



## THE ROLE OF PAPARAZZI IN THE LIVES OF PAKISTANI CELEBRITIES

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### Abstract

The research titled as “The Role of Paparazzi in the Lives of Pakistani Celebrities” examines the perspective of celebrities about Paparazzi interference in their lives through in-depth interviews as a tool of data collection. The respondents were selected from media, political and sports fields, using convenience sampling. The hypothesis tested was “celebrities perceived that paparazzi interference in their lives is unethical and their solidarity of life is being affected”. The theoretical framework comprised of Social Responsibility Theory and Expectancy Violation Theory. The general findings revealed that paparazzi invade into the solitude life of the celebrities so that they can capture exclusive photographs of them by using different tactics to boost the television rating points (TRPs) of their channels and increase the circulation of their newspapers. Whereas according to the opinion of celebrities’ paparazzi do not follow the code of ethics hence create troubles in their private lives.

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### 1. Introduction

Media is the most dominant and influential tool of communication as said by Imtiaz (2008). It plays a significant role in the society and has the power to influence the lives of ordinary people. Razaq (2010) in a research article titled as "importance of media in Pakistan towards change" states that media of any country depicts how people of that country behave. People's behavior and their perceptions are related to media since it affects people's minds about the content it covers. As a dominant tool sometimes in quest of breaking information and giving sensationalized stories, media interferes in personal lives of celebrities and interrupts the private life of popular figures. Devrani (2008) argues in a study that people need media in their life like food and clothes. Media carries out a key role in strengthening the society since it informs people, educates them and creates awareness among them. Based on previous research, it can be said that media as a powerful

tool has informative and constructive role in modern era. Despite being an integral part of the society, media interventions in the privacy of individuals particularly celebrities is a matter of concern. Privacy is the right of every human being but paparazzi due to their intriguing nature interfere in personal lives of celebrities to the extent of spoiling their repute.

The incident of Princess Diana's death occurred in Paris France, on August 31, 1997. After conducted investigations, Paris police arrested seven photographers found to cause the accident that killed Princess Diana because they were chasing the Mercedes that the Princess and her fiancé were in, to get some pictures of them. They would certainly, sell these pictures to British and American tabloids. There are many incidents of paparazzi causing accidents and creating chaos among celebrities. It has also been reported that there were some photographers continued to take pictures of the badly injured Princess Diana after the accident instead of helping her.

The paparazzi mean the photographers who are in search of renowned public figures instantly to capture them while they are unaware. (Madere, 1999). Merriam Webster dictionary defined paparazzo as a self-employed photojournalist who deliberately takes open photographs of the celebrities.

The word "paparazzi" was used and originated in the 1960 film "La Dolce Vita" directed by Federico Fellini. The photographer (news) named as "Paparazzo" was the one character in the film which was played by Walter Santesso. Robert Hendrickson (1987) writes in his book "Word and Phrase Origins" that the director Fellini took the name from an Italian dialect that describes a particularly annoying noise, that of a buzzing mosquito. It was his childhood inspiration when during his school days, he recalled a boy who was nicknamed as "paparazzo", because of his talkative nature and relentless movements, a name Fellini later used to the imaginary character in his film "La Dolce Vita".

A celebrity is any person who is being famous in a society by any reason. According to Encarta dictionary, a celebrity is a prominent person who is well-known during his or her own time. The word "celebrity" derived from early Roman civilization. The word we now know to mean as "a condition of being famous" or "a famous person" derived from the Latin word *celeber*, meaning "frequented or populous".

This article discusses that how paparazzi intervene with the privacy and secrecy of celebrities. This study focuses on the kinds of problems Pakistani celebrities face by media interruption and how their personal lives are being disturbed and affected by intrusion of media especially by paparazzi.

This research provides an understanding that celebrities do have right to make their lives private according to law and media ethics. Hence, without their permission media cannot forcibly publicize them.

Feig (2006) in the article titled "Paparazzi: Photographers Who Stalk Celebrities: A Necessary Nuisance and a Law to Combat" explained that celebrities and sensationalist photographers (paparazzi) relate to each other somehow. The sources of revenue of the paparazzi are those famous pictures of renowned people which they capture in candid moments.

