



# Students' Perception of Instagram's Influence on Celebrity Marriages: A study of Yaba College of Technology Students

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## Abstract

The social phenomenon known as public perception is the difference between an absolute truth based on facts and a virtual truth shaped by public opinion, media coverage or reputation (Adamu 2016). Public perception is not necessarily accurate or based on something other than the truth. The public at large can often receive enough information on social media to form a general opinion about a public figure without relying on unfounded rumor as suggested by Adamu (2016).

Social media has been defined by numerous scholars. The 15<sup>th</sup> edition of Merriam Webster dictionary defines social media as “websites for social networking and micro blogging through which users create online communities to share information and ideas, personal messages and other content.”

According to Stec (2015), Instagram is a photo-sharing mobile application that allows users to take pictures, apply filters to them and share them on the platform itself. Per the company website, Instagram has over 400 million active monthly users who shared over 40 billion pictures, with an average of 3.5 billion daily likes for 80 million photos shared daily on the site (Instagram 2016). Instagram reaches the younger generation and appeals to diverse societies more prevalently than other social networking sites (Abbot et al 2013; Salmon, 2013). It has been reported that youngsters today spend more time on Instagram than any other social networking site, thus making them the largest group of Instagram users (Duggan et al 2015).

The ways celebrities choose to show their relationship through social media (Instagram) will most likely be used by others in the future. Most times, fans get themselves involved in the marital issues of the celebrities by making comments that could worsen the situation with the intention of defending their favorite celebrity.

Hence, this study with the use of the survey research method and online questionnaire as the instrument of data collection examined how Instagram influences celebrity marriages and the perception of Yaba-tech students of it.

The study concludes that just as Instagram can be a fun platform for celebrities to connect with their fans and

followers alike, it can also have a negative influence on their marriages.

Keywords: **Instagram, Perception, Marriage, Celebrity**

## Introduction

The advent of internet has brought different ways to communicate; one of the methods of communication that has been developed is **Social media**. Social media provides a platform that allows computer mediated communication that spans across time and space boundaries, connecting people from around the globe (Hogan, 2010); social media has changed the way we meet and interact with each other, thereby enhancing communication.

Social media websites refer to web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public profile within a bounded system; these sites include Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on ideological and technological foundations, that allows the creation and exchange of user generated content.”

The advent of social media has brought several advantages into the society as well as changing the way people live, interact and work. Notwithstanding the numerous advantages of social media, it also has disadvantages which ranges from dissemination of fake news to it being used for dubious businesses.

Of the entire numerous social networking sites, this study has its focus on Instagram. Instagram is an American photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Facebook incorporation. It was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Instagram is a mobile application for Smartphone which is available in the Application Store (App Store) and Google Play (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013).

In discussing the influence of Instagram on celebrity’s marriage, it is important to state that the use of Instagram generally by celebrity couples has a massive impact in their lives. Most times, celebrity couples do not have time for interpersonal communication and intimacy due to the distractions they get from their followers or fans on Instagram. The result of this is that a considerable number are lured into extramarital affairs due to the Lack of attention, intimacy and show of love by their spouses, which could cause an absence of communication.

While there are no official statistics on how Instagram is affecting marriages in Nigeria, there have been many stories of love gone sour arising from social media influences. A recent celebrity marriage crisis between the actor Gbenro Ajibade and his wife, Osas Ighodaro. Gbenro Ajibade took to his Instagram page on February 17, 2019, where he slammed his spouse Osas Ighodaro for leaving their daughter in the hands of strangers, to attend a party with friends (www.pulse.ng). This may be one of the reasons a Nollywood actress, Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde advised singer Bankole Wellington and his wife to stay off social media to avoid controversy (an article written by ‘Jayne Augoye of premium times, November 21, 2017’).

## Statement of the Problem

Despite the numerous benefits of Instagram, it still has its setbacks especially on marriages. Instagram comments are believed to be instigators of marriage dissolution due to the number of dissolved marriages, especially celebrity’s marriages. Celebrity’s couples no longer have meaningful communication with their spouses, rather they spend time with their phones viewing comments from followers on their posts and the number of followers they have.

Past researches done by various scholars speak of the influence of social media on marriages, that of Saleh & Mukhtar (2015) who researched on social media and divorce case study of Dutse LGA, Jigawa state’ shows that social media could lead to infidelity and possible divorce.

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the level of Instagram usage amongst Yaba-tech students.
2. To examine the frequency of Yaba-tech students' exposure to celebrity marriages on Instagram.
3. To examine Yaba-tech students' perception of Instagram portrayal on celebrity marriages.
4. To examine Yaba-tech students' perception of Instagram influence on celebrity marriages.

## Research questions

In view of these objectives, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of Instagram usage amongst Yaba-tech students?
2. To what frequency are the Yaba-tech students exposed to celebrity marriages on Instagram?
3. What is the perception of Yaba-tech students on Instagram's portrayal of celebrity marriages?
4. What is the perception of Yaba-tech students on Instagram influence on celebrity marriages?

## Significance of the study

The significance of this study was to help indicate the influence of Instagram on the marriages of highly visible members of the society in Nigeria (celebrities) and the perception of Yaba-tech students on it. This study exposes the undue **pressure of perfection** that is placed on celebrity couples. Also, this study will advance the frontier of knowledge in the field of mass communication and serve as a reference material for future purposes when conducting similar study.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

#### • Instagram

Instagram is a social website that everyone knows. Even the most remote areas of the world have at least heard of it and are probably using it daily. It is a free, online photo-sharing and social platform that allows users to edit and upload photos and videos through a mobile app. It is a website that does not only give you information, but interacts with you while giving you information. Instagram is an American photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Facebook incorporation.

