

**THE REPRESENTATION OF MALE AND FEMALE CELEBRITIES ON e+ MAGAZINE COVERS
AND HOW IT MIGHT INFLUENCE TEENAGERS LIVING IN THE UAE**

by

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DECLARATION

Student number: 46492348

I declare that **The representation of male and female celebrities on e+ magazine covers and how it might influence teenagers living in the UAE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Date: 5 June 2014

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how male and female celebrities are represented on the 24 covers of e+, a weekly entertainment magazine that was published by Dubai-based Al Nisr Publishing. This cross-sectional, exploratory study used a qualitative visual semiotic analysis and quantitative content analysis to examine how male and female celebrities are constructed and represented on covers published between October 2010 and September 2011. In addition, the study explored whether the myths and ideologies found on the covers made an impression on the perceptions and tastes of teenagers living in the UAE. A subsequent self-administered questionnaire was completed by 30 teenagers living in the UAE aged between 16 and 19 with the purpose of determining how teenagers experienced representations of celebrities. Furthermore, to gain a deeper understanding of how teenagers experienced celebrity culture, three focus-group interviews, each comprising of six participants, are conducted.

The study found that both male and female celebrities were represented in gender stereotypical roles. Results showed that male celebrities were represented as active, strong, decisive and dominant. Male celebrities were associated with success, fast cars and dangerous weapons. On the other hand, female celebrities were predominantly represented as submissive. The representations of female celebrities focused on beauty and fashion. The survey and focus-group results revealed that celebrity culture does have an influence on teenagers. Participants reported that they bought products that they saw celebrities wearing or using, emulated the celebrities' behaviour and copied hairstyles and make-up looks. However, the study found that, in addition to celebrity culture, teenagers' perceptions are also shaped by their peers, parents and other people they interact with such as teachers.

Key words: Representation; semiotic theory; social semiotics; triangulation; gender stereotypes; celebrity culture; myth; ideology; impression on teenagers; masculinity; femininity

Dedication and acknowledgement

In memory of my loving father J.J. Madlela, who was passionate about education and did his best to ensure his children got the best education.

To Mama aka Granny and Zonke J.J. Madlela. I would like to thank you all for the encouragement. This is to inspire the young Zonkes – I want PhDs.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the representation of male and female celebrities on 24 front page covers of *e+*, a weekly entertainment magazine that was published by Dubai-based Al Nisr Publishing. The magazine, which was founded in April 2001 and closed in September 2011, was targeted at expatriates and English-speaking Emiratis (UAE nationals). Published every Thursday, the magazine carried the latest in celebrity news, gossip and exclusive photos making it a favourite among teenagers (Bin Fahad 2012:167). This study examines the way teenagers experienced the images of celebrities because research shows that teenagers are the most susceptible group to images and linguistic messages presented in the media (Boykin 2003). During adolescence individuals are at a vulnerable stage where they are trying to establish their values and develop their self-identity. During this phase, Boykin (2003) argues that teenagers tend to look for role models such as celebrities. However, this study also seeks to further examine other factors that influence the way teenagers read and interpret images of celebrities. Drawing on cultural studies, this research examines the environment teenagers live in to determine if it shapes the way teenagers experience media messages. The following sub-section gives the background and context of the study.

1.2 Background and context of the problem

The word hero was once used to describe people such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther Jr, Mahatma Ghandi and Nelson Mandela. However, now if teenagers were asked who their heroes are it would most likely be celebrities such as Paris Hilton, Justin Bieber or Lady Gaga. Why? It could be due to the coverage that celebrities get in mass media. The proliferation of entertainment magazines worldwide exposes highly impressionable teenagers to these personalities, for instance, if a celebrity falls pregnant or ends a relationship it becomes front page news in the tabloids, and their picture is put on the covers of entertainment magazines. For example, the Duchess of Cambridge and Kim Kardashian's pregnancy announcements were sensationalised and turned into a pregnancy battle (Barnett 2012) and Selena

Gomez and Justin Bieber's split was highly publicised. As a result, teenagers have no choice but to take notice of what is going on in the lives of celebrities.

Susan Boon and Christine Lomore (2001:460) note that the current celebrity climate seems to have taken hold and will not fizzle easily and further assert that relationships with celebrities are likely to play an increasingly important role in people's lives. Ellis Cashmore (2005:6) sums up succinctly the role of celebrities in society where he says "like it or loath it, celebrity culture is with us: it surrounds us and even invades us. It shapes our thoughts and conduct, style and manner". Furthermore, Cashmore (2005:6) notes that celebrity culture "affects and is affected by not just hard-core fans but by entire populations". In light of the above, it is therefore important to examine how celebrities are constructed and represented in the media and the effect it might have on the teenagers' self-identity.

1.2.1 The construction and consumption of celebrity

P. David Marshall (1997:186) argues that the entertainment industries construct celebrities and in this digital age those images are introduced into many homes through television sets, computer screens, newspapers and magazines. Marshall (1997:186) argues that each industry produces a unique breed of celebrities. In addition, for Marshall (1997:7) celebrities are cultural fabrications. He argues that the notion of celebrity is a social construction in which the mass media plays a leading role to influence the public. Since the entertainment industry produces many celebrities, the present age is celebrity saturated; teenagers are bombarded with images and news about celebrities. For example, Robin Andersen and Lance Strate's (2000:13-15) study revealed that, in 1977 on average, entertainment news accounted for 15 percent of the total content on television evening news. Two decades later entertainment news made up 43 percent of the total content. Chris Rojek (2001:10) notes that in contemporary society, the cult of celebrity cannot be avoided and further argues that celebrity has become a part of everyday life and a common reference point. It follows that the continuous exposure to celebrity news is likely to shape teenagers' tastes and worldviews.

Rojek (2001:17-19) distinguishes three types of celebrities, namely ascribed (which concerns lineage and status follows from blood lines); achieved (which derives from the perceived accomplishments of the individual in open competition); and attributed (which is a result of the concentrated representation of an individual as noteworthy or exceptional by cultural intermediaries). In recent years the meaning of a celebrity has altered and is now often applied to those who are famous through media involvement (Boorstin 1962:57). The standards and entry barriers to celebrity status have also changed and the term celebrity has become a metaphor for value in modern society and “more specifically, it describes a type of value that can be articulated through an individual and celebrated publicly as important and significant” (Marshall 1997:7).

1.2.2 The effect of celebrity culture on society: a teenager-specific focus

The proliferation of celebrity culture and the commodification of everyday life have resulted in rising concern about their perceived influence on society, particularly their effects on teenagers who are considered to be the highly impressionable members of the community. Psychologist, Erik H. Erikson (1959) asserts that the major task of the adolescent is the quest for self-identity and during this process of integration; acceptance and appearance are considered fundamental to the development of self-concept. Michael E. Gardiner (2000:109) notes that during the early phases of capitalism everyday life was autonomous from the economy while in the present age leisure time is commodified and manipulated. He observes that consumer capitalism reduces the usage of all goods and services including cultural products to “the mercy of exchange”. In other words, the economy dominates all social life.

Representing movie icons, sports personalities, socialites and musicians as yardsticks of beauty and success in the media may shape how teenagers view themselves. The interest in the lives of celebrities has a bearing on how teenagers make decisions and form opinions about their physical appearance and what they value in life. Most people in the UAE live away from their extended families and parents work long hours and rarely spend time with their children (999 expat survey... 2014). As a result, in most cases, teenagers turn to friends, housemaids and the media, especially celebrity news and information in entertainment

magazines, to make sense of everyday life and who they are (999 expat survey... 2014). Many teenagers use media such as magazines and television to decide which hairstyles, make-up and fashion trends are popular. In light of this, magazine editors put pictures of 'hot' celebrities on the covers, which promote glamorous lifestyles, in order to lure young readers to buy the magazines.

Some teenagers become preoccupied with celebrities and develop parasocial relationships (Klimmt, Hartmann and Schramm 2006:292). A parasocial relationship is usually a one-sided, imaginary, relationship with a media personality (Klimmt, Hartmann and Schramm 2006:292). It is worth noting that celebrities are viewed as "both larger than life and as intimate confrères" (Rojek 2001:16-17). Parasocial relationships can help teenagers construct their own identity and learn about gender roles, ideal body types, fashionable clothing, and other cultural norms. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (1996:193) argue that magazine covers have the power to transmit a society's culture and seek to "further consolidate and fix an otherwise more unstable sense of both self and gender". However, images of celebrities that are featured in the media also perpetuate gender stereotypes (Lindner 2004). For example, men are often featured doing masculine activities such as leaping from moving cars and using dangerous weapons while women are featured in passive poses. Katharina Lindner's (2004) study of the portrayal of women in advertisements, for example, found that women were shown in the domestic sphere in feminine roles such as cleaning or cooking.

The way that male and female celebrities are represented on the covers may influence teenagers' concept of their own self-image as they learn through these portrayals about the acceptable and unacceptable gender roles in society. In other words, the covers play a role in reinforcing 'ideal' masculine and feminine behaviours and what is perceived to be acceptable physical appearances for teenagers. However, theorists such as Sonia Livingstone (1996:305) argue that "while media messages tend to reinforce norms or mirror the status quo in some cases the media sets the agenda and introduce alternative ways". Instead of featuring slim female celebrities who promote the thin ideal, for example, images of celebrities who are big may be used on the covers to show a different body type.

Celebrities often seem magical and super human and this kind of representation can negatively influence teenagers' physical and psychological well-being (Rojek 2001:13). Research suggests that media portrayals of unrealistic body images negatively impact teenagers' self-esteem (Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliwer & Kilmartin 2001:230). Teenagers who compare themselves with celebrities, for example, may become dissatisfied with their bodies and, in a bid to achieve the ideal presented on the covers of entertainment magazines, develop unhealthy eating habits, undergo surgical procedures, or take dangerous substances like steroids to help them develop muscles (Field, Carmago, Taylor, Berkey, Roberts & Colditz 2001:54-60). With the development of technologies it is becoming increasingly easy for teenagers to access celebrity news.

Technological convergence feeds into teenagers' obsession with celebrities as it has made it possible for fans to take photographs and videos using their cell phones. In addition, with new technologies celebrities run their own websites and are active on social networking platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook, making it easier for teenagers to get more information about the private lives of the celebrities and strengthen their parasocial relationships.

Some celebrities upload photographs and videos that promote antisocial conduct, for example smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol. In some cases, when some celebrities have misunderstandings they insult each other online and fans join in the online-wars. Such behaviour may set a wrong precedent for teenagers who may employ the same strategies in handling conflicts in the future.

A glance at the images of the celebrities featured on magazine covers shows that teenagers are subjected to conflicting messages. It may be confusing for teenagers to know what is ideal because images of celebrities represent different concepts of masculine and feminine identity and appearance. On the one hand, some teenagers are exposed to images of loving mothers and caring fathers while on the other, they are also exposed to images of playboys and 'sex kittens'. Linda Hofschire and Bradley S. Greenberg (2002:126) observe that teenagers, especially girls, are faced with unattainable ideals as they see popular actresses "attract men with the seemingly impossible combination of a large bust and a waif-like body". Jeniffer L.

Derenne and Eugiene V. Beresin (2006) posit that audiences are presented with images of waif-thin models side by side with voluptuous pop icons, and male celebrities with ultra-masculine rugged appearance alongside metrosexual men¹ and therefore might find it difficult to choose role models. How then do teenagers make sense of everything and assert their identity?

It is important to note that teenagers are not just at the mercy of the media. Drawing on cultural studies approach, which shows that there are other factors other than the media that shape teenagers, this study seeks to examine whether the context within which the images of celebrities are produced and consumed shapes the way teenagers read and interpret them. Studies that use cultural studies as a theoretical framework show that teenagers choose what they want to read and make their choices based on what they anticipate will fulfil their needs. Teenagers use the media to construct how they imagine their future to be like as evidenced by Norbert Wildermuth and Anne Line Dalsgaard's (2006) study, which focused on the influence of the media in the construction of imagined futures among young people in Brazil. The study revealed that access to media images made "the creation of new identities and the dreaming of aspirations possible for ordinary people" (Wildermuth & Dalsgaard 2006:14). Furthermore, the researchers found that the consumption of mass media was influential in the development of imagined 'other' and 'future' lives.

However, in copying their favourite celebrities' behaviours teenagers may not separate what they see in the media (particularly on magazine covers) from the celebrities' real lives. The confusion may be compounded by the fact that the proliferation of celebrity gossip magazines and websites like Perez.com and TMZ.com blurs the line between the characters celebrities portray on-screen and their everyday lives. Both candid photographs of celebrities going about their everyday lives captured by the paparazzi and still images from the movie scenes or music videos are featured on magazine covers. In other words, teenagers consume both the reel and real lives of the celebrities. Some still images from movies that were put on the covers of e+ magazine portrayed celebrities performing dangerous stunts such as jumping from moving cars or shooting at others. The thin line between

¹ A metrosexual male is a heterosexual man who is concerned about his outward appearance and often uses grooming products and wears fashionable clothing.

the character a celebrity portrays in a film and their offstage life has resulted in several movies spawning copycat crimes (Newbury 2000:276-277). Teenagers who watch their favourite celebrities in violent movie scenes, and then see the celebrities' photographs on the front covers of e+ magazine may be encouraged to emulate the same behaviour.

The fact that celebrities are rewarded for engaging in violent behaviour may make teenagers believe that they too will be rewarded if they emulate the exhibited behaviour. One such example is the case of a boy who imitated what his favourite celebrity, Leonardo DiCaprio, did in the film *The Basketball Diaries*. In the film DiCaprio, who plays a basketball player, smuggles a shotgun into school and kills his classmates. The image of the shotgun-toting hero was published on several magazine covers and movie posters and DiCaprio was praised for his successful portrayal of the character. A teenager named Barry Loukaitis, like his hero, hid pistols, ammunition and a rifle under a black trench coat and shot dead his Algebra teacher and two of his classmates (Egan 1998). This incident shows that emulating celebrities can have detrimental consequences.

It is worth noting that photographs of celebrities are not mere pictures representing some external world. Graham Clarke (1997:27-28) argues that "the photograph both mirrors and creates a discourse with the world, and is never a neutral representation". It therefore follows that the images of the celebrities serve a purpose: to sell a certain lifestyle to readers. Roland Barthes (1977:36) notes that a visual image is not innocent because it "represents a cultural message".

According to Stuart Hall (1997:15), representation implies the active work of making things mean. In keeping with Hall's (1995) line of thought Croteau and Hoynes (2002:168) posit that the media do not merely reflect the world, on the contrary, they re-represent it and engage in practices that define reality. In a way representation gives a selective view, which normally reflects the dominant social and cultural views of a certain society. The images of male and female celebrities do not merely represent masculinity or femininity, they serve to subtly form conceptions of masculinity and femininity. In addition, the images represent certain myths and

ideologies. Having looked at the effects of celebrity culture on society, particularly teenagers, the next section focuses on the research problem.

1.3 Research problem

This cross-sectional, exploratory study uses a qualitative visual semiotic analysis and quantitative content analysis to examine how male and female celebrities are constructed and represented on 24 covers of *e+* magazine. It also uses a qualitative reception analysis to investigate how teenagers living in the UAE experienced the myths and ideologies found on the covers.

1.4 Sub-problems and assumptions

The study breaks down the research problem into three specific sub-problems.

❖ ***Celebrities represented in gender stereotypical roles***

How is gender constructed on the covers of *e+* magazine? Which gender features prominently in terms of roles and frequency on the covers of *e+*?

The researcher's basic assumption is that celebrities are represented in gender stereotypical roles. The researcher further assumes that white, heterosexual males will feature prominently on the covers as heroes and main characters. Also female celebrities are likely to be underrepresented in terms of frequency of appearance and because they are featured in subordinate roles often as passive, dependent and submissive (Gauntlett 2002:56; Van Zoonen 2006:17).

❖ ***Celebrities as cultural or ideological signs***

Which ideologies and cultural values do images of celebrities on covers of *e+* magazine promote?

The second assumption is based on semiotic theory derived from Barthes (1977) and De Saussure (1974). The study assumes that a celebrity is a sign

that signifies something and often promotes certain myths, ideologies and values.

❖ ***Celebrities and their influence on teenagers***

How did teenagers living in the UAE experience the images of male and female celebrities represented on the covers of e+ magazine?

With the proliferation of media, teenagers are saturated with images of celebrities and look up to them to make sense of the world around them. Celebrities can have a positive or negative influence on teenagers.

1.5 Purpose of the study

This study analyses the construction of masculinity and femininity by focusing on the visual representation of male and female celebrities on e+ magazine covers. Furthermore, this exploratory study endeavours to uncover the masculine and feminine identities that are on display. It is worth noting that drawing on semiotic theory, a celebrity is a sign that stands for something. In view of the above using semiotic codes such as poses, gaze, facial expressions, body view or display and costume, denotative and connotative meanings of the texts are explored. Decoding meanings exposes the myths and ideologies that the images entrench and how they might shape the lives of teenagers living in the UAE. In other words, the main purpose is to try to answer the question: how do images of celebrities on the covers produce and manipulate social signifiers?

It is important to examine social signifiers that are produced and manipulated in the UAE since many existing studies focus on the West. It is integral to expand the existing body of knowledge about media representations in the Middle East, and UAE in particular, because by doing so “we perform the political act of changing the power relations that rule our lives” (Enriquez 2000:8). Although the magazine in question closed down three years ago, retrieving copies from the archives and analysing them is still of relevance to the discipline of Communication because this

study will generate information on the representation of celebrities in a magazine that was published locally in the UAE.

The findings will be added to the body of research in the discipline of Communication and will be useful in furthering work in the field because the information can be used by other researchers in comparative studies. Comparing findings from different studies will enable researchers to establish if culture and geographical locations have a bearing on the way teenagers experience celebrity culture. In addition, since the study analyses covers of a magazine that is no longer in circulation, its findings can be used by researchers studying current magazines that are still on the newsstand. This will enable them to see if the representation of celebrities has changed or remained the same since e+ closed down.

1.6 Objectives and goals

According to Susana Horning Priest (2010:10), in mass communication studies, basic research is rooted in a theory or theoretical ideas and is undertaken to “improve our general understanding of how something works rather than in response to an immediate practical need”. In other words, basic research adds to the existing, theoretical knowledge in an area of study or topic. Applied research seeks to find answers to problematic situations. It is solution-driven and the findings can be used to resolve unwanted situations or improve certain unpleasant issues (Priest 2010:10). This study adopts elements from both applied and basic research as it is driven by the researcher’s interest in the subject of representation and the effect celebrity culture has on teenagers.

The main objective of this study is to explore how celebrities are constructed and represented on the covers of e+ magazine with the goal of adding to the existing body of scientific knowledge. In addition, the research’s objective is to explore the teenagers’ attitudes towards celebrities. Furthermore, the study seeks to describe the signs and codes that were used to represent celebrities and show how teenagers living in the UAE experienced such representations.

As mentioned above, the fundamental goal of this exploratory study is to examine how celebrities are represented. To achieve this goal, a quantitative content analysis and qualitative visual semiotic analysis, are used to identify themes that feature prominently on the covers of e+ magazine, for instance the age, gender, race, costume and body type of the male and female celebrities. Commenting on the representation of the body image in newspapers, Maggie Wykes and Barrie Gunter (2005:71-72) note that “newspapers provide a narrative that tells a complete story firmly held together with words and pictures, juxtaposed with other news stories thought to be complementary”. The same concept applies to magazine covers, where the image of a celebrity is used together with the cover lines. Hence, it is important to take into account the setting, the lighting, the positioning of the celebrity or celebrities, the poses and the gazes. Furthermore, focus-group interviews are conducted to determine how teenagers experienced the myths and ideologies that are promoted by images of male and female celebrities. Having looked at the goals and objectives, the following section highlights the relevance of the study.

1.7 Relevance of the study

The representation of celebrities and its influence on teenagers has gained academic interest because it is an important issue that concerns parents, teenagers and society at large. For example, some celebrities behave badly, they take drugs and abuse their partners and parents worry that their children may emulate such antisocial behaviours (McLanahan 2008:148).

Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (1996:30) point out that humans “depend in large measure on the cultural industries for the images, symbols, and vocabulary with which they interpret and respond to their social environment”. Since many people are exposed to visual images of celebrities most of the time it is important to explore how the myths and ideologies they promote might influence society, particularly teenagers in the UAE. Although the issue of representation of celebrities has gained prominence in other parts of the world, no research has been undertaken on this topic in the UAE so far and studying this subject is an attempt to fill in that gap.

The researcher chose to analyse the representation of celebrities on the covers of *e+*, a magazine that is no longer in circulation, because it was a leading entertainment magazine in the region with a total qualified weekly circulation of 74,593 (www.bpaww.com). Moreover, *e+* was accessible to teenagers as it was available on subscription and in newsstands all over the UAE. As the only local English language entertainment magazine in the UAE, *e+* was widely read by teenagers as evidenced by the fact that they constituted the majority of the magazine's Facebook fans and Twitter followers. Many teenagers also posted comments on the magazine's website and wrote letters to the editor giving feedback and expressing their opinions.

The magazine issues that were published during the last year of publication were chosen for analysis because they show an up-to-date representation of constructed femininity and masculinity. The magazine was affected by the global economic crisis during 2008 and 2009 but fared better when compared to other publications that were largely dependent on advertisements from real estate companies. It closed in September 2011 while it was still doing well in terms of advertising and circulation figures. According to the *Arab Media Outlook 2011-2015* *e+* was the third most read magazine in the UAE and the most read English entertainment magazine (Bin Fahad 2012:167). The magazine's closure prompted many readers and advertisers to send emails and call the marketing and editorial departments to make inquiries. It is important to analyse the covers, which were the selling point of the magazine, in order to gain an insight into what readers found appealing about the images of celebrities. The next sections discuss the political, economic, religious and socio-cultural environment of the UAE give insight into the context in which the texts are produced and consumed by teenagers.

1.7.1 The political system of the UAE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was established in 1971 when the six emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah and Umm Al Quwain) came together to form a federation. Ras Al Khaimah, the seventh emirate became part of the federation in 1972. Prior to the federation, the seven emirates existed independently as Trucial States under British rule and each had its own governing institutions. The

federal government consists of the Supreme Council, which comprises the rulers of the seven emirates; the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), the Federal National Council (FNC), UAE's advisory council made up of 40 elected members, and the Federal Supreme Court, which represents an independent judiciary system (<http://www.sheikhmohammed.co.ae>).

The leadership style is both hierarchical and consultative. The UAE nationals originate from Bedouin tribe, who used to be desert nomads and were governed by a shaikh. After moving to the cities they maintained that form of leadership and the shaikh and ruling family of each emirate still consult the people. For example, HH Shaikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai has an open door policy and engages with citizens and residents on his website, Twitter and Facebook. In the introduction to questions submitted by citizens and residents on his website he begins by stating "... We wish to welcome all our brothers and sisters from all cities. Consider me, Mohammed bin Rashid a brother to all..." (<http://www.sheikhmohammed.co.ae>). The above example shows that the UAE's political system combines both the traditional and modern "with an inherent commitment to consensus, discussion and direct democracy (<http://www.sheikhmohammed.co.ae>). Each of the seven emirates has its own leadership under the Ruler, however, there is coordination between federal and local governments as spelt out in UAE's Vision 2021 policy statement, which was launched by Shaikh Mohammed at the closing of a cabinet meeting in 2010 (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>).

The UAE participates in global politics and is a member of international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the International Renewable Energy Agency, which is headquartered in Abu Dhabi. The country also hosts many international summits due to its central location and state-of-the-art facilities.

1.7.2 The UAE's economic environment

The Trucial States's economic mainstay was the pearling industry in the 19th and early 20th centuries (<http://www.uaecd.org/uae-history>). Pearl diving provided

income and employment to the people of the Gulf region. In the 1960s oil was discovered in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and after the formation of the federation the rulers of the UAE used oil revenues to develop the education system and infrastructure. Owing to the country's strategic geographical location between Europe, Africa and the Far East the UAE attracts merchants and skilled manpower from all over the world. The UAE has become a central hub for the movement of goods and people to different parts of the world. The country has moved from an agriculture- and fishing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy with the government investing in "science, technology, research and development throughout the fabric of the UAE economy" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>). The rulers have also implemented strategies aimed at diversification away from over reliance on oil and are supporting non-oil industries such as transport, tourism and services sector.

The UAE Vision 2021 envisions that a "diversified and flexible knowledge-based economy will be powered by skilled Emiratis and strengthened by world-class talent to ensure long-term prosperity for the UAE" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>). The diversification of the emirates' economy has seen a significant increase in the non-oil sector's contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is forecast to grow in excess of 4.5 per cent in 2014 (<https://gsec.abudhabi.ae>).

The country's political stability and an enabling business environment attract foreign investment. In addition, with its competitive tax-free salaries and high quality of life, the UAE attracts and retains white-collar expatriate workers. The UAE Vision 2021 spells out that the country endeavours to be "flexible in adopting new economic models, and capitalising on global economic partnerships to guarantee long-term prosperity for current and future generations of Emiratis" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>).

Mercer's 2014 International Geographic Salary Differentials, which examined gross and net pay salaries of employees across all career levels in 79 countries shows that "people holding managerial and senior positions in the UAE are among the top ten highest paid in the world" (Maceda 2014). Most of these high income-earning executives are expatriates. Expatriates, who account for nearly 84 per cent (about 8.5 million) of the UAE's total population (<http://www.uaeinteract.com>) have

disposable income and can afford to subscribe to newspapers and magazines, and buy entertainment gadgets for their children. Studies show that most teenagers living in the UAE have television sets in their bedrooms and also own laptops, iPads and smartphones (Al Huneidi 2011). These gadgets make it easy for teenagers to access celebrity news any time of the day. A study published in *The Global Media Journal - Arabian Edition* found that half of Emirati teenagers spend eight to ten hours a day on social media and many teenagers admitted that they watch television, particularly American programmes up to 2am every day (Al Huneidi 2011).

The UAE is a consumer society as evidenced by a study conducted by Dubai-based research consultancies AMRB and TRU, which revealed that UAE teenagers spend \$103 per week, on the latest mobile phones, clothing, health and beauty, home entertainment and electronics and technology, compared to the global average of \$28 a week that teenagers in other parts of the world spend on shopping (Rizvi 2011). To cater to the teenagers' spending habits the country has large malls, which are home to leading international brands, food courts with restaurants serving different cuisines and indoor leisure facilities (Bennett 2011). Moreover, there are shopping festivals such as Gitex, Dubai Summer Surprises, Global Village and Abu Dhabi Shopping Festival that run throughout the year.

1.7.3 Religious and socio-cultural dynamics in the UAE

The country's religious and cultural values are grounded on Islam traditions and Arabic culture. The UAE 2021 Vision encourages citizens to draw on "their strong families and communities, moderate Islamic values, and deep-rooted heritage to build a vibrant and well-knit society" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>). However, there is religious freedom as people from other faiths like Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism practice their religions. The Rulers of the emirates have given people of other faiths land to build their houses of worship. For example, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad donated land for a Sikh temple in Jebel Ali and Shaikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, who visited the place of worship commented that although the UAE is a Muslim country it is a multicultural community that is tolerant and respects all other faiths (Dhal 2013).

There are church compounds, temples for Hindus and places of worship for other religions at designated areas.

In line with the UAE Vision 2021 policy document, UAE Rulers and nationals encourage dialogue with other nationalities to further strengthen the UAE's social fabric and add that "a spirit of respect and consideration among our many cultural groups is essential for the preservation of productive and harmonious coexistence. It will enhance our tradition of mutual understanding throughout society" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>).

In Arabic culture there are defined gender roles for men and women. On one hand, men are expected to provide for the family and take care of women in the family. On the other hand, women are supposed to get married, have children. However, while the UAE respects Emirati traditions it also supports the "emerging role of women and continues in helping them to achieve ever-greater empowerment in all spheres" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>). The UAE Vision 2021 policy statement spells out that women should be given an opportunity to "combine full participation in active life with the joy and fulfilment of motherhood. In pursuit of these noble goals, women will be protected against all forms of discrimination at work and in society" (<http://www.vision2021.ae/en>). There are women in government for example there are four female cabinet ministers.

Public decency laws that govern the behaviour of citizens, residents and tourists have been formulated to safeguard the local customs and traditions. For example, public display of affection like kissing or petting are illegal (Government of Dubai:6). Members of the opposite sex who are not related by family ties or marriage are forbidden from living under the same roof and punishment for this crime can be up to a one-year jail sentence followed by deportation if offenders are expatriates. Also wearing clothing that indecently expose parts of the body is not allowed and persons who are not dressed appropriately are banned from entering public places such as malls, parks and business buildings (Government of Dubai:6). Alcohol consumption is strictly limited to designated places such as licensed hotels and restaurants, and being caught in public under the influence of alcohol may lead to a fine or imprisonment (Government of Dubai:8).

The UAE leadership seeks to work towards increasing the citizens' well-being and happiness by providing infrastructure, health facilities and improving the quality of education. Research shows that the quality of life in the country is good as the UAE ranked the first among the Arab countries and number 14 out of a total of 156 countries surveyed in the World Happiness Report (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs 2013).

1.8 Feasibility of the study

The topic is researchable in terms of time and costs. The researcher can access the magazines for free from the public libraries or the *Gulf News* library. The topic is ethically acceptable because it addresses a pertinent issue of how celebrity culture shapes the teenagers' choices in life. It is possible for the researcher to gain access to teenagers aged between 16 and 19 for the focus-group discussions because many teenagers living in the UAE read e+ magazine. To adhere to ethical guidelines on research that uses human subjects, informed consent is obtained from parents and teenagers.

The findings of the study may benefit former publishers of the magazine who can gain insights into what the teenagers liked, or disliked, about celebrities featured on the magazine. The owners may revive the magazine or incorporate those favourable elements in the magazine's successor.

1.9 Structure of the project

This study consists of nine chapters. The first chapter gives background to the issue of representation of celebrities in the media and discusses the way teenagers and the community at large experience images of male and female celebrities. It also highlights the context of the problem and further goes on to state the problem and sub-problems of the research. The chapter also includes the research's purpose and objectives, and the political, economic, religious and socio-cultural environment of the UAE.

Chapter two presents a literature review, which outlines themes that have been addressed and methodologies that have been utilised by other researchers in similar studies. In addition, the literature review presents some of the major findings on the representation of male and female celebrities in the media.

The third chapter discusses the theoretical framework. Drawing on Cultural Studies, this chapter focuses on semiotics as theory and research method, and representation theory.

The fourth chapter focuses on research design. It highlights the research methodology and instruments that will be employed in this study to collect and analyse data. In chapter four, population and sampling techniques are stated.

Chapter five gives an overview of the entertainment magazine genre and the importance of magazine covers. In addition, the fifth chapter gives a history of e+ magazine, including the target audience and factors that influenced the choice of content that was published.

Chapter six focuses on the history of celebrity, the construction, circulation and consumption of contemporary celebrity culture and role of celebrities in society. This chapter provides background information on celebrity construction and consumption, which helps understand how teenagers experience celebrity culture.

In the seventh chapter, six images of celebrities featured on the covers are analysed using visual semiotic analysis drawing on Roland Barthes' (1977:32) and Ferdinand De Saussure's (1974:67) semiotic theories. Furthermore, findings of a quantitative content analysis and focus-group interviews are presented in Chapter 7. The research findings are interpreted in Chapter 8. In addition, the myth and ideologies that are found on the images of celebrities on the covers are uncovered.

The last chapter presents a summary of findings and examines key findings so as to establish whether the findings are in line with the research's assumptions or not. Moreover, chapter nine highlights the strengths and limitations of the research and also covers recommendations for further study.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter situated the study within its context and drawing from effects research showed that mediated representations of celebrities have the power to shape the public's opinion. Celebrities are often viewed as role models; therefore, the ideals that are promoted by their images on the covers are likely to have a bearing on readers. However, drawing on cultural studies this chapter also discussed other factors that have a bearing on the way teenagers interpret and make sense of the representations of celebrities, for example, the political, economic, religious and socio-cultural environment of the UAE and their family backgrounds.

This chapter also presented the research problem and assumptions that guide the study. The research problem forms the basis of the study, directs the focus of the research and guides the data collection and analysis process. Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod (2010:62) note that assumptions "are so basic that, without them the research problem itself could not exist". In a way assumptions serve as springboards for discussion of the topic of representation of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine.

In addition, the introductory chapter stated the purpose of the study which is to examine the images of male and female celebrities on the 24 covers of e+ magazine and further conduct focus-group interviews to gain an insight on the influence of celebrity culture on teenagers. The chapter demonstrated what the knowledge obtained from the study will be used for. The goals, objectives and relevance of the study detailed the significance of conducting the research. The chapter concluded with the thesis overview, which gives the structure of the project. Having given context to the study, the following chapter presents the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LIRERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the literature review, which focuses on material that has already been published on the topic. The aim is to review literature on the topic of representation of male and female celebrities and identify the gaps in existing knowledge. After identifying the shortcomings, this study will explore areas that have not yet been covered by other researchers and the findings will add new information to the topic of gender representation and its influence on teenagers.

There are several ways of organising a literature review, namely chronological order, thematic, theoretical and methodological approach (Ridely 2012). This study follows the thematic and theoretical approaches and includes studies that address the topic of gender representations of male and female celebrities, theories and the methods that were employed in the research projects. It is important to draw from several approaches in order to get a balanced view. Reviewing relevant literature is fundamental because it gives an insight into the theoretical perspectives that have been employed in that area of research (Du Plooy 2009:61). The body of existing knowledge is useful because it helps to identify research problems, hypotheses and results obtained by other researchers to avoid duplication.

The literature review may be helpful in generating measuring instruments, coming up with suitable methods for data analysis and interpretation. Other researchers' studies may also be used as a benchmark and the researcher can compare the similarities and differences in research findings with earlier studies. A literature review looks at existing research and establishes how it relates to the present study. The next section will look at previous research, focusing mainly on the consumption of celebrities and the gratification of needs, celebrities as role models, representation of male and female celebrities in the media, and semiotic analysis.

2.2 Previous research and scholarly views

Several studies into the representation of celebrities in the media and how it influences fans have been conducted. The studies focus on different media including film, television, newspapers and magazines. Moreover, the influence of celebrity culture on members of the community, particularly teenagers has been approached from different theoretical perspectives, which are examined in detail in the following sections.

2.2.1 Consumption of celebrities and gratification of needs

Lawrence Grossberg's (1998:261) study employed the uses and gratification theory as a point of departure, and examined the influence of celebrities on soap opera viewers. The findings revealed that viewers use what they see in soap operas as conversation openers and the experiences of characters to make sense of their own lives.

Furthermore, Cynthia Hoffner (1996) found that soap opera viewers often establish parasocial relationships with the characters. Hoffner (1996) notes that parasocial relationships may be affected by the attractiveness of the celebrity, for example physical appearance, personality, competence and success. In addition to the physical attributes, Johan F. Hoorn and Elly A. Konijn (2003:250-268) argue that a parasocial relationship may also be built on the perceived commonalities between a viewer and a celebrity.

However, Sara Algoe and Jonathan Haidt's (2009:105-127) study revealed that "the more a character is different, the more he or she is attractive because differences may be found interesting or exotic or cause positive responses through social comparison". Drawing on these studies, this research examines whether teenagers are only influenced by celebrities from their own ethnic group with whom they share similar characteristics and backgrounds or if they also emulate celebrities from other cultures and genders. The study seeks to find out whether teenage girls consider male celebrities to be their role models, and on the other hand, if boys look up to female celebrities.

2.2.2 Celebrities as role models

Boon and Lomore (2001) argue that the ways celebrities influence teenagers are dependent on factors such as the teenager's values, family background and level of exposure to the media. Their study examined the extent to which celebrities influenced a sense of identity and self-worth in 213 Canadian undergraduate students. The researchers found that students were influenced by mass mediated celebrities and transformed their lives in order to resemble the celebrities (Boon & Lomore 2001:445-446). The respondents who were influenced more and transformed their lives were those who consumed a lot of information about celebrities and participated in fan forums.

Like Boon and Lomore (2001), Jake Halpern's (2007) survey, which examined children's attitudes towards fame and pop culture found a link between media consumption and the teenagers' beliefs. The study revealed that respondents who watched entertainment shows or read entertainment magazines regularly were more likely to believe that they could be famous. In addition, the findings showed that these children believed that if they became famous they would climb up the social ladder.

Researchers such as Grossberg (1998), and Boon and Lomore (2001) focused on television actors, but Reuben Buford May's (2009) research introduces a new group of celebrities, the sport personalities. He conducted a study in America to find out if black male basketball players from the National Basketball Association served as role models for young black males. The assumption was that since black males who participated in high school basketball belonged to the same ethnic group with black professional basketball players they will emulate everything their heroes did. On the contrary the researcher found that young black players were discerning in their acceptance and rejection of certain role model attitudes and behaviours (Buford May 2009). While researchers cited above tended to focus on one form of celebrity, this study examines different types of celebrities featured on the magazine covers including musicians, television and film actors and royalty.

Rina Makgosa (2010) examined the influence of persuasive communication on teenagers in Botswana. The results from a survey that was done among secondary school children revealed that role models such as television celebrities and entertainers do have an influence on the purchasing behaviour of teenagers in Botswana.

The findings of Makgosa's (2010) study are in line with Bush, Martin and Bush's (2004) research that was conducted in America among 218 teenagers studying at high school and junior high school. They hypothesised that media sources are important references for teenagers in selecting products. The findings supported the hypothesis as they found that teenagers who admired athletes and considered them to be their role models bought products that were endorsed by their favourite celebrities in order to look like their role models.

In addition to influencing purchasing behaviours, exposure to images of celebrities impacts the teenagers' self-esteem and body image. For instance, Tiggemann and McGill's (2004:26) study found that exposure to the images of thin models in fashion magazines led to appearance concerns among vulnerable women. Girls who could not measure up to the ideal body image represented in the media found themselves lacking resulting in "negative mood and body dissatisfaction" (Tiggemann & McGill 2004:26). It is important to examine how male and female celebrities are represented in the media since it is connected to how teenagers view and feel about themselves.

2.2.3 Representation of male and female celebrities in media

Most studies cited above focused on the effect celebrities have on teenagers, not necessarily on the way celebrities are represented in the media. It is worth looking at research that focuses on the representation of celebrities and how gender is constructed on the covers as well as what a celebrity as a sign stands for.

Barrie Gunter's (1995) study on representation of gender in action drama revealed that women were underrepresented in terms of frequency of appearance and the way they were portrayed. He noted that men and women were featured in gender stereotypical roles and used the terms "sex role stereotyping" and "sex trait

stereotyping” to refer to the trends. Gunter’s (1986:11) study found that women were featured in a limited range of roles. Binary oppositions were used to represent men and women, for example women were confined to the private domain and were shown mainly in the home caring for their families. On the other hand, men controlled the public domain and were featured in the workplace involved in activities that would benefit society not just their families. Women were also portrayed as being more emotional than men (Gunter 1986:11).

More recently, Mallika Das’ (2000) study, which focused on the representation of men and women in advertisements published in Indian magazines found that not much had changed, since Gunter’s (1986) research, to accommodate the changing roles of men and women in society. Das’ (2000:700) study revealed that women were represented in domestic settings as homemakers, as dependent on men, and as sex objects. However, the study found that men were represented in authoritative, dominant roles.

