

# Media Assignment

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## Question 1.

To what extent has the media impacted the rise in celebrities? Please write with reference to a specific media/celebrity examples. Analyze a magazine and the celebrity photos and stories, what are the social implications of these trends?

### Introduction

The media has played its part in revealing stories, capturing moments and even assisting in the success and rise of celebrities. Celebrities nowadays are seen even more as role models and symbolic figures than they were before. People tend to relate their lifestyle around celebrities they adore or can relate to, in fact those who have no close ties or relation with them would strive to pursue their lifestyle, possibly because of the idea the media has given to its viewers of what life as a celebrity is. With the boom in celebrity tabloid magazines, it is expected that trends will be set and some would follow. This essay will discuss how far the media has impacted the rise of celebrities. An American reality TV series namely “Keeping up with the Kardashians” will be analyzed and how their lifestyle as reality stars had made them into one of the most known celebrities in Hollywood overnight. Then the issue of the media manipulating images of celebrities to portray perfection will be discussed. The controversy behind a Vogue magazine image will be discussed relating to the size-zero trend amongst women. The media has implanted the idea of perfection to be flawless skin, full shiny hair, and light weighted (size-zero), examples of celebrities in these situations and their influences on people will be added into the discussion briefly.

Keeping up with the Kardashians is an American reality show that aired in 2007 and is still running (IMDb 2012). What made this average family so special? Why start a reality show of them? They represent family, a luxurious and wealthy one at that. The show was an exclusive into the private family life of the socialite Kim Kardashian, daughter of late L.A power attorney Robert Kardashian (IMDb 2012). The average family life style can relate to any

average American household, however what strikes this family appealing is there sense of humor, wealth, social life and fashion sense. The stars of the show are the family members namely, “Kim, Khloe, Koutney Kardashian along with their mother and step-father, Kris and Bruce Jenner” Kuvaas (2011). Kim Kardashian, who the show was initially built around, has expanded since 2007 with three spin-offs. Kim as a celebrity has set some negative and positive effects on her fans and other viewers.

In 2007, she sued Vivid entertainment for the distribution of a sex tape of her and her ex-boyfriend that was released to the public (Benet 2007). According to Kuvaas (2011) Kim’s sex tape is what brought her into the spotlight, driving the force to boost the show. Her sex tape not only made her more popular but also benefited her entire family. This is because the people began to watch he show more after the release of the sex tape. No doubt the Kardashians are a very interesting family filled with life but it is possible that viewer would think that creating a sex tape would make one more famous. Fame is something which most people desire, and nowadays people go through a great length to get it. Attention is one of the best ways to jump start a career and this is exactly what the Kardashians have been doing.

Just last year Kim got married to her boyfriend Kris Humphries, a marriage that cost a fortune, approximately \$10million, but lasted only 72 days (Marikar 2011). Rumors had circulated that the wedding was a form of profit, however the reality star mocked her critics with a public message saying, “filing for divorce was a bad business decision” (Raftery 2012). With that statement she further went on commenting that if the public thought that her marriage was a business decision and if she really made all that money everyone claim, off the wedding, being a smart business woman she would have stayed married for longer (Raftery 2012). Kim claims that the divorce was not for money, however it is verly possibly that it was another form of attention. Kris and Kim signed a pre-nuptial agreement with her net worth estimated at \$35 million and his at \$8 million (Marikar 2011). With that being said and the short duration of their marriage, it is hard to believe that their marriage was based

on just love. Kim as a fashion icon and socialite has a large fan base and they look up to her, as a reality star it is her responsible to set a good example to her viewer and not allow the media take over her life. Kim is also very famous for her voluptuous and curvy figure, indeed she is very confident in her body and has began to set a trend in America where women are beginning to move away from the size-zero pressure.

Speculations over Vogue magazine covers have steered up a number of discussions, from manipulation of photographs to controversies over discrimination, but the most common is the “size zero” debate. The 2011, supermodel Karlie Kloss, who was only 19 earned a spread in the December issue of Vogue Italia, she was in various states of nudity which is common in the model industry, however what caught the public eye was a particular picture that made the model look thinner than usual. Rumors quickly started developing, suggesting that the model was suffering from anorexia or the picture had been over manipulated. She was too young to be in such a sexually provocative shoot, but that wasn't even the main issue for most readers. The editorial hailed her as “the new body” but was used by several pro-anorexia websites as 'thinspiration' for those seeking to loose weight in an unhealthy manner (Waite 2011). The picture portrayed thinner looking women as more attractive or as Vogue would say “the new body”. The picture shown was the most concentrated on showing Karlie at an usual angle, Fashionista reports (Waite).



*(Meisel 2012)*

Vogue Italia were quick to react to the situation by taking the image off their website (Waite). After the incidence, the chief editor in Vogue, Franca Sozzani commented in her blog over the controversies, specifically the picture that got everyone talking. She commented on rumors of people suggesting that it was either anorexia or photoshopped, she clarified that the image was not overly photoshopped and added that the photographic distortion techniques developed by Man Ray are responsible for the exaggerated angles in the shoot (Phelan 2012). So why use a photographic technique to make a model look thinner if it wasn't trying to send a message? She also claims that Karlie is not anorexic but has a muscular body (Phelan 2012). Her last comment was on why she took the picture off the website. She wrote, "I did not remove the first picture from the site because I thought it set a bad example due to its thinness, but because I am aware of the fact that people can easily attach labels without thinking"(Phelan 2012). Whether the picture intended to encourage women to look thinner or not the point is it did, and for the editor of the magazines admits that she aware of the fact that people can easily give in their own ideas to an image without thinking, so why publish it in the first place? The young viewers are not all photographers and would not know that the angle at which the model stands is what makes her appear thinner, they simply believe what they see without deep thought into it.

Trends in eating disorder have increased over a few decades. In the 1940s and 50s the average dress size was a 12-14 but now the obsession with size zero celebrities has changed and the trend is causing health problems (Yellowless 2010). "It is estimated that 1.1 million people in the UK suffer from eating disorders. The majority are young women aged between 12 and 24 years although women of any age can develop a problem" (Yellowless 2010). A number of celebrities have admitted that they have felt under pressure to be thin because of the way media portrays beauty and perfection. Disney actress and singer Demi Lavato told UK TV show Daybreak, "I feel as if television and movies are now glorifying an unhealthy body image, which puts a lot of pressure on young girls, especially girls who are growing up and trying to find themselves" (Newsdesk 2012). In 2010 the actress entered a rehab facility for an eating disorder and emotional issues (Newsdesk 2012). Also Big Borthor

Star Nikki Grahme suffered from anorexia at the age of eight, destroying her future being a mother (Watkins 2011). She reveals in her book that the pressure is so much because of airbrushed images and a lot of thin people appearing in magazines, she further commented, “I do not think it helps that there are also stick-thin models on the catwalk. You see these emaciated models and think; they are being paid thousands of pounds to look like that. How can that be justified?” (Watkins 2011).

The celebrities have spoken for themselves, and if this is what it does to them then one can only imagine the implications and trends it sets on the viewers. A lot of young viewers especially fall victims to these trends that the media impacts on celebrities, they look into magazines to see what they should look like and media industries should take more responsibility in publishing information and pictures to the public.

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