According to Systrom (2010), Instagram started to develop when Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger decided to focus on the HTML5 check-in application named Burbn, which allows the function of location check-in, earn points upon meeting friends and post photos. However, they decided to focus on the application's photo function after some confusion on the application and soon they renamed Burbn to Instagram.

In 2014, Instagram was the fastest growing platform for social interactions on the internet with 150 million users heading to the site every month. Now, Instagram boasts 800 million active users and 500 million active daily users. It can be said without hesitation that this social networking platform has far exceeded any expectations that we may have had for it at the very beginning ([www.candybitsocial.com](http://www.candybitsocial.com))

Instagram reaches the younger generation and appeals to diverse societies more prevailingly than other social

networking sites (Abbot et al., 2013; Salmon, 2013). It has been reported that youngsters today spend more time on Instagram than any other social networking site, thus making them the largest group of Instagram users (Duggan et al 2015). Many have concluded that Facebook is losing its “youth appeal” and the popularity of Instagram has recently surpassed the popular SNS Twitter with 300 million users monthly.

What sets Instagram from other social networking sites is the way it is characterized by its photo-sharing and enhanced photo-editing features allowing users to share high quality images and videos with the use of filters and hash tags (Sheldon et al, 2017).

## Features

Instagram has series of features. The following are few of them:

### Explore

In June 2012, Instagram introduced “Explore”, a tab inside the app that displays popular photos, photos taken at nearby locations and search. The tab was updated in June 2015 to feature trending tags, places, curated content, and the ability to search for locations. In April 2016, Instagram added a “Videos You Might Like” channel to the tab, followed by an “Events” channel in August; featuring videos from concerts, sports games and other live events followed by the addition of Instagram stories. This was followed by the addition of **Instagram stories** in October.

In November 2016, the tab was expanded after **Instagram live** launched to display an algorithmically curated page of the “best” Instagram live videos currently airing. In May 2017,

Instagram once again updated the Explore tab to promote public stories content from nearby place.

### Video

Initially a purely photo-sharing service, Instagram incorporated 15-second video sharing in June 2013. The addition was seen by some in technology media as Facebook’s attempt at competing with the then popular video sharing application **Vine**. In August 2015, Instagram added support for widescreen videos. In March 2016, Instagram increased the 15-second video limit to 60 seconds. Albums were introduced in February 2017, which allows up to 10 minutes of video to be shared in one post.

### IGTV

IGTV (Instagram TV) a vertical video application launched by Instagram in June 2018. IGTV is an app within Instagram that gives users the ability to share videos that are up to an hour long. IGTV allows uploads of up to 10 minutes in length with a file size of up to 650 MB, with verified and popular users allowed to upload videos of 60 minutes in length with a file size up to 5.4 GB. The app automatically begins playing videos as soon as it is launched.

### Reels

Reels are 15-second multi-clip videos that show up as a part of your feed or shared as a story. It was launched on the August 5, 2020. In contrast to Instagram stories, reels are multi-clip, meaning you can cut and shoot and transition to different scenes all in one video, instead of it being chopped up into a series of separate videos, like an Instagram story.

### Stand-Alone Apps

Instagram has developed and released three stand-alone apps with specialized functionality. In July 2014, it released **Bolt**, a messaging app where users can click on a friend’s profile photo to quickly send an image, with the content

disappearing after being seen. It was followed by the release of **Hyperlapse** in August, a then IOS-Exclusive app that uses “clever algorithm processing” to create tracking shots and fast time-lapse videos. Hyperlapse launched on Android and Windows in May 2015. In October 2015, it released **Boomerang**, a video app that combines photo into short, one-second videos that play back-and-forth in a loop.

### • Marriage

Marriage is the approved social pattern where two or more persons establish a family (Shinwari 2011). He further stated that marriage involves not only the right to conceive and bear children but also a host of other obligation and privileges affecting many people. The real meaning of marriage is the acceptance of a new status, with a new set of privileges and obligations and the recognition of this new status by others. A legal marriage legitimizes a social status and creates a set of legally recognized rights and duties (Shinwari 2011).

### Economic Definition of Marriage

The economic definition of marriage is defined as a family consisting of husband, wife and children in a society. Dr N.A. Wimalasena further stated that marriage is patrilocal in most part of society, meaning that the bride always moves to live with her husband and not the other way round. He further stated that the family’s functions are based on division of labor on the basis of sex: the husband performs all the task outside the home and fulfills his economic obligations; the wife on the other hand bears children, brings them up and performs other house-hold duties of daily routine. According to H.M. Stone and Abraham Stone (1939), economic fitness still constitutes a very important social factor in marriage, that is why in the modern set-up much stress is being laid on the economic value of the girl; and with this the ethical and ideological norms of society are losing their importance.

### Social Definition of Marriage

According to Sing (1978), marriage is the foundation of social existence. Further saying that marriage conveys the sense of the relationship and that marriage is something more serious than the pleasure of two or more people in each other’s company, rather it is an institution that assures the multiplication of the race and forms a vital part of the intimate texture of society. It is an adjustment between the biological purposes of nature and the sociological designs of man (Sing, 1978).

The fact remains that marriage is one of the universal social institutions established and nourished by human society and it is closely connected to the institution of family. According to Gillin and Gillin (2002), “marriage is a socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation”.