Another recent study by William M. O’Barr (2008:1) found that women are still underrepresented and presented in a less favourable way. For example, where a man appeared with a woman in an image “the relationship almost always focused on masculine dominance and female submissiveness” (O’Barr 2008:1). It is important to highlight that masculine and feminine attributes differ from one culture to another. For instance, what may be viewed as an act of subordination in one culture may be interpreted differently in another. For instance, in Eastern cultures it is acceptable for women to cover up their bodies and keep a low profile in public while in the West it could be regarded as being submissive and subordinate.

O’Barr’s (2008:1) study found that the number of old men and old women featured in advertisements was far less compared to young men and women. Old people only featured as frail and ailing in health advertisements. The study also identified themes that recur in visual representations of men and women. He examined the representations of gender in advertisements published in magazines and noted that “masculine images typically convey power, strength, virility, athleticism, and competitiveness whereas feminine images show beauty, submissiveness, nurturance, and cooperation”. Although his study did not focus on celebrities per se it

is important because it addresses the issue of representations of masculinity and femininity in the media.

Further to the above, O'Barr (2008:7-8) notes that the poses and facial expressions differed for male and female models. Most women were featured in provocative poses and had exaggerated smiles on their faces proving that the focus was on their sexuality. However, men were shown in active roles, concentrating on the tasks they were engaged in. Also none of the men were smiling. The next section discusses gender representation and semiotic analysis. The signs and codes that are used to represent masculinity and femininity are examined.

2.2.4 Representation, gender and semiotic analysis

Following from O'Barr's contribution, it is important to explore codes that are used to represent masculine and feminine identities. Studies that employed semiotic analysis provide tools that can be used to examine how images of celebrities and models in the media promote certain gender ideals, myths and ideologies. Notable contributors include Angela McRobbie (1977) who used semiotic analysis to examine a teenage magazine called *Jackie*; Paul Carter (2000) who analysed the front page covers of three British newspapers including one that featured Madonna; and Siân Davies (2002), who studied two teenage magazines, *More* and *19*. Influenced by Barthes' (1973:131) three levels of signification these researchers examined the denotative, connotative and ideological meanings of visual texts.

Drawing from structuralism and feminism, McRobbie (2000:78) analysed *Jackie's* covers and editorial content and identified four codes which were used by the magazine to promote images of femininity. For McRobbie (2000:80-110) the four ideological codes are the code of romance, the code of personal/domestic life, the code of fashion and beauty, and the code of pop music. She noted that through these codes the magazine promoted a conservative ideology of femininity and positioned girls as future wives and mothers as was evidenced by the fact that success was viewed as the "achievement of romantic attachments rather than career or educational achievements" (Laughey 2007:109). However, since McRobbie's seminal work there have been new developments in magazines targeted at women,

for instance the code of romance no longer only focuses on heterosexual relationships but also includes lesbianism.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1977) argued that a photograph is both an iconic and indexical sign because the signifier is directly linked to the signified. Carter's (2000) semiotic analysis of newspaper front-page photographs shows that a photograph is not an objective representation of reality. Carter (2000) highlights that although a photograph is mechanically produced the codes of size, position, camera angle and other signs used in the syntagm can be used to connote different meanings.

Carter (2000) notes that the wide-shot image of a murdered Zimbabwean farmer used by *The Guardian* connoted objectiveness while the medium close-up photograph used by the *Daily Mail* connoted an intimate subjective view. He also points out that *The Sun's* close-up photograph of Madonna focusing on her physical beauty connotes intimacy and glamour. His findings are in line with Barthes observation that "a photograph is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms which are so many factors of connotation" (Barthes 1977:19). Although Carter's research focuses on newspapers and two hard news stories it is relevant and the signifiers, such as setting and image size, which are used to attach emotional connotations can be used in the analysis of photographs of celebrities on the front covers of e+ magazine.

Davies' (2002) study was based on the assumption that femininity is constructed. The study analysed magazine covers paying attention to titles, fonts, layout, colours, paper texture and the language used. Davies (2002) found that the images of women on the covers promoted certain notions of femininity and encouraged its readership to turn to the market for satisfaction. In a way the images on the covers reinforced consumerism.

Davies (2002) notes that "a particular form of femininity is constructed through subliminal education via information reinforced by visual representations of desirable characteristics". For example, if readers are constantly exposed to images of slim women on the covers, they may end up believing that being thin is the acceptable

body type. This section has examined representations of gender in media, and the ensuing discussion focuses on how this study will fill in gaps in existing knowledge.

2.2.5 Filling in the gaps in existing knowledge

Preliminary investigation revealed that there is no research in the Middle East that deals with celebrities and their influence on teenagers. Most studies on representation of celebrities and its impact on society have been conducted in the West and may not apply to the Middle Eastern setting due to differences in societal norms. Most countries in the Middle East and the UAE in particular are governed by *sharia* (Islamic law), hence are conservative.

However, there is a large expatriate community in the UAE; there are people of different nationalities living in the country. Moreover, while the Middle East does not have an entertainment industry that is as established as Hollywood in the West or Bollywood in India, residents are still exposed to international celebrities in the media. Due to a lack of local celebrity news publications such as *e+* magazine rely on content from Hollywood and Bollywood. Since the country has strict laws, syndicated material is screened and only the content that it is in line with the cultural sensitivities code gets published.

In view of the above, this study seeks to fill in the gap by analysing images of celebrities on the covers of a locally produced magazine and identify the codes used and ideals that are promoted and further state how they were experienced by teenagers living in the Arab world.

In addition, gaps are identified in existing literature, for example, studies like Buford May's (2009) research tend to focus on one gender when examining the influence of celebrities on teenagers. On the other hand, Henderson-King and Hoffmann's (2001:1407-1416) research focused on girls and their findings revealed that exposure to ideal female images negatively influences women's self-evaluations of themselves.

Other researchers such as Gunter (1995) examined how both male and female celebrities were represented on television, and found that gender role stereotyping was prevalent in this medium. Makgosa's (2010) study examined the influence of celebrity endorsements on both teenage girls and boys. This exploratory study draws on Gunter and looks at both male and female celebrities and follows Makgosa in examining the influence of celebrities on boys and girls.

Most studies cited in this literature review that address the issue of representation of celebrities and its influence on teenagers focused mainly on advertising, celebrity endorsement, television, women's magazines and film. This study approaches the topic of celebrity representation from a different angle as it focuses on an entertainment magazine and therefore introduces a new dimension to the research on celebrity culture.

There is very little research on entertainment magazines in the Middle East as most studies tend to focus on how news about the region is covered in Western newspapers, agencies and broadcast media and how Arabs are portrayed in films. This study examines how celebrities from different parts of the world are represented on the covers of a magazine that is published in the Middle East. In addition, the research focuses on the cultural industry as opposed to politics.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that a literature review is helpful in highlighting what has been done on the topic in terms of theoretical perspectives that have been employed by other researchers. This broadened the researcher's perspective and opened the mind to different angles that could be explored.

The literature review included research focusing on different types of media, gender representation in the media, the effects images of celebrities have on teenagers and those that use semiotic analysis to examine visual images. From the literature review it emerged that celebrities do have an influence on teenagers. Makgosa (2010) found that celebrity product endorsement in Botswana influenced the teenagers' purchasing behaviour. The researchers who analysed visual images identified

certain recurring themes regarding the codes that are used to represent men and women. For example, McRobbie (2000) found that the focus was on the female celebrities' physical beauty and that codes used included the codes of fashion, beauty and glamour. Having given a detailed literature review, the next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that informs the study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents theoretical perspectives that inform this study. The study employs semiotic theory and representation theory, which fall under Cultural Studies, to examine the images of male and female celebrities that are featured on the covers of *e+* magazine. Semiotics is used as both theory and method for analysing texts; hence a detailed discussion of the semiotic theories is given. The chapter also highlights the three approaches to representation. The applicability of theories to the study is also discussed.

A theoretical framework provides a lens through which to examine the topic of representation of celebrities and the influence it might have on teenagers living in the UAE. Drawing on Cultural Studies, this project employs semiotic theory and representation theory to analyse the images of the celebrities. Graeme Turner (2005:9) defines Cultural Studies as an interdisciplinary field that evolved in the late 1950s but has since grown in scope and broadened its methodologies. Cultural Studies has become a global tradition with different schools like British Cultural Studies, African Cultural Studies and American Cultural studies. Cultural Studies is a critical perspective that draws on diverse fields and theories such as sociology, communication studies, economics, politics and cultural and literary theory.

This study draws on British Cultural Studies because its Marxist assumptions and critical perspectives are relevant for this research. However, it is worth noting that although the term British Cultural Studies is often used to refer to the work of researchers from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, other European scholars contributed to its development (Turner 2005:3). For example, European structuralists including De Saussure (1974) and Barthes (1973) introduced the semiotic theory and Marxists such as Althusser and Gramsci introduced ideology to the analysis of popular culture texts.

The ground-breaking work of British Cultural Studies scholars such as Hoggarts and Williams used textual criticism to analyse cultural forms. Early cultural studies mainly

focused on the connection between culture and communication and how meanings are constructed and transform over time. But their efforts fell short because they did not have tools to examine how “cultural forms and practices produced their social, not merely aesthetic, meanings and pleasures” (Turner 2005:10).

De Saussure’s (1974:16) semiology, which he described as a “science which would study the life of signs within society” focused on language and its cultural and social dimensions. He argued that meaning was culture specific, something that Hoggarts and Williams’ textual criticism had failed to achieve (Jones & Holmes 2011:44). As the field of Cultural Studies continued to grow, Barthes (1973) extended De Saussure semiotic theory, which mainly focused on analysing linguistic signs to examining visual cultural texts, paying attention to how they perpetuate social domination. The method Barthes (1973) introduced was useful for exploring visual signs to uncover ideological and hegemonic meanings.

Cultural Studies is also concerned with representation, how the world is socially constructed and represented. Like semiotics, Hall’s (1997:19) representation theory focuses on signs. He argues that a sign carries meaning and should be interpreted. Furthermore, Hall’s (1997) theory connects meaning and language to culture. For Hall each culture has its own set of shared codes which enable members to assign meaning to signs and focuses on popular culture particularly “hegemony, signs and semiotics, representation and discourse, and meaning and struggle” (Hall 1997:2).

Semiotic and representation theories, which fall under the umbrella of Cultural Studies, are relevant for this study because they give importance to meaning and trace its roots to the community. In addition, Cultural Studies theories are suitable for this study, which analyses images from popular culture because it provides theories and methods for examining both visual and textual elements to determine how meaning is constructed. The main concern of Cultural Studies is to study culture and its effects on society, and this study explores the influence of popular culture on teenagers. Semiotics, one of the chief methods that are employed in Cultural Studies to understand culture is used as both theory and method for analysing images of male and female celebrities.

Cultural Studies provides tools that enable researchers to examine how cultural products promote ideologies, values and gender representations, therefore it is suitable for this study, which focuses on how teenagers experience cultural artefacts like magazine covers.

3.2 Semiotic theories

The founding fathers of modern semiotics Swiss linguist De Saussure (1857-1913) and American philosopher Peirce (1839-1914) developed semiotic theories. Several theorists including Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, Charles W Morris, Ivor A Richards, Charles K Ogden and Thomas Sebeok analysed, interpreted and developed on the seminal works of De Saussure and Peirce (Chandler 2005).

The term semiotics comes from the Greek root *semeion*, which means sign (Bignell 2002:1) and is used to describe what signs are and how they function. The most important concept in semiotics is the sign. For Peirce (1977:27) a sign “is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity”. Traditionally, De Saussure’s theory is known as semiology and Peirce’s as semiotics; this study uses the term semiotics to cover both approaches.

Semiotics is a way of analysing meaning by looking at signs, which include words, pictures and symbols which communicate meanings. When semiotics was first developed its major concern was to understand how language worked but Barthes (1973) later extended to analysing visual signs. To establish the background and orientation of semiotic theory the following discussion highlights contributions of some of the notable theorists.

3.2.1 De Saussure’s semiotic theory

Swiss linguist De Saussure coined the term ‘*semiologie*’ to refer to the not yet existing general science of signs (Nöth 1995:57). He used the word ‘semiology’ to refer to his work and described it as a “science that studies the life of signs within society” and noted that “semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws

govern them” (De Saussure 1974:16). His semiotic perspective draws on a dyadic model and focuses on the linguistic sign, which is divided into two components, the signifier and the signified (De Saussure 1974:67). It is important to note that according to the Saussurean semiotic model the signifier and signified are inseparable (Saussure 1983:111) and both concepts are psychological. To illustrate his point he gave the simile of two sides of a sheet of paper and suggested that “thought is the front and the sound the back; one cannot cut the front without cutting the back at the same time” (De Saussure 1974:113).

Put in another way, for De Saussure “a linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept (signified) and a sound pattern (signifier), which refers to the hearer’s psychological impression of a sound” (De Saussure 1983:66). However, scholars who adopted De Saussure’s model distinguished the two and defined the signifier as that which exists in the material world and the signified as that which is inferred or a mental concept (Bignell 2002:11-12).

Commenting on the rules that govern signs, De Saussure argued that signs do not mean anything in themselves, they signify by virtue of their difference from other signs. In other words, “the *value* of a sign is determined by the relationships between the sign and other signs within the system as a whole” (De Saussure 1983:112-113) and this implies that without relational differences there can be no meaning.

De Saussure further went on to assert that a linguistic sign is arbitrary (Bignell 2002:8); hence its meaning is socially determined. Furthermore, according to De Saussure’s semiotic theory a speaker cannot alter the meaning of a sign once it has become established in a linguistic community. Bignell (2002:8) concurs and notes that linguistic signs exist in a social context and their meaning is based on what is accepted in that social context.

De Saussure’s theory, which also focuses on language (*langue*), considers a sign to be a fixed unit and speech (*parole*) the purely individual part of language which includes phonation (Barthes 1964). He defines *langue* as a “social institution and system of values” (Barthes 1964) that cannot be altered by an individual. This approach is problematic because it assumes that language is static. De Saussure

distinguished between synchronic and diachronic analysis of signs. The former examines a sign system as though it were devoid of its history while the latter studies the historical evolution of a sign system (Nöth 1995:63).

De Saussure's contribution to semiotics has been viewed differently by scholars. He is considered by some as the founding father of semiotics, however, Mounin, Jakobson and Sebeok view him as a precursor of semiotics. Mounin, quoted in Nöth (1995:63), notes that "Saussure's concern for semiology was motivated primarily by his interest in the classification of the sciences".

However, although De Saussure's semiotic theory has weaknesses, it is plausible and still relevant today. For example, although De Saussure's theory was devised for analysis of language it can be used to analyse images because images are also signs in a system of communication. De Saussure also made an important contribution to Cultural Studies by linking language to culture. Many scholars have used his theory as a foundation and built their theories upon it.

3.2.2 Peirce's semiotic theory

American philosopher Peirce (1977) developed a semiotic theory that was different from De Saussure's and used the term "semiotics" to refer to his work. He defined semiotics as "the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs" (Ott & Mack 2010:103).

The main difference with De Saussure's semiology is that Peirce's semiotics dismisses the principle of arbitrariness and his category of signs is not only limited to language, it includes all aspects of human communication (Ott & Mack 2010:104). Peirce introduced the triadic sign model, which comprises the "representamen", "interpretant" and an object. For Peirce (1977) a sign constitutes what is represented, how it is represented and how it is interpreted. His "representamen" corresponds to Saussure's signifier while the "interpretant" resembles the signified.

Peirce distinguished three types of visual signs, the iconic, indexical and symbolic. The images of celebrities on the front page covers of the magazine are photographic

images and resemble the person on the photograph as a result they can be classified as iconic signs. However, these images of celebrities also communicate by logical connection. In other words, they are indexical, for example, by virtue of being linked to Hollywood or Bollywood celebrities stand for the glamorous lifestyle that is associated with these centres of entertainment. Their clothes may signify their social status. If the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary the sign takes on an indexical meaning.

Symbolic signs, which make up the third group, are “linked to their corresponding objects purely by social convention or agreement” (Ott & Mack 2010:104). Symbolic signs are therefore learnt rather than intuited. Since symbols are conventional it becomes difficult for readers to assign meanings to images that they are not familiar with such as images of celebrities from a different culture or time period. For example, readers from a Western culture may not understand the symbolic significance of certain signs that are used to represent Bollywood celebrities.

While De Saussure believed that the relationship between the signifier and its signified is arbitrary, Peirce argued that iconic and indexical signs have a natural relationship with what they stand for, for instance the photograph of a celebrity and the celebrity being represented. However, Peirce did not consider the three categories of signs to be mutually exclusive, he acknowledged that some signs could function at different levels (Ott & Mack 2010:104).

Peirce’s semiotic theory has been criticised because his definition of a sign is ambiguous and too broad (Noth 1995:79). Furthermore, Noth (1995:89) argues that on one level Peirce’s triadic model enumerates the representamen, interpretant and object in the same order while “within his categorical system, the object is a phenomenon of secondness, and the interpretant is one of thirdness”. For Peirce the universe is a system of signs. He defined a sign as something that stands for something to someone in some respect or capacity (Peirce 1977:27). Following from the above definition, in the world everything can be seen as standing for something else, hence functioning as a sign.

Moreover, Peirce's theory was criticised because there is no clear cut distinction between the three sign components the representamen, object and interpretant since all three can switch their positions. For example, a semiotic object can become a representamen. However, Peirce's semiotic theory is still important and relevant because it enables researchers to analyse the world we live in. In this study, Peirce's semiotic theory can be used as a tool to analyse celebrities as signs and explore the ideals and ideologies that they promote.

3.2.3 Barthes' semiotic theory

Barthes developed on De Saussure's theory and argued that semiology should be considered a branch of linguistics (Nöth 1995:58). In addition to De Saussure's signifier and signified, Barthes (1973) postulated the notion of denotation, connotation, myth and ideology. For Barthes denotation describes the first-order signification and is concerned about the literal or explicit meaning (Ott & Mack 2010:105). In other words, denotation refers to what one sees in the picture or image.

Barthes (1973) noted that signs evoke more than the literal meaning and developed the second level of signification that he termed connotation. Connotation, which is derived from the Latin word "*connotare*" which means "to mark along with", refers to what the image evokes (Barthes 1973:132). In a way connotation is concerned with the historical issues that are associated with the sign. Barthes (1973) notes that the meaning assigned at the second level of signification, varies from one culture to another. For example, the image of a celebrity can evoke beauty and glamour in Western culture while the same photograph can connote being pretentious in Eastern cultures where most religions emphasise the importance of being humble. Barthes' connotation shows that texts are open to different interpretations (Ott & Mack 2010:105). Barthes' denotation corresponds to Saussure's signifier and connotation to the signified; the only difference is that a signifier can have several signifieds. Also connotation resembles Peirce's symbolic sign, which emphasises the fact that meaning is learnt.

Barthes (1973:118) argues that myth is a third level of signification. The tri-dimensional relationship between the signifier, signified and the sign give rise to a myth (Barthes 1977:166). In other words, Barthes suggested that a sign in the first order system can become a signifier in the second order system. In Barthes' semiotic theory the signifier and the signified can switch sides at different levels. For Barthes myth does not deny things but purifies and justifies them. However, though myths may seem natural, Barthes (1973:156) notes that they serve to maintain power structures. Myth is usually created by a certain group, particularly the political and economically powerful, and serves the interests of those who own the means of production.

Closely related to myth is ideology, a concept that is born when denotation and connotation merge. Barthes' (1973:127-137) semiotic analysis of the image of a "Negro" in French military uniform saluting the flag shows how denotation and connotation give rise to ideology. For example, the denotative meaning or literal image that one sees is of a black soldier saluting the flag. At the second level the signifiers of black soldier, the French flag and the salute connote allegiance to France. The myth created is that the black soldier serves willingly and it promotes the ideology of domination and naturalises it.

Barthes (1967) focused on linguistic signs and their relationship to visual signs. The visual signs belong to codes and are arranged in syntagms and paradigms. Barthes (1967) employed the syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements in his analysis of how clothes are worn. For Barthes visual signs are often accompanied by a linguistic message, which either serves an anchorage or relay function. A linguistic message performs an anchorage role when it directs "the reader through the visual signifieds" (Ott & Mack 2010:106) and a relay function if it reinforces images.

Barthes' semiotic theory emphasises the issue of shared codes and meanings by members of the same culture. However, meaning is not always shared as Umberto Eco's (1976:16) concept of "aberrant decoding" demonstrates. Eco (1976) argued that aberrant decoding happens when encoders and decoders have different backgrounds. For example, due to different educational backgrounds readers may

interpret the images of celebrities on the covers differently from the way the editorial team thought they would be interpreted even if they are from the same culture.

Eco (1976) also noted that within a culture there are sub-cultural codes, which may influence the way community members decode texts. For instance, teenagers who come from rich families may have different views from their counterparts who come from less privileged backgrounds. Religion is another factor that can have a bearing on the teenagers' views. Muslim and Hindu teenagers are likely to assign different meanings to images of celebrities on the covers because of the influence of their beliefs. Hall's (1980:128-138) concepts of encoding and decoding show how people can derive different meanings from the same image. Hall (1980:128-138) argues that audiences decode texts in various ways and assign their own meanings. The audience can interpret the text from the dominant-hegemonic position and arrive at the preferred or dominant meaning, which is in line with the dominant ideology. If the audience employ negotiated reading they can adopt and oppose the dominant cultural codes. For example, teenage girls can admire beautiful celebrities with a 'perfect pout' but oppose plastic surgery and Botox. Lastly, Hall (1980:137) argues that oppositional reading occurs when audiences reject the dominant codes.

Despite these weaknesses Barthes' theory offers useful tools and terminology for analysing visual texts. It helps get a better understanding of the communication process as it points out that although visual images such as photographs are mechanically produced they are still not objective. Barthes further highlights the relationship between visual and linguistic signs and how they position the reader to assign meaning to the text.

Barthes' semiotic theory is useful because it introduces the third level of meaning, the mythic meaning which serves to promote dominant ideologies. There have been some developments in the field of semiotics with the introduction of social semiotics.

3.2.4 Social semiotic theory

The term social semiotics was coined by social linguist Halliday in 1978 to distinguish the new theory from the traditional approaches to semiotics that were

developed by De Saussure and Peirce. Basically, social semiotics is an approach that incorporates several modern approaches to the study of social meaning and social action. It draws on linguistics, sociology and cultural anthropology and semiotics (Lemke 1990). While general semiotics founded by De Saussure and Peirce focuses on the relationship between signs, social semiotics goes further to examine semiotic practices and asks “how people use signs to construct the life of a community” (Lemke 1990:183).

Also, general semiotics seems to suggest that meaning is inherent or in-built in signs; however, social semiotics assumes that meanings are made. Furthermore, social semiotics acknowledges that different people can assign different meanings to the same sign. For example, in this study, teenagers from different cultures can make different meanings from the image of a celebrity wearing a red dress. A teenager from the West may associate the red colour with passion while someone from India may think it is linked to a wedding.

Notable contributors to social semiotics (Kress 2010, Van Leeuwen 2004, Lemke 1990 & Halliday 1978) argue that each community has its own unique semiotic resources, such as actions like speech and gestures that it uses to communicate. Semiotic resources are context and culture specific and Theo Van Leeuwen (2004:285) argues that they have a “meaning potential, based on their past uses, and a set of affordances based on their possible uses”. In other words, Lemke (1990:186) notes that social semiotics is mainly concerned with how members of the community make meaning in social contexts.

Halliday focused on language, while Gunther Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) went further and applied principles that were originally developed for language to analyse visual design. They argued that social semiotic theory focuses on what the image represents, and the ideals and attitudes that it promotes. An image like a photograph of a celebrity can be used to persuade, educate or entertain. Social semiotics delves deeper to uncover the relationship between the modes (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006) such as an image and linguistic message, facial expressions, the orientation of the body (sideways, bent or straight), and the colours used.

For Kress (2010) modes are the “result of a social and historical shaping of materials chosen by a society for representation” and they differ from one culture to another. This is in line with Barthes’ (1973:132) connotation, which is culturally determined. This study will draw on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) to develop categories for a qualitative, visual semiotic analysis and employ Barthes’s connotation, denotation, myth and ideology to examine the covers.

Kress (2010) introduced the concepts of framing and multimodality in social semiotics. Multimodality introduces the use of many modes in one sign for example writing, image and colour. However, multimodality only alerts the reader to the different modes but cannot explain the difference in styles or colours.

Each culture provides semiotic resources for framing signs. Kress (2010) argues that “there is no meaning without framing”. Kress (2010) argues that in social semiotics signs are constantly being made, hence meaning is not fixed, it is in flux. Meaning is created using socially and culturally shared semiotic resources. Having looked at semiotics as both theory and method for analysing the covers, the discussion turns to representation theory.

3.3 Representation theory

To identify the codes that feature prominently and those that are excluded on the covers of e+ magazine, this study draws on representation theory. Representation theory, which falls under Cultural Studies, shows that shared cultural codes enable people from the same community to produce and exchange meaning among themselves. In other words, meaning is not inherent in things but it is constructed and produced through language (Hall 1997:24). It is important to note that since cultural codes change over time, meanings are also likely to change as society evolves (Hall 1997:16). For Hall (1997:9) representation “can only be analysed in relation to the actual concrete forms which meaning assumes, in the concrete practises of signifying, ‘reading’ and interpretation”. This entails analysing the actual images and words “in which symbolic meaning is circulated” (Hall 1997:9). There are three approaches to representation and they are explored in detail in the following sub-sections.

3.3.1 Approaches to representation

Representation can be divided into three main approaches namely reflective, intentional and the constructionist approaches (Hall 1997:24). According to the reflective approach to representation, meaning “lies in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world” (Hall 1997:24). This approach is problematic because it does not cover fictional characters and the imaginary world.

The intentional approach, on the other hand, states that the author imposes meaning. This theory is weak because it ignores the social aspect of communication. Hall (1997:24) notes that communication is largely dependent on shared linguistic conventions and cultural codes. Furthermore, Barthes (1977) argues that there are many codes in society hence messages are likely to be misread. Barthes (1977:148) championed the “birth of the reader [which] must be at the cost of the death of the author”.

The third approach to representation focuses on the social aspect of representation and argues that things do not mean; rather meaning is constructed by members of the society (Hall 1997:25). For constructionists representation “is a practice, a kind of ‘work’, which uses material objects” (Hall 1997:25). In other words, the members of a society use their cultural and linguistic systems to construct meaning (Hall 1997:25). The constructionist approach acknowledges that there is a mediated relationship between the material world, conceptual images and language. The aforementioned three combine to produce meaning in line with the linguistic codes of that particular culture. The next section examines how the theories apply to the study.

3.4 Application of theories to the study

Humans are a sign-making and sign-interpreting species. The discipline of semiotics is mainly concerned with establishing how signs work, therefore it is a suitable theory and method for examining the representation of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine since meanings in the media are communicated by signs (Bignell 2002:2).

Semiotics provides the researcher with methods and terminology for analysing texts and tools for interpreting messages. Drawing on De Saussure, who argues that a sign comprises of two components (the signifier and the signified), this study examines the concept of celebrity as a sign. It also gives an insight into how readers can interpret, then either accept or reject the meanings depending on social conventions.

This study employs social semiotic tools to examine how signs are used to communicate certain beliefs and attitudes. Social semiotics introduces multimodality and framing, which are useful tools for analysing visual and linguistic texts (Kress 2010).

It is important to employ semiotics, particularly Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, myth and ideology to study how signs are mediated through e+ magazine covers because the images of celebrities have the power to shape the teenagers' perceptions, attitudes and understanding of the world around them. Barthes (1973:143) notes that signs mediated through the media can be used to relay social, economic and political messages to the public, for example, universalising bourgeoisie² ideology. For Barthes a myth is an ideological tool, it is a figure of speech devoid of historical content whose purpose is to naturalise ideology. Semiotic analysis helps reveal myths and "ideological abuse" (Barthes 1972:11) hidden in media and culture. As Barthes (1973:143) argues "myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them... it purifies them and makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification". Semiotics is a useful method for deconstructing myths that are imbedded within the covers of e+ magazine.

The representation theory provides a framework for examining the systems of signification and the cultural codes that are employed in order to gain an insight into the way male and female celebrities are represented on the covers of e+ magazine. Employing the three approaches to representation to analyse the images of celebrities helps identify the characteristics that are promoted and those that are

² Bourgeoise is a French term that means the middle class. In Marxist theory bourgeoisie refers to a class that is opposed to the proletariat.

excluded. For example, using the approaches will help uncover ideals of masculinity and femininity that are featured prominently and those that are ignored.

The images of celebrities that are featured on the covers serve a particular purpose, it could be to maintain the existing status quo or to challenge the ideals and introduce new alternatives. Hall (1995:68) notes that “to construct this rather than that account requires the specific choice of certain means and their articulation together through the practice of meaning production”. For example, in this study it is important to examine whether the images of celebrities on the covers advance gender stereotypes or challenge them. This study draws on representation theory to analyse the images of male and female celebrities on the covers because e+ magazine does not just reflect but also constructs the images of celebrities.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This section has highlighted the theoretical perspectives that inform the study, namely semiotics and representation theory. It sought to explain how the theories are still relevant to the study of representation of male and female celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine.

Having looked at theories propounded by seminal authors such as De Saussure and Pierce, the following chapter outlines the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGNING THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodologies that are used to collect and interpret data “in an attempt to resolve the problem that initiated the research” (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:6). The methodology section gives information about the sample, measuring instruments, data collection and analysis and interpretation methods. In other words, it sets out the strategy that is adopted to collect data and extract meaning from it in a bid to answer the research question, which mainly addresses the issue of construction of gender on the covers.

The researcher employs semiotic analysis to examine the ideologies and cultural values that are promoted by the images of celebrities featured on the covers. Furthermore, using field research, this exploratory study seeks to examine whether the representations of male and female celebrities shaped the consumer tastes and perceptions of teenagers living in the UAE. The research design, which includes qualitative, quantitative and mixed research strategies, is highlighted below.

4.2 Research design

Research techniques fall into three paradigms namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed research. This study is both exploratory and descriptive. An exploratory study is concerned with “exploration of a relatively unknown research area” (Mouton & Marais 1988:43). A descriptive study allows for accurately measuring, recording and describing variables (Mitchell & Jolley 2010:225). Drawing on Mouton and Marais (1988:43), this study seek to gain insights into the way male and female celebrities are represented on the covers of e+ magazine. Furthermore, since the study is also descriptive, in-depth description of the codes used to represent celebrities and the ideologies they promote are given. Qualitative and quantitative approaches emerge from different paradigms and have different worldviews about the nature of knowledge. Each research design is discussed in detail below.

4.2.1 Qualitative research design

Qualitative research emerges from the interpretative paradigm and includes an interpretation of what the researcher sees (Creswell 2013:176). Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2005:3) add that qualitative research is conducted in “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. While quantitative research is deductive, Michael R. Harwell (2011:149) notes that qualitative research is inductive and gives the researcher flexibility to construct theories or hypotheses from information gathered from respondents. Qualitative design is exploratory and is used to learn more about the phenomenon that is being investigated. This approach uses different strategies of inquiry including field observation, questionnaires, photographs and focus-groups to discover and understand “the experiences, perspectives and thoughts of participants” (Harwell 2011:149). In this study, qualitative research involves interaction between the participants and the researcher during the focus-group interviews as well as analysing covers using qualitative visual semiotic analysis (Harwell 2011:148).

The qualitative paradigm is founded on the interpretivist philosophy and assumes that reality and meanings are socially constructed and fluid (Creswell 2013:35). Qualitative approaches such as focus-group interviews are better suited to social inquiry because they view social phenomena holistically, and acknowledge that reality is subjective and multiple as seen by respondents. For example, in this study teenagers from different cultural groups may perceive celebrity culture in different ways.

In qualitative inquiry the researcher serves as a data collecting instrument. For instance, in this study the researcher employs a visual semiotic analysis and identifies and interprets the codes that are used to represent male and female celebrities. Moreover, the researcher interacts with the focus-group respondents and plays an active role in analysing and categorising data according to themes, interprets and draws conclusion about the meanings. John W. Creswell (2013:182) notes that the researcher “filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific socio-political and historical moment”. In view of the above, qualitative

research design is subjectivist, value laden and biased. In addition, findings cannot be generalised to a bigger population. To get an objective view, it is important to supplement qualitative research with quantitative research, which is discussed below.

4.2.2 Quantitative research design

Quantitative inquiry draws on the positivistic paradigm which assumes that there is an objective reality. A quantitative research design can either be descriptive or experimental. This study adopts the descriptive approach, which is mainly concerned with describing an identified variable. In quantitative approach, the researcher is detached and does not interact with the participants.

Quantitative inquiry provides numerical answers to research questions (Creswell 2013:37). For example, in this study, quantitative methods help count the number of male and female celebrities featured on the covers and explain what is observed using statistics. Techniques used in quantitative research include questionnaires and observation. The major strength of quantitative design is that it is based on scientific methods, which maximise objectivity; hence it is value free and unbiased. Moreover, quantitative research is deductive in nature because it mainly focuses on testing the hypothesis (Creswell 2013:33).

The main weakness of quantitative design is that it does not provide in-depth answers (Creswell 2013:34). In addition, quantitative inquiry assumes that reality is singular and that “rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will basically agree on its existence and its characteristics” (Creswell 2013:36). Another weakness of quantitative research is that it is rigid and does not allow for flexibility because it works from a hypothesis that is set at the beginning of the research and cannot be altered as the study evolves to include data obtained from participants (Creswell 2013:33).

Since both quantitative and qualitative designs have their weaknesses it is important to combine the two approaches to offset the biases of each method. Creswell (2013:36) argues that mixed research is helpful in understanding “both the subjective

(individual), intersubjective (language-based, discursive, cultural), and objective (material and causal) realities in our world". Furthermore, Burke Johnson and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie (2004) note that employing the mixed research approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods enriches the research.

4.2.3 Methodology

Lawrence W. Neuman (2000:7) notes that researchers gather data by employing specialised techniques, and use the data to support or reject theories. Triangulation, a technique that combines two or more research and data-collection methods and enables the researcher to gather data from multiple sources is employed in this study (Du Plooy 2009:39). Data triangulation makes it easier to collect data using different types of sampling such as a larger sample for quantitative analysis and then drawing a smaller one for an in-depth qualitative analysis (De Vos 2002:359). Dowson R. Hancock and Robert Algozzine (2006:66) argue that using different methods to collect data increases reliability and validity of findings.

A key strength of using multiple methods is that it reduces the biases and weaknesses that are associated with using a single method. Du Plooy (2009:39) notes that it is important for communication researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches as the strengths of one can compensate for weaknesses of the other. In other words, the two methods complement each other and help to uncover the phenomena under purview. For instance, quantitative content analysis can quantify the number of male and female celebrities and qualitative visual semiotic analysis examine the codes that are used to represent femininity and masculinity.

However, triangulation also has some weaknesses; first it is expensive to employ multiple methods in one study. In addition, it can be time consuming and challenging for a single researcher to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004:14-26). The research methods that are used are quantitative content analysis, visual semiotic analysis and field research. The data is collected from various sources including e+ magazine covers and teenagers living in the UAE, who are aged between 16 and 19.

A quantitative content analysis examines the demographics of the celebrities featured on the covers including age and gender. Quantitative content analysis involves counting phenomena (Stokes 2003:66), for example the number of male and female celebrities on the covers, to determine which gender features prominently in terms of frequency. Twenty-four covers are analysed using content analysis. The findings from a quantitative content analysis presents factual evidence that either confirms or refutes the assumption that white, heterosexual males will feature prominently on the covers. However, quantitative content analysis on its own cannot uncover aspects that cannot be quantified but can only be described with words. For example, it cannot explain why male celebrities feature prominently or why there are more celebrities below the age of 35 and a few aged 45 and above. In addition, quantitative content analysis can quantify the number of passive female celebrities and active male celebrities but cannot explain why they are featured in those poses.

In view of the above, a qualitative visual semiotic analysis of magazine covers is conducted to investigate how celebrities are represented paying particular attention to codes that are used to construct the physical appearance, poses and facial expressions of each gender. Liesbet Van Zoonen (2006:74) notes that semiotic analysis is useful for examining texts as it helps the researcher to “unravel structures of meaning beyond mere presence or absence”. In this study, semiotic analysis is used to analyse the six front page covers of *e+* magazine drawn from a population of 24 that are analysed using content analysis (the point is discussed in detail under sample).

Furthermore, field research is conducted to gain an insight into how UAE-based teenagers experienced the representations of celebrities. Robert G. Burgess (2005:3) argues that field research involves “the practices and procedures of doing research and the methods of data collection and data analysis”. Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph Dominick (2011) concur and add that field research methods include field observation, focus-group interviews, in-depth interviews, case studies and social surveys.

For this study, data is collected through self-administered questionnaires and conducting focus-group interviews. Focus-group interviews are a suitable data collection method for this research because they allow for observing non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and body language. Moreover, during focus-group interviews follow up questions can be posed to probe further and understand how the respondents experienced the images of celebrities.

Pre-group questionnaires are sent to 30 teenagers and then a sample of 18 drawn for focus group interviews (discussed in detail under sample). The data obtained from focus-group interviews helps determine whether images of celebrities shape the teenagers' attitudes, for example, what they consider to be the ideal body type and fashionable clothing. Field research is suitable for this study because the method provides an efficient means of gathering information from teenagers on how the images of celebrities influence the way they live their lives.

4.3 Data collection

Data collection begins with determining the kind of data that is required followed by the selection of an availability sample from the population. An instrument to collect the data from the selected sample is also needed. This study employs quantitative content analysis, a qualitative visual semiotic analysis of the covers, pre-group questionnaires and focus-group interviews. The methods for collecting data were selected after considering the variables to be measured and the availability of time (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:6).

4.3.1 *Collecting primary and secondary data*

For this study, data is collected from primary and secondary sources. The literature review consists of data collected from secondary sources. In addition to secondary data, primary data is collected first-hand by the researcher through methods such as quantitative content analysis, visual semiotic analysis, self-administered pre-group questionnaires and focus-group interviews.

For the literature review, secondary data is gathered mainly from documents such as books and journals. The study draws on both the work of seminal authors and recent research. For example, the semiotic theories employed in this study were developed by seminal authors such as De Saussure and Pierce, and later refined by scholars like Barthes and social semiotic researchers including Kress and Van Leeuwen. Reading secondary sources helps establish the context of the study. Secondary data from books and journals presents more information about the topic, particularly aspects that have already been covered by other researchers on the topic of representation of male and female celebrities and its influence on teenagers. The information gained is useful in determining how the current study would add to existing knowledge. The study draws on theoretical perspectives and methodologies which were employed by other researchers because they are relevant for the topic under investigation. In addition, the research questions that were posed by other researchers are helpful in refining the focus of the current study. Moreover, reading books and journal articles is useful in identifying the gaps in existing literature that this study attempts to address.

While secondary sources have many benefits they also have shortcomings that are worth mentioning. Jane Summers and Melissa Johnson-Morgan (2009:109) note that secondary data is data which already exists, that has been “gathered for some purpose other than the research at hand”. Since the data is collected for another purpose it may not answer all the questions, therefore, it is important to collect primary data as well.