However, the reason that instigated the paparazzi to use forceful and sometimes unsafe or risky means is to get those shots in the interest of the public's mania with these star gossip publications full of sensational photographs. To get their photographs, paparazzi will wait in backstreets,

public places, sometimes will hang on trees for a celeb to come into view. Most photojournalists have a huge linkage of informers, including hair stylists, servers, attendants, watchman and sales people who are rewarded to share information about known figures.

Celebrities do have a right to privacy according to international law that is Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and article 14 of the Pakistani constitution as well; like all other individuals but paparazzi just for the sake of money and popularity violate the law and hence create trouble in their lives.

In Pakistan, we have many examples in the past and present, the celebrities who became victims of these paparazzi like at present the case of Veena Malik and Meera, in past even popular female pop singer Nazia Hassan was scandalized. So, this study focused on these issues related to celebrities and hence emphasized that media and paparazzi should understand that everyone has a right to keep his or her life personal and private so paparazzi should not get in the way of celebrities. Thus, this study is very important in order to get opinion of different celebrities about paparazzi interference in their lives and what problems they are facing due to media.

## **2. Literature Review**

Nordhaus (1999) talks the trouble that comes in ways to keep safe rights of confidentiality of stars from the aggressive pranks of paparazzi. Mostly, a celebrity's right to maintain his or her life private is attacked in a public place, where such a right is restricted. The question of privacy raises when a photojournalist captures a prohibited picture of a celebrity. Whereas, the right to promotion or publicity ascends when a periodical issue those pictures. Nordhuas discusses both and then argues that the solution to paparazzi intrusion posed by Onassis is indeed the suitable way to resolve or settle the paparazzi problem. The solution is that interference by the press in the privacy of the individual cannot be the dominant public interest so it is not necessary to highlight them in fact the press rather tilts its attention towards more productive issues related to the press, luminaries, the general public, and the courts etc.

Pamela Sobotka stated that Princess Diana Spencer's death occurred in Paris France, on August 31, 1997. She died in a car accident, while being chased by paparazzi.

Bisdee (2011) explained that the rise of the film industry increased public demand for information about the known figures and the publicity of film stars added to the sales of newspapers and magazines. He said that television has brought celebrities into our homes and made us intimate

about these people. So now people want to read their news and want to see their pictures. In this culture obsessed with celebrity, the paparazzi providing more pictures of them during their vulnerable, unguarded and embarrassing moments that we want to see.

*Los Angeles Times* (2010) told that despite having solid condemnation from news organizations, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill furious on photographers who drive recklessly to chase celebrities or block the roads or paths and create the sense of captivity or "false imprisonment" for Hollywood high society. The paparazzi bill, AB 2479 proposed by then Assembly woman Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles), enforces firm penalties including possible jail time for photographers who cross the line. The bill provides that any person who tries to halt or create a sense of caging for someone intended for getting any candid shot will be punished according to the law. Mendelson (2010) narrated that one group of "journalists" is consistently observed more harmfully than others – the paparazzi. Whenever we talk about the paparazzi, it is always being discussed in relation to known figures and their privacy issues. The paper explains this issue by investigating it through the lens of image and reputation management, the concepts engrained in the field of public relations. This involves that we begin to think of celebrities less as human beings or individuals whose privacy is vulnerable and more as industries which are trying to produce the most unified image possible to increase their cultural and economic power. In this view, celebrities, along with their related support staff, are repetitively struggling to present a unified image, one that may be contradicted by the paparazzi. Campbell (2009) stated that among the most significant of these cases, the one was related to the wedding photos of Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta Jones and a tussle between two famous mags. Basically, the couple sold the exclusive rights to their wedding day photos for one million pounds to *OK* magazine. Whereas, *Hello* magazine created a plan to let its disappointment over the agreement between them, and designated a freelancer journalist pretended as a waiter in their wedding and thus captured the couple on their big day, and sold the copies to *Hello* magazine. Ultimately, *Hello* paid a small amount to the Douglas's for breaching their privacy. Moreover, as per law it was also found that *OK* will extract a significant cost from *Hello* for breach of its confidentiality.