### An Ideal Celebrity

According to “Boorstin” as cited in Neal Gabler’s book titled “Toward a new definition of celebrity” (2001) , a celebrity is a person who is known for his well-knownness. Boorstin further stated that a celebrity is the human pseudo-event who has been manufactured for us but who has no substantiality. A celebrity must be known by many or he becomes no celebrity, which is why publicity is a prerequisite (Gabler, 2011). A celebrity is also a person whose name could grab people’s attention, arouse public interest and generate profit from the public.

Chris Rojek (2010), a professor of sociology at the school of Arts and Social Sciences, University of London, delineated three types of celebrities, they are: **Ascribed**, **Achieved** and **Attributed**. He said the **Ascribed Celebrities** are those who are famous because of their lineage. It includes royalty, socialites with long background of affluent relative and children whose parents were also celebrities. The **Achieved Celebrities** are those who became famous because of their talent and skill in that particular field. They are generally actors, actresses, musical artistes and sports stars. The last but not the least are **Attributed Celebrities**, they are those who become famous by attracting a lot of media attention or by being associated with multiple celebrities.

## **Instagram and Celebrity marriages**

The use of Instagram by married celebrities varies, some celebrities possibly use Instagram to flaunt how charming and good looking their partners are. This may not be the case all the time, there have been cases where celebrities come on Instagram to insult their partners.

Instagram may be a tool used by celebrities, married ones precisely to lash out on their cheating partners in order to gain pity from their fans. Some married celebrities get involved in verbal abuse or act unruly with their supposed fans.

Married couples are at the risk of spilling out their private matters on social media possibly because of pressure from their fans and followers. The fact that celebrities are being given attention by so many on Instagram, they may let the fame and attention get to their heads, which may lead to them acting irrationally on Instagram. Instagram if not used properly by married celebrities, could endanger their marriage.

Social media has the capacity to steal the time meant for married celebrities to build a strong relationship with their partners. Celebrities may find it hard to spend some quality time with their loved ones as a result of the pressure put on them and their busy schedule. They are sometimes carried away by the love shown to them by their so-called followers or fans. The constant use of social media by married celebrities could make their partners raise an eyebrow. Research has shown that social media could cause one's partner to be secretive, he or she tends to hide relevant information from their partner which could lead to lack of trust and possibly infidelity (Boye, 2017).

### **Portrayal of Celebrity marriages on Instagram**

The term portrayal simply means the way a person is described. In this sense, portrayal of celebrity marriages on Instagram means the way in which celebrity marriages are being represented or described on Instagram.

Celebrities are guilty of having an extravagant and lavish wedding ceremony, because of how highly graded they are in the society. They tend to try to conform to what society asks of them forgetting the fact that after the wedding comes marriage.

Instagram in general tends to portray celebrity marriages as that which is perfect and unblemished but with the different cases of married couples getting separated or divorced, it tends to counteract the picture that it portrays about celebrity marriages. The manner in which Instagram portrays celebrity marriages is deceitful, because it shows the rosy part and leaves the rusty part aside and this tends to have a negative impact on ordinary married couples.

Some celebrities try as much as possible to avoid the media and the unnecessary attention it brings. They go as far as having a secret wedding just to avoid publicity, this may prove difficult because somehow somewhere a picture of the celebrity pops up on Instagram from inquisitive hunting paparazzi and fans. These celebrities may at times find it hard to live a normal and private life.

The portrayal of celebrity marriages on Instagram also depends on how their fans and followers or people in general view the marriages of celebrities. People are fast in concluding the manner in which marriage would go, which should not be so. Celebrities should be keenly aware that their marriage lies in their hands and not in the hands of Instagram or any social media platform.

### **Media Coverage of Celebrity marriages on Instagram**

The media often times focus on the failing marriage of celebrities and ignore the successful ones. They are not to blame per se, because people tend to have more interest on negative news of celebrities. The media tends to give out what the people or masses crave for. For instance, in the news of a celebrity involved in cheating and a married

man who took his wife and children to an all-expense paid trip to Dubai, the former is more likely to go viral; as the media tends to focus on the negative aspects especially when it involves celebrities and their marriage.

When couples first get married, there is a big fuss about the event itself; the dress and the venue. But the media focus still remains on the love shared between the couples most especially celebrities that easily give in to marriage and fail to stay together. The media tends to put more focus on failing marriages rather than the successful ones, this then pushes celebrities to have their wedding done secretly without any interference of uninvited guests.

It is assumed that marriage of celebrities is given much attention by fans and social media when things are not going well in their marital life. The media focuses on the misfortune of celebrity marriages and ignore the good aspect. To avoid being the talk of the town, celebrities are advised to leave their private life off Instagram and try as much as possible to be in control of what they feed the media. The media shows us what is available to them, so celebrities should make sure that they don't give the media sensitive stories that could come back and haunt them.

### **Influence of Instagram on Marriages (Celebrity Marriages)**

Alexandra Samuel a director of the social and interactive media center at Emily Carr University and a social media consultant reiterated that the influence of social media on relationships can positively impact couples who spend a lot of time apart. She further stated that when both partners participate in social media together, it can be a way for busy people to connect when they are apart. Social media can be a useful tool as well as harmful tool especially for married couples.

Various studies as cited by Huesman, Jones and Miles (2012) in their article titled 'the negative impact of social media on marriages', social media and technology are not helping to decrease marital conflicts but in fact are magnifying troubling issues in marriages and relationships. They further stated that social networking sites have been associated with the negative feeling married couples often experience regarding the quality of their relationship, however the link does not necessarily mean that social media is the cause for problematic relationships but instead could be a symptom of a bigger problem.