Primary data is collected specifically for the purpose of this particular study; hence it answers the research questions posed. Primary data generated through quantitative content analysis and visual semiotic analysis provides new material and insights into gender representations by a locally published magazine. The study presents new information that has not been recorded by other researchers. Also, using primary sources ensures that up-to-date data is collected (Kumar 2008:59).

The methods for collecting primary data were chosen after taking into consideration the purpose of the study, and the respondents’ level of education. For example, in

this study, self-administered questionnaires are used to collect data because the respondents are literate.

However, collecting primary data through questionnaires and focus-group interviews may be time consuming as the process requires seeking permission from respondents and their guardians if they are minors (under the age of 18). Coupled with the above, in the presence of the researcher and peers during focus-group interviews, some respondents may withhold vital information or say what they think is socially acceptable (Kumar 2008:59). It is important for the researcher to explain to respondents at the beginning of the focus-group interviews that there are no right and wrong answers. In addition, it is fundamental to make it clear that the purpose of the discussion is to gather the respondents' views and not for the researcher or peers to judge them. The key components that are instrumental to gathering primary data include the population, sample and units of analysis. These are detailed in the next sub-sections.

4.4 Population

For Johann Mouton (1996:134), population refers to a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics which the researcher is interested in studying. Since this study's population comprises many subjects it would be difficult to examine all of them due to time constraints and limited resources. To make it possible to carry out the research, the population is narrowed down to target and accessible populations from which study samples are drawn.

The population for the quantitative content analysis and visual semiotic analysis is all entertainment magazines published in the UAE. For the pre-group questionnaires and focus-group interviews all teenagers living in the UAE constitute the population.

4.4.1 Target population

The target population refers to units or objects that the researcher is interested in examining. It is important to delineate the characteristics of the target population; hence, for the visual quantitative content analysis and visual semiotic analysis the

target population is all issues of *e+* magazine. The target population for the pre-group questionnaires and focus-group interviews is teenagers living in the UAE who used to read *e+* magazine.

4.4.2 Accessible population

The accessible population is a subset of the target population. However, since not every member of the accessible population can be studied, a sample is drawn from it and investigated. The issues of *e+* magazine published between October 2010 and September 2011 constitute the accessible population for the quantitative content analysis and visual semiotic analysis. This time frame was chosen because it was the final 12 months of the publication of the magazine; it therefore reflects the most recent representations of male and female celebrities on the covers of *e+* magazine.

Since this study uses triangulation, several units of analysis are analysed for different purposes. The units of analysis for the quantitative content analysis comprise 24 magazine covers, and groups or individual celebrities featured on each cover. For example, while counting the total number of celebrities featured, each celebrity is treated as a unit of analysis. To determine the number of covers featuring all-male and all-female celebrities, the unit of analysis is a group of celebrities. The main images (except for one cover which features a monster (Figure 7.18) instead of a celebrity) are analysed. In the case of the cover featuring a monster, the insert image of a celebrity is analysed. For the qualitative visual semiotic analysis the units of analysis are the images of celebrities and the cover lines (linguistic message).

The accessible population for the pre-group questionnaires and focus-group interviews is teenagers aged between 16 and 19 years living in the UAE who used to read *e+* before it closed. Teenagers aged between 13 and 15 were not chosen because they were too young to have read *e+* before it closed in 2011. The 16 to 19 age group is included because it fits the criteria, which stipulates that teenagers should have read *e+* for at least two years before it closed.

Earl Babbie (2010:98-99) notes that units of analysis are the main objects or subjects that are to be observed, described or explained during the research

process. The units of analysis for the pre-group questionnaires are the 30 teenagers who are selected using snowball sampling. From the 30 teenagers who fill in the questionnaires, 18 are selected for the focus-group interviews. For the focus-group interviews the units of analysis are the three focus-groups. Teenagers from different cultural backgrounds are chosen to reflect UAE's multicultural society.

4.5 Sampling

A sample comprises of cases or units that are intentionally selected from a population and examined for the purposes of the study. In other words, a sample is a subset of the population. This study uses non-probability sampling methods including judgement sampling and snowball sampling.

4.5.1 Judgment sampling

Judgment sampling, which is also known as expert sampling or rational sampling, is a procedure which involves drawing a series of subgroups from the population using random techniques (Deming 2010:11). Judgment sampling techniques rely on the judgment of the researcher in selecting cases for a particular purpose. For the quantitative content analysis, the magazine covers are divided into five subgroups: first week, second week, third week, fourth week and fifth week (some months had five weeks). The magazines published on the first and third week of each of the 12 months (October 2010 to September 2011) are selected bringing the sample to 24 covers. Selecting the first and third week ensures that the sample is spread over time and not confined to a single point in time (Deming 2010:11).

For the visual semiotic analysis, a judgment sample is drawn from a population of the above mentioned 24 covers. A total of six magazine covers are chosen bearing in mind the gender, race and age of the celebrities featured on the front cover. The covers sampled include a female celebrity, a male celebrity, a male and female celebrity together, two or more male celebrities together, two or more female celebrities together, and teenagers. Selecting a diverse sample gives an insight into the codes that are used to construct celebrities of different genders, races and age groups.

The advantages of using judgment sampling is that it enables the researcher to select cases with a specific purpose in mind and come up with a sample that only consists of the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study (Strydom & Venter 2002:199). Coupled with the aforementioned, judgment sampling is less costly compared to other sampling methods. However, judgment sampling is liable to bias and the “sampling errors cannot be calculated from the sample” (Deming 2010:10). To minimise sampling error, the covers chosen feature celebrities of different genders, ethnic groups and age groups.

4.5.2 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique is used to select a sample for the pre-group questionnaires. A teenager who fits the criteria is identified and asked to identify other potential respondents. The process is repeated until 30 respondents are identified. Questionnaires are emailed to 30 teenagers, 15 boys and 15 girls. The criteria are as follows: participants should reside in the UAE, be aged between 16 and 19 years, and should have been reading e+ for at least two years before it closed.

From the 30 pre-group questionnaire respondents, 18, nine boys and nine girls who fit the criteria are sampled for the focus-group interviews. Three focus-groups, each comprising of the recommended minimum of six respondents, are conducted (Wimmer & Dominick 2011). Other reasons for having six respondents per group are to keep groups manageable and to ensure that each teenager gets enough time to air their views. The first group (X) consists of six girls; the second group (Y) six boys; and the third group (Z) consists of three girls and three boys. It is important to ensure that the sample is balanced in terms age and gender.

Focus-groups X and Y are homogeneous in terms of gender while Z has both male and female teenagers. Responses from the three groups will be compared to establish whether gender dynamics have a bearing on how teenagers experience the representations of celebrities.

The advantage of using snowball sampling is that it is effective for locating members that are difficult to reach. For example, there is no existing list of teenagers who read e+. However, snowball sampling is not representative and it may also result in the recruitment of teenagers from the same school or university. It is important to guard against this by ensuring that the sampling procedure is free from bias (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:90).

4.5.3 Rationale for choosing sampling procedures

The sampling procedures are clearly outlined to ensure the reliability of the study. If the study is replicated using the same sampling techniques the same results should be obtained. Judgment and snowball sampling were chosen after examining the cost and time considerations since non-probability sampling is quicker and cheaper to use compared to probability sampling.

Unlike probability sampling, non-probability sampling does not require a sampling frame, which was not available for this particular research. The sizes of the samples are suitable for the research methods used. Also non-probability sampling is appropriate for this study whose purpose is exploratory and does not intend to generalise the results to the population (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:90).

4.6 Measuring instruments

The measuring instruments used for the purposes of this project are quantitative content analysis, a qualitative visual semiotic analysis of the covers, pre-group questionnaires and focus-group interviews. The covers are analysed taking note of codes of content and form, the gender and age of celebrities featured. Signs such as words, images and colour are analysed to determine what they signify.

Furthermore pre-group questionnaires are designed. The first part consists of closed-ended questions with a certain number of categories included as options to get the respondents' demographic data. The last half constitutes open-ended questions that are meant to elicit the respondent's views and opinions. The questionnaires were emailed to respondents with a cover letter (Figure 4.1)

explaining the purpose of the research. To adhere to research ethics, the cover letter includes a clause informing respondents that participation is voluntary and that the material will be kept confidential. In addition, respondents are asked to fill out a consent form (Figure 4.2).

The researcher also serves as a measuring instrument through observation. Field notes are discreetly taken during focus-group interviews, paying particular attention to non-verbal cues like the respondents' body language, posture, gestures and facial expressions.

4.6.1 *Validity of measuring instruments*

Establishing the validity of measuring instruments focuses on reducing error in the measurement process. Validity determines whether the instrument “measures what we intend or claim to have measured” (Du Plooy 2003:124). This study addresses the issue of validity by ensuring that instruments comprise relevant elements that measure variables of interest to the research. Avoiding ambiguous statements and only including clear units ensures content validity.

4.6.2 *Reliability of measuring instruments*

Reliability goes hand in hand with validity. For a measuring instrument to be valid it also needs to be reliable. Du Plooy (2003:134) observes that a measuring instrument that is reliable should yield the same results when used on a similar group of respondents in the same setting.

To ensure reliability it is important to avoid double-barrelled questions, questionable assumptions and complex questions (Du Plooy 2003:134). In addition, to ensure reliability of measuring instruments such as questionnaires and focus-group interviews, open-ended questions are carefully phrased to avoid ambiguity. Open-ended questions give respondents room to express their opinions in their own words.

4.7 Data analysis

Data obtained from primary sources is raw; it does not have any meaning until it is analysed and interpreted. De Vos (2002:339) defines data analysis as “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data”. Quantitative content analysis and visual semiotic analysis are used to analyse images of celebrities on e+ magazine covers. Quantitative content analysis is used to identify the categories and classify the images of celebrities on the covers and then semiotics, which employs codes of content and codes of form used to analyse the data. It is worth noting that data analysis is an ongoing process as the researcher is actively engaged with the data from its collection up to interpretation. The data is continuously analysed and interpreted throughout the research process.

4.7.1 Quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis provides tools for analysing both verbal and visual content. Quantitative content analysis enables the researcher to count phenomena (Stokes 2003:56). It is an objective method for analysing visual representations as it specifies the coding scheme and uses reliable, explicitly defined categories. Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (2004:13) note that it is important to define categories and that they should be exhaustive to ensure that all units of analysis are categorised, and should be mutually exclusive so that each unit of analysis can be placed under only one category.

The issue of reliability is important, particularly in cases where more than one person is involved in the data coding process. The researchers' different interpretations may result in inconsistencies in the coding system. To ensure that the coding system is reliable operational definitions are given and the categories explained to all coders. However, in this study the issue of intercoder reliability does not arise since only one person is responsible for coding the data. The researcher uses her discretion to gauge, for example, what constitutes serious and neutral expressions. Celebrities shown frowning or with an intense look are coded under “serious expression” while images of celebrities who are neither smiling nor frowning are coded under “neutral expression”.

4.7.2 Quantitative content analysis categories

The following categories and subcategories are developed to capture the demographics of the celebrities. Drawing on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), modes including types of poses, facial expressions and body types are analysed. The categories are as follows: Gender of celebrities featured on the covers (Female adult, Male adult, All-female adults, All-male adults, All-adults mixed gender, Teenagers); Origin of celebrities featured on the covers (UAE, GCC region, Hollywood, Bollywood and Other); Field of original activity (Television and movies, Music, Disney and Other); Age (Under 25, 26-35, 36-45 and Over 45); Poses/posture (Hand(s) in pocket, Standing upright, Bent, Arm(s) on waist, and Looking over shoulder); Facial expressions (Smiling, Serious and Neutral expression); Action depicted (Passive and Active); Types of images (Taken at events, Stills from movies, Collage created using visual tricks, and Other); and Body type (Slim, Muscular, Heavy set, and Normal).

4.7.3 Using quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis is suitable for this study because it does not require a lot of money and time (Adler & Clark 2008:376). Furthermore, when using quantitative content analysis all elements are coded because mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories are used (Grossberg & Wartella 2006:189). For example, in this study all the celebrities' place of origin is coded. Celebrities who are not local, regional, from Hollywood or Bollywood are listed under "Other".

Quantitative content analysis allows the researcher to collect primary data that is relevant and provides answers to the research questions (Stokes 2003:56). Grossberg and Wartella (2006:186) note that quantitative content analysis is "a more systematic and objective method of describing manifest or surface content of the text". In addition, quantitative content analysis is suitable for determining "how much of phenomenon there is in a chosen set of texts" (Stokes 2003:57). For example, in this study it can be used to quantify the number of celebrities who are featured smiling.

Another strength of quantitative content analysis is that it is unobtrusive as it is not likely to affect or influence the nature of the collected data because it analyses texts that already exist (Bryman 2001). For instance, in this study doing quantitative content analysis cannot affect the way celebrities are represented on the covers of the magazines because the texts already exist. Stokes (2003:65) notes that quantitative content analysis is a flexible method that can be used in conjunction with others like visual semiotic analysis.

Quantitative content analysis can help answer questions about what media represents but cannot explain why it depicts things the way it does. In other words, using quantitative content analysis on its own does not allow for the establishment of causal relationships (Stokes 2003:66). For example, it can only show that male celebrities are featured in active roles but cannot explain why they are represented that way. Therefore, there is need to supplement it with visual semiotic analysis, which seeks to examine how celebrities are represented and goes further to explore the reasons behind such portrayals. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2004:13) argue that “content analysis alone is seldom able to support statements about the significance, effects or interpreted meaning of a domain of representation”. In addition, the data obtained from a content analysis is not representative, therefore the results cannot be generalised to the whole population.

4.8.1 Semiotic analysis

Barthes (1964) is credited for introducing visual semiotics to analyse media texts. In *Mythologies* Barthes (1972) employed semiotics to analyse and decipher meanings of visual signs in things that were part of everyday life such as advertisements, wrestling matches, Romans in films and images on magazine covers, notably a black soldier saluting the French flag. He also used visual semiotic analysis to explore cultural meanings of public displays of sexuality, French cooking, automobiles and the clothing system (Barthes 1972:15-88). Barthes was particularly interested in uncovering signs that seemed straightforward at face value but took on a different meaning at the connotative, mythical and ideological level. These seemingly innocent signs, he argued, served to maintain and perpetuate the dominant

ideologies. This study employs Barthes' techniques and identifies the signs that are used to construct the images of male and female celebrities.

Furthermore, this research adopts social semiotics, an approach that is mainly concerned with how meanings are made within social contexts. In addition, social semiotics focuses on the system of rules governing the 'discourses' involved in media texts, stressing the role of semiotic context in shaping meaning (Van Leeuwen 2005:3).

Van Leeuwen (2005:3) notes that social semiotics is a form of inquiry that offers ways of searching for answers. In other words, it provides semiotic resources that can be used to examine how codes are used to promote and maintain certain ideas, values and identities. For Van Leeuwen (2005:3) semiotic resources are "actions and artefacts we use to communicate". The semiotics resources include gestures and colours and signify something. For example, the red colour may signify passion. Van Leeuwen (2005:3) uses the term semiotic resources while Barthes (1967) uses the word signs.

Van Leeuwen (2005:4) argues that meanings are context specific. Social semiotics shows that the same text may generate different meanings for different readers. For example, readers can assign different meanings to a sign depending on their interests and cultural values. An image of a smiling female celebrity can be interpreted to mean that she is friendly by some readers while others may view her as being seductive. The interpretations may be influenced by the context and other signs such as the dress and make-up that the celebrity is wearing. This shows that signs have a "signifying potential rather than specific meanings, and need to be studied in the social context" (Van Leeuwen (2005:5). Semiotic codes are used to arrive at meaning and the following section discusses them in detail.

4.8.2 Semiotic codes

According to Arthur Asa Berger (1997) codes are systems for interpreting texts in which the meanings are not obvious or evident. Some codes are universal while others are local and only specific to a certain society. Codes help readers assign

meanings to words and images. Berger (1997) lists codes he calls non-verbal *signemes* (fundamental signs that cannot be broken down any further) that are found in advertisements. Since these *signemes* are used to analyse visual texts they can also be applied to the analysis of images of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine.

Drawing on Barthes (1964), each cover is analysed to determine the denotative, connotative, and mythic and ideological meanings. Also, the relationship between the linguistic message and the visual image is established. It is important to identify whether the linguistic message fulfils the relay or anchorage function (Barthes 1977:21).

Furthermore, Van Leeuwen (2005:9) introduces the concept of framing, which, he argues, connects the text and picture. The different types of framing including pictorial and textual integration as well as 'rhyme', which refers to colour similarity between picture and text are analysed.

The visual semiotic analysis is used to analyse the codes that are used to construct male and female celebrities to determine whether they promote gender stereotypes and particular ideologies. Drawing on Richard Dyer (1998:88), the physical appearance of celebrities is analysed to identify codes that signify masculinity, for example strong and rugged. In addition, codes such as romance and sensual beauty that signify femininity are examined.

The study, furthermore, employs some categories developed by Erving Goffman (1978), including the ritualisation of subordination (women presented in inferior positions and poses, performing submissive or appeasement gestures) and licensed withdrawal (evident in gaze, retreating behind objects, covering face, snuggling into others). Although Goffman (1978) used the categories to analyse advertisements they are still relevant and can be applied to examine visual texts like images of female celebrities on front page covers. Moreover, it is worth examining if the categories that were developed 36 years ago are still relevant today.

Images of male and female celebrities are examined taking note of gender, age, race, relationships implied, appearance or body type, facial expressions, attire, pose, setting, shot size, and the verbal message (cover line) that accompanies the image.

It is also important to determine whether the image captures the celebrity at work or during candid moments. Is the image a staged photograph, a still from a movie or was it taken during events such as red carpet appearance or a concert? Visual semiotic analysis can give insight into whether the photograph of the celebrity is linked to the release of a movie, album or a scandal.

4.8.3 Using semiotic analysis

Conducting visual semiotic analysis does not require a lot of resources (Stokes 2003:72) because the magazine covers are already available free of charge at the *Gulf News* library and Dubai Municipality libraries. Visual semiotic analysis can be used in conjunction with other methods like quantitative content analysis. Visual semiotic analysis makes it possible to go beyond establishing the prevalence of phenomena to answer questions about the nature of social phenomena under study (Van Leeuwen 2005:3). It is suitable for analysing poses, dress, colours uses and the linguistic messages on the covers.

Additionally, visual semiotic analysis poses both descriptive and explanatory questions in order to examine and describe all aspects of a phenomenon. For example, this study poses the questions: “How are male and female celebrities represented on the covers e+ magazine?” and “Why are they represented that way?” In other words, semiotics enables researchers to go beyond the obvious elements contained in the texts and uncover the dominant ideologies and cultural values that are promoted.

However, there are disadvantages of using visual semiotic analysis. Daniel Chandler (2007:10) notes that semiotics is elitist because it uses complicated jargon that is not accessible to everyone. Also, it is difficult to analyse texts that a researcher is not familiar with because a certain level of contextual knowledge about the field of study is required. Stokes (2003:73) argues that if one does not have knowledge about the

subject they will “not know what the various codes mean”. For example, someone who is not familiar with the entertainment industry may find it difficult to analyse images of celebrities because they are not aware of the codes used. The next sections focus on focus-group interviews and examines how the codes that were used to represent celebrities were experienced by teenagers.

4.9.1 Focus-group interviews

Focus-group interviews fall under field research and involve interviewing two or more people simultaneously, with a moderator guiding the respondents in a relatively free discussion about the topic under consideration (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:100). In this study, three focus-group interviews were conducted with each group consisting of the recommended six respondents (Wimmer & Dominick 2011).

A pre-group questionnaire (Figure 4.3) was designed and emailed to 30 teenagers aged between 16 and 19 years to capture demographic information such as age, gender and race. The pre-group questionnaires was accompanied by a letter of introduction (Figure 4.1) explaining the purpose of the research so that respondents could give their informed consent. A consent form (Figure 4.2) was also included for individuals who were interested in participating in the research to fill out. In addition, the cover letter included a clause explaining to the respondents that participation is voluntary. The findings from the pre-group questionnaires were used to draw a sample for the focus-group interview and to draft the moderator’s guide (Figure 4.4). In addition, using information gathered from pre-group questionnaires contributes to reliability and validity. The moderator’s guide contains questions which were used to direct the interview to ensure that all the important points were addressed.

Face-to-face group discussions were scheduled for a Friday afternoon and held in the one of the communal rooms, which is used for entertaining, games and other social functions, at the researcher’s residential tower in Dubai. The facilities are available free of charge to residents and they are allowed to bring guests. A room was booked in advance and the security guards given a list of names of focus-group participants. The venue is located in a quiet area; hence it is suitable for conducting a focus-group interview.

The venue was ideal because of its central location and it is close to the Metro and bus station making commuting easier for respondents from other parts of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and the northern emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah). The rooms are big and can accommodate six respondents and the researcher. In addition, there is a big television screen that can be used to show slides of magazine covers.

Friday was chosen because it is the first day of the weekend and it is convenient for the respondents because they will not be going to school on the next day. Each discussion lasted an hour and began with a slide show of 24 magazine covers. The covers served as prompts for the discussion (Stokes 2013:188). Since only three focus-group interviews were conducted with a total of 18 teenagers, the findings from this study cannot be generalised. The findings should only be considered exploratory.

Focus-group interviews are suitable for analysing how teenagers respond to media culture because this method examines the points of view of participants as they share their concerns and opinions (Wimmer & Dominick 2011). Furthermore, Stokes (2013:187) contributes that focus-group interviews “elicit more nuanced, and complex ideas”. To get balanced information it is important to treat respondents equally and to give everyone a chance to be heard. In other words, the moderator should not show favouritism while conducting focus group interviews.

A tape-recorder was used to capture the data and was supplemented with discreet note taking during the focus-group interviews. The material was transcribed soon after the focus-group interview sessions.

4.9.2 Using focus-group interviews

The advantages of using focus-group interviews is that the method provides rich, in-depth, information that can help clarify the multiple dimensions of complex phenomena (Wimmer & Dominick 2011). For example, in an informal setting of focus-group interviews, respondents can freely express their attitudes towards representations of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine.

Another advantage of conducting focus-group interviews is that within a group several ideas may be generated, which would not have occurred to one individual. Moreover, since the issue of the effects of celebrity culture has a social dimension focus-group interviews provide an ideal platform to try and understand how a group of teenagers experiences images of celebrities.

Despite its strengths, focus-group interviews have limitations as well. For example, the articulate members of the group may dominate the discussion and impose their opinions on others. In such cases the moderator should intervene to ensure that everyone expresses their views. Moreover, some respondents may feel shy to express their views if their opinions differ from those of the rest of the group.

Furthermore, it is time consuming to conduct focus-group interviews. The process involves scheduling an interview session with the respondents, collecting the data, transcribing, coding, and interpreting the data. The sections above have looked at the data collection methods; next is a discussion of data interpretation.

4.10 Data interpretation

Data interpretation is an ongoing process throughout the research. This study uses semiotics, a qualitative method of analysing texts and quantitative content analysis. In addition, qualitative content analysis is used to interpret focus-group interview transcripts. Themes are identified and text categorised according to concepts or recurring themes. The key points are summarised.

Moreover, the researcher serves as an instrument for data interpretation. Wimmer and Dominick (2011:120) argue that the researcher is an instrument in data interpretation and his bias and preconceived ideas may influence the way he interprets the data. The research cannot be entirely value free but the researcher should practice epoché that is try to “remove or at least become aware of prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions that might interfere with the analysis and interpretation” (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:120).

4.11 Time spent on the project

A cross-sectional study is conducted to examine the representation of male and female celebrities on the front covers of e+ magazine and how these representations influence teenagers living in the UAE. A cross-sectional study in terms of both study population and timeframe (Kumar 2005:93) is adopted because it allows for observation of phenomena without manipulating the participants and the environment. In other words, a cross-sectional study is descriptive and provides a snapshot of the problem or issue at a particular point in time.

The benefit of conducting a cross-sectional study spanning 12 months is that it increases external validity (Wimmer & Dominick 2006:32). However, a limitation of using a cross-sectional study is that it cannot be used to establish the changing trends in the representation of male and female celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine.

4.11.1 Proposed time-frame

The project was completed within 13 months, from April 2013 to April 2014. In some cases, more than one chapter was worked on at any given time, meaning that there was some overlap.

April 2013 – Writing the introduction

May – Researching and putting together the literature review

June – Working on the third chapter that covers the theoretical framework

July to September – Research design and methodology

August – History and contents e+ magazine; and celebrity culture

September to October – Conducting a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative visual semiotic analysis

October – Conducting focus-group interviews

November – Interpretation of findings, and writing the conclusion

December 2013 to March 2014 - Writing the first draft

April 2014 - Writing the second draft

May to June 2014 – Writing final report and submitting

4.12 Limitations

The study focuses on the representation of celebrities and its influence on teenagers. The categories that are delineated for visual semiotic analysis are based on earlier studies and the research question. However, the researcher's world view and perceptions may influence the analysis and interpretations. Coming from an Nguni society where people have different concepts about weight and body types from those living in the West may influence the way the researcher codes the images of celebrities under slim and heavy set. What may be considered slim in Nguni culture may be interpreted as fat by someone from the West. Moreover, living in a society where there is a dress code for public places, and people wear clothes that cover their bodies may influence the researcher's perceptions about what constitutes revealing clothing. In a nutshell, one's cultural background and the environment they live in may influence their worldview and interpretations.

Although a slide show of the covers was shown before the focus-group interviews, relying on the teenagers' memory to recall events that happened in the past may not yield accurate results. The results of the three focus-groups cannot be generalised because the sample size is small. In addition, participants for the survey were recruited using snowball sampling and results may reflect the influence of celebrity culture on teenagers from a certain class. The study could benefit from using a bigger sample of the magazine covers and teenage participants.

4.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the research methodology and highlighted its importance in solving the research problems. Triangulation is an appropriate method for this study because it uses multiple research methods and data sources to analyse phenomena from different perspectives. The study employs a quantitative content analysis to get definitive answers to the research questions, for example to establish whether there are more males featured on the covers than females. The second method used is a visual semiotic analysis, which enables the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions by studying the images of celebrities featured on the covers. The third method, field research, provides answers to the "how" question.

Field research will allow respondents to give detailed descriptions and explanations about how they experienced representations of male and female celebrities.

This chapter detailed the research design, which includes techniques that will be employed to collect, analyse and interpret the data. The rationale for using the various methods to analyse and interpret data has been unpacked in detail. Quantitative content analysis, visual semiotic analysis and field research complement each other and are the appropriate methods for soliciting answers to the research questions. The population, sample and units of analysis have also been discussed. The next chapter will discuss e+ magazine, its history, target audience and content.

CHAPTER 5: THE MAGAZINE

5.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the representation of male and female celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine and how it was experienced by teenagers living in the UAE. It is important to contextualise the study by giving an overview of the media environment e+ operated in. This chapter examines the entertainment magazine genre, and presents the history of e+, the magazine's target audience and circulation figures. Furthermore, factors that influenced the choice of content that was published in the magazine and the importance of magazine covers are discussed. Understanding the production process of the magazine, its target audience and reach is helpful in determining how teenagers experienced its content.

e+ magazine operated within UAE's vibrant media landscape. The role of e+ and various other media in the UAE was to convey news, information and entertain audiences (Sinclair, Jacka & Cunningham 2002:103). In this study, the term audience refers to readers, listeners and viewers of media content. In other words, the word audience refers to consumers of broadcast, online and print media content. In addition to providing content to audiences e+ sold space to advertisers as the magazine relied on advertising revenue for its operations (Sylvie, Hollifield & Sohn 2009:199). e+ served a dual product market because on one hand its content was geared towards readers; while on the other, the magazine provided a platform for advertisers to access readers (Albarran, Sylvia & Chan-Olmsted 2006:184).

Several determinants including economic, social, cultural, political, regulatory and technological factors influence the UAE's media scene. For example, the 2008-2009 economic downturn affected the media because most companies reduced their advertising budgets. However, although e+ was affected it fared better compared to other magazines, especially property publications that were dependent on real estate companies, because e+'s major advertisers were movie cinemas (*Gulf News* 2011). In 2011, the year the magazine closed, the economy was beginning to stabilise and new consumer magazines were launched (Bin Fahad 2012:30).

The regulatory laws and the demographic profile of the UAE have an impact on the growth of media. For instance, there are many local and international media companies operating in the UAE with most of them based in free zones³ such as Dubai Media City and twofour54 Abu Dhabi Media Zone. The relaxed ownership and censorship laws in free zones, such as 100 percent foreign ownership, attract companies to the UAE (Bin Fahad 2012:173). With many media outlets in the country, e+ faced competition for readers and advertisers. Furthermore, there were many magazine genres available in different languages including Arabic, English, Tagalog, Urdu and Hindi to cater to people of different nationalities living in the UAE. e+ magazine was published in English and covered a wide range of topics to cater to the UAE's multicultural society.

Another crucial aspect that is worth addressing is the magazine's geographic market, which refers to the place where the product was offered. e+ was sold in the UAE, GCC region and the Indian subcontinent and some of the stories were uploaded on the website, hence the magazine served the local, regional and global markets. The primary geographic market of e+ was the UAE where the magazine was available on subscription and sold on the newsstands. The magazine also had a Facebook page and Twitter account. Within the primary geographical market e+ competed with Hindi and Indian film magazines for Bollywood news and on the other hand, with English lifestyle magazines for Hollywood material (Bin Fahad 2012:32).

Due to technological developments e+ had a wider reach and was accessible to readers all over the world. Readers in the secondary geographic markets read the magazine online as evidenced by comments on stories on the website posted from India, Pakistan, Britain, Bahrain, Qatar, Kenya, the Philippines and so on (*Gulf News* 2011). In addition, Twitter and Facebook posts revealed that e+ had fans and followers in different parts of the world. Some of the posts and comments were written by UAE residents on vacation in various holiday destinations and former residents who had moved back to their home countries but continued reading e+

³ Free Zones are tax-free business hubs that were established to attract foreign investors to the UAE. The free zones were set up as part of the country's economic diversification initiative to facilitate investment and remove bureaucratic barriers. The main benefits of operating from a free zone are relaxed ownership regulations which allow foreigners 100 per cent business ownership and tax-free income (<http://www.dubaimediacity.com/>).

online (*Gulf News* 2011). Before giving an overview of e+ magazine, it is important to highlight what a magazine is and discuss the characteristics of the entertainment magazine genre.

5.2 What is a magazine?

The word “magazine” is derived from the Arabic word “*makhazin*” which means a storehouse (Johnson & Prijatel 2007:3). Tim Holmes (2007:516) notes that in its broad sense, a magazine is a publication that contains several articles and is published on a regular schedule, for example weekly, monthly or quarterly. For Margaret Beetham (1996:5) magazines are “material objects: print artefacts reliant on technologies of paper and ink, typically produced and disseminated on a regular basis”. Sammye Johnson and Patricia Prijatel (2007:14) agree with Beetham where they argue that magazines are printed and bound publications which are tailored to the needs of a specialised audience.

The above definitions are dated because in the present age there are online magazines which do not rely on paper and ink. Moreover, due to the development of new technologies, magazines are available on Smartphones and iPads as applications. Furthermore, online magazines are constantly updated. In addition, not all magazines are geared towards specialised audiences; some are general interest magazines that appeal to a broad section of society.

The magazine industry caters to all kinds of consumers; hence magazines are normally divided into two broad categories, namely consumer and trade or professional magazines. Beetham (1996:8) argues that magazines, particularly consumer magazines, can be viewed as commodities which enable readers to access the world of commodities. Mehita Iqani (2012:8) concurs and adds that magazines are “grounded in product culture and celebrate the ‘world of goods’”.

This study draws on Jonathan Bignell’s (2002:65) study and defines a magazine as “a collection of signs”, which consists of paradigmatic and syntagmatic elements including the title of the magazine, the fonts used, the layout, the colours, the language adopted and the content of the articles. To assign meaning to texts readers

have to decode signs, which comprise the signifier and signified (De Saussure 1972) and promote certain myths and ideologies (Barthes 1973).

5.3 The entertainment magazine genre

An entertainment magazine can be defined as a type of publication that provides readers with up-to-date news, particularly stories about celebrities (Rhodes 1994). Entertainment magazines are also viewed as vehicles for transmitting ideas. In other words, they can be considered as agents of socialisation and mediums for disseminating popular culture. However, this genre is not the only source of information about celebrities. In the UAE there are many platforms such as broadcast media, websites and social networking sites which dominate the immediacy of the news about celebrities. Since most entertainment magazines that are sold on the newsstands are weeklies, they tend to confirm and expand on what readers have already heard or seen in other forms of media. To attract readers, entertainment magazines such as *e+* look for exclusive content like pictures, which have not been published and approach stories from a different angle (Al Naqbi 2013).

Although entertainment magazines compete with different forms of media such as newspapers, radio, other types of magazines and television for advertisements they still manage to attract advertisers because they are vehicles of popular culture and serve as agents of socialisation. In other words, magazines are important in the reproduction of consumer culture. In addition, Rhodes (1994) suggests that entertainment magazines provide “a unique combination of pictorial and popular literary expression that is not found in either newspapers or broadcast media”.

Bignell (2002:64) notes that another characteristic of entertainment magazines that makes them more appealing to readers is that they largely depend on visuals. Also, like women’s magazines, entertainment magazines are “glossy and colourful connoting pleasure and relaxation rather than seriousness... the smell of glossy paper connotes luxury” (Bignell 2002:64).

The Arab Media Outlook 2011-2015 report revealed that magazines still have a strong readership in the UAE with an average subscription rate of 14 percent. The survey further showed that 59 percent of people preferred reading magazines in print (Bin Fahad 2012:168). Entertainment magazines such as e+ tend to adopt a light-hearted approach which provides an escape for readers who are often exposed to news about wars and natural disasters in the news media. Looking at the history of e+ and the content that the magazine published will give an insight into how the publication might influence teenagers living in the UAE.

5.4 e+ magazine

e+ magazine was owned by Al Nisr Publishing, a privately owned, Limited Liability Company that also publishes *Gulf News*, the most read newspaper in the UAE (Bin Fahad 2012:166). The magazine was launched in April 2001 as *Entertainment Plus* and rebranded and changed its name to e+ in March, 2006 (Al Naqbi 2013). The glossy weekly English language magazine was published every Thursday and sold for Dh5 (about \$1,36). The purpose of e+ magazine was to provide local and international entertainment news (*Gulf News* 2011).

e+ fell under the broad category of consumer magazines and the sub-genre of entertainment magazines. The magazine covered a wide range of issues including the latest in celebrity news and gossip, features, celebrity interviews, exclusive photographs, live events, movie, music and DVD reviews (e+ More than just entertainment [Sa]). Since e+ covered many topics it could not be classified as a film, music or celebrity magazine, hence it can be described as a general entertainment magazine. Moreover, the magazine tried to appeal to a diverse audience.

5.4.1 Target audience

e+ magazine's primary target audience was expatriates, mainly Asians (Bin Fahad 2012:167) because there are many people from the subcontinent living in the UAE. Out of a population of 8.26 million, expatriates constitute 7.31 million, with Asians being the majority (UAE National Bureau of Statistics). The magazine was targeted at middle class families with an estimated combined monthly income of Dh30,000.

The intended readers were outgoing cinema goers from the Indian subcontinent who were interested primarily in movies (*Gulf News* 2011). However, there was crossover and pass-on readership (McCracken 1996:97) as evidenced by letters to the editor, Facebook and Twitter posts from Western and Arabic expatriates. The secondary reader category also consisted of people living outside the UAE, who read the magazine's content online.

5.4.2 Circulation figures

The magazine had a qualified weekly circulation of 74,593 (www.bpaww.com). Findings from the Arab Media Outlook 2011-2015 market research revealed that e+ was the third most popular magazine in the UAE in terms of readership (Bin Fahad 2012:167).

The magazine was ranked the sixth most purchased magazine in the country (7.7 percent) and the most purchased English publication in the UAE. The wide appeal and reach of the magazine were attributed to its association with a popular daily English newspaper *Gulf News*, which has strong brand loyalty and an established distribution network (Bin Fahad 2012:167).

5.4.3 Content

Each issue of e+ was approximately 60 pages. Celebrity stories constituted a significant amount of the magazine's content. The magazine was divided into four sections, namely People, Unwind, Movies and Scene Stealer. An analysis of the magazine revealed that only one section (Unwind) out of four contained 100 percent local content. In this study, local content refers to material that was generated by e+ staff and stories about events and activities taking place in the UAE. Foreign content refers to content obtained from syndication and stories about events happening outside the UAE.

The local content section comprised of the Cinema Guide, TV Picks, e+ Reviews that included movie, music, DVD and restaurant reviews. The Around Town column gave details about cultural events and live shows taking part over the weekend in the

UAE. The editorial team organised interview opportunities with celebrities visiting the country, to perform or to promote movies, through a local public relations company handling the event (*Gulf News* 2011). During such events e+ got exclusive interview opportunities in the English language medium since it had the highest circulation figures in that category. The exclusive interview content was published in the People section.

For foreign content, the magazine was largely dependent on celebrity news from Hollywood and Bollywood and got most of the stories and photographs from syndication, particularly Rex Features, as evidenced by the gutter credits⁴. Foreign or international content consisted of images on the cover and Celeb Watch (gossip and glossy photographs capturing fashion and the Hollywood celebrities' candid moments). The latest news and photographs from Bollywood were featured in Bolly Buzz and Bollywood Confidential. This foreign content section also included Movies (previews of forthcoming movies), the Star Poster (photograph of pin-up boy or girl) and Scene Stealer (images of a location where a popular movie was shot).

A market research survey (Bin Fahad 2012:167) showed that the most popular magazine topics for readers were fashion (62.1 percent), celebrities (55.5 percent), and culture (45.2 percent). e+ was popular among expatriates, particularly women and teenagers, because it published stories about celebrities, celebrity fashion and glamour (Bin Fahad 2012:167). The magazine's tag line "More than just entertainment" was aspirational as it created a desire to improve and succeed in life like the famous celebrities featured on the covers. It is also worth examining the factors that influenced the choice of content that was published in e+ magazine.

5.4.4 Factors that influenced choice of content

This section focuses on the economic environment, and social and cultural factors that influenced the type of content that was published in the magazine. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (2002:17) note that advertising plays a crucial role in determining content that is featured in media. Political economists such as Noam

⁴ A gutter credit is the text or photo byline that is placed on the space outside the margin.

Chomsky (1997) and Ben H. Bagdikian (2004) argue that the media are in the business of selling audiences to advertisers and view the audiences as products and consumers respectively. Chomsky (1997) argues that “the product is audiences... You have to sell a product to a market, and the market is, of course, advertisers... Corporations sell audiences to other corporations”.

Bagdikian (2004:138) views audiences as consumers and notes that advertisers often exert pressure on media managers who end up changing or “dumbing down” content. Herman and Chomsky (2002:17) concur with Bagdikian and observe that advertisers try to influence media managers to avoid content that can interfere with the consumers’ ‘buying mood’. Furthermore, Bagdikian (2004:138) points out that in some cases editors select articles “not only on the basis of their expected interest for readers but for their influence on advertisements”. For example, movie cinemas such as Reel Cinemas, Grand Cinemas and Vox Cinemas were big advertisers in e+ magazine and exerted direct and indirect influence on the magazine.