Corrice (2007) stated that as human beings, we all have rights of privacy and solitude. But when it comes to the celebrity, the term privacy grasps

different meaning. Most of the celebs admit the fact that they will be caught by the media the time they step out their places. Celebrities lives revolves around the cameras most of the time, so it seems obvious that the stuff related to their private lives will highlight. However, it isn't impossible for a celebrity to keep their private lives private. There are many celebrities that seem to keep a low profile, yet remain famous.

She quoted the example of Johnny Depp that he is one of the most famous actors across the world, but we don't regularly see stories on him posted in the magazines or newspapers. It does not mean that there is nothing in his life worth mentioning, everyone does, right? The fact is that he abandons from speaking about his personal life when being interviewed and he doesn't let the cameras to catch him in any uncomfortable public displays.

Majority of the studies support researcher's stance that paparazzi invade into the solitude life of the celebrities by using different tactics. Princess Diana Spencer's death occurred in a car accident while being chased by the paparazzi. Just for the sake of taking some pictures they crossed their limits and caused her to death. Some studies also express that this is celebrity obsessed society, media supply what people are demanding. It is the fact that the public sometimes seem to be possessed with these celebrity gossips and has compelled the paparazzi to use extreme and inappropriate ways to get the snaps.

### **Hypothesis**

This study is focused on the impact of interference of media and paparazzi in the lives of Pakistani celebrities. The aim of the study was to explore the opinion of celebrities about paparazzi interference in their lives. The objective is achieved by using research methodology of intensive interviews. The respondent's answers make clarify the role of media and paparazzi in their lives.

In this research study the researcher has tested the following hypotheses.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Celebrities get disturbed by paparazzi interference in their lives.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Media is not following the code of ethics regarding coverage of celebrities

### **Research Questions**

**RQ 1:** Do celebrities have bad experience regarding the interference of paparazzi in their lives?

**RQ 2:** Is the media following the code of ethics according to celebrities?

### **Objectives**

This study aimed to:

1. To find out the opinion of celebrities about paparazzi interference in their lives.

2. To give the solutions that how the celebrities have a calm life.
3. To give certain recommendations for further study.

### **Method**

The researcher adopted method of in-depth interviews and designed questionnaire to collect data from its population. Opinion based (open-ended) questions were asked from the sample. Through these interviews, the researcher learned the interference of Paparazzi in celebrity lives.

This research was conducted to find out the role of Paparazzi in the lives of Pakistani celebrities. For this purpose, the researcher has taken different people known as celebrities from different areas i.e. from TV, Film and Politics. The celebrities selected from Film and TV were Reema Khan, Meera, Syed Noor, Pervaiz Kalim, Rukhsana Noor, Nisho, Sheikh Rasheed from politics and Imran Khan from Sports.

In-depth interview is, “a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation.” (Boyce & Neale, 2006 as cited in Tabassum 2010, p.31). This method was used to check out the government’s role in the progress of film industry of Pakistan.

The universe of this study was Pakistan’s film and Television industry and government related people. The population of this study were film and TV actors and government officials associated with some scandals. The researcher has applied “convenience sampling method” to collect the data.

Checklist was prepared by the researcher based on related broad areas of research and used at the time of interviews. This checklist was helpful for the researcher to collect the maximum relevant information from the sample audience.

### **Reliability of the Method used:**

The researchers conducting this study went to the selected celebrities in person and on phone since a few people whom the researchers needed to interview were out of station during the time when the research was being conducted. Face to face communication, also termed as interpersonal communication is one of the most reliable method to communicate- the other person sits across and detailed information can be obtained and questions can be rephrased in some other way if the respondent does not answer directly. Interviewing in person has a great advantage since the interviewer can use open ended questions instead of restricting the respondents to a simple yes or no.

### **Results**

Majority of the respondents told that the paparazzi should not hurt the personal feelings and family life of celebrities and should not disclose their delicate issues. According to them it is unethical to interfere in any one’s private life without his or her consent. Majority of the respondents said that paparazzi should realize that there are some private decisions of celebrities in which they should not interfere. Media and paparazzi should not go in so extreme that leads to damage the repute of that celebrity or stake his or her future.