There have been different cases of celebrity marriages heading the wrong path due to the pressure social media brings. The case of Mercy Aigbe and her ex-husband, Lanre Gentry who out of anger called out her husband on Instagram and accused him of infidelity and domestic violence. The husband on the other hand denied the claims and accused his wife of slander and tarnishing his reputation; the supposed issue that is meant to be resolved privately was brought on social media.

Another case is that of Tiwa Savage (a popular musician) and her now ex-husband TeeBillz. The marital issue got worse when it was taken to Instagram (this time by her husband), he called his wife out on Instagram and accused her of cheating as well as not performing her duties as a wife. The issue intensified when Tiwa Savage decided to grant an interview to an online TV channel (Pulse TV); this interview was taken by many as being rushed and done at the wrong time: the interview caused an uproar on social media and people had things to say about the issue. The issue taken to Instagram did not solve the problem; rather, it possibly escalated the problem.

Also, a popular TV presenter, Toke Makinwa and her ex-husband, Maje Ayida had impregnated a lady who he dated before he got married to Toke Makinwa. The two (Maje Ayinda and his alleged girlfriend) reconnected via Facebook which led to him cheating on his wife. The matter was dragged on Instagram by an unknown source which led to Toke Makinwa being heartbroken, the duo tried to resolve their issues off social media but it all proved futile. They separated and now are divorced, the issue of the marital problem led to Toke Makinwa writing a book titled "On Becoming" which speaks about how she had to overcome the fears and humiliation her ex-husband caused her.

Tonto Dikeh and her ex-husband, Olakunle Churchill were also involved in a marital bant on social media. The former took to Instagram to call out her ex-husband whom she accused of sexually abusing her; she showed evidence(pictures) of the bruises she had from the beating she received from her husband. The ex-husband on the other hand was quick to counter her claims, disclosing that he never abused his wife but rather was a victim of a woman who was under the influence of drugs. The duo marital problems were all over Instagram and lasted for a month or so. The fact that the matter was taken to social media didn't change the situation rather it worsened it and led to verbal abuse rained out by both parties to each other, as well as other parties involved.

These cases mentioned above are examples of celebrity couples who have been involved in marital clashes on Instagram, which have led to the dissolution of their marriages. It should be said that Instagram may not be the main reason they got divorced, but due to the fact that they brought their marital issues online because of some reasons best known to them it worsened the issue, thereby causing more harm to the marriage.

### **Empirical Review**

Various past researches were done to show the influence Instagram has on marriages. Some research works were looked into to help guide this study.

A research conducted by Saleh & Mukhtar (2015) on “social media and divorce case study of Dutse L.G.A. Jigawa State”. The study examined the impact of social media on marital relationship. Using stratified random sampling technique, they distributed a structured questionnaire to 140 respondents as well as interviewed two more respondents. It was discovered in the study that more women subscribe to social media, irrespective of sex differences and that social media users spends more time on social network sites. The study also showed that social media can lead to infidelity and possibly divorce. The research suggested that people should be wary of how they utilize social media, who they interact with in various social media platform, as well as what they post or share. The society can also be of help, by orientating young people and adults on proper social media usage.

Hiram Ting, Winnie Wong Poh Ming, Ernest Cyril de Run and Sally Lau Yin Choo (2015), conducted a research work, investigating the beliefs about the use of Instagram. The qualitative methodology was used for the study and 34 respondents were involved in the research survey. Respondents were selected by means of purposeful sampling strategy, to ensure the sample was representative of the population in Malaysia. The study revealed that Instagram performed the following roles: Socializing role, Product information, Features usefulness, Personal gratification and Entertainment. In conclusion, it is believed that this study will enhance not only the understanding of Instagram usage but also contribute additional knowledge to user's behavior towards future social networking sites and mobile applications.

Another study conducted by Mary Code (2015) on “Instagram, Social Media and the like: exploring virtual identity's Role in 21<sup>st</sup> century students” from Brock University, Ontario. Using a qualitative inquiry; purposeful sampling was employed to recruit 6 participants between the ages of 15 to 19 to examine their social networking site use and educational experience. Data were collected from single, one-on-one semi-structured interviews in which participants discussed their experiences using social media and data was also collected from the teens' personal Instagram accounts. Participants shared how they and their peers use social media, the pressures and expectations from other users. All 6 participants explained that their teachers donot talk to them about social media use, even offered critiques of the school system itself and its inability to prepare students for the new realities of the digital world. This study concludes that while social media is very influential on students' socialization, educators should be more concerned about the lack of guidance and support that students receive in school in terms of appropriate social media use and the navigation of virtual identity.



## Theoretical Framework

Theories provide the explanations of phenomena in terms of the strength and direction of the relationship between them. The significance of theories to researchers is the enablement they give to researchers to predict the outcomes of occurring phenomena to a possible extent (Black, 1999).

The theoretical models chosen for this research work are:

- Perception theory
- Uses and Gratification theory

## Perception Theory

This theory was propounded by Berelson and Steiner in 1964. They defined perception as the complex process by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. The perception theorists were of the opinion that perception is notably active and involves learning, updating perspectives and interacting with the observed. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, perception is the process of becoming aware or conscious of a thing or things in general; the state of being aware.

The four basic principle that influences the action of an individual were identified by Folarin (1998) and they are; selective attention, selective perception, selective action and selective recall.

Selective attention is the tendency of an individual to pay attention to those part of the message that are consonant with their strongly held beliefs, attitude or behavior and to avoid those part of the messages that are against their strongly held beliefs, attitude or behavior. What this simply means is that an individual would pay attention to only what interest them.