The big cinema houses booked prime spots for their advertisements on pages facing movie reviews and previews (*Gulf News* 2010). Moreover, the cinemas put pressure on the editorial team not to put their advertisements next to photographs or stories about unpopular celebrities because it would affect the mood of the readers (*Gulf News* 2010). Since there are many cinema companies in the UAE the magazine received a lot of advertisements, which required special placement. To accommodate all the prime loading advertisements e+ had to publish many movie reviews and previews and leave out other stories (*Gulf News* 2010). This led to a decline in coverage of controversial issues and a move towards celebrity fashion and movie reviews. In other words, pressure from the advertisers influenced content that was included or left out.

Furthermore, the number of advertisements booked for a particular issue determined the size of the magazine in terms of pages. The Al Nisr Publishing policy set the editorial-advertising ratios at 60:40 (*Gulf News* 2010) and e+ magazine adhered to these guidelines. If the marketing department failed to get the required number of advertisements to reach the target, the editorial team dropped some stories to balance the editorial-advertising ratios. Conversely, if there were many

advertisements, the number of editorial pages was increased to balance the equation. The size of the magazine could only be determined when the marketing department gave the final number of advertisements for that particular week (*Gulf News* 2011).

Moreover, constraints such as time and financial resources (Fenton 2007:12) impacted the content. For example, e+ magazine relied on international agencies for images of celebrities that were used on the covers and inside pages, due to limited resources. The publishers of e+ magazine were not able to send photographers to movie premieres in Hollywood and Bollywood, where most celebrities were based, due to limited financial resources (*Gulf News* 2010). Al Nisr Publishing, the parent company of e+ magazine, signed a contract with agencies to supply its publications with content. e+ magazine's editorial team downloaded pictures of celebrities from syndication because it was part of the company's subscription. Using images from agencies was cheaper compared to sending a staff reporter abroad to cover the events (*Gulf News* 2010).

Likewise, in some instances, when celebrities visited the UAE, e+ magazine still used images from agencies due to limited human resources. The structure of the organisation was such that there was a central photography desk that serviced all the magazines under the Al Nisr Publishing stable. Since there were no dedicated photographers for the magazine, in some cases it was not possible to get a staff photographer on short notice to cover celebrity events because priority was given to the coverage of breaking news for the broadsheet newspaper (*Gulf News* 2011). As a result, although the magazine was published in the UAE, it presented Western perspectives due to its overreliance on syndicated content supplied by agencies based in the West.

e+ was replaced by *Scene* magazine in October 2011 (Key dates in *Gulf News* history [Sa]) while it was still performing well in terms of both advertising revenue and circulation figures. This was due to a change in management. When the new management came into power they came up with a new strategy that was geared towards focusing more on digital applications (*Gulf News* 2010). All the existing print magazines within the company were revamped and began producing content that

could be repurposed for digital applications (*Gulf News* 2011). After a three-month trial period a decision was made to close e+ and introduce a new entertainment magazine that aligned with the new strategy (Al Naqbi 2013). However, the strategy that was borrowed from a New Zealand-based publishing company could not be successfully replicated in the UAE market. This resulted in the closure of three magazines including e+'s successor *Scene* which closed down in December 2012 due to lack of advertising and poor subscription figures (Al Naqbi 2013).

5.5 e+ magazine covers

Bignell (2002:59) argues that “the front covers of magazines are advertisements for the magazine itself”. Since there are many magazines on the newsstands vying for the consumers’ attention, it is important to design a cover that will grab the readers’ attention and influence them to choose the publication over the competitors’ products. To attract readers, e+ magazine mainly featured celebrities on the covers. The image on the cover was usually linked to the lead story (*Gulf News* 2011). However, if there was no strong image accompanying the lead story, the design team was assigned to do an illustration (*Gulf News* 2011).

The visual signs on e+ covers were accompanied by cover lines and these served as teasers of what the magazine contained and enabled the readers to gauge if the magazine would fulfil their needs. Unlike other magazines, which thrive on exposing scandals of the rich and famous, e+ usually put images of celebrities who had achieved something, for example played their role well in movies or won awards. In line with the magazine’s motto “More than just entertainment,” e+ mostly featured successful celebrities on the covers (*Gulf News* 2011). The covers sold a certain lifestyle by featuring rich, glamorous celebrities. The celebrities were represented as powerful and having money to buy whatever they wanted to live a ‘high life’.

By highlighting lifestyle products associated with celebrities, such as cars, clothes and accessories, the covers provided a benchmark that readers could use to measure themselves. The image on the cover therefore plays an important role in luring readers to buy the publication. Mark Allan Peterson (2004:135) notes that the main purpose of a magazine cover is to “persuade people that the media text they

are thinking of consuming will be worth the investment of time, energy, and money they must spend in order to experience it”.

Magazine covers fall within a system of visual representation, they create as well as contribute to culture. The covers are both aesthetic and socio-political objects (Peterson 2004:135). They are aesthetic because a lot of consideration and creativity goes into the designing of a cover. Magazines are also socio-political objects because they create and reflect what is considered to be acceptable or the ideal in society. For example, the images of male and female celebrities on the covers may have a bearing on the way teenagers perceive their identity. In addition, the images of celebrities have the power to shape how teenagers think about masculinity and femininity, for example, the body type that is considered to be appealing to the opposite sex.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on magazines, particularly the entertainment magazine genre. A detailed discussion of e+ magazine including target readers, circulation figures and content featured was given. In addition, this chapter focused on the role played by a front page cover in influencing the readers to buy a magazine on the newsstand.

A detailed discussion of factors which influenced the choice of content published in e+ magazine can enrich the visual semiotic analysis by giving an insight into why certain images of celebrities were used on the covers. Moreover, the study examines whether using syndicated content influenced the choice of celebrities that were featured, for example Hollywood and Bollywood celebrities instead of those from the GCC. Furthermore, the study explores whether advertisers who comprised mainly of cinemas influenced the choice of celebrities that were featured on the covers. For example were the celebrities featured from music or film industry? Having looked at the socio-economic environment that the magazine operated in and factors that influenced choice of content that was published, the next chapter presents the history of celebrity, the rise of celebrity culture and the role of celebrities in society.

CHAPTER 6: CELEBRITY CULTURE

6.1 Introduction

Celebrity culture is evident in most aspects of everyday life and has created celebrities in almost all spheres of life. Prior to the twentieth century only a few people who had achieved a lot were called celebrities. However, Kristine Harmon (2005:100) observes that in the present age there are “celebrity daughters, celebrity criminals and celebrity office assistants”. This chapter presents the history of celebrity, as well as the construction, circulation and consumption of celebrity culture. Furthermore, the spread of celebrity culture and the role of celebrities in society will be discussed.

Larry Z. Leslie (2011:viii) notes that “celebrities are one of popular culture’s most important products”. Since celebrities are considered important and admired by many people, understanding what celebrity culture entails can be useful in helping human beings understand themselves. It is important to begin by tracing the history of the term, stating the contexts in which it was used and then move on to investigate its contemporary definitions. Moreover, it is fundamental to examine words that are used as synonyms of celebrity because scholars use different terms to refer to or to distinguish individuals who are in the limelight.

Celebrity culture will be discussed paying attention to the construction, circulation and consumption of celebrities. Finally, the functions of celebrities in society will be discussed because it may shed light on how celebrities can shape the perceptions of teenagers living in the UAE. Teenagers are constantly exposed to images of celebrities and use them to make sense of the world around them. The images and representations of celebrities are useful for reading social and cultural meanings and determining what the community considers valuable and acceptable behaviour.

6.2 History of celebrity

It is not known when the term celebrity was first used. Suzanne W. Collins (2008:6) notes that scholars have different views; one group argues that celebrity is as old as

mankind and traces it back to oral cultures while another believes it to be a recent phenomenon. Stange, Oyster and Sloan (2011:235) argue that the roots of celebrity can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome; however, Leslie (2011:4) and Richard Schickel (1985:21) dispute this point. Leslie (2011:4) posits that during the Egyptian civilisation and the rule of the Greek and Roman empires certain individuals were well-known or famous but not necessarily celebrities because they were only known within their sphere of influence.

The term celebrity was already in use as far back as 1600 when Hooker (quoted in Leslie 2011:3) used it in reference to someone that many people were talking about. Also, in 1751 the word celebrity was used to refer to “a feast or ceremony as well as publicly praising or extolling an individual” (Leslie 2011:3). By 1838 it had evolved to mean a public person or celebrated character.

For Leslie the growth of mass media in nineteenth-century America enabled individuals to move from being well-known and famous to being celebrities. Leslie (2011:12) seems to suggest that an individual becomes a celebrity when he or she seeks to be recognised and honoured for his or her accomplishments.

However, Schickel (1985:21) argues that “there was no such thing as celebrity prior to the beginning of the twentieth century”. He traces the term celebrity to the publication of the *International Celebrity Register* by Blackwell and Amory in 1959. Prior to the publication of the *International Celebrity Register*, Schickel (1985:21) notes that in the media people were just referred to as “successful” or “famous”.

Although the term “celebrity” entered mainstream use in the twentieth century, the concept of celebrity existed long before that. Prior to the twentieth century people were fascinated and consumed some attributes of celebrity that are of interest even today. For example, scandalous stories about monarchs, and courtesans in eighteenth-century Europe. At the beginning of the twentieth century celebrity culture became evident because the mass media provided “the oxygen of publicity” (McNair 2011:168). In other words, for celebrity to thrive and reach many people it has to be transmitted through the media.

The above discussion shows that most scholars (McNair 2011, Leslie 2011 & Schickel 1985) agree that from its early use the term celebrity has been linked to publicity and visibility, which distinguishes celebrities from the masses. They only differ on when the term was first used. The different views are probably due to the various meanings that have been assigned to the term “celebrity” and words that have been used as its synonyms. It is therefore fundamental to examine several terms that seem to be related and in some instances used as synonyms for celebrity, namely “well-known”, “famous” and “star”. Before examining synonyms, however, it is important to first look at the contemporary meanings of the term “celebrity”.

6.3 Contemporary meanings of the term celebrity

Contemporary celebrity culture has been democratised due to the development of new media platforms including YouTube and Twitter and the introduction of programme formats such as reality shows. As celebrity culture became accessible to ordinary people, the public’s concept of celebrity changed. Turner (2004:4) suggests that the term celebrity can be examined from three perspectives. The first is commentators who regard celebrity as a “symptom of a worrying cultural shift: towards a culture that privileges the momentary, the visual and the sensual over enduring, the written, and the rational” (Turner 2004:4). The second group, which comprises investors and celebrity consumers, perceive it as something natural that only a few possess. Academics, which constitute the third group, focus on celebrity as a product of cultural and economic processes. This group emphasises the commodification of celebrities through marketing strategies such as advertising and publicity.

In the twentieth century the term celebrity referred to an individual who led a public life and was famous because of his or her accomplishments (Leslie 2011:17). However, with the passage of time the word celebrity has come to be used to describe “a person who is well-known for his well-knownness” (Boorstin 1962:57). The seminal author, Daniel J. Boorstin (1962:75) views a celebrity as a “human pseudo-event”. A pseudo-event is an activity that is not spontaneous such as a press conference, a movie premiere and an award ceremony because it is organised and journalists are invited in advance so they can report on it. Like an inauthentic

pseudo-event, some celebrities do not have any intrinsic value other than being talked about in the media, for instance, *Big Brother* contestants. Therefore, a celebrity is “fabricated for the media and evaluated in terms of the scale and effectiveness of their media visibility” (Boorstin 1962:57). Furthermore, Boorstin (1962:75) argues that an individual can become a celebrity without any talent through marketing and public relations.

It is worth mentioning that some individuals earn their celebrity status by doing something substantial in their careers. For example, most celebrities featured on the covers of *e+* magazine are accomplished musicians, actors and actresses who have excelled in their fields. However, as some of these celebrities progress in the entertainment industry, the media tends to focus more on their personal lives than their professional achievements and reduce them to “human pseudo-events”. Giles (2000:25) concurs with Boorstin and adds that “the ultimate modern celebrity is the member of the public who becomes famous solely through media involvement”.

Furthermore, Turner (2004:9) argues that celebrity is a genre of representation that has a social function as it can be used to promote certain ideals. For Turner, (2004:9) celebrity is a cultural commodity traded by the publicity and the media industries. Moreover, it is important to note that what constitutes a celebrity in one cultural domain may be different in another, for example the criteria used to determine a celebrity in film and reality television is different. Reality television tends to have many temporary celebrities while the film industry has established, enduring celebrities. An individual can become an instant celebrity by taking part in a reality show such as *Big Brother*, yet in the movie industry one has to play a leading role in many movies before they are accorded the title celebrity. In film there are one-time movie stars or “celetoids” but these are only a few compared to reality television. Different words have been used to refer to celebrities, and these are discussed in detail below.

6.4 Celebrity synonyms

Several terms have been used to refer to those who are in the spotlight, namely “famous”, “well-known”, “star” and “celebrity”. For Adrienne Lai (2006:229) celebrity

is used to refer to “anyone who has achieved widespread renown, either by merit, accident, or notoriety”. On the other hand, the term “star” is used to refer to “individuals who have become famous via their activities in the art and entertainment industries” (Lai 2006:229). Going by Lai’s definitions, most people who were featured on the covers of *e+* magazine fall under both celebrity and star categories. They are celebrities because they are established actors and musicians and are stars because they work in the entertainment industry.

For Dyer (1998:31) the term “star” was used to describe an individual noted for his or her charisma while the word “celebrity” refers to the new breed of people who are in the limelight because of their media exposure. Daniel Herwitz (2008:x) asserts that a star is a cultural icon, an individual idolised by some. Therefore, “to be a star a synergy must exist between one’s performance and one’s personal life”. In other words, a star’s success is measured in relation to their career and life outside their area of work. For example, movie personalities are considered stars both on- and off-screen. What they do in their personal lives is as important as their performance in a movie.

Joseph Epstein (2005:9) notes that fame is “based on true achievement” while celebrity is based on “broadcasting that achievement”. However, David Giles (2000:5) suggests that people become famous for various reasons, for example some achieve fame through doing positive things and others through negative deeds such as committing a crime. The coverage these individuals get in the mass media makes them known to many and famous. For Giles (2000:5) fame is a “process and consequences of how an individual is treated by media”. From the above discussion it is clear that not everyone is a celebrity and that there are different types of celebrities. In view of this, which qualities should an individual possess to qualify to be a celebrity? Furthermore, what qualities do different types of celebrities have?

6.5 Types of celebrities

Scholars adopt various approaches to tackle the issue of celebrity. Rojek (2001:17-19) divided celebrities into three broad categories, the ascribed, achieved and attributed. He later added the subcategories ‘celetoid’ and ‘celeactor’ to cater to the

changing nature of contemporary celebrity. The “ascribed” category includes people who become celebrities by virtue of their blood line, for example members of the royal family; the second group earn their celebrity status through achievement while the third category comprises those who are promoted by a third party such as the media. For Rojek (2001:26) the term ‘celetoid’ refers to a celebrity who is constructed by the media and has a very short lifespan in the limelight. On the other hand, a ‘celeactor’ is someone who assumes a fictitious temporary identity such as James Bond and Harry Potter. For example, actors such as Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Radcliffe were often referred to by names of the characters they played, Bond and Harry Potter or Boy Wizard (Foster 2013), respectively. Some media reports still refer to Brosnan as “the former Bond”.

Monaco in Turner (2004:21) lists three categories of celebrities, which correspond to Rojek’s four types of celebrities. Monaco’s “hero” (someone who has actually done something spectacular to attract attention) bears some resemblance to Rojek’s “achieved”. Some examples of heroes include David Beckham and Michael Jordan who excelled in sport and became celebrities (Cashmore 2004). The second type is the “star” (someone who achieves prominence through the development of a public persona that is more important than their professional life), which corresponds to Rojek’s “attributed” celebrity. It is important to note that there are crossovers including people such as David Beckham who worked hard in soccer and then later his public persona became more important than his professional life. Cashmore (2004) argues that David Beckham’s popularity is no longer linked to sport but to his brand image.

The third type of celebrity is the “quasar”, someone who becomes the focus of attention through no fault of their own (Turner 2004:21). The quasar is similar to the “celeactor” and “celetoid” in that all the three terms point to the notion of temporary celebrities. An example of a quasar is Pippa Middleton who was thrust into the limelight when she served as a maid of honour at her sister Catherine and Prince William’s wedding. Before the wedding she was not known by many people but her association with the Royal couple made her an instant celebrity as evidenced by constant reports about her private life and business in celebrity blogs such as Perez Hilton.com and Just Jared (Pippa Middleton Category... [Sa]).

There is yet another breed of celebrities who are known as socialites or “It Girls”. Socialites like Paris Hilton and some supermodels are now counted among celebrities. This category shows that some individuals can become celebrities due to their physical beauty and economic status. This trend is in line with the commentators’ and academics’ perspectives detailed by Turner (2004:4). Glynn (2000:15) notes with exasperation that the tabloid culture promotes everyday Joes and Janes into celebrities. The new trend shows that the current age is marked by emphasis on media-based renown as opposed to achievement-based fame.

In addition, borders between show business, politics and religion are thinning as evidenced by the rise of celebrity chefs, celebrity religious leaders and celebrity politicians. Some celebrities are even running for political office. Former movie star Ronald Reagan, for example, became Governor of California in 1966 and went on to become President of the United States of America in 1980. In 2003 Hollywood actor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that he was running for Governor of California on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* (Kaufman 2003) and went on to win the elections. In other parts of the world, former Pakistan cricket captain Imran Khan formed a political party that got many followers who believed that he could offer the country something. In May 2013 Khan contested in parliamentary elections (Khan 2013).

Reality television, which debuted in the 1990s, is turning normal people into celebrities. The celebrities created by reality television tend to have a short shelf life and only a few manage to establish careers in show business after achieving fame in shows such as *Survivor*, *Punk’d* and *Big Brother*. These reality television programmes show that people do not need talent to become celebrities, they can achieve their 15 minutes of fame by doing something that catches the attention of the media and is circulated to many consumers (Altman 2005:6).

Having many people who are called celebrities has led to the hierarchical categorisation to classify and place individuals in their proper places. Epstein (2007:362) argues that around two decades ago great celebrities were called “stars” and later a new vocabulary was developed and they came to be known as

“superstars”. As years progressed there were too many superstars and the term “icon” was coined to describe individuals who were in the top tier of the hierarchy.

Journalist James Ulmer (1997) developed the Ulmer Scale to track, measure and rank the star power worldwide. Ulmer classifies celebrities into A+, A, B, B+, C and D lists (A being the highest ranked and D the lowest). A celebrity may fluctuate between two categories depending on their earnings at that particular moment in their life. The image of the celebrity that is circulated in the media is important as it can impact their earnings. There is a symbiotic relationship between the media and celebrity culture; hence it is important to examine how celebrities are constructed. Moreover, it is worth discussing how celebrity culture is circulated and consumed by audiences in order to establish whether celebrities shape people’s lives.

6.6 Construction, circulation and consumption of contemporary celebrity culture

Cashmore (2004:2) argues that celebrity culture did not arise out of a vacuum but arose due to the proliferation of media and loss of confidence in established forms of leadership and authority. Despondent, people began to focus on the lives of the celebrities as the technologies made it easier to produce and circulate news about celebrities. For Cashmore (2006:2) the new technologies were instrumental in introducing celebrity culture.

Technological developments including radio, film and print media such as magazines helped circulate news about celebrities. The birth of television, later followed by the increase in the number of internet sites in the 1990s, cable and satellite television channels and 24-hour news channels further accelerated the pace (Altman 2005:2). To produce content to fill up the 24-hour programming schedule in broadcast media requires a lot of money. To cut down on costs media organisations opt for content that is cheap to produce such as celebrity gossip. This trend has led to the proliferation of celebrity talk shows, reality and talent shows. Also, images of celebrities feature prominently on the magazine covers and inside pages. Altman (2005:2) notes that, in America, celebrities “appeared on the covers of nearly 40 percent of the magazines in 2004”. Dyer (1998) observes that celebrity culture is

linked to the production of media texts which in turn is dependent on the economic environment that influences the allocation of resources for programming.

Media construction and representation shape the ways in which people understand and make sense of the world, hence it is important to understand “the functions of media and other information providers (Media and information literacy... UNESCO). The media manufacture celebrities, however, it is not the media alone, there are other factors and key players involved in the creation, marketing and circulation of celebrity culture. Harmon (2005:102) argues that it “takes more than a village to create a celebrity”. Several institutions and individuals come together to create and circulate news about celebrities. Gamson (2001:264) describes them as the “publicity machine” while Epstein (2007:361) uses the term “celebrity-creating machinery” to describe institutions and individuals behind the construction and circulation of celebrity. They include television shows, magazines, celebrity mongers, journalists, the celebrities’ agents, publicists, and marketing and communications specialists. Fans also play an important role in all the three aspects of celebrity culture, namely construction, circulation and consumption of celebrity.

Scholars such as Cashmore (2004), Giles (2000) and Dyer (1990) emphasise the fact that media visibility is a key component of modern celebrity. Dyer (1998:88) further argues that “stars as images are constructed in all kinds of media texts”. The introduction of new media such as reality television, Twitter and YouTube videos in the twenty-first century has altered the meaning of celebrity in that it has introduced a new breed of famous people. With the introduction of reality shows on television, everyone can become a celebrity. Andy Warhol (quoted in Boorstin 1962a) once argued that one day everyone in the world will be famous for fifteen minutes and it is increasingly becoming possible for anyone to become a celebrity.

Celebrity culture has become a feature of social life largely due to the accelerated growth of global media such as 24-hour multi-channel television and the new social networks that have made it possible to circulate images of celebrities. Due to the rapid growth of media, in the twenty-first century it is easy for celebrities and fans to interact. Celebrities can increase their visibility as they are able to reach and capture interest of the public through new media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and

Facebook. Portable entertainment devices like iPods and iPads make it easier for fans to access news about celebrities all the time, even while travelling. Moreover, fans can meet celebrities at events and interact with them online. Turner (2004:8) notes that in the present age the fascination with celebrities is both a fantastic projection and something that can be realised.

As celebrity culture is increasingly becoming part of everyday life it is important to examine what Gamson (2001:264) refers to as the contemporary “dream machine” that publicists and journalists use to create celebrities. According to Marshall (1997:58) celebrity is a “system of signs that includes chains of signification”. The celebrity as a sign is often manipulated either directly or indirectly by the celebrities themselves, their publicists or journalists. For example, in some cases, celebrities are represented in the media as extraordinary and at times the media use candid photographs to reveal the celebrities’ flaws to show that they are human and normal just like everyone. Turner (2004:8) posits that modern celebrity is a product of media representation, which is often contradictory and ambivalent.

Furthermore, there is a symbiotic relationship between celebrity culture and journalism (Gamson 2001:264). For instance, a celebrity’s publicist can contact journalists to alert them about photo opportunities and arrange for exclusive interviews. Movie studios and record labels also organise press conferences and events to promote celebrities when they release a movie or a new album. Journalists, especially the paparazzi, follow celebrities and capture their candid moments and sell the images to media organisations. Epstein (2007:361) argues that without celebrities the style sections of newspapers will close, there will not be any television talk show interviews with celebrities and celebrity magazines will also close down. Holmes (2005:24) concurs and notes that “the magazine depends upon the cooperation of the celebrities themselves, and in general terms it is, of course commercially dependent upon, and part of, the production of celebrity as a capitalist enterprise”. The above discussion shows that magazines such as *e+* both construct and deconstruct celebrity.

Collins (2008:50) observes that for Marshall a celebrity is admired and considered a role model and audiences also “construct celebrity as legitimate forms of cultural

value and personal identification". In other words, for Marshall, the celebrity sign embodies meaning that influences the audience's worldview while celebrity power comes from the audience and the meanings they assign to them. It therefore follows that the public also plays a part in the construction of celebrities. For example, in reality television shows like *Big Brother* and *American Idol*, the members of the audience are directly involved in the creation of the celebrity because they vote for the winner.

In addition, the consumption process is also complicated as it is characterised by celebrity worship as well as loathing. On the one hand, fans like to see celebrities succeed while on the other hand, they see them as "frail, ready at all times to crash and burn" (Epstein 2007:362). To please audiences the media, particularly entertainment magazines, adopt the "rags to riches" and also the "fall from grace" approaches. In a way the media have the power to make or break a celebrity. Having discussed how celebrities are constructed, news about them circulated and consumed it is important to examine the role they fulfil in society because community members tend to emulate them.

6.7 The role of celebrities in society

It is important to pose the fundamental question: is it the people or the media that is obsessed with celebrities? The answer to this question is not clear-cut. Altman (2005:9) argues that the media give a lot of coverage to celebrities because that is what the public wants. It eventually becomes a vicious cycle because to attract audiences and get high ratings the media feature more and more celebrity news. Celebrity culture is alluring because it is associated with glamour; however, behind the façade it provides pointers into important factors that shape society, for instance the acceptable dress code for men and women.

Celebrity culture is an integral part of modern life and celebrities whom Dyer (1986) refers to as stars are cultural commentators who transmit ideas about gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality. Celebrity is intricately connected to the community's history and socio-cultural context and celebrities serve as role models and influence fashion tastes and public opinion. Analysing images of celebrities can shed light on the

contemporary ideas about identity issues and what society values. Celebrities are therefore ideological images that serve to foster the ideal images in society.

Schickel (1985) examines the careers of leading American figures from the fields of film, literature, music and television to demonstrate how celebrity culture shapes the world and influences people's perceptions. He also focuses on the unacknowledged relationships, which are known as parasocial relationships between the celebrities and the masses. Schickel (1985) coined the term 'intimate strangers' to describe the relationship between fans and their favourite celebrities. Owing to their position as intimate strangers celebrities serve as role models for society, especially teenagers. He argues that celebrity is "possibly the most vital shaping (that is to say, distorting) force in our society" (Schickel 1985). In addition, Schickel (1985) notes that celebrities are both private and public figures, and the paradoxical nature makes them more alluring. In the present age the celebrities' private lives tend to attract more public interest than their professional lives (Turner 2004:4).

According to Dyer (1998) celebrities are commodities that are produced and consumed on the strength of their meanings. This corresponds to the Saussurean semiotic theory, which advances that a celebrity is a signifier that stands for something (De Saussure 1972:111). For example, the image of a celebrity can be used to promote social values. In other words, a celebrity embodies social values and can reinforce what is considered to be acceptable gender roles and behaviours. However, in some cases, a celebrity can depart from the status quo and promote alternative views.

Stange, Oyster and Sloan (2011:231) agree with Dyer (1998) where they note that celebrities are commodities that are constructed by the media and serve as sites for audience identification. One of the celebrities' marketable assets is their physical appearance, which is used to promote images of ideal masculine and feminine beauty. Celebrities serve as role models for appearance and behaviour for male and female audiences. For feminist theorist Susan Bordo (1993:170), femininity has been packaged as a commodity that women should strive to attain. She notes that the media transmit "standardised visual images... the bodies of celebrity women serve as role models for women to emulate" (Bordo 1993:169-170).

However, Cashmore (2006) suggests that collectively consumers are not helpless but have more power. Cashmore (2006:4) argues that “we are educated in the arts of celeb-production by the very channels that present them. We do not just look at pictures: we have become able readers”. For instance, readers are aware that some of the images of celebrities they see on magazine covers and the ideals they promote are not attainable. Readers also know that some celebrities have had cosmetic surgery and that photographs put on the magazine covers are airbrushed to remove excess flab or make muscles appear larger. Gamson in Croteau and Hayness (2002:296) notes that “celebrity watching is a complex act” and further argues that audiences use a range of interpretative strategies to read mass mediated texts.

Celebrity producers are increasingly becoming aware that consumers are not gullible and are beginning to move away from blatant stereotypical gender representations. Gauntlett’s (2008:145) study shows that magazines provide alternative views by featuring successful career women instead of limiting them to the domestic setting. Furthermore, although traditionally masculinity has been linked to strength not beauty, in the present age metrosexual celebrities who are concerned with grooming are also featured because celebrities reflect societal trends.

Celebrity culture is linked to consumerism, a trend that turns celebrities into mobile advertisements that are meant to promote aspirational consumption (Cashmore 2006:12). Celebrities are trendsetters, they initiate beauty and fashion trends and teenagers copy their hairstyles and clothing. The images of rich, glamorous celebrities can have both positive and negative effects. For example, on the one hand, they can inspire teenagers to do something to improve their lives while on the other hand they can make them feel bad about their wardrobe and physical appearance (Wolf 1991:62).

Furthermore, celebrity culture is linked to consumer society and the commodification of celebrities. Cashmore (2004:3) argues that celebrities promote consumption because consumers feel the need to buy the products their favourite celebrities are featured wearing. For example, Makgosa’s study (2010) in Botswana revealed that

celebrity product endorsement influenced the teenagers' purchasing behaviour. As a result many brands appoint famous celebrities to be their brand ambassadors or spokespersons. For instance, former basketball player Michael Jordan was spokesperson for Nike and McDonalds. In addition, celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez and Beyoncé Knowles own cosmetic lines. The above show that celebrities have become commodities that are consumed by fans.

Celebrities play a major role in society, particularly in shaping teenagers' tastes and self-identity, but they are not exclusively responsible for teenagers' behaviour. Other factors like peers, family and society also play a significant role in shaping teenagers.

6.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the history of celebrity, the rise of celebrity culture and the role of celebrities in society. It has shown that celebrities are constructed by different members and institutions in society including journalists, the celebrities' publicists, audiences and even celebrities themselves. The concept of celebrity has changed as it evolved over the years due to technological developments. In the present age, due to the proliferation of reality television shows, ordinary people can become celebrities overnight and in the same token their fame is short lived.

Furthermore, the chapter has shown that the role of celebrities in society is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, celebrities help members of the society make sense of the world around them while on the other; they promote ideals that are not attainable causing their followers to feel inferior. The next chapter presents data analysis and findings of a quantitative content analysis, a visual semiotic analysis and focus-group interviews on the representation of male and female celebrities on the front covers of e+ magazine.

CHAPTER 7: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine how celebrities are represented on the covers of e+ magazine. In addition, the study seeks to explore how the way celebrities are represented might shape teenagers living in the UAE. This chapter presents the findings. This exploratory study uses methodological and data triangulation. Using mixed methods to gather and analyse data ensures holistic coverage of how teenagers experience celebrity culture thereby providing richer findings that cannot be obtained using one method.

Hennie Boeijie (2010:76) notes that data analysis involves systematically arranging materials collected to increase “your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others”. The first section of this chapter, therefore, focuses on the quantitative content analysis of images of male and female celebrities published on 24 covers of e+ magazine. Nine categories and subcategories are developed and the data coded. Tables and pie charts are used to present the statistical data.

To gain a deeper understanding of the visual images, the study employs Barthes' (1973) semiotic theory and social semiotics (Kress 2010 & Van Leeuwen 2004). First, the signs and codes on each cover are examined to determine the denotative meaning. Secondly, the study explores what the signs signify; in other words, establish the connotative meaning of the celebrities' images. Lastly, the myths and ideologies that each image promotes are identified. This study examines the cultural norms each image represents, and the values about gender that are projected through the images of celebrities, for example, masculine and feminine ideals. The images on the covers are analysed focusing mainly on costume or attire, facial expressions, poses; and the cover lines.

Finally, the chapter presents findings of focus-group interviews to show how teenagers experienced the images of celebrities. The themes that emerged from focus-group interview data were useful in determining whether images of celebrities featured on the covers of e+ did shape the lives of teenagers living in the UAE.

7.2 Findings of a quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis was used to analyse data from a sample of 24 covers. Nine broad categories were defined, namely gender representation on the covers, origin of celebrities, field of original activity, age, poses or posture, facial expressions, action depicted, types of images and body type. Subcategories were developed under each broad category, data coded and then the percentages calculated.⁵

7.2.1 Gender representation on the covers

A total of 45 celebrities were featured on the 24 covers (Table 7.1). Out of the 45 celebrities, 25 were female and 20 male. In other words, 56 percent female celebrities were featured on the covers compared to 44 percent male (Figure 7.25). On some covers two or more celebrities were featured together, and the demographics were as follows: 38 percent female adults; 17 percent male adults; 8 percent all-female adults; 21 percent all-male adults; 8 percent all-adults mixed; and 8 percent teenagers (Figure 7.26).

The findings revealed that female celebrities are more visible on the covers of e+. This differs from other studies, particularly those that have focused on news, which report that women are not given visibility in the media (Gallagher 2001:4). However, it is important to note that though more women were featured in terms of frequency on e+ covers, they were underrepresented in terms of roles as they were shown in passive and submissive poses (this point will be addressed in detail under poses/posture category, and semiotic analysis).

⁵ The issue of intercoder reliability did not arise in this study as only one person coded the data.

7.2.2 Origin of celebrities

To determine the place of origin of the celebrities, five subcategories were developed, namely UAE, GCC⁶ region, Hollywood, Bollywood and Other including celebrities from geographical locations not mentioned above such as the Philippines and the United Kingdom. There were no celebrities from the UAE and the GCC region featured on the 24 covers. On the other hand, Hollywood celebrities featured prominently as they comprised 71 percent, followed by Other at 17 percent and Bollywood contributed 12 percent (Figure 7.27). The absence of celebrities from the UAE and GCC could be due to the fact that there are a few newsworthy A-list celebrities who live in the region since the entertainment industry is not as developed as Hollywood and Bollywood.

7.2.3 Field of original activity

The study found that the celebrities on the covers came from different industries and entertainment centres, including television and movies, music, and Disney. The “Other” category was included to accommodate those who did not belong to any of the aforementioned subcategories. Out of the 24 covers sampled, 19 (79 percent) featured celebrities from television and movies, three (13 percent) from the music industry and one (4 percent) each from Disney and Other field (Figure 7.28).

Most celebrities were featured in connection with the release of a movie. This could be an indication of the popularity and rapid growth of the movie industry as evidenced by the fact that Bollywood produces about 1,000 films while Hollywood makes around 500 movies annually (Ghosh 2013). Since the front cover is meant to persuade people to buy the magazine, editors place images of celebrities whom they believed would sell the magazine (Peterson 2004:135). Gamson (2001:264) notes that movie studios and the celebrities’ public relations personnel work with journalists to promote films and main characters that appear in them.

⁶ The GCC refers to the Gulf Cooperation Council, a regional block whose member countries include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

7.2.4 Age

The study found that the youngest celebrity featured was aged 14 and the oldest was over the age of 60. Most female celebrities featured on the covers were young, mostly below the age of 35. Female celebrities under the age of 25 accounted for 20 percent; the 26-35 age group represented 64 percent; those aged 36-45 constituted 16 percent while there were no females over the age of 45 (Figure 7.30). On the other hand, the age distribution of male celebrities was different. There were more men aged 36 and above compared to those under the age of 35. Out of a total of 20 male celebrities only one (5 percent) was under 25; six (30 percent) were aged 26-35; nine (45 percent) aged 36-45; and four (20 percent) over 45 (Figure 7.29).

Only seven men out of 20 compared to 21 women out of 25 were below the age of 35. The results suggest that as female celebrities get older they cease to be featured on the magazine covers. The majority of female celebrities were from the movie and television industry and were mainly featured on the covers to coincide with the release of a movie in which they played a leading role. In view of the above the diminishing number of female celebrities as they age could be an indication that they no longer get leading roles in movies (Seagrove 2011).

In the entertainment industry, women are judged by their looks and as a result have a short shelf life compared to their male counterparts (Seagrove 2011). Most female celebrities are in their prime in their late twenties and early thirties. For example, Elizabeth W. Markson and Carol A. Taylor's (1993:157) study on women and Academy Awards found that women over the age of 39 have accounted for only 27 percent of Best Actress while men in the same age group accounted for 67 percent Best Actor. On the other hand, mature men still get leading roles where they feature "as vigorous, employed and involved in same-gender friendships and adventure whether as hero or villain" (Markson & Taylor 2000).

7.2.5 Poses/posture

The data was coded under five categories that were most prominent, namely Hand(s) in pocket, Standing upright, Bent, Arm(s) on waist and Looking over shoulder. The percentage of the poses differed across genders. Out of the 25 females sampled, 52 percent were featured in upright position; 12 percent bent; 28 percent with an arm or arms on waist; 8 percent looking over shoulder; and none had a hand in a pocket (Figure 7.32).

On the other hand, out of 20 male celebrities sampled, 10 percent had a hand in a pocket, 60 percent were shown in upright position; 20 percent bent; 10 percent with arms on waist and none was looking over the shoulder (Figure 7.31).

7.2.6 Facial expressions

The celebrities' facial expressions were coded under three subcategories, namely smiling, serious and neutral expression. More men compared to women had serious facial expressions. Four males (20 percent) out of 20 were smiling compared to 15 (75 percent) who had a serious expression (Figure 7.33). Only one male celebrity (5 percent) had a neutral expression.

More female celebrities (48 percent) were featured with a neutral expression. This was closely followed by those who were smiling at 44 percent while only 8 percent had a serious expression on their face (Figure 7.34).

7.2.7 Action depicted

Most of the celebrities featured on the 24 covers were passive. All of the 25 female celebrities were passive. Fourteen out of 20 male celebrities were passive while only six were active (Table 7.8).

When all the celebrities were put together the passive female subcategory accounted for 56 percent, followed by passive male at 31 percent and active male constituted 13 percent, and there were no active females (Figure 7.35).

7.2.8 Type of images

The images on the 24 covers were classified under four categories, Taken at events, Stills from movies, Collage created using visual tricks and Other, where it was not clear where the photograph was shot. Out of the 24 images on the covers only one was taken at an event as evidenced by the awards ceremony banner in the background.

Five images were stills from movies; another five were collages created using visual tricks and the rest of the images fell under the Other subcategory (Table 7.9). The image taken at an event constituted 4 percent; stills from movies and collages were tied at 21 percent; and Other contributed 54 percent (Figure 7.36).

7.2.9 Body type

Under body type, four subcategories were developed, including Slim, Muscular, Heavy set and Normal. The researcher used her discretion to determine what constituted a slim, muscular, heavy set and normal body type. Most celebrities, both male and female fell under the normal subcategory, which had 16 out of 25 females and 17 out of 20 males (Table 7.10). Only three out of 25 female celebrities were heavy set while there were no males in that subcategory. Also three out of 20 males were muscular while there were no muscular female celebrities. Six female celebrities out of a total of 25 were slim. On the other hand, there were no slim male celebrities.

Some studies have found that most magazines feature slim women on the covers (Altman 2005:15-17), however, this research shows that there were more celebrities with normal weight compared to slim ones.

The quantitative content analysis was useful in presenting statistical figures and demographic information about celebrities. It is important to delve deeper and analyse in detail the codes that have been used to represent celebrities and what celebrities as signs stand for.

7.3 Visual semiotic analysis

Semiotic analysis is used to examine signs to gain a better understanding of the social context in which the images were produced. Barthes (1972:15-25) notes that a sign does not stand on its own but is part of a system. The reading of the photograph relies on the reader's knowledge of the codes.