Celebrities’ stance not to unveil their personal lives has been proven by a study with reference to the literature review by authority of the House of Commons. The House of Commons Culture Media and Sport committee members (2002) stated that Privacy is a part of one’s self-respect and independence and almost everyone respects privacy as essential and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that every person holds the right to respect for his or her private and domestic life.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

Media plays a significant role in our society and thus is the most powerful tool of communication. It is the reflection of our country and is said the fourth pillar of state. We are informed, educate and entertained by media. The result from the research shows that paparazzi interference has a strong impact in the celebrity’s lives. It is revealed that the lives of celebrities get disturbed by the untimely interruption of the paparazzi. Different opinions of known people are found to have strong impact and effect of media and paparazzi in their private lives.

The previous studies discovered that media has a strong impact on the society. Media behavior towards the personal lives of celebrities is criticized. And paparazzi being part of media are viewed so negatively towards the privacy of celebrities. Hence different studies suggest that there should be a unified relationship between them. The celebrities told that although media played a prominent role in projection of them and promoted them well they can’t deny it but it should understand the fact that besides show business celebrities do have family life also and that life cannot be exchange by celebrities so it should not highlight by media and of course paparazzi. Because it is their right not to share their secrets and hence they can keep it personal and private.

On asking the question regarding paparazzi interference actress Reema narrated that she doesn’t agree that artists are public property. According to her that public property is his art not

his personal life. She said that she knows people are curious but the celebrities who don't want to share their secrets they can keep it personal and private. It is in our religion that if you hide's any one's secrets Allah will never disclose yours. She quoted the example of Lady Diana who had an accident due to Paparazzi.

Sheikh Rasheed told that he believes a celebrity's life is not personal. If any one hides is lucky. But any ways the paparazzi should not destroy their lives. He said that paparazzi do this for sake of rating. They look into the issue for sake of rating and do compete with others for it. He explained that publishing candid pictures of celebrities is very wrong act and should not be done. Everyone has the right to live life freely. One should not look into the clothes. One should must expose financial corruption but not publicize the personal lives.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

This study is focused on the impact of interference of paparazzi in the lives of Pakistani celebrities. The main objective of the study was to find out the opinion of celebrities about paparazzi interference in their lives. The objective is achieved by using research methodology of intensive interviews. The respondent's answers make clarify the role of media and paparazzi in their lives.

The research has explored that media and paparazzi interfere in the private lives of celebrities. They do so for the sake of ratings, fame and notoriety. They try to publicize all the content that is related to their personal lives and do not hesitate to highlight someone's private and confidential matters.

### **Hypothesis of research:**

**H1** Celebrities get disturbed by paparazzi interference in their lives.

**H2** Media is not following the code of ethics, regarding coverage of celebrities.

The research answers the above-mentioned hypothesis that celebrities get disturbed by paparazzi interference in their lives and despite proper rules and regulations media is not following those code of ethics regarding coverage of celebrities.

### **Research questions:**

**1 Do celebrities had bad experience regarding the interference of paparazzi in their lives?**

**2 Is the media following the code of ethics according to celebrities?**

The researcher also found the answers of the research questions by interviewing celebrities that they do had bad experience with the media regarding their personal lives and according to them media is not following the code of ethics.

Majority of the respondents stated that although media play a pivotal role in our society and hence get to know everything about them but it must realize that they do avail some privacy rights, so anything that is related with the country with the show business media has been allowed to highlight that but it has not been permitted to enter in the bedroom of any one with out his or her consent.

This study can lead towards the new dimensions of research. This research has been conducted to check the impact of interference of media and paparazzi in the lives of celebrities. Other researches can be done to determine the line between privacy and freedom of media. The researchers also conduct a research on the living standards of Paparazzi by the famous photographs they capture. Another research can be conducted to create awareness about the rights of celebrities among the general public. So, there are many fields and dimensions to be explored and to be researched on role of paparazzi in interfering the lives of celebrities. Research involving journalists, and photographers can be done too.

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