Selective perception tends to make people perceive and then decode communication messages in the light of their previous experiences, current dispositions, needs, moods, beliefs and memories. Folarin (1998) further expatiates that the main principle of perception is that people have distinct psychological characteristics, sub-cultural orientation and social network membership which will interpret the same media in different ways.

Selective action was summed up by Folarin in two ways. The first is in terms of the nature of the intervening variables or conditions that they post between the media and response that people made. The second is in terms of the four principles of selectivity that leads the individual to attempt to interpret, recall and then act upon media messages in a distinctive way.

Selective recall is the tendency for the information been recalled to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes and other psychological factors. Humans tend to accurately remember messages that are favorable to their self-image than messages that are not favorable. The principle of selective recall is parallel to attention and perception.

According to PsycholoGenie Staff (2018), perception is the ability of people to create an impression about others or form a judgement about other individuals or groups as well as drawing conclusions about a person from certain observations. They further stated that , social perception is how people learn about others feelings and emotion by picking up information they gather from physical appearance, verbal and non-verbal communication.

## Juxtaposing Perception theory with this study

In the era of new media which has greatly amplified the selective nature of humans, what the youths now select or chose to get exposed to on the internet, and Instagram most importantly is now entirely dependent on them.

The internet and social media era has promulgated almost totally the golden age of "on-demand contents". We simply

get exposed to the content we only demand. Who the youths follow and like their posts is now a matter of choice entirely dependent on them.

Therefore, the assumptions of the selectivity process of perception theory is completely at play almost every time the youth log on to their Instagram page, they wouldn't waste their scarce and expensive data on the content that does not conform to their preconceived biases or content that amplifies their cognitive dissonance. If they follow any married celebrity, then it simply means they agree with some of the biases and nuances of his/her posts. The influence the contents of celebrities' Instagram posts and stories can have on their marriages as perceived by the audience can be expected to be subject to the biases of the audience. This is a given in the age of distorted social reality occasioned by the portrayal of "unreal and filter-based Instagram lifestyle".

## Uses and Gratification Theory

The uses and gratifications theory asserts that people use media to gratify specific wants and needs. Unlike many media theories that view media users as passive, uses and gratifications see users as active agents who have control over their media consumption.

Uses and gratifications was first introduced in the 1940s as scholars began to study why people choose to consume various forms of media. For the last few decades, uses and gratifications research mostly focused on the gratifications media users sought. Then, in the 1970s, researchers turned their attention to the outcomes of media use and the social and psychological needs that media gratified. Today, the theory is often credited to Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz's work in 1974. As media technologies continue to proliferate, research on uses and gratifications theory is more important than ever for understanding people's motivations for choosing media and the gratifications they get out of it.

## Assumptions of the Theory

Uses and gratifications theory relies on two principles about media users. First, it characterizes media users as active in their selection of the media they consume. From this perspective, people don't use media passively. They are engaged and motivated in their media selections. Second, people are aware of their reasons for selecting different media options. They rely on their knowledge of their motivations to make media choices that will help them meet their specific wants and needs.

Based on those principles, uses and gratifications go on to outline five assumptions:

- Media use is goal-directed. People are motivated to consume media.
- Media is selected based on the expectation that it will satisfy specific needs and desires.
- Media influence on behavior is filtered through social and psychological factors. Thus, personality and social context impact the media choices one makes and one's interpretation of media messages.
- Media compete with other forms of communication for an individual's attention. For example, an individual may choose to have an in-person conversation about an issue instead of watching a documentary about the issue.
- People are usually in control of media and therefore are not particularly influenced by it.

Taken together, Uses and gratifications theory stresses the power of the individual over the power of the media. Individual differences mediate the relationship between media and their effects. This results in media effects being driven as much by the media user as by the media content itself. So, even if people take in the same media message, each individual will not be impacted by the message in the same way.

## Uses and Gratifications and New Media (Instagram)

Scholars have noted that new media includes several attributes that were not part of older forms of media. Users have greater control over what they interact with when they interact with it, and more content choices. This opens up the number of gratifications that new media use could satisfy.

An early study published in the journal of Cyber Psychology & Behavior on uses and gratifications of the internet found seven gratifications for its use: information seeking, aesthetic experience, monetary compensation, diversion, personal status, relationship maintenance, and virtual community. The virtual community could be considered a new gratification as it has no parallel to other forms of media. Another study, published in the journal Decisions Sciences, found three gratifications for internet usage. Two of these gratifications, content, and process gratifications, had been found before in studies of the uses and gratifications of television. However, a new social gratification specific to internet use was also found. These two studies indicate that people look to the internet to fulfill social and communal needs.

Research has also been conducted to uncover the gratifications sought and obtained through social media use. For instance, another study published in Cyber Psychology & Behavior uncovered four needs for Facebook group participation. Those needs included socializing by staying in touch and meeting people, entertainment through the use of Facebook for amusement or leisure, seeking self-status by maintaining one's image, and seeking information to learn about events and products. In a similar study, researchers found that Twitter users gratified their need for connection through the social network. Increased usage, both in terms of the amount of time one had been active on Twitter and in terms of the number of hours per week one spends using Twitter, increased the gratification of this need.

### Juxtaposing Uses and Gratification Theory with this Study

Just like the case with selective processes of the perception theory, the internet age has greatly amplified the dominant role of the audience as opposed to the media, one only needs to look at the divergent nature of contents the youths choose on Instagram these days.

The decision to choose a particular handle to follow on Instagram is completely a matter of gratification intended to be derived from such handle. There is simply so much content flying around on Instagram and so limited amount of data, so much so that choosing to stay on a particular page means so many gratifications is derived from it.