Barthes (1977:20) cites "connotation procedures" that are employed to promote certain meanings. They include trick effects, which can be used to tamper with an image, for example putting together photographs that have been shot independently using Adobe Photoshop (Figure 7.17). Furthermore, visual tricks can be used to advance myth and ideology. For instance, in Figure 7.17 the women's images are brought together to promote the beauty myth. The image seems to suggest that for one to have a desirable body like the celebrities featured on the cover they have to follow the Hollywood diet. Encouraging readers to look to the market for solutions to their problems promotes the ideology of consumerism. According to Barthes (1977:22) the second procedure is pose, which serves as a signifier, for instance clasped hands and raised eyes can connote youthfulness and purity. In addition, colour can be used to signify something.

The image is often accompanied by text which has an anchorage or relay function. When the text anchors a visual image it leads a reader towards a certain meaning. Barthes (1977:26) notes that the text can have an ideological function and load the image "burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination". When the linguistic message serves a relay function the text complements the image. In some cases the verbal message of the cover lines contradicts the visual image, for example, gloomy and anguished cover lines accompanying the image of a radiant celebrity. Drawing on Barthes (1977), six images, which have been chosen because they reflect the range of representations of gender and race of the celebrities featured on the covers of *e+* were analysed to highlight the denotation, connotation and mythic and ideological meanings of the signs.

7.3.1 Queen of hearts



Figure 7.5

The medium shot of a female who seems to be in her twenties occupies most of the space on the cover. She is wearing a one-shoulder white dress, which shows cleavage and jutting bones on her neck. She is wearing make-up and her eyebrows are shaped. She has long hair combed to the back. The woman referred to in the cover line as “Queen of hearts” has one hand on her hip and her head is tilted to one side. The linguistic message, which uses the same colour as her dress, and the magazine branding, is positioned close to her heart and the second cover line, which identifies her as Deepika Padukone, is set against the pale grey background.

The image seems as though it was shot in the studio or outdoors with wind blowing her hair. Her pose, a hand on her hip and head tilted to the side and her long flowing hair signifies that she is carefree. The focus is on her sexuality and she is

represented as a seductress as evidenced by her pose and dress which leaves part of her upper body exposed. Moshe Cohen-Eliya and Yoav Hammer (2004:169) argue that a seductress is represented as thin, young, smiling, provocative and sexually available. These signifiers reinforce the notion that women should assume provocative poses and wear revealing clothes in order to attract the attention of viewers, particularly men.

Furthermore, bending to one side connotes her youthfulness and suppleness. However, twisting her neck makes her appear uncomfortable. Michael E. Hall and Patricia Dawson (1998:95) note that revealing the neck and executing a sidelong glance puts someone off balance and makes her appear submissive and vulnerable.

Deepika Padukone, an award-winning Bollywood actress who was a fashion model before she established her career in the film industry, connotes Bollywood glamour. It is noteworthy that although she is an Indian actress based in Bollywood, she is wearing Western style clothes instead of the traditional Indian *sari* (a cloth that is wrapped around the body with one end draped over the shoulder) or *salwar kameez* (a two-piece suit consisting of a long tunic and loose trousers). Her choice of clothing could be attributed to the effects of globalisation and the proliferation of Western culture.

In addition, wearing Western clothing could signify the homogenisation of consumer taste, which is considered by scholars such as Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2009:4) as a consequence of globalisation. Homogenisation can be viewed as global interconnectedness, cultural convergence and consumerism (Pieterse 2009:4). The world is becoming a global village and products are easily accessible as multinational clothing brands have set up retail outlets all over the world and embarked on aggressive campaigns to market their brands. Celebrities such as Deepika Padukone, who are featured on magazine covers also help market the clothes because the public, particularly teenagers, tend to copy their fashion styles. Pieterse (2009:4) sums up this movement of goods and products from the West, particularly America to the rest of the world, as “McDonaldisation” and “Coca Colonisation”.

Coined by George Ritzer (1993), the term “McDonaldisation”, refers to a sociological phenomenon that involves rationalising everything. Furthermore, it describes a scenario whereby “the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world” (Ritzer 2010:263). When a society adopts McDonaldising principles it focuses mainly on efficiency, which does not allow for individuality and calculability. In addition, such societies tend to specialise in quantity over quality; predictability, which emphasises uniformity of products and standardised outcomes; and control (Ritzer 2010:263).

“Coca Colonisation” refers to a process of importing goods from the West, particularly America. Conglomerates like Coca-Cola are seen as new agents of colonisation because they spread Western culture, including food and clothing to other parts of the world. Instead of widening and broadening consumers’ tastes, globalisation creates homogeneous products and moves everyone towards a homogeneous consumerist culture. For example, the clothes that are sold by multinational conglomerates are the same in different geographic locations; hence “Coca Colonisation” and “McDonaldisation” increase global homogeneity (Ritzer 2010:263).

The image uses colour to connote certain meanings. In Hinduism white (*safed*) represents purity and cleanliness (Werner 2005). Also the Brahmin, the highest in the caste system are associated with white. In Western culture, white connotes good as opposed to black, which is associated with evil. Frantz Fanon (1967) notes that “black” is a binary opposite of “white”. A dress with frills, and the pale background colour could connote sensual femininity.

The white dress signifies purity, yet on the other hand, the design seems to suggest that she is sexually available because it exposes part of her upper body. There is a play on words, the linguistic message says she “bares her soul” an allusion to her one shoulder dress which is revealing.

The image employs various types of framing, including rhyme and pictorial integration (Van Leeuwen 2005) to connect the text and picture. The different font

sizes and colour-blocking⁷ are playful and visually appealing. White and yellow are used to construct feminine beauty. There is rhyme (colour similarity) between the dress, magazine branding and the linguistic message. Also, the headline ‘Queen of hearts’ is placed inside the picture space forming a link between the picture and text. The linguistic message is positioned close to her heart connoting the roles she plays in romantic movies where she is often cast as the leading female character. Since meaning is context specific, only readers who are familiar with Bollywood cinema would understand these associations.

The myth being promoted here is that to be successful and become a ‘queen’ one has to wear fancy clothes and look sexy. A slim body is promoted as the ideal. The image also promotes the beauty myth since the focus is on her face. Beauty is presented as being associated with grooming, wearing make-up and having flawless skin. Binary oppositions are applied; the subtle message being implied is that to achieve the beauty ideal one has to buy grooming products from the market. The image advances the notion that women are delicate, and promotes sensual femininity, which is linked to looking well-groomed all the time.

⁷ Colour-blocking is a term that is borrowed from the fashion industry. In fashion it refers to a trend that uses two or more bold colours in an outfit.

7.3.2 Why West is Best

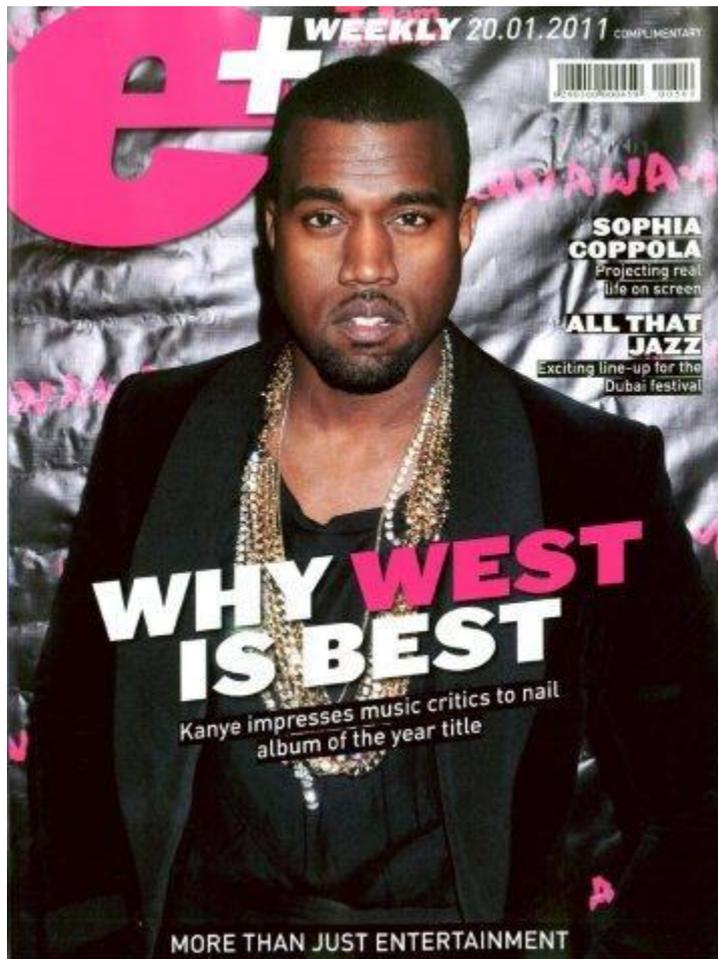


Figure 7.8

The image predominantly features a black man wearing a monochrome jacket looking at the camera. His mouth is open and he has frown lines on his forehead. Underneath the jacket, he is wearing a T-shirt, and a lot of chains. The man who appears to be in his thirties is well groomed. He has short hair and light stubble.

The image seems to have been taken at an awards ceremony as evidenced by the grey background featuring the word “award” written in magenta. The linguistic messages identify him as Kanye West, and explain that he is featured on the cover because he has “impressed music critics” and won an award. Emmertt G. Price (2012:26) argues that on the one hand, some hip hop artists, from the African American community, which was once marginalised, strive to excel and are driven by the desire to bridge the economic gap. As a result each generation is groomed to be

“more effective, more efficient, and more successful than the past” (Price 2012:26). On the other hand, other hip hop artists also promote the “bad boy” image that is linked to ghetto life and hip hop culture. Kanye West is featured on the cover because he has excelled. In other words, his image was put on the cover based on his abilities and popularity.

In contrast to the lower case font used in Figure 7.5, the font used here is masculine. Bold capital letters are used for the cover line to ensure that it stands out. The magenta colour on the magazine’s name and the awards banner is incorporated into the linguistic message and connotes masculinity because it is a warm colour unlike bright colours such as fuchsia and pink that are associated with women (Flood, Gardiner, Pease & Pringle 2007:4). In addition, other signifiers such as West’s beard, facial expression and clothing signify masculinity.

The cover line “Why West is Best” is poetic, it employs alliteration to grab the reader’s interest. Only his surname “West” is given on first mention because it rhymes with “Best”. The linguistic message connotes conversation by using informal language such as “nail album of the year title”. The magazine addresses the reader directly as a friend and adopts the laid-back conversational style that acquaintances would use.

Furthermore, the words used on the cover have various connotations and readers can assign different meanings to them. For instance, at first glance “West” could be interpreted as referring to the West, the developed world, which is often “represented as being better than non-Western cultures that are usually portrayed as an insignificant other” (Shome 1996:43).

The word “nail” connotes strength and resilience because a nail is strong since it is made of steel or copper. The nail is strong and sharp and can be hammered into hard surfaces such as walls to serve as a peg for hanging things or into wood to function as a fastener. However, when a nail penetrates a soft surface like the human skin the person may feel pain. The linguistic message seems to draw on the metaphor of inflicting pain with a sharp nail to suggest that other candidates who

were competing for the award felt pain when West “nailed it”. Furthermore, the verb “nail” could be construed as suggestive because it has sexual connotations.

The jacket worn with a T-shirt could connote smart casual as opposed to the formal black-tie attire (jacket, shirt and tie) that some male celebrities, particularly Caucasians wear at award ceremonies. West’s dress code could be a way of asserting his identity and bad boy image that is associated with being “cool”.

The jewellery is eye-catching. It is a fashion statement and an integral part of hip pop culture. African-American hip hop artists wear ‘bling’ (jewellery) as a way of expressing themselves and their music. The term ‘bling bling’, which Price (2012:86) says could have originated in the southern part of America signifies wealth and opulence. The word ‘bling’ which was popularised by New Orleans rapper BG and Hot Boys’ 1999 song *Bling Bling* is also a way of asserting ones self-identity.

African-American men are often demonised in the media and represented in a stereotypical manner as “alternately idle and uneducable, or constitutionally criminal and licentious” (Flood et al 2007:7). Furthermore, while African-American masculinity has been linked to physical strength (Flood et al 2007:7), this image shifts it to financial stability. In this image success is defined in financial terms because a lot of money is needed to acquire jewellery and nice clothes. Price (2012:26) notes that “as a culture, hip hop has a central focus on making money and being known; the influence of capitalism and commodification is evident as third-party, external forces as well”. The image promotes consumption of goods, particularly clothing and accessories. It is worth noting that hip hop culture is dominated by the idea of materialistic living as evidenced by 50 Cent’s lyrics “Get rich or die tryin’” (50 Cent 2003) and the song “Mo money, mo problems” as performed by The Notorious B.I.G, Mase and Puff Daddy (The Notorious B.I.G. 1997).

7.3.3 *Wedding of the century*



Figure 7.14

A man and a woman are pictured in front of the national flag of the United Kingdom. The man is wearing a dark suit, and his arm is linked through the woman's. His hands are folded. He is clean-shaven and has short hair. He is also bigger and taller than the woman and his image occupies more space on the frame. The woman, who is shorter than the man, is wearing a blue dress with a plunging neckline, which reveals her necklace. She has a ring on her wedding finger. She is wearing make-up and her long curly hair is parted in the middle. Both male and female are smiling. It is assumed that they are famous since their names are not given. People who keep track of news about the British Royal family would identify the pair as Prince William and his then fiancé Catherine Middleton.

Both the male and female's eyes are averted; they are not looking at the viewer. In their analysis of the role of the gaze in visual representations of social actors, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) described this pose as 'offer image' because no response is expected from the viewer. In other words, the viewer acts as a voyeur. The two celebrities on the cover are subjected to the reader's gaze without their knowledge. It seems as though the celebrities are concentrating on whatever they are involved in and not posing for the reader. The fact that the celebrities seem to be engrossed in something may serve to attract the reader's interest.

Prince William is well-groomed and his image introduces a metrosexual male. Mort (1988:194) observes that "young men are being sold images which rupture the traditional icons of masculinity". For instance, centuries ago men did not pay attention to their looks, preening was branded taboo or feminine (Mort 1988:194).

The man is holding the woman and this represents cultural values whereby men are supposed to protect women. The fact that the woman is shorter than the man makes her appear vulnerable and vulnerability connotes a femininity that is dependent. Reinforced ideological constructions of romantic love and heterosexuality are promoted as the norm. The image can have an effect on teenagers, particularly girls, as they may be led to believe that what they see on the cover is what really happens during interactions with the opposite sex (Greer 2008:181).

The cultural values expressed through the two celebrities on the cover seem to promote heterosexual relationships. The couple is shown smiling, and this gesture suggests that they are happy. Linking arms and smiling is meant to convey to readers what an ideal heterosexual romance is like. This image appears to promote the myth of happiness and seems to suggest that it is achieved through marriage. The notion of binary oppositions is applied as the implication is that people who are not married are not happy. In other words, readers are called upon to emulate the lives of the celebrities featured on the cover.

The image uses a shared prior cultural experience to attribute meaning to the symbolic representation of the subjects. For example, the ring on the woman's finger

signifies that they are engaged. It is assumed that readers know that the photograph was taken after the engagement in the lead up to the wedding.

The expensive ring and clothing connote luxury and wealth. The couple's power is linked to financial success as evidenced by the fact that they have the means to pay for the "wedding of the century". The Prince's suit signifies authority and is meant to promote consumption.

The crown signifies royalty. The flag connotes British pride and power. It is a national symbol that brings all British citizens together. Although Britain has modern democratic institutions, the monarchy still has influence in the United Kingdom and in some of its former colonies. The national flags of some former colonies still feature the Union flag in the upper left-hand quarter.

The image uses the wedding myth and seems to suggest that a wedding is one of the most important days in one's life, particularly for a bride (Luo 2012). In most cultures, including British culture, girls are socialised to plan for the big day and at a wedding the focus is the bride, especially the dress. Everything should be perfect from the bridesmaids, the dress and the guest list. The image promotes dominant ideologies of consumerism and capitalism. It is referred to as the "Wedding of the century" and the linguistic message "Where to celebrate in the UAE" reinforces that it is an international event that will be celebrated in various parts of the world.

Brides are usually presented as beautiful and happy (Luo 2012). The wedding myth is further promoted by borrowing concepts from fairy tales, for example, fairy princesses wear crowns. In addition, in fairy tales, the Prince marries his bride and they live happily ever after, which is alluded to by the fact that the couple is shown smiling and looking happy. The image serves as an ideological sign that transmits to the reader what an ideal wedding should be like.

7.3.4 Boy racers!

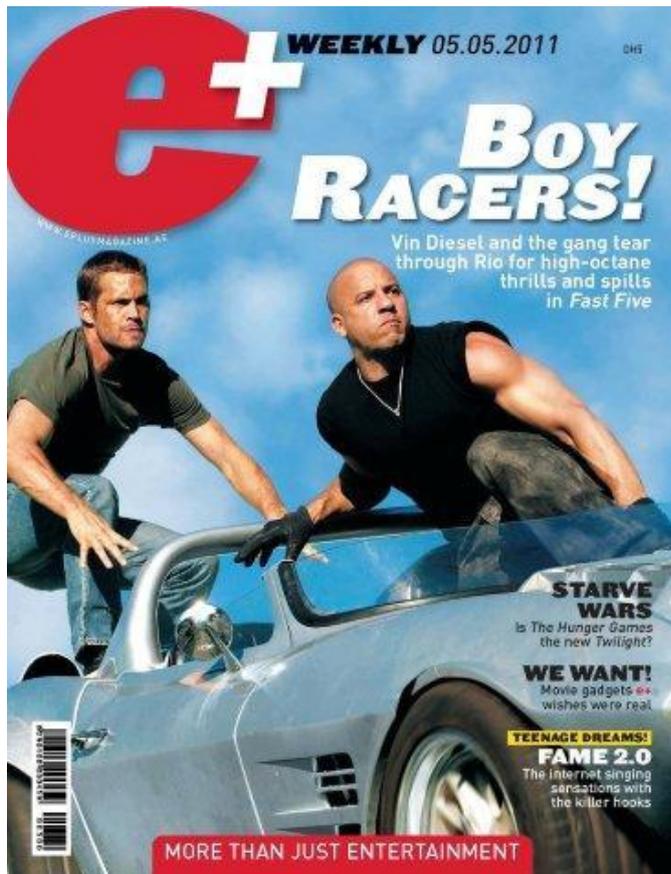


Figure 7.15

The image of two Caucasian men, who seem to be in their forties, jumping from a car features prominently on the cover. One's head is clean-shaven and the other has short hair. Both have no facial hair. They are wearing jeans and T-shirts. The man on the right is wearing a necklace and black gloves. Both have an intense look on their faces and their eyes are focused on something straight ahead connoting that they are prepared to deal with issues straight on. This is in line with findings from David Machin's (2010) study of music CD covers which focused on the musicians' gaze and revealed that looking outside the frame connoted certain moods or emotions. For example, Machin (2010) noted that looking up signifies that someone is optimistic and up-beat while looking down connotes that they are depressed.

The cover line refers to "Vin Diesel and the gang" but does not specify which one of the two is Vin Diesel. Even the names of the "gang" members are not given. It is

assumed that readers have a certain level of knowledge about the movie franchise and know who the characters are. The setting is Rio. The language used is informal because Rio is short for Brazil's Rio de Janeiro.

The image seems to be a still from the movie *Fast Five*. The men are caught in action jumping from a car. The visually arresting image celebrates athleticism since the men are shown to be fit and can jump from a car with ease. They are wearing jeans and T-shirts which signify casual attire that is appropriate for outdoor adventurers.

Convertible cars are well-known for speed and serve as a status symbol. A convertible car is also associated with 'bad boys'. The blue background conjures images of the blue sky and white clouds, which signify good weather that is perfect for driving with the roof down. Blue connotes masculinity since it is a binary opposition to the feminine pink. The setting is Rio, a city that hosts carnivals and offers vibrant life (Brazil, Ministerio Do Turismo). The celebrities are represented as adrenaline-fuelled 'junkies' having fun outdoors. The possession of a car signifies their social status, and that, in addition to having money, they have good taste.

Readers familiar with the movie franchise will identify Vin Diesel as the man wearing a chain, gloves and a muscle top. The reader is positioned to view Vin Diesel as the leader of the gang because only his name is given and he is more muscular than the other man on the cover. Vin Diesel is represented as an alpha male, the leader of the 'pack'. The two celebrities are adults who appear to be in their forties, but the term 'Boy racers' is used in the textual message to refer to them. It is important to note that in this context the word is used as a term of endearment rather than to demean them. "Boy" connotes being naughty. The image promotes the masculinity that is reflected through courage and team work, hence the term "gang" is used to refer to them.

The colours used; black, blue and silver are powerful signifiers of masculinity. The image is evocative and equates masculinity with being reckless and engaging in high adrenaline activities that are often dangerous. The focus is on the car, physical strength, and fashion and this could influence teenagers into believing that men are

tough and supposed to steer away “from the volatile terrain of emotions” (Winship 1987:154). The images of the celebrities also promote a muscular body, virility and strength as the ideal masculinity. The relationship implied through their body language and linguistic message “gang” suggests that they are heterosexual. Like Figure 7.8 this image shows that role models for boys are based more on their abilities and physical strength rather than their age or looks.

7.3.5 *Ultimate celeb diets!*

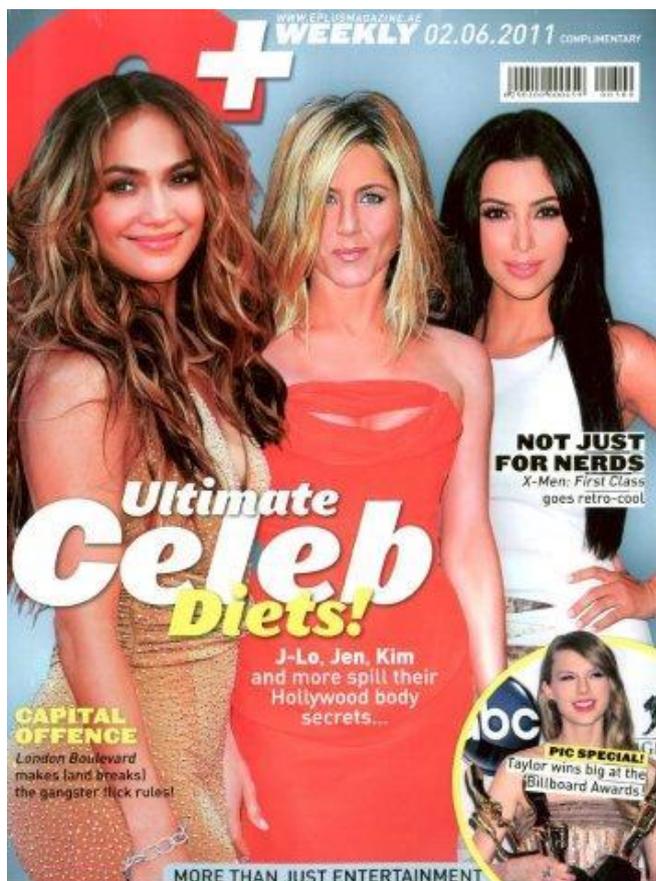


Figure 7.17

Three women who seem to be aged between 30 and 40 are featured against a pale blue background. The women are shown in various poses, and their bright dresses, hair colour and hairstyles catch the reader’s eye. The linguistic message identifies them with the short forms of their names as J-Lo, Jen and Kim. Their surnames are not given, probably because they are believed to be famous enough for readers to know who they are. Epstein (2005:13) observes that “the greatest celebrities are

those who do not even require their full names to be mentioned”. In addition, using their nicknames creates the idea of familiarity. Using nicknames gives the impression that readers know the celebrities as friends.

J-Lo (Jeniffer Lopez) is wearing a peach evening gown that closely resembles her skin tone. Her side view is shown and she is smiling with her lips closed. J-Lo has long curly hair that is parted in the middle and cascades down covering part of her face and shoulders. Jen (Jeniffer Aniston) is wearing a slinky, strapless, red dress. She has blonde hair, however, to an alert eye it becomes apparent that the roots are black. This tell-tale sign shows that she is not a natural blonde. Changing the colour of her hair probably to improve her looks could be a fashion statement. Kim (Kim Kardashian) is wearing an all-white outfit, has one hand on her waist and is pouting, which connote a sexualised pose. She has long, jet-black straight hair that sharply contrasts with her white outfit.

All three celebrities are wearing make-up and looking straight at the camera or viewer. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) describe this kind of picture as a “demand image”, which acknowledges and establishes a relationship between the celebrities and the viewer. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) argue that a demand image requires an emotional response from the viewer.

Their outfits connote glamour and the celebrities are presented as icons of beauty and success. The images promote sensual femininity as evidenced by the signifiers of soft colours and the beauty of the celebrities. The images are meant to create aspirational needs in readers. However, Sturken and Cartwright (2009:39) point out that “what counts as glamorous or sexy changes according to shifts in cultural ideas about beauty and visual pleasure”. For example, Katzmarzyk & Davis’ (2001) study on body weight and shape of *Playboy* centrefolds found that in the late 1970s women’s body size and shape were bigger but over the years the thinner and leaner body types became desirable. In addition, fashion trends change. Also, it is worth noting that the concept of beauty and perceptions of the ideal body type differ from one culture to another. For example, a voluptuous woman may be considered beautiful by Latinas and African Americans but viewed differently by white Americans or Asians. Moreover, Western cultures favour a tanned body while in Asia, especially

India, most people desire to have fair skin, which is linked to the caste system (Frith & Mueller 2010:118). The Brahmin, the top class in the Indian caste system, are fair skinned while the untouchables (*Shudras*), the lowest caste, are dark. Frith and Mueller (2010:118) argue that “for Hindu women, beauty is measured by how fair her skin is”.

Jen is wearing red, a colour that is usually associated with sex and passion in the West. The ‘Lady in Red’ displays a form of sexual availability and uses her sensuality for example the make-up, blonde hair and sexy gown to attract men instead of obvious sexual advances. However, in some parts of the world, particularly India among the Hindus, red (*laal*) means something totally different to that of Hollywood. In India, red is associated with marriage and love, hence during Hindu weddings brides wear red *saris* with a bit of white (Ramdya 2010:37).

Kim’s all-white clothing is a fashion statement. She uses her glamorous wardrobe to attract attention. In addition, white connotes neatness and not getting dirty, something she can afford since she has money to hire assistants and people to do her laundry to keep her clothes clean. Bowen and Thompson (2013:238) argue that people are more likely to identify with a subject that is in the foreground of a photo rather than in the background. However, in this image the focus is on all the three celebrities because Jen’s red dress and Kim’s all-white also draw the reader’s eye to them.

The three celebrities on the cover are of different nationalities, J-Lo is Latina, Jen is Caucasian and Kim is of Armenian descent. The body types projected through the celebrities vary, for example, J-Lo is voluptuous, Kim is medium weight and Jen is slim. It therefore becomes difficult for the reader to know what the Hollywood body looks like. Viewed from another perspective the images of the three celebrities represent reality on the ground. The three celebrities are used to show that people of different nationalities have different body shapes and sizes, traits that are determined by the genes. The images of celebrities are used to promote consumerism since they are featured on the cover because of their diets. The images are meant to encourage readers to diet so they can look like their favourite celebrities.

7.3.6 Teen queens



Figure 7.22

Two teenagers are featured on the cover. Closely examining the image reveals that their photographs were shot separately and put together using editing technology. Willow Smith is Will Smith and Jada Pinket-Smith's daughter and Kendall Jenner comes from the Kardashian family.

Willow, 14, has one hand on her waist, a pose which is popular among runway models and connotes her youthfulness and suppleness. Her braids are piled up in a ponytail exposing her facial features. Braids are a cultural symbol, which distinguish Willow as an African American. She is wearing a graphic T-shirt, and a pink jacket and scarf. The pink colour reinforces that she is a girl because it is often associated with femininity. The graphic T-shirt connotes casual attire and playfulness, which is linked to youthfulness.

The 17-year-old Kendall is wearing a cocktail dress and her face is heavily made up, which make her appear mature for her age. Her dress has animal print designs connoting being wild and unrestrained and these are associated with teenage rebellion. The animal print represents uninhibited, wild instincts associated with big cats or the feline; hence the leopard print may signify that she is a sex-kitten. Her loose up-do hairstyle connotes elegance and adds a chic element to her look. The hairstyle is suitable for special occasions. She is smiling and looking seductively at the camera.

Kendall is bold and exhibiting a flirtatious stance while Willow who is three years younger than her is more subtle. Willow is tilting her head coyly, a pose common among teenage girls, particularly when they have a crush on a boy and want to gain his attention without being overly seductive (Dickson & Charlesworth 2012). This image shows that flirting is alright and in a way encourages teenage girls to take the initiative. The medium shot's focus is on their flawless skin and this connotes youthfulness. The image reinforces the notion that youthfulness is desirable.

Women are often identified through men as a wife, sister or daughter but this study found that Kendall is not identified through a male relative but through her sister Kim. Identifying Kendal through her sister could be viewed as a departure from traditional, hegemonic patriarchal ways of introduction. On the other hand, Willow seems to be represented as successful in her own right. But readers who know that she is Will Smith's daughter can read between the lines and infer from the linguistic message "future movie mogul" that she is following in her father's footsteps. The cover lines use prior shared cultural experiences and knowledge to attribute meaning to signs.

The two girls are referred to as "Teen Queens". The word "queen" seems to be an unnatural choice to use to refer to teenagers, probably "princesses" would have been more appropriate. However, in America, there is the tradition of proms in high schools, where at the end of the event one student is crowned Prom Queen. Usually the most popular and prettiest girl is voted Prom Queen. The term "queen" signifies that the two teenagers are high achievers. The fact that an American concept of proms has been adopted in most parts of the world and that the word "queen" used on the cover is understood by readers in the Middle East could point to the influence

of globalisation. John B. Thompson (1995:149) argues that globalisation “refers to the growing interconnectedness of different parts of the world, a process which gives rise to complex forms of interaction and interdependency”.

In a cosmopolitan society such as the UAE teenagers are exposed to other cultures through interacting with different nationalities, and consumption of media. In the UAE prom has also become a big event, even in Indian and Pakistan schools, proving that “the locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them” (Tomlinson 1997:176). Proms which are in a way a rite of passage have been commodified; a lot of money is spent on hiring limousines and buying clothes. Teenage girls can copy Kendall’s gown and her elegant loose up-do hairstyle which is perfect for a special occasion like a prom.

“Teen Queen” could also be an allusion to beauty pageants since Kendall is a supermodel. Kendall and Willow’s poses and clothes resemble those often featured on the ramp. The link between prom and beauty pageants is that both focus on fashion, make-up and hairstyles. Also, they are both referred to as A-list kids, connoting that they come from successful families in the entertainment industry and have also made their own mark.

The linguistic message mentions Tinseltown, an informal name for Hollywood because of the glamour and glitter associated with the movie industry and its icons. The pink, white and yellow colours used on magazine branding and cover lines are feminine.

Having examined the myths and ideologies that are promoted by the images of male and female celebrities, the next section focuses on the influence of celebrities on teenagers. The information gained while analysing the images of celebrities on the six covers was helpful in developing the moderator’s guide. A visual semiotic analysis helped the researcher become familiar with the images of celebrities that were featured on the covers of e+ magazine. In addition, a visual semiotic analysis revealed codes that were used to represent male and female celebrities and the data was used to formulate questions that were included in the moderator’s guide.

7.4 Findings from focus-group interviews (please see Addenda D on page 198)

To qualify for the study a respondent had to be a teenager aged between 16 and 19 years. In addition, focus-group interview respondents should have been reading e+ for at least two years before it closed in 2011. Pre-group questionnaires were sent to 30 teenagers aged between 16 and 19, which were selected using snowball sampling. Twenty-four out of 30 teenagers filled out and returned the questionnaires. Some respondents completed questionnaires, scanned and emailed them but many were returned in person.

The response rate was high among girls with 14 out of 15 (93 percent) returning the filled out questionnaires because their parents got involved as they wanted to establish that the research being conducted was genuine. Moreover, some parents accompanied their daughters when they went over to submit the questionnaires because they wanted to meet the researcher in person before their children took part in focus-group interviews. In the Middle East region families are protective of women for security and social reasons. On the other hand, 10 boys out of 15 (67 percent) responded. The overall response rate was 80 percent. Of the remaining six, two wrote back stating that they were not able to take part in the study because they were not comfortable with participating in focus-group interviews while four did not respond to the follow-up emails.

For the focus-group interviews, 18 respondents who fit the criteria were selected from the 24 participants who returned the pre-group questionnaires. The participants were drawn from different cultural groups living in the UAE. The mean age was 17.5 years which translates to 17 years and six months. Out of 18 respondents there were nine boys and nine girls from different countries including Lebanon, the UAE, India, the Philippines, Pakistan and Britain. There was one Lebanese, one Emirati (UAE national), six Indians, two Filipinas (females from the Philippines) and two Filipinos (males from the Philippines), four Pakistanis and two British teenagers who participated in the study.

The focus-group interviews were conducted following the moderator's guide (Figure 4.4), which contained questions that were meant to obtain data on how teenagers living in the UAE experience the images of celebrities. The narrative was transcribed and the data analysed highlighting issues that emerged, which were then accumulated into potential themes (Grbich 2013:21-23) that are discussed in the sections below. The following sections focus on how teenagers experienced celebrity culture. Furthermore, the way images of celebrities shaped the teenager's tastes and perceptions is examined. The themes that emerged from focus-group findings include, using celebrities as role models and benchmarks. The study also found that teenagers followed trends that were set by celebrities. Each theme is discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

7.4.1 Teenagers using celebrities as role models

Gauntlett (2005:158) defines a role model as "someone to look up to and base your character, values or aspirations upon". In other words, a role model is an individual who is perceived as having qualities that are worthy of imitation. It is worth noting that in the present age teenagers spend a lot of time consuming the media. Teenagers are constantly exposed to messages about celebrities due to the proliferation of communication technologies and availability of entertainment media. Given the amount of time teenagers spend consuming media, Potter (2005:234) argues that it is becoming common for them to have role models that are mediated through media such as celebrities.

The findings from the three focus-group interviews showed that some teenagers embraced mediated celebrities as role models while others looked down upon them because of the way they dressed or behaved. The results revealed that teenagers tended to emulate celebrities whom they thought had positive attributes. Struchen and Porta (1997:120) note that teenagers choose role models in whom they find a "positive image or identity that appeals to them". Seeing celebrities being rewarded for their behaviour served as an incentive for teenagers to emulate them. For example, in focus-group Y a 19-year-old Indian boy said he wanted to drop out of school so he could earn money and live a luxurious lifestyle like Daniel Radcliff (Figure 7.38). Another participant wanted to be like Kanye West because "guys like

Kanye West have got it, he really brings the house down. I wish I had a voice like his. I'd use it to serenade girls" (Figure 7.39).

In focus-groups X, Y and Z, teenagers said they learnt gender roles from celebrities. The images of female celebrities featured on the covers of e+ magazine represented an ideal woman in a gender stereotypical way as someone who was well groomed, wore nice clothes and had flawless skin. Most teenage girls from group X and Z said the images put pressure on them to look well-groomed. Some tried to look "prim and proper" like celebrities because they believed it was socially acceptable (Figure 7.37). The findings are similar to Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stravropolous and Kirby's (2003:198) study which revealed that images of female celebrities "teach girls that they should desire to be beautiful and show them how to look beautiful". All the teenage girls were aware that celebrities used make-up to conceal their blemishes (Figure 7.37 and Figure 7.39). The images of celebrities promote looking to the market for solutions. As a result a 17-year-old Indian girl, who could not afford to buy the products felt poorly about herself because whatever she did she still went out "looking dishevelled" as she could not hide her imperfections (Figure 7.37).

Teenage girls were influenced by representations of female celebrities because girls look up to other girls and older women to learn what society considers acceptable feminine behaviour (Kilbourne 1999:138). In other words, teenage girls got guidance regarding how they are expected to behave as girls and women in the future from the images of celebrities. For instance, a 16-year-old Indian girl from the mixed group said she admired celebrities because they "are beautiful and rich and want to look like Deepika or Kat but my parents cannot afford to buy me nice clothes and make-up" (Figure 7.39).

On the other hand, teenage boys learnt what is popularly perpetuated regarding what it means to be a man from the male celebrities. In contrast to the representations of female celebrities, which focused more on beauty and clothing, the ideal man was portrayed as being active, daring, strong, adventurous and not afraid to do dangerous things. Male celebrities were represented in a stereotypical manner in relation to power and as being energetic. The focus on men's bodies had more to do with their performance; hence teenage boys said they were influenced by

images of muscular celebrities to the extent that some of them got a gym membership. For example, an 18-year-old Filipino said “I lift weights but I am not there yet” (Figure 7.38). However, some teenagers were influenced by other people in society, for example, a 16-year-old Lebanese boy cited his physical education teacher as an authoritative figure that he looked up to (Figure 7.38).

Tiggemann (2006:523-541) argues that the effects of media saturation leads to the “pervasive transmission of societal beauty ideals”. Findings revealed that representations of celebrities on the covers put pressure on teenagers to obtain the idealised body images. It was not girls alone who were dissatisfied with their bodies and under pressure to conform to the ideal, boys too wanted their bodies to look like their favourite celebrities’. To achieve the slim ideal some girls resorted to dieting while boys lifted more weights in the gym to build muscle. One 18-year-old Filipino contemplated taking supplements (Figure 7.38).

Furthermore, the images of celebrities influenced the teenagers’ attitudes towards what they considered desirable in the other gender. For example, in the girls only focus-group, a 17-year-old Indian girl said that she wanted to “marry a hunk like Ranbir but with a body like Vin Diesel” (Figure 7.37). However, her peers pointed out that it was difficult to find a partner who matched the idealised male body images that were presented on the covers. To demonstrate that it was a far-fetched wish, one participant said, “keep on dreaming. No one like that exists. Even in Bollywood itself my friend” (Figure 7.37). Moreover, some of the girls were aware that it was not only one’s physical appearance that mattered when choosing a partner. An 18-year-old Pakistani girl pointed out that “parents are not concerned about looks and a six pack” but “look for a boy from a good family who is well settled and can take good care of you” (Figure 7.37). The peer’s contributions highlight the importance of financial stability and good conduct.

Findings showed the images of female celebrities had different effects on teenage boys. While some teenage boys admired female celebrities in sexy clothes, the same images were viewed differently by others. For instance, a 19-year-old Pakistani boy in focus-group Y felt that images of women in “skimpy clothes look gross. Too much flesh everywhere. Women should cover themselves to protect their

family honour” (Figure 7.38). He felt that images of scantily dressed celebrities promoted a culture of nudity and debauchery (Figure 7.38). The findings from the mixed gender focus-group revealed that the desirable body type varies because “it is a matter of personal taste” (Figure 7.39).

The findings showed that images of celebrities perpetuated gender stereotypes. For example, Figure 7.19 gave teenagers the impression that it was acceptable for men to have several romantic partners. For instance, an 18-year-old British boy pointed out that “it’s acceptable for guys to fool around. Most dudes, especially those who have the dosh have girlfriends or mistresses all over the world and they get away with it” (Figure 7.39). Closely related to the above, teenagers used images of celebrities as benchmarks to evaluate themselves.

7.4.2 Teenagers using celebrities as benchmarks

Focus-group interview findings showed that teenagers used images of celebrities as benchmarks to gauge themselves. For example, some teenagers used images of celebrities as a basis for comparison of physical attributes. The study found that for physical characteristics, teenage boys compared themselves to male celebrities while girls measured themselves against female celebrities. This trend is in line with Leon Festinger’s (1954) social comparison theory where he argues that people strive to evaluate their opinions and abilities and often compare themselves to those who are similar to them. Research findings revealed that using celebrities as yardsticks had two effects on teenagers. First, after exposure to images of muscular male celebrities and tall, slim female celebrities respectively, teenage boys and girls were dissatisfied with their bodies.

Vulnerable teenagers, for example, an overweight 18-year-old Indian girl and a 17-year-old Indian girl who has pimples, reported feeling jealousy, stressed and angry when they evaluated themselves against celebrities on the covers (Figure 7.37). Respondent D said, “I tried dieting, food deliveries, but nothing works. I even tried those ayurvedic stretching exercises to gain a few inches but I am still short” (Figure 7.37). She resorted to unhealthy practices such as dieting and starving herself because she was under pressure to achieve the ideal since her weight had a bearing

on her prospects of getting a marriage partner (Figure 7.37). On the other hand, teenage girls who were satisfied with their body image were less influenced by exposure to images of celebrities. For instance, an 18-year-old Pakistani girl did not care about make-up and only used “lip balm to moisturise my lips. Like my mum I prefer ze *au naturel* look” (Figure 7.37). The above examples show that, in addition to the images of celebrities, the teenage girls’ families played an important role in shaping their daughters’ perceptions about their body image.

Results of this study were consistent with findings of other studies including Tiggemann and McGill’s (2004:26) research which found that exposure to a “thin ideal image elicits appearance concerns and evokes comparison processing in vulnerable women”. Furthermore, Wiggin, Caron and McGrath’s (2010) study revealed that factors such as familial relationships contributed towards one’s poor concept of their body image.

Among boys, exposure to idealised images of muscular celebrities such as Vin Diesel stimulated social comparison and resulted in body dissatisfaction. Gauntlett (2005:78) argues that today men are expected to work out and develop toned bodies. In addition, teenage boys used images of rich and successful celebrities for self-evaluation and self-improvement. The images of celebrities prompted teenagers to think about following in the footsteps of their favourite stars. For example Respondent K in the boys-only focus-group was contemplating leaving school to try his “luck in reality shows on NDTV” so he can make money like *Harry Potter* star Daniel Radcliff.

Findings revealed that boys wanted to live out their fantasies through material things such as cars. For example, one wanted to have the car “souped up... and cruise on the Jumeirah Beach Road on weekends with all the girls drooling over me” (Figure 7.38). Male celebrities were represented as active, and this had an influence on boys as evidenced by the fact that they too wanted to be able to do things such as drive fast cars like Vin Diesel in Figure 7.15 and play with “cool toys” [guns] like Johnny Depp (Figure 7.16)

7.4.3 Teenagers using celebrities to forge their self-identity

A person's physical appearance is an integral part of their identity. Teenagers express their identity and personality through clothing, accessories, beauty products they use and hairstyles they wear. Teenagers try to conform to ideals promoted by celebrities since they believe these to be valued by society. Therefore, observing and emulating celebrity role models in media helps teenagers gather "lots of information about what it takes to be successful and happy" and gain acceptance in society (Potter 2005:234). Lacan (quoted in Olivier 2006:19) argues that when an individual identifies with someone beyond the mirror stage they may want to assume all the attributes of the person they identify with.

To attain the ideal and resemble their favourite celebrities, teenagers turned to products available on the market. An example is a 17-year-old Filipina who used to take products from her mother's vanity box and recreate the looks sported by celebrities when going out on weekends. Failure to get the look right caused distress and she says, "the other day I was going mental it's like I was struggling to make my thin lips fuller like Angelina Jolie's. I was practically in tears when my mum told me to use a lip pencil. Walla: a sexy bee-stung pout like Angelina Jolie without Botox" (Figure 7.37).

Research findings revealed that most teenage girls took inspiration from the clothing, make-up and hairstyles worn by celebrities. However, it is important to note that teenagers did not just imitate celebrities; instead they added certain elements to personalise and create their unique style and identity. A case in point is a 16-year-old Indian girl who says "I rocked Kat's look for my friend's birthday and for my cousin's wedding I actually took the mag with Kat's pic to India and showed it to the aunt who was hired to do the bride's hair and make-up" (Figure 7.39). The aunt recreated the look but also added a personal touch by pinning "some flowers, you know, in South Indian weddings women put flowers in their hair (looking at other group members). Everyone said I looked glamorous like a Bollywood starlet" (Figure 7.39). This point leads to the next section which discusses how celebrities as trendsetters influence teenagers.

7.4.4 Teenagers following trends set by celebrities

The findings from the three focus-group interviews revealed that images of celebrities influenced the teenagers' tastes. For instance, teenagers looked up to celebrities for fashionable clothing, new make-up trends and hairstyles. Seventeen-year-old C from Group X looked up to celebrities for new make-up trends. She said she used "to check out the latest looks that the actresses were sporting for inspiration" (Figure 7.37).

Findings revealed that the images of celebrities had an impact on the teenager's clothing choices. For example, an 18-year-old Indian girl said she bought jewellery that she saw Bollywood celebrities wearing because it is a status symbol. The findings show that celebrities promoted consumerism because some respondents from all the three groups went on to buy the products that celebrities were shown wearing. The merchandise ranged from clothing, jewellery and beauty products. A 17-year-old British boy was even planning to ask his parents to buy him a car like Vin Diesel's for his 21st birthday (Figure 7.38). He was prepared to do everything it takes, including being "a good boy so my parents can buy it [convertible] for me. Once I take off the covers I'll have it souped up" (Figure 7.38).

The images of celebrities influenced the teenagers' spending habits. Teenagers spent a lot of money on beauty products, accessories and clothing. Some did not make actual purchases because they could not afford to, however, they still had a desire to buy the products and if they had the resources they would have bought them. The results of this research were consistent with findings from Magkosa's (2010) study which found that teenagers in Botswana tended to buy products that were endorsed by favourite celebrities.

7.4.5 Nature of the influences of celebrities on teenagers

The results showed that celebrities do have an influence on teenagers but the degree and area of influence varies. In other words, representations of celebrities impacted different aspects of the teenagers' lives either positively or negatively. For example, respondent D who was dissatisfied with her body felt worse about her

physical appearance after reading e+ while respondent E who does not like make-up was not bothered by images showing celebrities wearing make-up. However, respondent E's fashion taste was influenced by celebrities. She was always "on the lookout for cool pieces that Bollywood celebrities wear" (Figure 7.37).

Some respondents reported that the representations of celebrities had minimal influence on their lives because they read the magazine for fun and did not take the content seriously. The above discussion shows that readers are selective. Each teenager focused on what was relevant to his or her situation and ignored the other aspects. The way teenagers read and assigned meanings to images of celebrities on the covers was influenced and "connected to experiences and social structures outside the world of media" (Croteau & Haynes 2002:289). For instance, the teenagers' cultural backgrounds, income levels and religion had a bearing on the way they experience the images of celebrities.

The results from all the three groups were more or less similar regardless of the gender of the respondents. Representing celebrities in gender stereotypical ways influenced both boys and girls. Although teenagers did not use the term "stereotype" they alluded to gender stereotypes. Focus-group findings revealed that the images of celebrities shaped the teenagers' perceptions about physical appearance and behaviours that society considers appropriate for men and women. For example, a 17-year-old Filipina was surprised to learn that another respondent did not like make-up and remarked "What kind of girl are you? All girls love make-up, bags and shoes" (Figure 7.37). Moreover, a 17-year-old Pakistani girl said, "If I lose weight I'll get a handsome boy like Ranbir. He's so delicious..." (Figure 7.39). However, other teenagers seemed to be aware that it is impossible to achieve the ideals promoted by images of celebrities. Furthermore, some teenagers pointed out that masculine and feminine ideals change over time. For instance, a 16-year-old Indian girl commented that "It's complicated; you never know what is good. They said hips don't lie but these days talk about the 'thigh gap'" (Figure 7.39).

Findings revealed that teenage girls from the girls-only and mixed focus-group were mainly concerned about having flawless skin and slim bodies. On the other hand, results showed that teenage boys from both the boys-only and mixed group wanted

their physique to resemble Vin Diesel's. The gender compositions of the focus-groups only had a minimal impact on the nature of the findings.

All three focus-groups addressed the issue of characteristics that were deemed desirable by the opposite sex. In the boys-only and girls-only focus-groups, the respondents tended to speculate, whereas in the mixed group boys and girls debated the topic. Having both boys and girls in group Z yielded a true reflection as they reached the conclusion that the desirable body type depends on the individual. Group Z stated that what may be considered beautiful by one person may not be appreciated by another. It is therefore not surprising that three totally different celebrities represent the 'Hollywood body' (Figure 7.17).

7.5 CONCLUSION

The research findings were presented in this chapter. Results from a quantitative content analysis showed that more female celebrities compared to male celebrities were featured on the covers. However, an in-depth analysis revealed that, although female celebrities dominated in terms of numbers, they were underrepresented in terms of quality of representation as they featured mainly in subordinate roles.

Furthermore, a visual semiotic analysis explored the meanings of the signs as represented on six covers and examined recurring patterns to understand the ideals that were promoted and how they might have been experienced by teenagers living in the UAE.

The findings from focus-group interviews revealed that teenagers living in the UAE used celebrities featured on the front covers of e+ magazine as role models and benchmarks. The study found that both male and female celebrities were represented in gender stereotypical ways and this had an influence on both teenage boys and girls because the images make up a discourse on what it means to be feminine and masculine or successful in society (Potter 2005:234). Moreover, the images of celebrities circulated ideologies such as capitalism and consumerism and reinforced patriarchal ideology by promoting certain ideals. The next chapter presents a discussion of the research findings.

CHAPTER 8: INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This study uses triangulation, a technique that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Although the results of the quantitative content analysis, qualitative visual semiotic analysis and focus-group interviews are presented separately, synthesising will occur at the interpretation stage where applicable. Bringing together results from qualitative and quantitative research helps cross-check one data set against another. In addition, it makes it possible to clarify and answer research questions from different perspectives (Grbich 2013:27).

Sturken and Cartwright (2009:21) argue that “images are important means through which ideologies are produced and onto which ideologies are projected”. The visual images of celebrities that teenagers were increasingly exposed to elicited emotions and responses. For example, some teenagers felt happy while others felt sad because they did not meet the ideals promoted by celebrities. Sturken and Cartwright (2009:25) note that “the capacity of the image to affect viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meanings they involve and the social, political and cultural contexts in which they are viewed”.

This chapter discusses the way male and female celebrities were represented and further examines how the representations were experienced by teenagers living in the UAE. It is worth mentioning that celebrities can shape opinions and beliefs immediately (Potter 2005:234), for example, a teenager can see a hairstyle, like and copy it. Images of celebrities can exert long-term attitudinal effects (Potter 2005:234). For instance, if a teenager is continuously exposed to young, slim celebrities she may end up believing in the thin beauty ideal.

This section begins with gender representation of the covers, particularly gender stereotypes that were employed to represent male and female celebrities. Next the myths and ideologies will be exposed. Finally, the way teenagers experienced the representations of celebrities will be examined.

8.2 Gender representation on the covers

Unlike some studies, particularly those that have focused on news (Gallagher 2001:4), the findings of this study revealed that women were more visible on the covers of e+. Of the 45 celebrities featured on the 24 covers, female celebrities accounted for 56 percent compared to 44 percent male celebrities. However, although women were visible in this study they tended to be represented in unfavourable ways. For example, findings showed that female celebrities were represented as passive objects (Figure 7.35). Mgcineni Pro'Sobopha (2005:118) concurs and notes that "women have always been visible as objects... and rarely have they been acknowledged as subjects of cultural production in their own right". For instance, the girls (Katrina, Deepika and Angela) Ranbir (Kapoor) has "loved, lost and left..." in Figure 7.19, are featured as accessories in a subtle way. The three women are successful actresses, but the focus is not on their careers; they are featured in their capacity as Ranbir's former lovers. This can then be viewed as underrepresentation because of trivialisation of women.

Some boys felt the representation of celebrities was a reflection of what happens in the real world because "it's okay for a guy to have many girl friends" (Figure 7.39). Even some girls seemed to condone Ranbir's behaviour. For instance, a 17-year-old Pakistani girl praised Ranbir for his good looks and linking up with leading ladies in Bollywood (Figure 7.39). She seems to believe that it is acceptable for Ranbir to have relationships with his co-stars in Bollywood. Another female respondent pointed out that "heartthrobs like Ranbir are bad. They are big trouble. Heartbreakers" (Figure 7.39). The aforementioned assertion suggests that it is expected for handsome men to cheat on their romantic partners.

In the girls-only group, the participants focused mainly on Ranbir's looks and did not pay much attention to the women featured alongside him. For example, a 17-year-old Indian girl wanted her parents to find for her a good-looking boy "like Ranbir but with a body like Vin Diesel" (Figure 7.38). Another respondent in the girls-only group described Ranbir as "delicious" (Figure 7.38). It is worth pointing out that Ranbir's name was cited more than other celebrities because most focus-group participants were from the subcontinent and used Ranbir as an example. The above examples

show that teenagers felt connected to celebrities that they were familiar with, particularly those from their own culture.

This study's findings are different from Lindner's (2004) research on portrayal of women in advertisements, which showed that there have been changes from representing women as inferior and subordinate to men in blunt and obvious stereotypical ways. Instead, subtle messages are used to mark women's positions in society. The findings confirm the assumption that female celebrities are inadequately represented in terms of roles while male celebrities feature in leading positions.

8.3 Celebrities represented in gender stereotypical roles

To gain a better understanding of the concepts, this section will begin by defining the terms "gender" and "stereotype". Simone de De Beauvoir (quoted in Butler 2006:1) notes that "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one". De Beauvoir's observation suggests that gender is not only determined biologically but that it is also socially, culturally and historically constructed. O'Barr (2008:2) distinguishes between sex, one's biological traits and gender. He defines gender as the "internalised attitudes and behavioural expectations about maleness and femaleness". In other words, an individual's sex is biologically determined while the way they construct and develop their gender identity is shaped by societal values and mores.

Certain characteristics are used to represent people of different sexes or genders and stereotypes are often adopted. Gender stereotypes tend to focus on a few characteristics in order to promote ideas, beliefs and ideologies about men and women. In a nutshell, gender stereotypes are ideas or assumptions about men and women that are widely circulated and eventually become accepted as the truth. The above observation about stereotypes is linked to Hall's (1997) theory of representation, which acknowledges that representation is selective; it highlights certain things while relegating others to the background.

Gender stereotypes can be used to perpetuate inequalities and some expectations about men and women. In line with earlier research (O'Barr 2008, Das 2000 &

Gunter 1995) this study found that male and female celebrities were represented in gender stereotypical roles. Women featured mainly in subordinate roles as sex objects (Figure 7.5, Figure 7.17 & 7.19) and passive objects (Figure 7.1 & Figure 7.3) while men were represented as dominant (Figure 7.8) and active subjects (Figure 7.4, Figure 7.15 & 7.16). The gender stereotypes that were used to represent male and female celebrities are detailed in the following discussion.

8.3.1 Dominance and subordination

This study found that female celebrities were represented in subordinate roles while male celebrities were featured in stereotypical roles of authority and dominance. Goffman (1978:28) argues that power is expressed through relative size. Where male and female celebrities were featured together on the covers they were presented as a male-dominated couple. In Figure 7.14 Prince William is taller than Catherine and she is shown snuggling into him. In Figure 7.19 Hollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor features prominently since his picture is bigger than those of the three women. These are examples of what MacKinnon (1991:161) describes as a relationship characterised by domination and subordination whereby women are presented in inferior positions and poses.

Female celebrities were shown canting their heads (Figure 7.5, Figure 7.7, Figure 7.10, Figure 7.12 & Figure 7.20), which involves tilting the head laterally. Costa, Menzani and Bitti (2001:64) note that head canting can be interpreted as a “submissive gesture, an appeal for protection, and a form of ingratiation or appeasement achieved by reducing one’s overall height”. On the other hand, the head canting posture is also associated with being flirtatious (Costa et al 2001:64) and can be used by women to seduce men. The above shows that some poses are ambiguous and can be interpreted differently. Male celebrities who were not captured in action were shown with their heads held upright (Figure 7.6, Figure 7.8, Figure 7.21 & Figure 7.23), a posture that is perceived to be more dominant (Costa et al 2001:64).

Costa, Menzani and Bitti (2001:64) point out that other submissive poses include looking over the shoulder (Figure 7.3), and standing with a hand or both hands on

the waist (Figure 7.5, Figure 7.9, Figure 7.17, Figure 7.19 & Figure 7.22). Twenty-eight percent of female celebrities had their hands on the waist (Figure 7.32) compared to 10 percent male celebrities (Figure 7.31).

The findings showed that some female celebrities were portrayed as completed by men (Figure 7.14 & 7.19). This kind of representation shows that patriarchy naturalises binary sexual identities and continually reproduces women to subordinate positions reliant on men. This kind of portrayal had a bearing on the way teenagers experienced the representations. For example, teenage girls viewed men as providers. During focus-group interviews, when talking about marriage, girls referred to “a boy from a good family who is well settled and can take good care of you” (Figure 7.37).

Male celebrities were represented as dominant, powerful, independent and concerned with achievement as evidenced by the fact that they were featured wearing suits (Figure 7.4, Figure 7.6 & Figure 7.14) while none of the female celebrities were wearing business clothes. Most female celebrities were featured wearing evening gowns (Figure 7.3, Figure 7.9, Figure 7.13, Figure 7.17 & Figure 7.19). Female celebrities were shown as being more concerned than men about physical appearance, for example, one of the celebrities comments that “Looks, not talent, matter in Tinseltown” (Figure 7.3) and Figure 7.17 refers to a Hollywood body. Bordo (1993:94) notes that “the size and shape of the body has come to operate as a marker of personal, internal order (or disorder) – as a symbol for the state of the soul”. Many people, particularly women, try to control the body not necessarily for health purposes but to boost their self-esteem by improving their appearance and attaining the ideal weight. However, it is not women alone who are under pressure to conform to societal ideals, men too try to attain the ideal beauty in order to appeal to the opposite sex. Findings from focus-group interviews revealed that boys go to the gym to tone their muscles because they believe that they “need a six pack like Vin Diesel to appeal to girls” (Figure 7.38).

Researchers such as Lynn Weber (1998) have observed that, in the media, men are mostly represented as powerful and judged by their social status and material success. The findings of this study were similar to Weber’s (1998) research as they

revealed that male celebrities' success was measured through their career and social standing in the community. For example, in Figure 7.6 Colin Firth is commended for his performance in the movie *King's Speech* and in Figure 7.8 Kanye West is hailed for winning album of the year title. Focus-group results showed that, in addition to wealth and career success, teenagers judged male celebrities according to their physique and appearance. Both boys and girls said they admired Ranbir because he is handsome, and commended Vin Diesel because he has a toned body.

Weber (1998) notes that while men are portrayed as powerful, women lack authority and are defined in terms of their appearance and relationship to men. Margaret Gallagher (2001) and Chris Barker (2002:107) concur and argue that the representation of women in the media strips them of power. Barker (2002:107) asserts that "women have subject positions constructed for them which place them in patriarchal work of domesticity and beautification". In contrast to research projects (Barker 2002, Das 2000 & Gunter 1986) which have shown that women are mostly featured in domestic settings, this study revealed that most female celebrities featured are successful in their own right. This study found that most female celebrities were judged by their career successes. Female celebrities were praised for their performances (Figure 7.2 Charice is said to have big dreams and Figure 7.7 Kat succeeds in her new movie). Like their male counterparts, the images of female celebrities were used on the cover following the release of their movies (Figure 7.7, Figure 7.9 & Figure 7.13).

However, although these female celebrities were featured as successful they were still represented as attractive and desirable. In other words, the emphasis was still on their beauty. All the female celebrities featured on the covers were wearing make-up and stylish hairstyles showing that they made an effort to groom themselves and look beautiful. In addition, the medium shots (Figure 7.1, Figure 7.3 & Figure 7.13) focus on their faces, hence giving more emphasis on their physical beauty. Teenagers were influenced by this kind of representation. In all the three focus-groups words such as "beautiful", "gorgeous" and "hot" were used to refer to female celebrities. For example, an 18-year-old Filipino remarked that he admired Julia Roberts because "she is a pretty woman with a good heart" (Figure 7.39). The

inflection of his voice seemed to put more emphasis on “pretty woman”, which was also a play on the title of the movie *Pretty Woman* that Julia Roberts starred in.

Having looked at the gender dynamics, the next section examines how sexuality is represented on the covers. The codes that are used to represent male and female celebrities will be highlighted.

8.3.2 Celebrities as sex objects

Female celebrities assumed provocative poses to emphasise their sexuality (Figure 7.5, Figure 7.9, Figure 7.17 & Figure 7.20). Hodge and Kress (2005:297) argue that smiling signifies submission and being ready to please and parted lips signify sexual arousal while narrowed eyes show sexual interest. Furthermore, Hodge & Kress (2005) suggest that the images of smiling models reinforced passivity whereas photographs of pouting women promoted the ideal of attractiveness that is linked to sexual readiness. Eva Margolies and Stan Jones (2008:120) concur and add that “pouting makes the lips look fuller and more sensual. The pucker says, ‘See my kissable mouth’”. Fuller lips are believed to be attractive as evidenced by the growing number of images of pouting girls that are used as profile photographs on Facebook and duck face selfies⁸ that are posted on Twitter and Instagram. A study from the University of Indiana revealed that selective self-presentation, that is the way people project themselves on social media, can make them feel better about themselves because they are in charge and in control of their self-image (Gonzales & Hancock 2010).

⁸ The trend of selfies and duck face photographs can be attributed to the rise of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and Instagram. A duck face involves pressing lips together into the shape of a duck’s bill to make them appear fuller. A selfie is a self-portrait taken while holding a hand-held device such as front-facing smartphone camera at arm’s length. Selfies are associated with the young who use social media, and have often been criticised for narcissism, over-sharing and imitating celebrities. In 2013, selfie was declared the *Oxford Dictionary’s* word of the year.

Furthermore, research shows that men are drawn to women's lips as they consider them to be the most attractive part of a woman's body (*The Daily Mail* 2010). An eye fixation study at Manchester University, which focused on tracking the eye movements of 50 men when they were shown images of women, found that 54 percent of the men spent more than half of the first 10 seconds looking at the lips of women. The study also found that full lips attracted more attention than thin lips as men focused on full lips for around six out of the ten seconds. The findings revealed that "lips represent one of the most sensual aspects of a woman's body and play a critical role in human sexual attraction" (*The Daily Mail* 2010).

The sex appeal of male celebrities was associated with their physique, having toned, muscular bodies. Male celebrities asserted their masculinity by displaying strength and being active (Figure 7.4, Figure 7.15, Figure 7.16, Figure 7.23 & Figure 7.24). Focus-group interview findings showed that girls cited a muscular body like Vin Diesel's as the desirable type in a romantic partner. Teenage boys also wanted to have a body that looks like Vin Diesel's so they could look attractive to girls.

Female celebrities were represented in sexualised clothes (Figure 7.5, Figure 7.9, Figure 7.13 & Figure 7.17) while male celebrities were featured in demure clothing (Figure 7.4, Figure 7.6, Figure 7.14 & Figure 7.24). Lindner (2004:414) argues that featuring women in revealing clothes reinforces the stereotype that women are sex objects. Moreover, female celebrities are represented as sexual objects, for example, signifiers used include "girls" and "item girl" although they are grown women. Findings from focus-group interviews show that such representations influenced teenage boys' perceptions of women. For example, boys used some terms that were featured on the covers to refer to female celebrities (and women in general) and added words such as "chicks" and "cougars".

The use of various terms to refer to female celebrities may suggest that these women promote different kinds of femininities. It is worth analysing the images of masculinity and femininities that are represented on the covers of e+ magazine.

8.3.3 Images of masculinity and femininity

Masculinity and femininity can be described as sets of values and behaviours that are culturally associated with men and women. For Vicenza Priola (2010) masculinity and femininity are socially constructed concepts associated with gender identities and practices rather than one's sex, which is biologically determined. Furthermore, Priola (2010) notes that masculinity and femininity are "discursive constructs (practices and symbols) that provide a means for gender signification". Robert William Connell (2005:33) argues that masculinity and femininity are often constructed in relation and in opposition to each other. Visual codes give an insight into how masculinity and femininity are defined and reproduced. Collinson and Hearn (2005:289-290) argue that masculinity refers to "the discourses and practices which indicate that someone is a man, a member of the category of men". Femininity refers to attributes that are associated or perceived to convey what it means to be a woman in society (Priola 2010).

The study found that gender is articulated by constructing the masculine as the opposite of the feminine, and the feminine as the opposite of the masculine. In other words, masculinity and femininity are constructed as binary oppositions (Fourie 2008:249) through gender stereotypes. Pieter Jacobus Fourie (2008:249) notes that social anthropologist Levi-Strauss argued that behind every sign and meaning there is an oppositional sign and meaning. For example, female celebrities are presented as beautiful (Figure 7.1 & Figure 7.13) while male celebrities are represented as physically strong (Figure 7.15 & Figure 7.23). The stereotypes of femininity and masculinity were constructed through appearance, physique for men and the face and body type for women. The ensuing discussion focuses on other binary oppositions that are used to represent masculinity and femininity. The binary oppositions include active subjects versus passive objects, and the colours that are used to construct masculinity and femininity.

8.3.4 Active subjects and passive objects

In addition to presenting women as beautiful and men as physically strong, another gender binary that was employed was active-passive binary oppositions. The body language exhibited by most female celebrities showed a lack of assertiveness. For example, some female celebrities were shown hiding part of their faces behind their hair (Figure 7.2 & Figure 7.17); and others were featured standing off balance (Figure 7.20). On the other hand, male celebrities were featured in assertive, macho postures including standing straight with relaxed shoulders and head held up (Figure 7.6, Figure 7.8, Figure 7.19, Figure 7.21 & Figure 7.23) and those who were bent were involved in some activity. Quantitative content analysis findings revealed that only 31 percent of male celebrities were passive compared to 56 percent of female celebrities. Moreover, 13 percent of male celebrities were active while there were no active female celebrities featured on the covers under purview (Figure 7.35).

The objectification of female celebrities is illustrated in Figure 7.19. On this cover, female celebrities are featured as an aesthetic dimension to Ranbir's lifestyle. As mentioned earlier, the three female celebrities are featured in a decorative role (Strickland 2002:150) though they are successful actresses. Teenage boys were influenced by this kind of representation and some thought it was acceptable for men to have many romantic partners. An 18-year-old British boy confessed that he had two girlfriends (Figure 7.39).

Female celebrities were represented as passive objects while male celebrities were featured as active subjects. This shows that masculinity is constructed through action and assertiveness while femininity is expressed through inaction and passivity. The next subsection examines how colour is used to construct masculinity and femininity.

8.3.5 Construction of masculinity and femininity through colour

Colour can be used to convey meaning and reinforce certain attributes to readers (Madden, Hewett & Roth 2000). Furthermore, colour can be used to distinguish what is feminine and what is considered to be masculine. Strong, bold colours such as

black (Figure 7.4, Figure 7.6, Figure 7.8 & Figure 7.23); blue (Figure 7.11, Figure 7.14, Figure 7.15, Figure 7.16 & Figure 7.21), grey (Figure 7.4) and brown (Figure 7.24) are used to symbolise masculinity (Madden, Hewett & Roth 2000).

Muted soft colours such as pink (Figure 7.20 & Figure 7.22) and bright colours including red (Figure 7.9, Figure 7.13 & Figure 7.17), and white (Figure 7.5, Figure 7.7 & Figure 7.19) are used to represent femininity. A soft colour scheme is also used for the background for images of female celebrities that were put together using computer technologies (Figure 7.17 & Figure 7.22) while dark colours are used for males (Figure 7.21 & Figure 7.23). The background where both male and female are featured is neutral (Figure 7.19). Although different codes are used to represent male and female celebrities, it is important to note that celebrities of the same gender, for example men may promote different forms of masculinities. The following subsection discusses the different types of masculinities and femininities that are promoted by the celebrities featured on the covers.

8.3.6 *Forms of masculinities and femininities*

The findings revealed that there are different types of masculinities and femininities. For instance, the form of masculinity represented by members of American boy band Thirty Second to Mars (Figure 7.11) is different from that portrayed by Prince William (Figure 7.14) or Ranbir (Figure 7.19). The band members represent a carefree rock'n'roll lifestyle while the prince, who is about to get married, stands for a polished, refined, heterosexual masculinity. The old men wearing cowboy hats (Figure 7.24) promote rugged masculinity while Vin Diesel and his 'gang member' (Figure 7.15) represent a masculinity that is based on strength and virility. There is yet another kind of masculinity that is advanced by well-groomed metrosexual males (Figure 7.6 & Figure 7.4).

In the same vein sensual femininity promoted by Julia Roberts (Figure 7.1), who is represented as a mature successful career and family woman differs from values and attributes embodied by Deepika Padukone (Figure 7.5) and Reese Witherspoon (Figure 7.9) who seem to be using their sexuality to attract attention.

Although there are different types of masculinities and femininities, the findings of this research revealed that e+ magazine tended to feature images of celebrities that promoted what is considered the masculine and feminine ideal. The next section discusses the ideals on the covers in detail.

8.3.7 Idealised masculine and feminine images

Representation is selective by nature, it tends to promote certain values and ideals while excluding others (Hall 1997). For example, the findings from the visual semiotic analysis show that the feminine ideal is presented as white, young, heterosexual and successful. As Weber (1998:10) observes, the myth of the universal ideal of femininity excludes women of different races, ages, sexual preferences and social classes. The majority of women featured on the covers are Caucasian; only eight (Figure 7.2, Figure 7.5, Figure 7.7, Kim in Figure 7.17, three women in Figure 7.19 and two teenagers in Figure 7.22) out of 24 women featured on the covers were from other racial groups. This shows that the images on the covers promote the young, white and beautiful as the ideal and acceptable form of femininity.

Two (Figure 7.8 & Figure 7.19) out of 20 male celebrities are from other racial groups proving the hypothesis that white heterosexual men feature prominently on the covers. For male celebrities age does not matter; the cowboys (Figure 6.24) and Firth (Figure 7.6) are portrayed as appealing as a young star like Daniel Radcliffe in Figure 7.4. Male celebrities have a longer shelf life and still get leading roles even when they reach the age of 60. But only young female celebrities like Deepika (Figure 7.5) are featured in leading roles.

It is worth mentioning that although e+ was targeted at the Asian expatriate community (Bin Fahad 2012:167), the magazine promoted the white ideal by featuring celebrities from the West, particularly Hollywood on its covers. Celebrities from Hollywood featured prominently (71 percent) because e+ sourced images from agencies based in the West (*Gulf News* 2010). Also noteworthy is that advertisers influenced the choice of celebrities who were featured on the covers. For instance, the majority of celebrities (79 percent) were from television and film because the cinemas were major advertisers (*Gulf News* 2010). The celebrities who were

featured on the covers were put there for a purpose. Barthes (1973) argues that a photographic image serves to promote certain myths and ideologies. The next section examines the concepts of myth and ideology.

8.4 Myth and ideology

Myth and ideology are important elements in semiotic analysis. According to Barthes (1973) myth and ideology are found at the second level of signification. Myths serve to maintain certain ideologies.

Nöth (1995:377) suggests that the term ideology was popularised by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who defined it as “a system of false ideas, representing the false consciousness of a social class, in particular of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie”. Althusser criticised Marx’s notion of ideology as a “false consciousness” because it assumed there was only one true ascribed ideology per class (Hall 1996:17).

For Hall (1995:88) ideology is a “function of the discourse and of logic of social processes, rather than an intention of the agent”. In other words, ideology is shaped by the social and cultural environment that community members live in. Ideology is present in images and language that people use to represent and interpret what is happening around them. Sonderling (2001) argues that there is a relationship between ideology, culture and language. In other words, ideology uses meaning to “establish and sustain relations of power and domination” (Sonderling 2001:320).

Barthes (1973) and Eco (1976) consider ideology to be a negative thing that should be exposed. For Barthes ideology like myth is a semiotic system that is based on connotation. Barthes (1964:49) argues that the “common domain of the signifieds of connotation is that of ideology, which cannot but be single for a given society and history, no matter what signifiers of connotation it may use”. Ideology therefore tries to make things seem natural in order to conceal their arbitrariness and conventionality.

It is important to explore the ideological functions of the images of celebrities on the front page covers of *e+* magazine because according to Marshall (1997:X) celebrity

operates “at the very centre of the culture as it resonates with conceptions of individuality that are the ideological ground of Western culture”. The section below examines myths and ideologies that are promoted on the covers.

8.4.1 *Beauty myth*

The images of celebrities featured on the e+ magazine covers construct flawless beauty. The beauty myth is constructed through make-up and hairstyles. According to Naomi Wolf (2002:12) the beauty myth gives the impression that the quality called “beauty” “objectively and universally exists”. In addition, for Wolf “beauty” is a currency system like the gold standard. The beauty myth is a “belief system that keeps male dominance intact because it assigns value to women according to a culturally imposed physical standard” (Wolf 2002:12).

Proponents of the beauty myth purport that success is linked to physical beauty. Moreover, they point out that “beautiful women are more reproductively successful” (Wolf 2002:12). In other words, a woman’s beauty correlates to her fertility. As a result “women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it” (Wolf 2002:12). On the covers of e+, female celebrities are represented as young and beautiful. This is in line with Wolf’s (2002:12) observation that the myth of beauty and youthfulness are viewed as prerequisites for procreation and success. Moreover, the ideal body that is promoted by the images on the covers created in teenagers what Wolf (2002:10) describes as a “dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of ageing and dread for lost control”.

Teenage girls were constantly bombarded with images of slim beautiful celebrities which are promoted as the ideal image of femininity. Catchy phrases like “ultimate celeb diets” and “Hollywood body secrets” were used to entice readers to take action and work towards attaining the ideal weight. The images taught girls that a perfect body comes from dieting. In the long run some teenagers internalised the images and considered what they saw on the covers to be the norm. Focus-group interview findings revealed that such representations of celebrities had a negative impact on teenage girls as it sent out a message that they should attain the ideal beauty and body type in order to be accepted in society. This led to poor self-esteem among

teenagers who did not measure up to the thin ideal presented. For example, an 18-year-old Indian girl said “the photos made me angry, and feel bad about the way I look. I felt so fat. ...I tried dieting, food deliveries, but nothing works” (Figure 7.37).

Chris Shilling (2012:1) argues that people are more interested in body matters and the media are “replete with features on body image and how to keep the body looking young, taut, sexy, beautiful and keep fit”. Findings revealed that images of “beef cakes” (Figure 7.23) created anxiety among some teenage boys. Furthermore, the findings are in line with Shilling’s (2012:2-3) observation that the ideal images, promoted in the media, create a world where people are made to feel emotionally vulnerable, constantly monitoring themselves for bodily imperfections. To get perfectly sculpted bodies some boys resorted to over-exertion at the gym and were considering taking supplements.

There were also conflicting messages, and both boys and girls found themselves in a quandary regarding the ideal body type. The images on the covers promoted different ideals, for example, both curvaceous and slim celebrities were featured. In addition, boys reported that they found it difficult to ascertain the ideal physique when faced with images of celebrities with toned muscular bodies in Figure 7.15 and Figure 7.23 and medium built men such as the *Harry Potter* star in Figure 7.4 and Ranbir in Figure 7.19 who are “magnets that draw women”. The desirable characteristics in men are not just linked to the physique but to beauty, which is in turn associated with happiness and the ability to attract the opposite sex.

8.4.2 Myth of happiness

The myth of happiness creates needs that can be satisfied by consumption of goods. For example, a 17-year-old Indian girl going through a ‘zit phase’ felt bad when she saw images of celebrities who had flawless skin. She looked to the market and “tried to disguise the ugly marks with concealers but they didn’t work because of the heat and humidity” (Figure 7.37). Another participant offers a solution that is connected to the consumption of goods and recommends using waterproof make-up because “Jennifer Aniston swears by it” (Figure 7.37). An 18-year-old Indian girl who loves bags, shoes and jewellery who felt happy when her parents bought her jewellery is

another example. Owning jewellery pieces similar to those worn by Bollywood celebrities was also considered a status symbol. She pointed out that her mother “is like okay with buying nice pieces for me because she wants us to look good because we come from Dubai. You know how it is in the village, everyone thinks NRIs have money” (Figure 7.37).

Images on the covers show what it means to be a celebrity and the lifestyles associated with it. A 17-year-old British boy admires Vin Diesel and the kind of life he leads. He thinks that getting a car like Vin Diesel’s whom he describes as “a monster behind the wheel” will make him popular with the girls. He says, “For my 21st I’m so getting a convertible... Imagine zooming on Shaikh Zayed Road and cruising on the Jumeirah Beach Road on weekends with all the girls drooling over me” (Figure 7.38). Celebrities are associated with wealth and often shown happy in the company of material goods implying that happiness comes from the products that are available on the market. Success is measured in material things such as big houses and fast cars. A 19-year-old Indian boy points out that “Money, money talks. You know what, when he [Radcliffe] was my age he had a mansion and fast cars (Figure 7.38).

Contrary to the findings of this study, research from San Francisco State University found that “buying life experiences makes people happier than buying possessions” (Howell 2012). Out of 154 San Francisco State University students, who were sampled for the research those who bought objects reported that they felt happy after buying the product but the joy faded over time as they got used to seeing it every day. Students who purchased experiences reported greater satisfaction and feeling happy during and long after the experience (Howell 2012). The San Francisco State University study shows that happiness cannot be obtained from goods and products because the value of material possessions diminishes over time. Teenagers living in the UAE are likely to associate happiness with consumption of products because the UAE, particularly Dubai, is a leading shopping destination that has international brands (Euromonitor International 2013:82). The emirate of Dubai is well-known for rapid growth and consumption of goods as evidenced by the shopping festivals that run throughout the year (Euromonitor International 2013:82).

8.4.3 Myth of heterosexual romance

The images of celebrities on the covers promote the sexual ideal of heterosexual romance. Where celebrities of the same gender are featured on the cover their heterosexual relationships are implied through body language and the context in which they are featured. For example, in Figure 7.15 Vin Diesel and an unnamed man are co-stars in *Fast Five*. The body language used to represent their heterosexual relationship promotes heteronormativity, a concept that stems from queer theory and refers to a belief system that promotes heterosexuality as the only acceptable sexual orientation (Jackson 1998:175). Heteronormativity presents heterosexuality as the natural form of sexuality and assumes that people fall under two genders, namely male and female. Under this concept all the community members are required to conform to their gender identities. People who do not conform to the norm are considered to be deviants and social misfits and rarely represented, hence excluded from mainstream society.

A case in point would be that there were no same-sex couples on the 24 covers that were analysed. This points to the underrepresentation of same-sex couples on the covers of e+ magazine and media in general. The absence of homosexuals and lesbians could be explained by the fact that same-sex relationships of a sexual nature are banned by *sharia* (Islamic law); hence such images cannot be published in the UAE.