Consequently, the influence married celebrities' Instagram contents can have on the youth is almost minimal because staying so much on any page means its contents must have conformed to the youth default psychological and personality make-up and reinforce a pre-conceived notion of gratification.

## Methodology

This chapter presents an overview of the processes applied in conducting the research. It discusses the methods used for data collection and rationale for choices made; it also includes a review of the research method, population of study, sample size and procedure, sample technique, data collection instruments and data analysis. Atere and Olagbemi (1998) defined research methodology as the rules, principles and practices that guide the collection of evidence and conclusion drawn from it.

## Research Method

Burns and Grove (2003) defined research method as the “blueprint for conducting research with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the finding”. The research method that would be used in this study

is the Survey Research Method, which makes use of questionnaire as its data collection technique; according to Sobowale (1983), “the survey method involves drawing up a set of questions on various subjects or on various aspects of a subject to which selected members of a population are requested to react. According to Babbie (1986), survey is an excellent vehicle for measuring behavior in a large population, which of course is achievable through a carefully selected population sample and through questionnaire which offers the possibility of making a refined descriptive assertion about a population. Also, the type of survey used for this study is **online survey**.

### **Population of study**

The population assessed for this research is the students of Yaba College of technology (Yaba-tech). The population size of undergraduates in Yaba College of technology is estimated to be over 19,000 ([www.yabatech.edu.ng](http://www.yabatech.edu.ng)).

### **Sample size**

As stated by Tejumaiye (2017), a sample is a subject of the population that is taken to be representative of the entire population. This is so because an entire population cannot be studied due to constraint of time and resources. The sample size for this study is 100 respondents.

### **Sampling Technique**

According to Adebayo (2006), sampling technique comprise one or more of the techniques used in samples from a given population. The sample size was selected through a convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study. In other words, this sampling method involves getting participants wherever you can find them and typically wherever is convenient.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The instrument used to collect data for this study is questionnaire, because questionnaires are cheap, easy to administer and are relatively easy to analyze. The questionnaire was structured in such a way as to ensure ease of understanding by respondents. The questionnaire will be structured and designed in such a way that the responses received will provide adequate data for testing and analyzing the research questions. For ease of completion, it would contain multiple choice questions. The questionnaire will be self-administered and a total of 100 copies will be given out to selected respondents.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

Analytical tools were used to collate the raw data and prepare them for analysis. Statistical package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) was used to analyze data as it is the most recognized software used for analysis.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

This chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis of respondent's opinion according to this research work objectives and questions. For this purpose, the data analysis and presentation is divided into three parts:

- The first part is the Analyses of Respondents' Demographic Information.
- The second section shows the information obtained from statistical analyses of primary research questions.
- While the final part is discussion of findings.

One hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in **Yaba College of Technology,**

**Lagos,** there were thoroughly filled and returned on schedule. Data analysis of this research work is therefore based on the number of returned copies of questionnaire.

**TABLE 1: Demographic of Respondents**

<b>Gender of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	43	43%
Female	57	57%
Total	100	100%
<b>Age of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
16-20 years	19	19%
20-24 years	65	65%
24-28 years	15	15%
Other	1	1%
Total	100	100%
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
OND 1	15	15%
OND 2	31	31%
HND 1	29	29%
HND 2	25	25%
Total	100	100%
<b>Programme of Study</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
School of Art, Design and Painting	7	7%
School of Engineering	14	14%

School of Environmental Studies.	18	18%
School of Liberal Studies	18	18%
School of Management and Business Studies	22	22%
School of Science	14	14%
School of Technology.	7	7%
Total	100	100%

Table 1 shows the demographic information of respondents. It can be deduced that the views expressed in relations to this study are representative of both gender; male and female as 43(43%) of the respondents are males while 57(57%) are females, this indicates that more female students were willing to provide answers to questions on the administered questionnaire.

Table 1 also shows the **age range of respondents** that filled the questionnaire. It is seen that 19(19%) of the respondents falls within the ages of 16-20 years, 65(65%) are within the age range of 20-24 years, 15(15%) of the respondents are between the ages of 24-28 years, while 1(1%) of other age range.

Also in table 1, according to the respondents' **Educational qualifications**, 15(15%) of respondents are OND first year students, 31(31%) of respondents OND second year students, alongside, 29(29%) are HND first year students while 25(25%) of the respondents are HND second year students. This indicates that the respondents are adequately educated to provide informed opinion on the study.

Table 1 also includes the distribution of respondents according to **Programme of study**. School of Management and business studies has the highest number of respondents of 22(22%), followed by School of library studies of 18(18%) and School of Environmental studies 18(18%), School of Engineering and School of science both has 14(14%) respondents, while School of technology and School of Art, Design and Painting has 7(7%) respondents each (these are the faculties with the lowest respondents).

### Analysis of Research Questions.

**Research Question ONE: What is the level of Instagram usage amongst Yaba College of Technology Students?**

**Table 2: Respondents level of Instagram usage.**

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Are you on Instagram?</b>	Yes	100	100%
	No	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>	100	100%
<b>How often do you log on to Instagram?</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Everyday	60	60%
	Every other day	10	10%
	Once in a week	20	20%
	Once in a while	10	10%
	<b>Total</b>	100	100%
<b>Why majorly do you get on Instagram?</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Toget celebrity gossips	60	60%

To get political information and be informed on current issues	0	0%
To be generally entertained	30	30%
No particular reason but to pass time	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	100	100%

Table 2 above shows that all the respondents are on Instagram. This shows that all our surveyed respondents use Instagram.