The images featuring two people or a group of people promotes traditional gender identities and heteronormative ideals. Images that feature a male and female celebrity, for example Figure 7.14 promote idealised notions of love. Marriage or a wedding is perceived as a demonstration of romantic love and commitment. The images of celebrities on the covers link human happiness to heterosexual romantic love. Marriage is represented as giving one a sense of belonging and happiness.

Laurie A. Rudman and Peter Glick (2008:204) argue that “traditional ideologies about heterosexual romance can also unwittingly preserve male dominance”. Cultural beliefs prescribe how love should be demonstrated, for example holding hands, putting ones arm around spouse or linking arms (Figure 7.14). Moreover, there are

rules that govern how people should act in relationships. For instance, infidelity is frowned upon especially if the offender is a woman but society is lenient with men and at times even praises him for his prowess (Figure 7.19). The above examples show that there is gender inequity, which serves to reproduce and maintain male power. Deborah L. Tolman (2006:74) sums it up succinctly where she notes that patriarchy is “the political institution by which patriarchal society is reproduced and regulated”.

8.5 Ideologies promoted on the covers

Celebrities serve as cultural products and reflect particular ideologies. Sturken and Cartwright (2009:21), as mentioned earlier, argue that “images are important means through which ideologies are produced and onto which ideologies are projected”. Visual images of celebrities have an intended purpose and effect. They are meant to elicit emotions and responses. For example, focus-group interview findings reveal that the image of Ranbir and three beautiful women produced feeling of desire among both teenage boys and girls. Boys wanted to be popular with women like Ranbir while girls wished to have a handsome romantic partner like him.

The image also sparked debate among teenagers from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Those from conservative social groups were angry because it glorified being a playboy and they were against such behaviour. Others particularly teenagers from the West, did not see anything wrong with the image. Sturken and Cartwright (2009:25) note that “the capacity of the image to affect viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meanings they involve and the social, political and cultural contexts in which they are viewed”. The next sections will unpack relevant ideologies.

8.5.1 Capitalist ideology and consumerism

Steven Miles (2006:1) argues that consumerism has become an integral part of life in modern society. For example, readers are defined as consumers; first they buy the magazine and they buy products associated with the celebrities featured by the magazines. Olivier (2006:30) notes that consumerism is linked to capitalism, which

promotes artificial needs and wants. The front covers of the magazines sell a lifestyle and worldview to readers.

Teenagers are susceptible to what they see in magazines and media in general. In addition, teenagers tend to judge each other by their materialistic possessions. Strickland (2002:48) argues that adolescence “is a time of turbulence marked by rapid physical, sexual, social and emotional development. It is a time of confusion and rebellion”. During this difficult phase teenagers turn to the media for guidance. Focus-group interview findings show that teenagers look up to celebrities for the latest fashion and beauty trends. Strickland (2002:151) notes that celebrities are incorporated into consumer culture or capitalist ideology and are used to influence the teenagers’ tastes and worldview through the consumption of goods as signs.

Male and female celebrities are therefore represented as commodities. In addition to engaging in conspicuous consumption, celebrities serve as “de facto advocates for particular products and services through personal use of those commodities” (Bell 2010). Female celebrities are portrayed with nice hairstyles, wearing make-up and branded clothes. Male celebrities fall into two categories; the well groomed and those who promoted the rugged appearance.

Teenagers were influenced by representations of celebrities that promoted materialism by linking happiness and success to consumption of products such as expensive clothing and jewellery (Figure 7.14) and nice cars (Figure 7.15). As alluded to earlier, the main reason teenagers were influenced by images of celebrities and turned to the market to buy products was to gain social acceptance. However, it is important to highlight that the ideal of happiness cannot be totally attained because new and better products are constantly being developed (Lacan quoted in Olivier 2006:30). For instance, a 17-year-old Filipina pointed out that she likes make-up and “used to check out the latest looks that stars were spotting for inspiration” (Figure 7.37). Furthermore, an 18-year-old Indian girl said, “I am always on the lookout for cool pieces that Bollywood celebrities wear” (Figure 7.37). In the end it becomes a vicious cycle as the cravings are only partially fulfilled and teenagers continuously seek new products (Kovel 2002:52).

8.5.2 Patriarchal ideology

According to Teresa L. Ebert (1988:19) patriarchy is the “organisation and division of all practices and signification in culture in terms of gender and the privileging of one gender over the other”. Patriarchal heterosexuality uses the myth of romantic love to advance the interests of male dominance and capitalism. The prescribed gender identities that are used to maintain patriarchy are described as hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity (Tolman 2006:76). For Tolman (2006:76) hegemonic masculinity encompasses a set of “norms and behaviours that men must strive to demonstrate - to themselves and to others - that they are ‘real men’”. In the same vein, hegemonic femininity prescribes how women should “behave, and think regarding themselves, their own bodies, their roles in relationships, and their responses to expectations about men” Tolman (2006:76). In other words, heterosexuality is promoted because it “entails women’s subordination to men” (Tolman 2006:76).

The myth of romance naturalises the objectification and subordination of women. A woman is presented as complemented and completed by a man (Figure 7.14). In Figures 7.14 and 7.20 marriage is represented as a natural milestone that everyone should pass through. The images employ binary oppositions and suggests that people who do not achieve this milestone are less successful or lacking something. However, it is worth pointing out that marriage is not necessarily a natural process but it is a socio-cultural practice that is perpetuated to serve the capitalist and patriarchal interests (Jackson 1998:175).

Patriarchal ideology sanctions the dominant role of men in the public and private spheres. Myra MacDonald (1997:106) argues that women are represented as objects to be looked at by men; hence in most cases they are featured in provocative poses or with averted eyes (Figures 7.3, 7.5, 7.9, 7.12, 7.17 & 7.19). Wolf (2002:58) concurs and adds that “Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only the relations of men to women, but the relation of women to themselves”. In other words, women are subjected to the male gaze and even where the target audience is female, they are positioned to look at other women from a male’s perspective.

8.6 Influence of images of celebrities on teenagers

The images of the celebrities encouraged conformity to the status quo. Theodor Adorno (1991:90) argues that the cultural industry encourages consumers to “conform to that which exists any way and to that which everyone thinks anyway as a result of its power and omnipresence”. However, Fiske (1991:24) argues that “popular culture is made by people, not produced by the culture industry”, hence people can use or reject texts. Furthermore, Fiske (1991:58-59) notes that people use different tactics to reinterpret media texts in line with their preferred reading to make sense of the world around them.

The results of this study proved that teenagers are not at the mercy of the media images like the picture Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1979) painted but also not as powerful as Fiske advocates. Teenagers reported that they used celebrities as ‘a cultural resource of everyday life’. The findings from focus-group discussions revealed a range of reading ‘positions’ that were taken by teenagers. For example, data collected during focus-group discussions showed that rather than simply accepting the representations as given teenagers might accept them in line with the normative gender ideals with which they were constructed. Furthermore, while accepting the dominant gender framework which the image represents, some teenagers read images in such a way as to make an exception for their specific circumstances or rejected the dominant gender frame entirely and read meaning of the image in globally contrary way. The above discussion is in line with Hall’s (1995) intended, negotiated and oppositional reading to assign meanings to texts.

Findings revealed that teenagers read the images of celebrities on the covers differently depending on their cultural backgrounds. For example, boys from conservative communities considered the images of scantily dressed female celebrities “gross” while others found them “sexy” (Figure 7.38). The findings are in line with Hall’s encoding/decoding theory. The editorial team may have encoded the text in a certain way but teenage readers, drawing on their cultural capital, decoded the text differently. In response to another respondent’s recommendations that she should buy waterproof products, a 17-year-old Indian girl said, “Are you kidding me? My parents can’t afford fancy products” (Figure 7.37). The above example shows

that the editorial team may have used images of celebrities to influence teenagers to adopt the glamorous lifestyle but the message had the opposite effect, that is making teenagers feel bad about them because they could not afford to buy high-end products.

8.6.1 Perceived extent of influence

This study examined how the way teenagers experience images of celebrities shape their perceptions, feelings and behaviour. The assumption was that since teenagers were constantly bombarded by images of celebrities they were likely to shape their tastes, behaviours and impact their self-image. Some teenagers cited that the celebrities featured on the covers of e+ magazine did not influence them. The respondents stated that they read the magazine for relaxation and entertainment purposes. For example, an 18-year-old Filipino said, “This celebrity thing is a time pass no one takes them serious though I wouldn’t mind dating a girl who looks like Hailee” (Figure 7.38). In addition, a 19-year-old Filipina said, “I never took much of the stuff serious. It helped me relax, you know, looking at images of successful people for a change” (Figure 7.39). Drawing on Horkheimer and Adorno (1979:120-135), one may argue that these teenagers seem to be unaware of the influence celebrities have in their lives. The teenagers’ statements show that the images of celebrities occupied their consciousness and they benefitted from the relief the photographs offered.

Some teenagers stated that the images did not have an influence on certain aspects of their lives, particularly if the celebrities were viewed as irrelevant to the teenagers’ situation. For instance, a 16-year-old Indian girl (Figure 7.39) noted that celebrities did not influence her fashion tastes because “most of the female celebrities are older than me. They wear very expensive numbers that show a lot of flesh. Where can I wear such dresses? I just go to the mall and mosque and don’t need fancy clothes.” Moreover, she mainly wears the traditional Indian *salwar khamis* as opposed to the Western style clothes most celebrities were shown wearing. However, although the images of celebrities did not influence her fashion tastes they shaped her choice of hairstyles (Figure 7.39). Be that as it may, overall the study found that the images of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine had an influence on teenagers.

8.6.2 Nature of influence

Some teenagers were encouraged and inspired by the celebrities, particularly the ones whom they perceived had desirable characteristics. The level of influence depended on how closely linked the teenager's goal was to a celebrity's. For example, celebrities who were high achievers like Kanye West (Figure 7.38) inspired teenagers to explore their potential and excel in life. In addition, celebrities who had desirable characteristics and pleasing personalities, such as Julia Roberts (Figure 7.39) and her charity work, had a positive influence. An 18-year-old Filipino said he admires her because "she has helped a lot of people with UNICEF. She's like not like some cheap divas. She uses her popularity to raise money for the poor (Figure 7.39). In addition, Julia Roberts' charity work inspired the teenager "to get involved in community events organised by my school like cleaning the beach" (Figure 7.39).

However, teenagers who could not measure up to the ideals promoted by celebrities developed negative feelings. For example, a 19-year-old Indian boy from focus-group Y felt bad because he still shares a bedroom with his younger brother, yet *Harry Potter* star Daniel Radcliffe owned a mansion when he was his age. Respondent K used the strong term, "I'm a loser" to describe himself and was contemplating leaving school to try and make some money (Figure 7.38).

Furthermore, celebrities such as Kendall (Figure 7.22) who are young, rich and physically attractive made some teenage girls feel incompetent. A 17-year-old Indian girl said, "She always looks so prim and proper (rolling her eyes), that's what gramps says, yet no matter what I do I go out looking dishevelled" (Figure 7.37). Her misery was compounded by the fact that she could not afford expensive products that could help conceal her blemishes. Another respondent reported having feelings of despair because she is "short and chubby I know I will never have a body like Deepika or Kat" (Figure 7:37). Having examined the negative and positive influence of images of celebrities on teenagers, the next section discusses how teenagers choose celebrity role models.

8.6.3 Choosing role models

The findings revealed that teenage boys and girls regarded both male and female celebrities as role models in different ways and situations. For instance, for philanthropic work and to make sense of what was happening around them teenagers looked up to both male and female celebrities. For instance, in the example cited above, Julia Roberts' involvement in charity inspired an 18-year-old Filipino to get involved in community activities organised by his school (Figure 7.39).

However, the findings show that for fashion and beauty, images of celebrities were more likely to influence teenagers if there were similarities such as gender, age and race. In other words, teenagers looked up to celebrities of the same gender as them. Findings also revealed that teenagers were influenced more by celebrities from their own ethnic groups as evidenced by mention of Deepika Padukone, Kat and Ranbir by Indian and Pakistan respondents, and Vin Diesel by participants from the West. However, a few teenagers from the subcontinent cited J-Lo's assets and Vin Diesel's muscular body, probably because they found differences interesting. These findings are similar to what Algoe and Haidt's (2009:105-127) study revealed.

8.6.4 Long-term impressions

The respondents tended to switch between past and present tense and this shows that even though the magazine closed three years ago the influence celebrities featured on the covers of e+ magazine had on teenagers is still evident. For example, although respondents D and O were exposed to the images more than three years ago they are still dissatisfied with their bodies and trying to lose weight. It is worth noting that teenagers continue to be bombarded with similar images, which lead to body dissatisfaction. This shows that celebrity news teenagers are constantly exposed to can have a lasting impact and far reaching consequences on some teenagers.

It is important to note that the extent to which a teenager experiences the representations of celebrities depends on the celebrities' characteristics, the teenager's self-esteem and context as well as whether the teenager has the means

to successfully emulate the behaviour. In other words, whether the teenager's personal circumstances would allow them to attain what they admire in the celebrity. For a teenager to emulate a celebrity, the behaviour should be perceived as desirable, the teenager should have means to copy it and the environment should be conducive. For example, respondent M copied Kat's hairstyle because she found it desirable, and although she could not do it on her own she had the resources to pay a hairstylist to do it for her (Figure 7.39).

While it is true that the images of celebrities do influence teenagers, it is important to highlight that the environment teenagers live in affects their behaviour and perceptions. For example, celebrities cannot be singled out as the sole gender role models because teenagers are exposed to masculinity and femininity ideals in the social environment they live in. Moreover, other people in the community including family members, peers and teachers also influence teenagers.

8.7 CONCLUSION

The findings of a visual semiotic analysis of the images of male and female celebrities were discussed, particularly paying attention to the images of masculinity and femininity that were promoted. In addition, a critique of the gender representation on the magazine covers in question was given. A quantitative content analysis showed that male and female celebrities were shown in different poses. For instance, male celebrities assumed macho poses on the covers. Some were represented as alpha male⁹ who were featured doing dangerous things such as jumping from cars and holding weapons. Metrosexual males did not display a dangerous streak but the focus was on their financial resources and well-groomed appearance. The above examples show that different types of masculinities were represented on the covers.

While male celebrities were featured in active roles, female celebrities were shown in passive and submissive poses. However, unlike other studies (Das 2000 & Gunter 1986) which found that women were featured in the domestic sphere, in this study

⁹ An alpha male is a term that is used to describe an animal that is the leader of the pack. Over the years it came to be applied to humans to refer to a male who is the strongest or dominant in a group.

female celebrities are working women and their jobs are represented as glamorous. However, although female celebrities are presented as working women some are portrayed as accessories to the male lead for example in Figure 7.7 and Figure 7.19.

The study found that teenagers were more influenced by celebrities who were attractive, competent, of high social standing and with whom they shared many similarities such as age and gender. Findings revealed that teenagers identified more with celebrities from their own ethnic groups. The following chapter presents a conclusion which consists of a summary of main findings and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of representations of male and female celebrities on teenage boys and girls aged between 16 and 19 years living in the UAE. This chapter demonstrates whether the findings confirm or refute the assumptions and investigates the strengths and limitations of the study. Moreover, this last chapter provides recommendations for future research.

Drawing mainly on Barthes' (1973) semiotic theory and Hall's (1997) approaches to representation, this study explored how male and female celebrities were represented in *e+* magazine. Semiotics was used as both theory and method for analysing texts. To determine whether celebrities were represented in gender stereotypical roles, visual semiotic analysis was used to identify signifiers that were used to construct masculinity and femininity. Hall (1997:24-25) argues that representation is selective, therefore this study sought to examine the issues that were highlighted to uncover the myths and ideologies promoted by celebrities featured on the covers. The denotation, connotation and mythic and ideological meanings of the images on the covers were identified. Both the visual and linguistic messages were examined because they are the first elements that readers see on the covers and play an important role in determining whether readers buy the magazine or not.

The study employed the mixed method approach. Using four methods, namely quantitative content analysis, visual semiotic analysis, survey and focus-group interviews, to gather and analyse data helped combine the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Babbie 2004:113). Triangulation techniques were useful in minimising the drawbacks and intrinsic problems associated with using one method, hence using several methods deepened and widened the understanding of the issue of representation of celebrities and how it influences teenagers. For example, a quantitative content analysis was used to provide statistical data while a visual semiotic analysis was used to uncover the meanings of the numbers produced by the quantitative method. In other words, a quantitative

content analysis revealed that most female celebrities were featured as objects and a visual semiotic analysis went further to explain, why female celebrities were represented as passive objects. Weyers, Strydom and Huisamen (2009:210) note that using different methods “contribute an additional piece of the puzzle and in so doing contribute to a more comprehensive and complete picture”. Furthermore, focus-group interviews were conducted to examine how the ideals and ideologies promoted by the images of celebrities on the covers shaped the lives and perceptions of teenagers living in the UAE.

9.2 Acceptance or rejection of assumptions

The study was informed by three assumptions. First, the research assumed that celebrities will be represented in gender stereotypical roles. Second, it was assumed that celebrities serve as cultural signs that promote certain ideologies. Lastly, the research was based on the assumption that celebrities have the power to influence teenagers. The discussion below highlights whether the findings support or reject the assumptions.

9.2.1 *Celebrities represented in gender stereotypical roles*

Findings confirmed the first assumption to be true. Binary oppositions were used to represent male and female celebrities. Male celebrities were represented as strong and serious while for female celebrities the emphasis was on sensual beauty. In addition, there was a marked difference in the frequency with which male and female celebrities were featured in passive poses. Of all the celebrities, which were featured on the covers 56 percent female celebrities were passive while 31 percent male celebrities were passive. Thirteen percent male celebrities were active while there were no active female celebrities. Male celebrities were featured in active poses, displaying athleticism and an adventurous streak, for example Figure 7.15, while female celebrities were shown in submissive poses, for instance Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.5.

Gender myths and stereotypes were presented as normal. The magazine mediated images of masculinity and femininity and influenced the teenagers' conception of

what it means to be male and female in society. The constructions of gender were influenced by the images of celebrities that teenagers saw on the magazine covers. For instance, focus-group interviews revealed that images of celebrities shaped the teenager's views of masculinity and femininity. Findings show that teenagers identified with traditional masculine and feminine identity and imitated fashion and beauty trends sported by celebrities who were featured on the covers. Boys emulated male celebrities while girls used female celebrities as benchmarks for fashion and beauty trends.

Gender stereotyping can have a negative impact on society. For example, Kilbourne's (1990) study revealed that representing women in stereotypical roles has a negative effect on audiences. Kilbourne (1990) found that respondents had negative perceptions of women and questioned their managerial skills after they were exposed to advertisements that depicted women in gender stereotypical roles. On the other hand, when respondents were exposed to images of career women in professional setting they had positive attitudes.

The findings of a quantitative content analysis refute the assumption that female celebrities are underrepresented in terms of frequency of appearance. The study found that more female celebrities were featured on the covers compared to male celebrities. Out of 45 celebrities featured on the cover, 56 percent were female and male celebrities constituted 44 percent. However, upon close examination, a visual semiotic analysis revealed that female celebrities were inadequately represented in terms of quality of representation. For example, female celebrities were objectified as they were shown in provocative poses, wearing revealing clothes while their male counterparts were featured in dominant poses wearing demure clothing. Moreover, all male celebrities were represented in leading roles. On the other hand, some female celebrities were featured in subordinate roles, and traditional feminine positions such as fiancés, wives (Figure 7.14 & Figure 7.20) and girlfriends (Figure 7.19). In these images, women were portrayed as the second sex, subordinate to men.

The findings are in line with the assumption that white, heterosexual males will feature prominently on the covers. There were 18 white male celebrities compared to

two celebrities of other racial groups. However, even among white males, there are various types of masculinities on display on the covers. Moreover, masculinities and femininities change over time. Like earlier research (O'Barr 2008, Das 2000), this study found that the media continues to feature visual and linguistic messages that perpetuate gender stereotypes.

9.2.2 *Celebrities as cultural or ideological signs*

The images of celebrities promoted certain myths and ideologies confirming the second assumption, which states that everything is a sign that signifies something. The celebrities featured on the covers promoted glamorous lifestyles associated with Hollywood and Bollywood. Celebrities as signs stood for success that is based on material goods, and beauty.

The images promoted the beauty myth. For female celebrities the focus was on sensual beauty and for male celebrities emphasis was on their physique. In addition, the images of celebrities advanced capitalist ideology and encouraged looking to the market for happiness and satisfaction. Furthermore, the images of celebrities advanced heteronormativity, a concept that promotes heterosexual romance as natural. Heteronormativity, in turn, promotes patriarchal ideology.

9.2.3 *Celebrities and their influence on teenagers*

The findings confirmed the third assumption, namely that celebrities do shape the teenagers' lives. The researcher found that celebrities can have both positive and negative influences on teenagers. Some celebrities had a positive influence on teenagers. For instance, Julia Roberts' charity work inspired a teenage boy to get involved in voluntary activities in the community (Figure 7.39).

Emulating celebrities led to feelings of insecurity, and made some boys and girls feel inadequate because they could not attain the ideal body image. It made some girls angry and dissatisfied with their weight and appearance. Failure to lose weight led to self-loathing. The products endorsed by the featured female celebrities were too

expensive for some teenagers. Some participants pointed out that the clothes celebrities were shown wearing were not available in bigger sizes to fit them.

Some boys were dissatisfied with their bodies because although they went to the gym they could not attain a muscular body like Vin Diesel's. Also some boys who compared themselves to celebrities such as Radcliffe and Vin Diesel, who drive fast cars and lead glamorous lifestyles, felt bad because they did not have the means to live a luxurious life.

Some girls admired male celebrities because they had characteristics that they found desirable in a romantic partner. It is important to note that the girls were aware that male celebrities were out of their reach, as a result they did not fancy them or fantasise about being in a relationship with them. Teenage girls aspired to have romantic partners who looked like their favourite celebrities. However, some boys fantasised about being in a relationship with female celebrities, particularly young celebrities such as Hailee Seinfeld.

9.3 Strengths of the study

The major strength of the study is that it employed triangulation techniques. Although triangulation was time consuming, multiple methods helped confirm trends and gain more insight into the topic of representation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:168). For instance, a visual semiotic analysis found that the images of celebrities promoted consumerism and focus-group interviews further confirmed this notion as most teenagers reported that they bought the products that the celebrities were featured wearing or using. Methodological triangulation improved reliability and validity of findings.

Using multiple methods generated a lot of data and meanings. The different interpretations and meanings proved that social phenomena look different when viewed from different angles. For example, statistical data from quantitative content analysis revealed that female celebrities featured prominently on the covers of e+ while a visual semiotic analysis showed that female celebrities were underrepresented. At face value the results seemed to be contradictory, however,

delving deeper and analysing the numerical and linguistic data showed that although there were more female celebrities in terms of numbers they were still underrepresented in terms of quality of representation as they were shown in submissive poses. While quantitative content analysis enumerated and determined the number of celebrities of each gender, visual semiotic analysis went further to uncover the nuances of the nature of representations of gender on the covers.

This study sought to unearth social phenomena involving human behaviour and including audience research enriched the research by revealing the respondents' real-life experiences on how celebrity culture influences their everyday lives. In addition, focus-group interviews yielded opinions and perspectives from teenagers from different cultural backgrounds. In some cases there was consensus and the group had a collective voice while in other instances there were contrasting opinions and respondents challenged each other's statements. Focus-group interview findings showed that several elements, including cultural background and economic status influenced and shaped the way teenagers read and interpreted the images of celebrities.

9.4 Shortcomings of the study and recommendations for future research

There is no existing research on the influence of celebrities on teenagers living in the UAE. The research problem was formulated based on a literature review consisting of studies done in other parts of the world. More research into representations of male and female celebrities and their influence on teenagers living in the UAE need to be done to provide local knowledge.

This study only analysed images of male and female celebrities that were published in e+ magazine. Future research could focus on many publications such as lifestyle, entertainment and film magazines. Analysing representations of celebrities in different types of magazines would enable researchers to do comparative studies that would yield results which will enrich people's knowledge about media representation and its influence on teenagers. While this study analysed magazines published between October 2010 and September 2011, in the future, a longitudinal study covering a long period or drawing a sample from all the issues that have been

published since the magazine was founded can give an insight into the similarities and differences in the representations of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine over the years.

The present study employed quantitative content analysis, visual semiotic analysis and focus-group interviews. Only 18 teenagers were sampled for three focus-group interviews. Having a bigger sample and more focus-groups would provide in-depth information on how teenagers from different cultures living in the UAE experience celebrity culture. Although the respondents were from different cultural backgrounds, they were all from middle class families and this could have had an effect on the findings. In the future, studies can also include teenagers from affluent and low income families to determine whether different income levels impact the way teenagers are influenced by celebrity culture. Furthermore, future research could benefit from including the opinions and perspectives of a wider range of people including parents and the editorial team that was responsible for selecting the images that went on the covers. By including the views of the editorial team both the production and consumption processes would be covered.

In addition, the interpretation of study findings may have been affected by the researcher's age. The focus-group respondents were aged between 16 and 19 and as an adult the researcher stood out and was viewed as the "other" due to the age gap. Some group members could have adhered to normative views that are socially acceptable or what they thought the moderator wanted to hear. Moreover, teenagers used their unique terminology and non-verbal language that was not familiar to the moderator. For example, one word can mean different things in different contexts, for instance, "The Harry Potter guy is bad" means "he is good" or "super cool" (Figure 7.38) while "Heartthrobs like Ranbir are bad" means he is a trouble causer (Figure 7.39).

Furthermore, in some cases it was difficult to ascertain whether teenagers were serious, joking or being sarcastic. For instance, a 17-year-old British boy remarked that the dresses most celebrities wore were "sexy" then went on to sing about the midriff, torso and cleavage (Figure 7.38). Although clarification was sought, the moderator's interpretations may not have captured the essence of the respondent's

statement. Moreover, some of the issues came to light during interpretation of findings when it was no longer possible to go back to the respondents to seek an explanation. Misunderstanding and misinterpreting the teenagers' statements could have led to an overestimation or underestimation of the influence of celebrities on teenagers. Future research could benefit from engaging undergraduate teenage research assistants who are familiar with the 'lingo' and the way teenagers converse to record and transcribe data.

Future research could also focus on the nature of the influence of representations of male and female celebrities on teenagers. In other words, future research can try to establish whether media has more positive or negative influence on teenagers.

9.5 Conclusion

The study examined the codes used to represent male and female celebrities and found that most celebrities were represented in gender stereotypical roles. Female celebrities were portrayed as beautiful, slim, young and inactive while men were represented as active, masculine and adventurous.

Moreover, the study explored the myths and ideologies found on the covers. The research focused on the beauty myth and myth of happiness. The images of celebrities associated happiness with consumption of material goods. Images of celebrities promoted heteronormativity and seemed to universalise heterosexual romance.

The study found that the way teenagers experience celebrity culture shapes their perceptions and tastes. This is similar to Bush, Martin and Bush's (2004) research, which showed that teenagers considered media sources to be important references. Focus-group findings showed that some teenagers considered celebrities to be role models. Teenagers also emulated the celebrities' behaviours as they believed it to be acceptable norm for men and women in society. Furthermore, some teenagers copied fashion designs, make-up looks and hairstyles that the celebrities were shown wearing. In other words, celebrities served as trendsetters.

However, it is worth noting that teenagers are not powerless or easily swayed by celebrity culture. Teenagers demonstrated that they use their cultural capital to read the images of celebrities. In addition, the findings of this study are in line with Boon and Lomore's (2001) study, which revealed that the way teenagers experience celebrity culture is determined by their values and family background. For example, teenagers from different cultural groups assigned different meanings to the same image. This was evidenced by the fact that some teenagers thought female celebrities looked "hot" while others drawing on their cultural and religious background thought the same celebrities promoted immorality.

Examining the influence of celebrity culture on teenagers is very important because teenagers are exposed to media messages that purport to show them appropriate behaviours for men and women. Boys learn that in order to be successful they should be muscular while girls are taught that a beautiful woman should have flawless skin and a slim body. Believing in stereotypes can put pressure on teenagers to conform to ideals promoted in the media, resulting in them adopting unhealthy lifestyles such as excessive dieting and taking muscle-building supplements. Discussing gender stereotypes will raise awareness and help teenagers to accept who they are. In addition, exposing myths that link success and happiness to looking a certain way and consumption of products will help society, particularly teenagers to develop their intellect and critically analyse images of celebrities featured in the media.

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ADDENDUM A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION, CONSENT FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Figure 4.1

Gulf News
PO Box 6519
Dubai, UAE

4 September, 2013

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear (name of participant),

I am a masters student in the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa.

I am doing a research on the influence of celebrity culture on teenagers aged between 16 and 19 years. The study focuses on the way celebrities were represented on the front covers of a weekly magazine called e+ (formerly called *Entertainment Plus*) that was published in the UAE from April 2001 until September 2011. The study further examines how such portrayals could influence teenagers. I am doing this research under the supervision of Mr Christo Colliers and Ms Hannelie Marx, lecturers in the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa.

I got your name and contact details from ... (name of informant) and will appreciate if you take part in this research by completing the attached questionnaire and attending the focus-group interviews if you are shortlisted. It will take around 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and a maximum of one hour for the interview on November 25, 2013. Please note that participation is voluntary and that the information you give will be treated with confidentiality and your name will not be

mentioned in the report. If you have any questions concerning the research project, please contact me.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Khulekani Madlela

Telephone: 04 4067751

Email: kmadlela@gulfnews.com

Supervisors' details

Names: Mr Christo Cilliers (cillicp@unisa.ac.za)

Ms Hannelie Marx (Marxh1@unisa.ac.za)

Address: University of South Africa

Department of Communication Science

PO Box 392 - UNISA 0003

Telephone: +27 429 6282

Figure 4.2

Consent to participate in the study

Title: The representation of male and female celebrities on e+ magazine covers and how it influenced teenagers living in the UAE

Researcher: Ms Khulekani Madlela, Department of Communication Science, University of South Africa

Supervisors: Mr Christo Cilliers and Ms Hannelie Marx

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine how celebrities are represented on the covers of e+ magazine. Furthermore, the study will explore how the way celebrities are represented on the covers might influence teenagers.

Procedures

If I agree to participate in this study I will fill in the questionnaire and attend the focus-group interview at the appointed venue.

Benefits

I will not receive any direct benefits like money from participating in the study. However, through participating in this study I may find out more about the relationship between media and society.

Confidentiality

All the information I give will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes and my identity will not be revealed.

Clarifications

All the details have been explained to me and I agree to give my opinion during the focus-group interview. If I have further questions I can seek clarification from the researcher.

Right to refuse or withdraw

My participation in this study is entirely voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any stage of the research without any consequences.

Consent

I have read the contents of this form and understood everything and hereby agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant: Date:

Signature of researcher:

For participants who are below the age of 18

Consent

I have read the contents of this form and understood everything and hereby agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant: Date:

Consent (parent or guardian)

I have read the contents of this form and understood everything and hereby agree that (name of minor) participate in this study.

Signature of the participant's parent/guardian: Date:

Signature of researcher:

Figure 4.3

Questionnaire

I am a masters student in the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa. I am doing a research on the influence of celebrity culture on teenagers aged between 16 and 19 years. The study focuses on the way celebrities were represented on the front covers of a weekly magazine called e+ (formerly called *Entertainment Plus*) that was published in the UAE from April 2001 until September 2011. The study further examines how such portrayals could influence teenagers. I am doing this research under the supervision of Mr Christo Colliers and Ms Hannelie Marx, lecturers in the Department of Communication Science at the University of South Africa.

Please note that participation is voluntary and that the information you give will be treated with confidentiality and your name will not be mentioned in the report. If you have any questions concerning the research project, please contact me on my mobile number 050 8794858.

Name of researcher: Khulekani Madlela

Please answer the following questions. Write your responses on the dotted lines and tick the applicable box. If there is anything you would like to add please write it under the "comments" section.

1) Please state your gender.

Male

Female

2) How old are you?

16

17

18

19

3) In which emirate do you live?

.....

4) What is your country of origin?

.....

5) What is your mother tongue?

.....

6) What is your level of education?

.....

7) Please state your religion.

Muslim

Hindu

Christian

Buddhist

Other (please specify)

8) How long had you been reading e+ magazine before it closed?

A few months

1 year

2 years-plus

9) How often did you read e+?

Every week

Occasionally

Rarely

10) Using the scale of 1 to 5 (1 meaning Strongly agree, 2 Agree, 3 Undecided, 4 Disagree and 5 Strongly disagree) please put a check mark in the box with the number that best describes your situation. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. Remember to mark only one box for each sentence.

	1	2	3	4	5
The images of celebrities on the covers of e+ magazine helped me:					
a. Get information about the latest celebrity gossip.					
b. Have things to talk about with friends.					
c. Escape reality by looking at colourful photographs of glamorous people.					
d. See the latest fashion and beauty trends it.					
e. Get information about new movie releases and celebrities appearing in them.					

11) Did you discuss what you saw on the covers of e+ with other people?

.....

12) How would you rate e+ magazine covers compared to other entertainment magazines you have read?

.....

13) Why did you read e+ magazine?

.....

14) Which celebrities did you like?

.....
.....

15) What did you like about the celebrities featured on the covers of e+ magazine?

.....
.....
.....

16) Which celebrities did you hate?

.....
.....

17) What did you not like about them?

.....
.....
.....

18) What role did the celebrities play in your life?

.....
.....

Comments

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for volunteering to participate

Figure 4.4

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Welcome and introduction (10 minutes)

- Researcher introduces herself to the respondents and thanks them for volunteering to participate.
- Explain the purpose and objectives of the study.
- Encourage everyone to participate, and explain that there are no right or wrong answers but everyone is free to share their ideas and opinions.
- Reassure respondents that information given will be kept confidential and their names will not be used in the study. (Each respondent will be assigned a code that will be used while taking down notes, transcribing data and in the report instead of their real name.)
- Seek permission to use a tape recorder and explain to the respondents that its purpose is to aid the researcher's recall, will be kept in a secure place and disposed of properly upon completion of the study.
- Present a slide show of the 24 magazine covers.

Focus-group interview (40 minutes)

Moderator's role

Leading the discussion and giving respondents the platform to share their views.

The moderator will ensure that all the questions in the interview guide are answered.

Observing non-verbal cues.

Taking down notes discreetly.

Noting down issues that arise and asking follow up questions to clarify points.

Guiding questions

1. What kind of feelings did you get when you saw the images of celebrities on the covers?
2. What role did the celebrities featured on the covers of e+ play in your life?
3. Are there celebrities that you liked or hated? Why?

4. How did you feel about the way the celebrities were represented? For example, how did their clothes and physical appearance make you feel?
5. Did you follow the fashion and makeup trends that you saw on the covers? To what extent? (For example did you ever buy an item of clothing because your favourite celebrity was featured on the cover wearing it? Or have you ever copied a hairstyle that you saw a celebrity wearing?)
6. What kind of information about gender did you learn from images of celebrities?
7. What did images of celebrities on the covers teach you about being a girl or boy that is how you are supposed to groom yourself, dress and behave?