Table 2 above also shows that 60% of all respondents log on to their Instagram account every day, 10% do every other day, while 20% log on once a week and 10% do once in a while.

This then means that the majority of the students of Yabatech log on to their account daily.

Also in table 2, 60% of respondents log on to the Instagram app to get celebrity gossips, 30% do for general entertainment reasons, while 10% get on the platform for no particular reason. This means that the majority of the youth get on the platform for entertainment and leisure purposes.

**Research question TWO: To what frequency are the students of Yaba-tech exposed to celebrity marriages on Instagram**

**Table 3: Frequency of Exposure to celebrity marriages on Instagram**

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
<b>How up-to-date are you about married celebrities on Instagram?</b>	Very up-to-date	24	24%
	Up-to-date	47	47%
	Fairly up-to-date	18	18%
	Rarely up-to-date	11	11%
	Not up-to-date	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>	100	100%

Table 3 shows that 24 respondents are very up-to-date about married celebrities on Instagram similarly 47 respondents are up-to-date about married celebrities on Instagram also 18 respondents are fairly up-to-date about married celebrities on Instagram, 11 respondents are rarely up-to-date while 0 respondents are not up-to-date about married celebrities on Instagram.

**Research question THREE: What is the perception of Yaba-tech students of Instagram portrayal on celebrity marriages?**

**Table 4: Perception of Instagram portrayal on celebrity marriages**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Instagram tends to portray celebrity marriages as one without problem.	24(24%)	46(46%)	7(7%)	19(19%)	4(4%)	100(100%)
The way Instagram portrays celebrity marriages is misleading, as it shows more of the rosy part than the rusty part.	15(15%)	55(55%)	7(7%)	16(16%)	7(6%)	100(100%)
Instagram focuses on the misfortune of celebrity marriages and ignores the good aspect.	5(5%)	22(22%)	12(12%)	42(42%)	19(19%)	100(100%)
Instagram creates an assumption that the more lavish celebrities wedding ceremony is, the more happiness they are likely to have in their marriage.	27(27%)	61(61%)	3(3%)	6(6%)	3(3%)	100(100%)
Instagram tends to portray celebrity marriages as that which is perfect and unblemished.	13(13%)	52(52%)	18(18%)	10(10%)	7(7%)	100(100%)

Table 4 shows the data representation of respondents on the perception of Instagram portrayal of celebrity marriages. 70% of the respondents agreed that Instagram tends to portray celebrity marriages as one without problem as 24% agreed and 46% of respondents strongly agreed to the statement while 23% (a combination of disagree and strongly disagree) of respondents disagreed. Also, the way Instagram portrays celebrity marriages is misleading, as it shows more of the rosy part than the rusty part as 15% strongly agreed and 55% agreed to the statement although 23% (a



combination of disagree and strongly disagree) disagreed. 61% of the respondents disagreed that Instagram focuses on the misfortune of celebrity marriages and ignores the good aspect (42% disagreed and 19% strongly disagreed) while 27% (a combination of agree and strongly agree) agreed to the statement. 88% respondents agreed (27% agreed and 61% strongly agreed) that Instagram creates an assumption that the more lavish celebrities wedding ceremony is, the more happiness they are likely to have in their marriage while 9% disagreed (a combination of disagree and strongly disagree). Furthermore, Instagram tends to portray celebrity marriages as that which is perfect and unblemished as 13% strongly agreed and 53% agreed to the statement.

**Research question FOUR: What is the perception of Yaba-tech students of Instagram influence on celebrity marriages?**

**Table 5: Perception of Instagram influence on celebrity marriages.**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Married celebrities are at the risk of spilling out their private matters on Instagram possibly because of pressure from their fans and followers.	44(44%)	48(48%)	3(3%)	4(4%)	1(1%)	100(100%)
Instagram can serve as a distraction from focusing on the interactions that nurture relationships.	21(21%)	65(65%)	7(7%)	6(6%)	1(1%)	100(100%)
Increased usage of Instagram may lead to marital problems in celebrity marriages.	13(13%)	60(60%)	6(6%)	16(16%)	5(5%)	100(100%)

Married celebrities may find it hard to spend some quality time with their loved ones due to their busy schedule and pressure on Instagram.	13(13%)	67(67%)	4(4%)	13(13%)	3(3%)	100(100%)
Being active on Instagram negatively affect celebrity marriages.	23(23%)	48(48%)	9(9%)	10(10%)	10(10%)	100(100%)
Being active on Instagram positively affect celebrity marriages.	11(11%)	20(20%)	14(14%)	44(44%)	11(11%)	100(100%)

Table 9 shows the Data representation of respondents on the perception of Instagram Influence on Celebrity Marriages. 92% of the respondents agreed that married celebrities are at the risk of spilling out their private matters on Instagram possibly because of pressure from their fans and followers ( 44% strongly agreed and 48% agreed to the statement). 86% of the respondents agreed that Instagram can serve as a distraction from focusing on the interactions that nurture relationships (21% strongly agreed and 65% agreed).

Also, respondents asserted that increased usage of Instagram may lead to marital problems in celebrity marriages as 13% strongly agreed and 60% agreed to the statement.

Respondents believed that married celebrities may find it hard to spend some quality time with their loved ones due to their busy schedule and pressure on Instagram as a large share of the respondents strongly agreed 13% and 46.3% agreed to the statement.

It is seen that 71% (23% strongly agreed and 48% strongly agreed) agreed that being active on Instagram negatively affects celebrity marriages. Also, 44% respondents disagreed and 11 % strongly disagreed that being active on Instagram positively affects celebrity marriages.