ADDENDUM B: e+ MAGAZINE COVERS



Figure 7.1



Figure 7.2



Figure 7.3



Figure 7.4



Figure 7.5



Figure 7.6



Figure 7.7

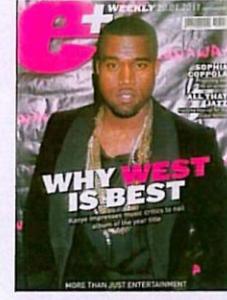


Figure 7.8



Figure 7.9



Figure 7.10



Figure 7.11



Figure 7.12



Figure 7.13



Figure 7.14



Figure 7.15



Figure 7.16

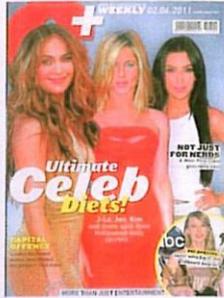


Figure 7.17



Figure 7.18



Figure 7.19



Figure 7.20



Figure 7.21



Figure 7.22



Figure 7.23



Figure 7.24

ADDENDUM C: TABLES AND PIE CHARTS

Table 7.1: Overall number of celebrities	
Female	25
Male	20
Total	45

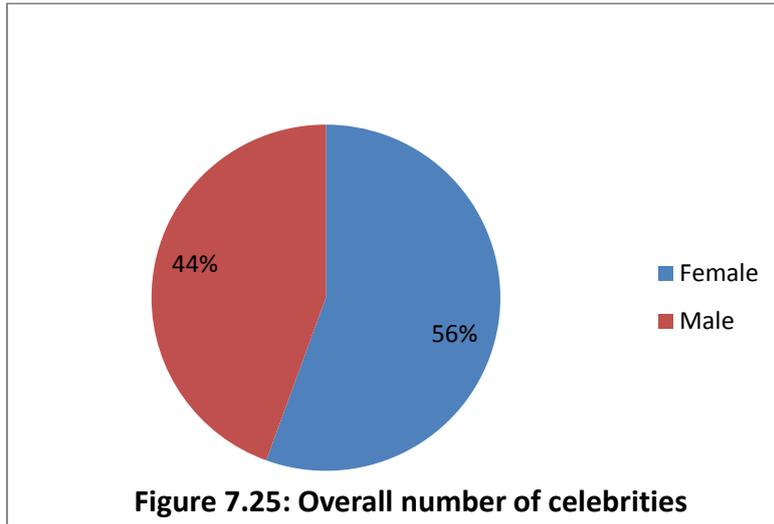


Table 7.2: Gender representation on the covers						
	Female adults	Male adults	All-female adults	All-male adults	All-adults mixed	Teenagers
	Figure 7.1	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.17	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.14	Figure 7.10
	Figure 7.2	Figure 7.6	Figure 7.20	Figure 7.15	Figure 7.19	Figure 7.22
	Figure 7.3	Figure 7.8		Figure 7.21		
	Figure 7.5	Figure 7.16		Figure 7.23		
	Figure 7.7			Figure 7.24		
	Figure 7.9					
	Figure 7.12					
	Figure 7.13					
	Figure 7.18					
Total	9	4	2	5	2	2

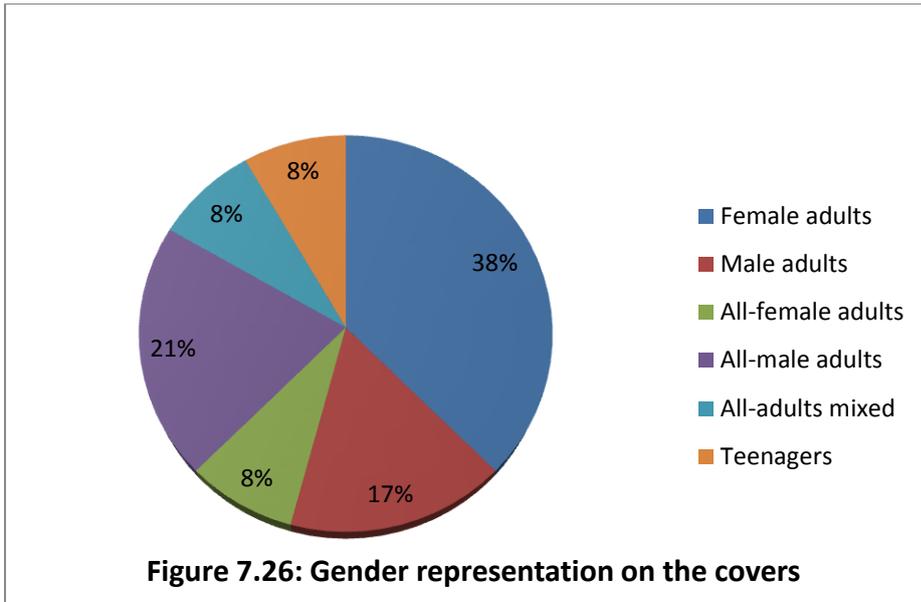


Table 7.3: Origin of celebrities					
	UAE	GCC region	Hollywood	Bollywood	Other
			Figure 7.1	Figure 7.5	Figure 7.2
			Figure 7.3	Figure 7.7	Figure 7.8
			Figure 7.4	Figure 7.19	Figure 7.14
			Figure 7.6		Figure 7.11
			Figure 7.9		
			Figure 7.10		
			Figure 7.12		
			Figure 7.13		
			Figure 7.15		
			Figure 7.16		
			Figure 7.17		
			Figure 7.20		
			Figure 7.21		
			Figure 7.22		
			Figure 7.23		
			Figure 7.24		
			Figure 7.18		
Total	0	0	17	3	4

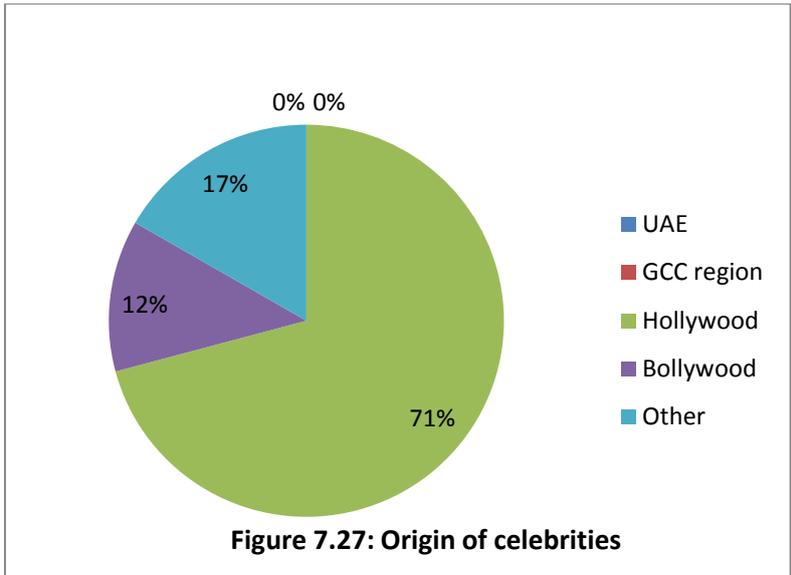
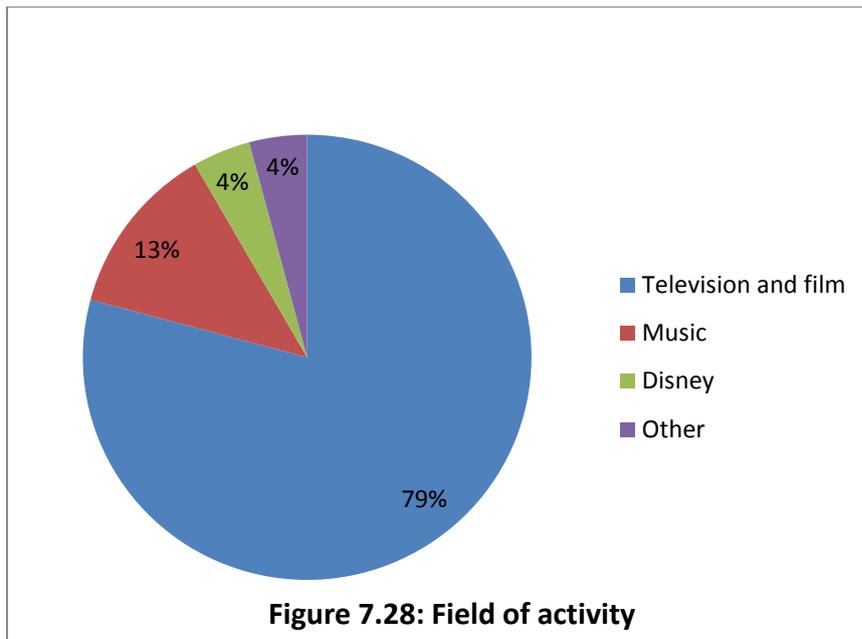


Table 7.4: Field of activity

	Television and movies	Music	Disney	Other
	Figure 7.1	Figure 7.2	Figure 7.22	Figure 7.14
	Figure 7.3	Figure 7.8		
	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.11		
	Figure 7.5			
	Figure 6.6			
	Figure 7.7			
	Figure 7.9			
	Figure 7.10			
	Figure 7.12			
	Figure 7.13			
	Figure 7.15			
	Figure 7.16			
	Figure 7.17			
	Figure 7.19			
	Figure 7.20			
	Figure 7.21			
	Figure 7.23			
	Figure 7.24			
	Figure 7.18			
Total	19	3	1	1



	Under 25		26-35		36-45		Over 45	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.2	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.3	Figure 7.8	Figure 7.1	Figure 7.6	
		Figure 7.10	Figure 7.14	Figure 7.5	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.9	Figure 7.16	
		Figure 7.19	Figure 7.19	Figure 7.7	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.17	Figure 7.24	
		Figure 7.22	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.12	Figure 7.15	Figure 7.17	Figure 7.24	
		Figure 7.22	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.13	Figure 7.15			
			Figure 7.23	Figure 7.14	Figure 7.21			
				Figure 7.17	Figure 7.21			
				Figure 7.18	Figure 7.21			
				Figure 7.19	Figure 7.23			
				Figure 7.19				
				Figure 7.20				
				Figure 7.20				
				Figure 7.20				
				Figure 7.20				
				Figure 7.20				
				Figure 7.20				
				Figure 7.20				
Total	1	5	6	16	9	4	4	0

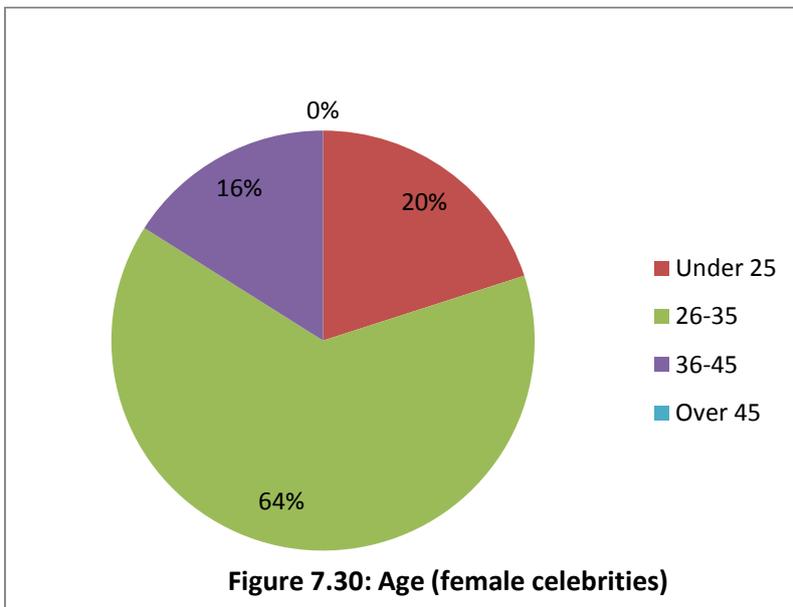
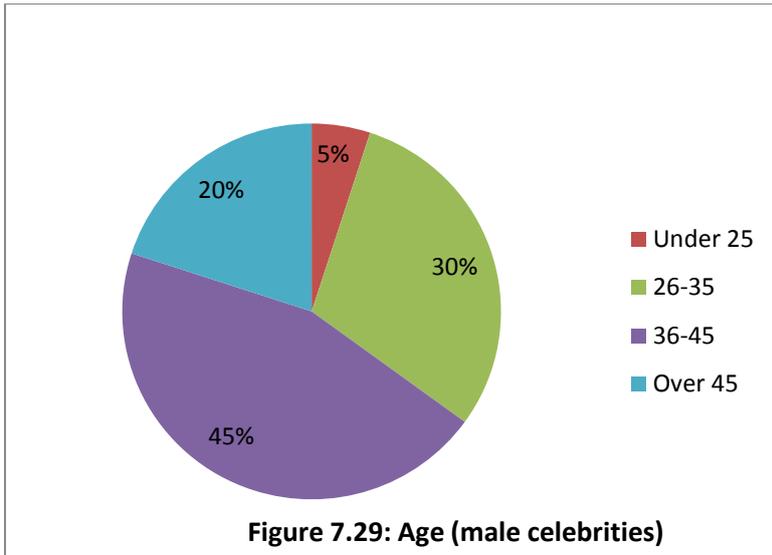
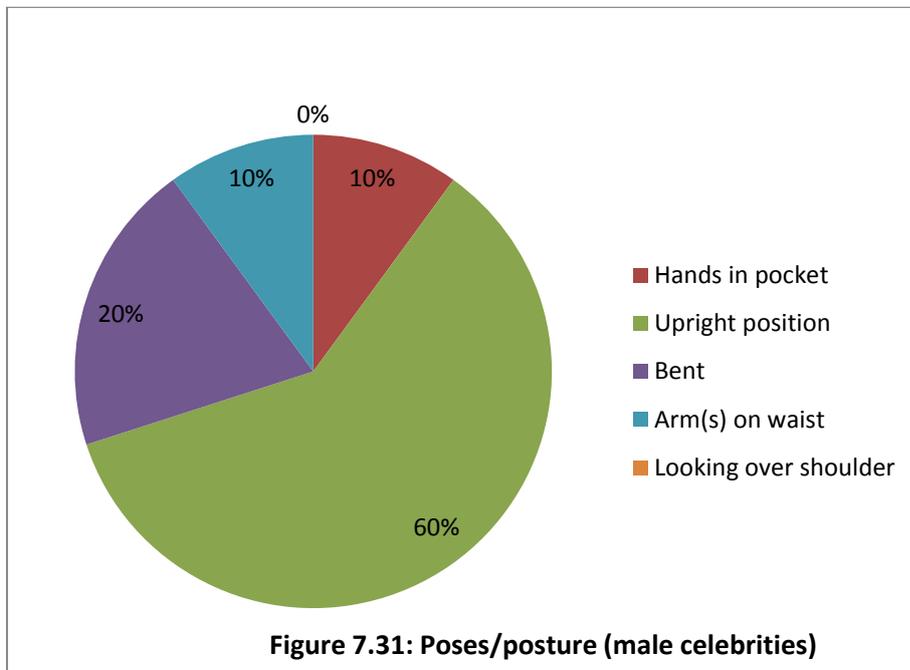


Table 7.6: Poses/posture

	Hand(s) in pocket		Upright position		Bent		Arm(s) on waist		Looking over shoulder	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Figure 7.21		Figure 7.6	Figure 7.1	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.20	Figure 7.24	Figure 7.2		Figure 7.3
	Figure 7.23		Figure 7.8	Figure 7.10	Figure 7.15	Figure 7.20	Figure 7.24	Figure 7.5		Figure 7.12
			Figure 7.11	Figure 7.13	Figure 7.15	Figure 7.20		Figure 7.7		
			Figure 7.11	Figure 7.14	Figure 7.16			Figure 7.9		
			Figure 7.11	Figure 7.17				Figure 7.17		
			Figure 7.14	Figure 7.17				Figure 7.19		
			Figure 7.19	Figure 7.18				Figure 7.22		
			Figure 7.21	Figure 7.19						
			Figure 7.21	Figure 7.19						
			Figure 7.21	Figure 7.20						
			Figure 7.21	Figure 7.20						
			Figure 7.23	Figure 7.20						
				Figure 7.22						
Total	2	0	12	13	4	3	2	7	0	2



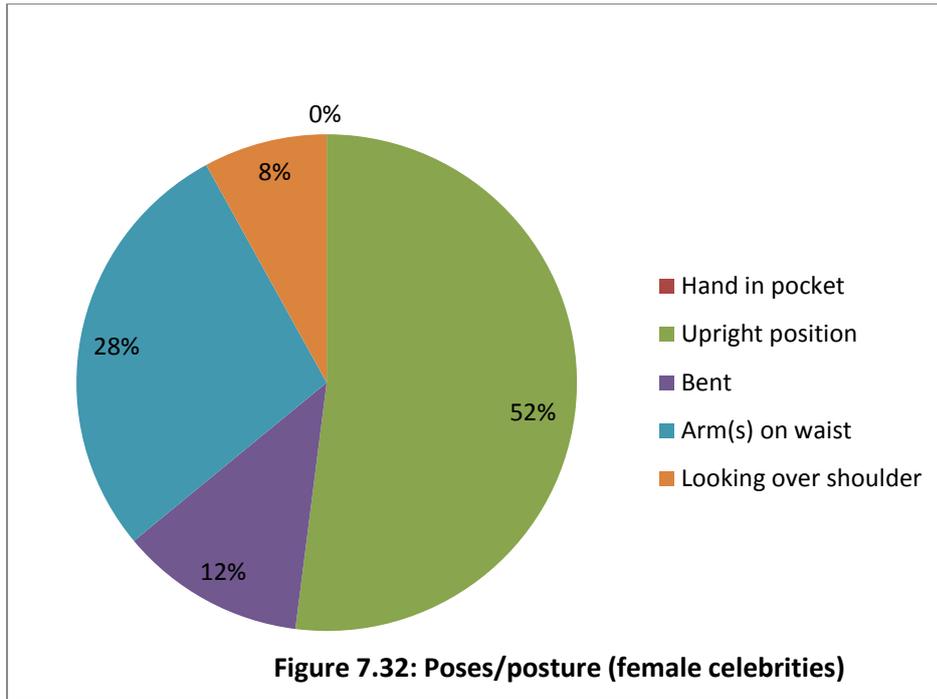


Table 7.7: Facial expressions

	Smiling		Serious		Neutral expression	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Figure 7.8	Figure 7.7	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.2	Figure 7.23	Figure 7.1
	Figure 7.14	Figure 7.9	Figure 7.6	Figure 7.17		Figure 7.3
	Figure 7.19	Figure 7.10	Figure 7.11			Figure 7.5
	Figure 7.23	Figure 7.12	Figure 7.11			Figure 7.17
		Figure 7.13	Figure 7.11			Figure 7.19
		Figure 7.14	Figure 7.15			Figure 7.20
		Figure 7.17	Figure 7.15			Figure 7.20
		Figure 7.19	Figure 7.16			Figure 7.20
		Figure 7.19	Figure 7.21			Figure 7.20
		Figure 7.22	Figure 7.21			Figure 7.20
		Figure 7.18	Figure 7.21			Figure 7.20
			Figure 7.21			Figure 7.22
			Figure 7.21			
			Figure 7.24			
			Figure 7.24			
Total	4	11	15	2	1	12

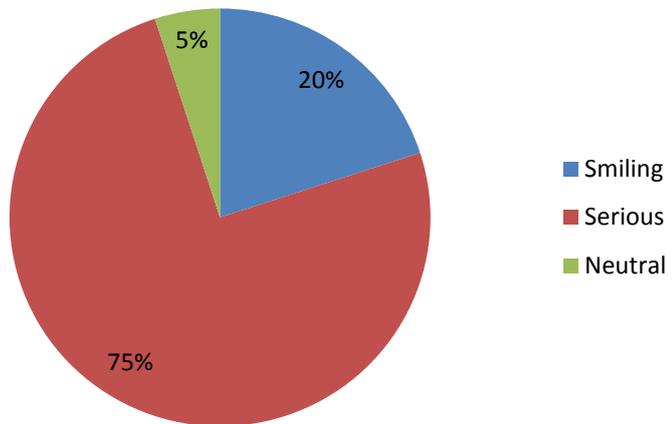


Figure 7.33: Facial expressions (male celebrities)

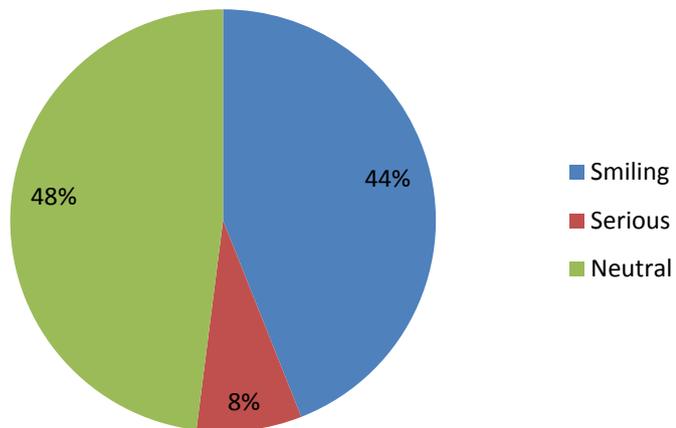


Figure 7.34: Facial expressions (female celebrities)

Table 7.8: Action depicted				
	Passive male	Passive female	Active male	Active female
	Figure 7.6	Figure 7.1	Figure 7.4	
	Figure 7.8	Figure 7.2	Figure 7.15	
	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.3	Figure 7.15	
	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.5	Figure 7.16	
	Figure 7.11	Figure 7.7	Figure 7.24	
	Figure 7.14	Figure 7.9	Figure 7.24	
	Figure 7.19	Figure 7.10		
	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.12		
	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.13		
	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.14		
	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.17		
	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.17		
	Figure 7.23	Figure 7.17		
	Figure 7.23	Figure 7.19		
		Figure 7.19		
		Figure 7.19		
		Figure 7.20		
		Figure 7.22		
		Figure 7.22		
		Figure 7.18		
Total	14	25	6	0

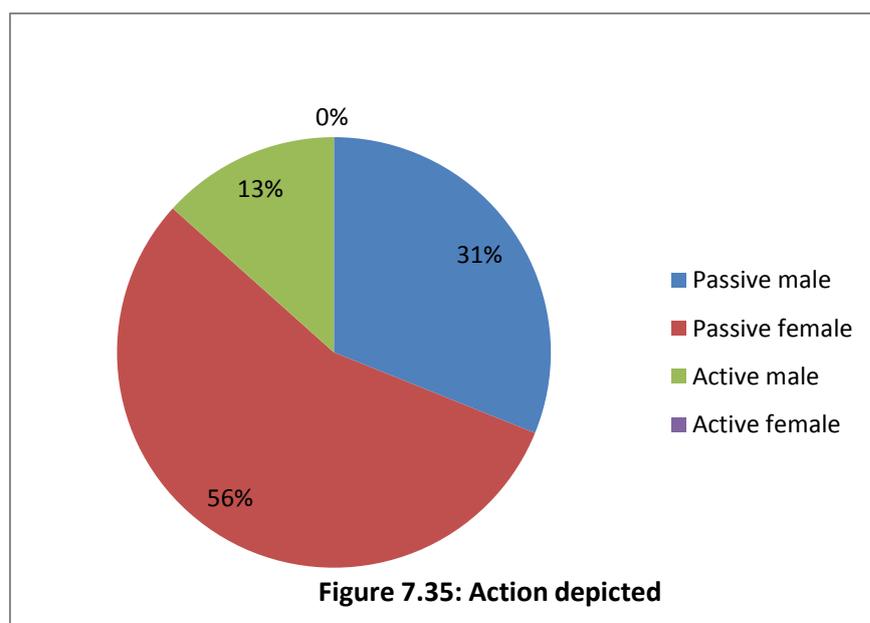


Table 7.9: Types of images				
	Taken at events	Stills from movies	Collage created using visual tricks	Other
	Figure 7.8	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.17	Figure 7.1
		Figure 7.15	Figure 7.19	Figure 7.2
		Figure 7.16	Figure 7.21	Figure 7.3
		Figure 7.20	Figure 7.22	Figure 7.5
		Figure 7.24	Figure 7.23	Figure 7.6
				Figure 7.7
				Figure 7.9
				Figure 7.10
				Figure 7.11
				Figure 7.12
				Figure 7.13
				Figure 7.14
				Figure 7.18
Total	1	5	5	13

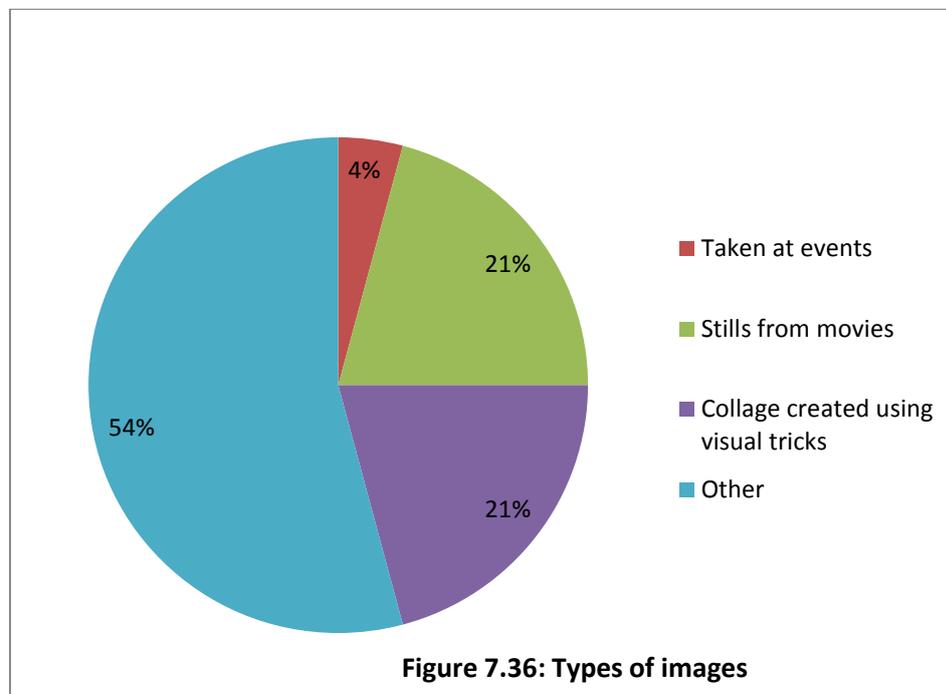


Table 7.10: Body type								
	Slim		Muscular		Heavy set		Normal	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		Figure 7.5	Figure 7.15			Figure 7.2	Figure 7.4	Figure 7.1
		Figure 7.17	Figure 7.23			Figure 7.17	Figure 7.6	Figure 7.3
		Figure 7.17	Figure 7.23			Figure 7.20	Figure 7.8	Figure 7.7
		Figure 7.19					Figure 7.11	Figure 7.9
		Figure 7.19					Figure 7.11	Figure 7.10
		Figure 7.19					Figure 7.11	Figure 7.12
							Figure 7.14	Figure 7.13
							Figure 7.15	Figure 7.14
							Figure 7.16	Figure 7.18
							Figure 7.19	Figure 7.20
							Figure 7.21	Figure 7.20
							Figure 7.21	Figure 7.20
							Figure 7.21	Figure 7.20
							Figure 7.21	Figure 7.20
							Figure 7.21	Figure 7.22
							Figure 7.24	Figure 7.22
							Figure 7.24	
Total	0	6	3	0	0	3	17	16

ADDENDUM D: EXCERPTS FROM FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS

EXCERPTS FROM FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS

Date: 25 October 2013

Location: Dubai

Time:

Focus-group X (girls) – 12pm to 1pm

Focus-group Z (mixed) – 2pm to 3pm

Focus-group Y (boys) – 4pm to 5pm

Criteria for selecting respondents

To qualify for the study a respondent be a teenager aged between 16 and 19 years. In addition focus-group interview respondents should have been reading e+ for at least two years before it closed in 2011.

Respondents' demographics

Pre-group questionnaires were sent to 30 teenagers aged between 16 and 19. Twenty-four teenagers responded from which 18 respondents were selected for focus-group interviews. Out of 18 respondents there were nine boys and nine girls from different countries including Lebanon, the UAE, India, the Philippines, Pakistan and Britain. There was one Lebanese, one Emirati (UAE national), six Indians, two Filipinas (females from the Philippines) and two Filipinos (males from the Philippines), four Pakistanis and two British who participated in the study.

Focus-group X (girls)

Respondent A: 16-year-old Emirati girl

Respondent B: 17-year-old Indian girl

Respondent C: 17-year-old Filipina

Respondent D: 18-year-old Pakistani girl

Respondent E: 18-year-old Indian girl

Respondent F: 19-year-old Pakistani girl

Focus-group Y (boys)

Respondent G: 16-year-old Lebanese boy

Respondent H: 17-year-old British boy

Respondent I: 17-year-old Indian boy

Respondent J: 18-year-old Filipino

Respondent K: 19-year-old Indian boy

Respondent L: 19-year-old Pakistani boy

Focus-group Z (mixed)

Respondent M: 16-year-old Indian girl

Respondent N: 16-year-old Indian boy

Respondent O: 17-year-old Pakistani girl

Respondent P: 18-year-old British boy

Respondent Q: 18-year-old Filipino

Respondent R: 19-year-old Filipina

Figure 7.37: Excerpts from focus-group X (girls only)

Respondents' demographics

Respondent A: 16-year-old Emirati girl

Respondent B: 17-year-old Indian girl

Respondent C: 17-year-old Filipina

Respondent D: 18-year-old Pakistani girl

Respondent E: 18-year-old Indian girl

Respondent F: 19-year-old Pakistani girl

B: Every Thursday morning I used to flip through e+ before going to school. The photos on the covers were different from what was usually on the newspaper. If I was late I took it and read it in the school bus.

A: I liked Thursdays and Fridays because the paper came with magazines. The pictures of celebrities made me happy. You know beautiful faces not blood or some terrorist attack in *Gulf News* (the English newspaper that was distributed together with e+ to households and businesses that subscribed to both).

F: The covers were so colourful and appealing. It made me feel like how do you say it? Like you know this person. I know it sounds weird but... At times I just held the mag closed my eyes for a moment and pretended I was rich, glamorous, beautiful and hot property in B-Town like D Pizzle [Deepika Padukone].

C: I like make-up so I used to check out the latest looks that stars were sporting for inspiration. I raid my mum's vanity box when I am going out on weekends. This other day I was going mental it's like I was struggling to make my thin lips fuller like Angelina Jolie's. I was practically in tears when my mum told me to use a lip pencil. Walla a sexy bee-stung pout like Angelina Jolie without Botox (winking at others).

D: You are better you have a nice body. The photos made me angry, and feel bad about the way I look. I felt so fat. I am short and chubby so forget it I can't wear skimpy clothes like Deepika or Kat's. It's like I don't have the body for that, I don't think they make such clothes in size 18. I tried dieting, food deliveries but nothing works. I even tried those aryuvedic stretching exercises to gain a few inches but I am still short.

B: Me too I was so angry. I felt so jealousy. This other day, my sister found me in the bathroom howling as I ripped off the cover and cut the photo into small pieces. Honestly I swear it, if they were near I would have taken off my slipper and whacked them good.

Interviewer: What made you so angry?

B: It's like all of them had flawless, glowing skin and I had ugly pimples on my face. I was going through a terrible zit phase. It's like I was teased at school. Girls said mean things. Looking at pictures of perfect celebrities made me mad. I tried to disguise the ugly marks with concealers but it didn't work because of the heat and humidity. If you sweat the make-up melts and exposes the dark spots.

A: Haven't you heard about waterproof make-up? Jenifer Aniston swears by it.

B: Are you kidding me? My parents can't afford fancy products. I felt like there was something wrong with me. The Kardashian girl, no she's not a Kardashian. You know who I mean, Kim's sister is my age but she has a lot of money, can buy anything she likes and travels alone. I still depend on my

parents for everything. She always looks so prim and proper (rolling her eyes), that's what gramps says, yet no matter what I do I go out looking dishevelled. At least now it's better, it's like I don't have many breakouts but see (running hand over her cheek and brow) I still have the ugly marks.

E: Guys, I'm getting bored. I don't like make-up I just use lip balm to moisturise my lips. Like my mum I prefer ze *au naturel* look (mimicking French accent).

C: What kind of girl are you? All girls love make-up, bags and shoes?

E: Now you're talking. I love bags, shoes and jewellery. My parents buy a lot of jewellery and I am always on the look out for cool pieces that Bollywood celebrities wear.

A: Wow. Lucky you, you get to sparkle like Bollywood starlets.

E: Only on weddings when we go back home. My mum is like okay with buying nice pieces for me because she wants us to look good because we come from Dubai. You know how it is in the village, everyone thinks NRIs [Non Resident Indians a term referring to Indians living abroad] have money. Anyway it's like my parents are keeping it for my dowry.

C: Girl you are thinking about marriage now?

B: In my village as soon as a child is born relatives start looking around for good families with boys if it's a girl or girls if it's a boy. I hope my parents find a good-looking boy for me. I want to marry a hunk like Ranbir but with a body like Vin Diesel.

F: Keep on dreaming. No one like that exists. Even in Bollywood itself my friend. See, see the two Khans, Salman and SRK [Shah Rukh Khan] have the body but aren't delicious like Ranbir. The other Khan (Aamir) has the looks but no muscle.

D: Ho, ho do you think your parents are concerned about looks and a six pack? I have never seen a *shadi* (matrimonial) ad which says we are looking for "Mr Muscle Hunk". They will look for a boy from a good family who is well settled and can take good care of you.

B: If he is super rich, I'll see what I can do about the looks department.

Figure 7.38: Excerpts from focus-group Y (boys only)

Respondents' demographics

Respondent G: 16-year-old Lebanese boy

Respondent H: 17-year-old British boy

Respondent I: 17-year-old Indian boy

Respondent J: 18-year-old Filipino

Respondent K: 19-year-old Indian boy

Respondent L: 19-year-old Pakistani boy

K: Looking at the images of hot chicks made me happy. It was a welcome distraction from scratching my head trying to solve equations or cramming elements on the periodic table.

J: Dude which chicks are you talking about? Most of those women are old, old enough to be your mothers.

H: No way. How old are you K? (posing the question with a raised eye brow)

G: J is right you can't call anyone over 21 a "chick". Cougars, cougars.

H: Whatever. I used to put the covers on my wall. I love surrounding myself with gorgeous chicks, cougars (looking at G and smiling)

L: I can't believe your parents allowed you to have such stuff on the wall. My dad would kill me. He believes it promotes immorality that's why we didn't subscribe to the magazines.

Moderator: How did you get access to the magazine since you did not subscribe?

L: I used to read it in the library at school or at a friend's house.

J: Your ol' man doesn't get it. The pictures of celebrities are harmless you just look at them for pleasure. This celebrity thing is a time pass no one takes them serious though I wouldn't mind dating a girl who looks like Hailee (*Hailee Steinfeld Figure 7.10*). She's a bombshell... (shaking his head) I like her killer smile.

G: You see now you are fantasising about having a girlfriend. I think that is what L's father doesn't want. Looking at women, you know what I mean, is considered taboo. You get into trouble for speaking to a girl.

L: Those women in skimpy clothes look gross. Too much flesh everywhere. Women should cover themselves to protect their family honour.

I: What? Those dresses are sexy. A girl gotta show off her assets. A little bit of midriff I spy, a little bit of torso here and there and a spilling cleavage is all I see (singing the words to the tune of Lou Bega's song *Mambo No. 5*). I think women should wear what they want as long as they have the body.

H: And it's not true that men entertain evil thoughts when they see images of "seductive sirens" (showing quote marks symbol with his fingers). Unless they're pervs (perverts). Anyway since you don't dig hot babes why did you read the mag?

L: For movie reviews and to know which movies were releasing.

Interviewer: It seems you have a lot to say about female celebrities, what about male celebs?

I: Those dudes are loaded. I want to be rich and famous like them.

Interviewer: Anyone in particular?

I: The Harry Potter guy is bad. He is a big catch and all those cougars can't get their hands off his dosh.

Interviewer: Is dating older women a bad thing?

I: No way it's like super cool. Army candy like Erin Darke on the red carpet. How cool is that?

K: Money, money talks. You know what, when he was my age he had a mansion and fast cars. Look at me I'm a loser. I still share a bunk bed with my annoying brother. If I quit school I can try my luck in reality shows on NDTV.

I: Yeah, some celebrities didn't go to college but are living large but it may not work for you. Some people have connections in Bollywood or do weird stuff to get in.

H: I like action heroes like Vin Diesel (*Figure 7.15*). He is a monster behind the wheel, he should have gone into racing. I'd like to see him race with Hamilton, Vettel and all those F1 guys. For my 21st I'm so getting a convertible. Gotta be a good boy so my parents can buy it for me. Once I take off the covers I'll have it souped up. Imagine zooming on Shaikh Zayed Road and cruising on the Jumeirah Beach Road on weekends with all the girls drooling over me.

G: Dude you're such a show off!

- J: But you also need a six pack like Vin Diesel to appeal to girls, you better get a gym membership now. You see (flexing his muscles) I lift weights but I am not there yet, may be I should try the supplements.
- G: My PE teacher says you don't need bulging muscles like The Rock (Figure 6.23) or The Terminator. He encourages us to exercise to stay health.
- I: I totally agree some guys overdo it. I don't want to look like a robot on steroids thank you very much. A bit of muscle is alright if you're talented. Kanye West is cool. He knows his stuff and helps other people. Each time he comes to our shows I'm always in front with my hands in the air.
- J: Johnny Deep is super cool. Imagine getting to play a pirate and play with cool toys (making a pretend gun with his hands). At 50, he steals the show on the red carpet. Do you remember that time when he showed up wearing make-up?

Figure 7.39: Excerpts from focus-group Z (boys and girls)

Respondents' demographics

Respondent M: 16-year-old Indian girl

Respondent N: 16-year-old Indian boy

Respondent O: 17-year-old Pakistani girl

Respondent P: 18-year-old British boy

Respondent Q: 18-year-old Filipino

Respondent R: 19-year-old Filipina

O: I was happy to see pictures of celebrities and I was not embarrassed to read the magazine when mum and dad were there. We used to keep it on the table for everyone to read. I also used to carry it to school to show my friends stuff I liked.

R: It was a nice mag that made me feel good. It was a wonderful way to unwind after school. I never took much of the stuff serious. It helped me relax you know looking at images of successful people for a change. In the news it was mainly disaster and TV was full of wannabes killing us with their lack of talent.

Interviewer: How do you define success?

Q: Guys like Kanye West have got it, he really brings the house down. I wish I had a voice like his. I'd use it to serenade girls (laughs).

P: You mean Kim (Kardashian). Kanye West will kick your ***.

Q: Most of the celebs were not fakes. They are good actors and musicians. Some of them are involved in charity like Julia Roberts. I really admire her she is a pretty woman with a good heart. She has helped a lot of people with UNICEF. She's like not like some cheap divas. She uses her popularity to raise money for the poor. Her charity work inspired me to get involved in community events organised by my school like cleaning the beach.

O: I am trying to lose weight, I want to look like Deepika. She's so pretty and clothes look good on her no?

R: It's like she's too skinny? She is bony. She has money but looks like someone who doesn't eat. Why do you trouble yourself so much?

O: But I should look like her if I want to get proposals. My mum is worried she thinks they will not get a boy for me like my cousin. She is 26 and is still not married.

Q: But me and my man Jay-Z like a bit of flesh and curves.

O: May be you're the only wacko guy.

Q: Wow are you calling my man Jay-Z a wacko? Queen B Beyonce has curves in the right places. Oh let's not forget J-Lo and her assets and Shakira.

M: It's complicated you never know what is good. They said hips don't lie but these days talk about the 'thigh gap'.

O: That's a difficult one. I know I'll never ever get the 'thigh gap'. All I want is to loose extra flab and have a flat stomach.

Interviewer: Please explain to us what you mean by 'thigh gap'.

N: Yes tell us that sounds interesting (with a smile).

M: It's like having thin legs that don't touch when you stand with your feet together.

N: (Standing up to demonstrate) Wow how on earth do you do that? It's totally insane.

M: Fashion not really because most of the female celebrities are older than me. They wear very expensive numbers that show a lot of flesh. Where can I wear such dresses? I just go to the mall and mosque and don't need fancy clothes. But I like experimenting with my hair so I used to steal the celebs' hairstyles.

P: Really. You girls, I surrender. I just looked to see what was trending. I had no intention of buying clothes or copying anyone's style. I don't want to be a clone.

M: I couldn't resist the hot looks. I rocked Kat's look for my friend's birthday and for my cousin's wedding I actually took the mag with Kat's pic to India and showed it to the aunt who was hired to do the bride's hair and make-up. She did my hair just like Kat's and then pinned some flowers you know in South Indian weddings women put flowers in their hair (looking at other group members). Everyone said I looked glamorous like a Bollywood starlet. Some boys even whistled as I passed them and my *bhai* (brother) reprimanded them.

O: You are better you have nice long hair M. I can't even look at the celebrities' manes. I used to have thick hair but it started falling and thinning has thinned. I always complain to my mother about hair loss but she says it was hormonal, and my hairdresser thinks it was caused by water.

R: I admire celebrities because they are beautiful and rich and want to look like them but my parents cannot afford to buy me nice clothes and make-up. Each time I see a nice dress and ask my mum to buy it she tells me they cannot spend money on useless things because they are saving money for my college tuition.

N: When you graduate you'll get a job and buy all the clothes you want.

R: Yeah but still I'm the only one who looks drab among my friends. My mum buys material and has my clothes stitched in Karama while all my friends wear labels that are worn by celebrities.

Q: What's the big deal with the clothes? The dudes [male celebrities] look cool in simple T-shirts and jeans. My humble wardrobe consists of tees and jeans and a few shirts for special occasions. Anyway I have never seen anyone wearing those kinds of dresses in malls or on the street.

R: Duh! Of course they are for special occasions like weddings and parties not malls or going to the movies.

O: I agree the clothes are nice but I don't think they'll look nice on me.

R: I want to hook up with someone with a body like Vin Diesel but the boys in my school are, they are just plain. They are boring.

O: If I lose weight I'll get a handsome boy like Ranbir. He's so delicious, he links up with leading ladies in B-town. I want a boyfriend like him as long as he doesn't cheat on me.

M: Obvious he will. Heartthrobs like Ranbir are bad. They are big trouble. Heartbreakers.

P: It's okay for a guy to have many girl friends.

R: Says who?

P: Me. Here [in the Middle East] it's acceptable for guys to have many girlfriends. When in Rome... I have two, one here [in Dubai] and another one back home [Britain], as long as they don't find out I'm fine with it.

- R: Correction Lover Boy. A man can have four, am I right, wives not girlfriends.
- P: You got me there. But it's acceptable for guys to fool around. Most dudes, especially those who have the dosh have girlfriends or mistresses all over the world and they get away with it.
- O: I get it men are cheating b*****. But tell me one thing, what is it that men want? Big boobs? A girl with a booty or a tall, slim thing with never-ending legs? What is it that you boys want?
- Q: Please don't call us names. To answer your question, it's a matter of personal taste. You said you wanted a Ranbir lookalike and someone wanted Vin Diesel's muscles. See even girls want different things in men.
- O: You still haven't answered my question, what do you want?
- Q: It's for me to know and for you to find out.