### Discussion of Findings

This study set out to examine Yaba-tech students' perception of Instagram's influence on celebrity marriages. In achieving this study, survey research method was employed. It was conducted via an online survey and questionnaires were used as the research instrument for this study. One hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered and filled by respondents (undergraduates) in different faculties in Yaba College of technology.

On the demographic characteristics of the respondents, it is obvious that the female gender was more prominent than the male. This can be attributed to the fact that females are generally more responsive to subject topics of this nature

than the male gender. Also, the questionnaires were evenly administered across different faculties and departments in Yaba-tech to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information required for a well-researched study.

Regarding respondents' responses on access to Instagram, it is seen that all respondents gain access to Instagram through internet-enabled mobile phones which is evident that all the respondents have mobile phones. This is attributed to the recent influx of affordable smartphones in the Nigerian market today, hence mobile phones are readily available for anyone and everyone.

Data from the research shows that Instagram is predominantly used for entertainment and soft news purposes, this shows the pattern of gratification intended by the youths, and this gratification intention is expected to influence the strength of perception they form on issues and stories emanating from the platform. This then means that while 100% of our respondents follow celebrities, they will expect issues and stories that entertain them rather than factually educate them.

More than 60% of them have a perception of Instagram portrayal of celebrity marriages as one without problem, also as something that focuses more on misfortune than good. What is equally curious, however, is the fact that over 60% still perceived Instagram as a medium that shows misleading messages about marriages as it portrays the rosy and not rusty part of celebrity marriages, as well as gives the impression that a lavish wedding guarantees happiness. This conflicting perception is more a reflection of the audience's personal biases and cultural disposition, and the interpretation they subconsciously attributed to contents on the Instagram pages and stories is more subjective to each life experience. Individual audience selective processing of the message as well as the sort of gratification (sensational entertainment value) they subconsciously intend to derive might be the fundamental factors at play from these data. The assumptions of both perception and Uses and gratification on dominance of audience socio- cultural and psychological traits are very much true when data from this research is subjected and interpreted in light of the theories.

An overwhelming percentage (over 80% of respondents) perceived celebrities to be at risk of spilling out private matters on Instagram possibly because of pressure from fans; the same huge numbers believed Instagram can serve as a distraction from focusing on the interaction that nurtures relations. These facts combined to show how the audience perceived themselves to be too important in the lives of their celebrities than their marriages because celebrities are always keeping their pages busy and full of content. It never occurs to the audience that almost all celebrities have management teams that determine what should be posted, at what time it should be, and in what tone. The place of celebrities deliberately posting sensational stories might have been lost on most youths. The audience is constantly in search of stories that fulfill their expected gratification (entertainment) sometimes at the detriment of losing touch with reality. In the modern era of the Internet and new sensational gossip, reality is secondary to fiction and those who profit from and understand the deep-seated needs of the audience are the new kings and queens. They rule over the heart of millions.

## **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Summary**

This research was conducted to find out Yaba-tech students perception of Instagram's influence on celebrity marriages.

As expected for a study of this nature, survey research method was employed, and questionnaire was used as the research instrument. Hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents (students of Yaba college of technology) through google forms. Based on the data analysis of the questionnaire filled by respondents, the following findings were revealed:

- i. Instagram tends to portray celebrity marriages as one without problem.
- ii. The manner in which Instagram portrays celebrity marriages is misleading, as it shows more of the rosy part than the rusty part.
- iii. Instagram creates an assumption that the more lavish celebrities wedding ceremony is, the more happiness they are likely to have in their marriage.
- iv. Married celebrities are at the risk of spilling out their private matters on Instagram possibly because of pressure from their fans and followers
- v. Instagram can serve as a distraction from focusing on the interactions that nurture relationships
- vi. Increased usage of Instagram may lead to marital problems in celebrity marriages
- vii. Married celebrities may find it hard to spend some quality time with their loved ones due to their busy schedule and pressure on Instagram
- viii. Being active on Instagram negatively affect celebrity marriages

## Conclusion

The study concludes that Instagram can be a fun platform for celebrities to connect with their fans and followers alike, it can also have a negative influence on their marriages. Given the popularity of Instagram and many social media platforms, it seems unlikely that married celebrities will be able to dissuade their partners from the platform as the study concluded that married celebrities are at the risk of spilling out their private matters on Instagram possibly because of pressure from their fans and followers. Therefore, it is essential for married celebrities to inculcate time management and conscious discipline in the use of the platform (Instagram) as it can be addictive and detrimental to relationships if too much time is dedicated to its usage. Marital counselors and the couples (celebrities) need to evolve strategies to guide and ensure that social media platforms such as Instagram are adopted mostly for positive motives and not for malicious use.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study recommends the following:

1. Married celebrities should guide their partners in the use of social media platforms such as Instagram and encourage its positive uses.
2. Married celebrities should avoid spilling out matters that involves their marriage on social media platforms (Instagram), as this will only cause problems.
3. Parents should ensure that their children especially celebrities-who are potential spouses -are taught and guided in the essence of appropriate communication in matrimony especially in this era of instant messaging.
4. The use of Social media, particularly Instagram should be part of the counseling package to be given to intending celebrity couples by marriage counsellors before marriage.

## Suggestions for Further Studies

During the literature research of this study, it was apparent that similar studies on this subject were quite scarce, especially in Nigeria. Therefore, more research should be carried out on this same subject or related topics with the objective of enriching the body of knowledge in this area of focus.

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