



**THE INFLUENCE OF TWITTER (X) AND FACEBOOK ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN GHANA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication, UniMAC.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to the intelligent Jessica Gyimah, whose support and inspiration made this work possible.

May this work stand as a reflection of your faith in me and the strength you have given me throughout this journey.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

To Mr. Eugene Longdon and Mrs. Ruth Aba Longdon, this accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine.

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana, focusing on how these platforms promote engagement, empowerment, and collaboration among young people. Grounded in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the study explored the motivations and gratifications that drive Ghanaian youths' social media use and how these translate into participation in development activities. The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and employed a quantitative, descriptive survey design. A total of 400 respondents, comprising Ghanaian youth aged between 18 and 35 years, were selected through convenience sampling. Primary data were collected using structured online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms and analysed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, and means through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (63.2%) were female, indicating growing female engagement on digital platforms for development-oriented discussions. Results further showed that Ghanaian youth use Twitter and Facebook predominantly for information sharing, social networking, and civic participation. These platforms serve as channels for mobilising peers, advocating social causes, and promoting community awareness. The study also found that social media contributes to youth empowerment by providing spaces for self-expression, leadership, and advocacy. However, several challenges, such as limited digital literacy, misinformation, poor internet access, and weak institutional support, were identified as barriers to effective utilisation of these platforms for community development. The study concludes that while Twitter and Facebook significantly enhance youth engagement in community projects, strategic policy interventions are needed to improve digital inclusion, media literacy, and infrastructural access. The findings have important implications for government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community leaders aiming to integrate social media into participatory development strategies

**Keywords:** Twitter, Facebook, Social Media, Youth Participation, Community Development, Empowerment, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Digital Engagement, Descriptive Survey.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

UGT-Uses and Gratifications Theory

SPSS-Statistical Package for Social Sciences

NGO-Non-Governmental Organisation

ICT-Information and Communication Technology

GDP-Gross Domestic Product

GSS-Ghana Statistical Service

SDGs-Sustainable Development Goals

CBO-Community-Based Organization

UGC-User-Generated Content

SNS-Social Networking Sites

UNDP -United Nations Development Programme

CSO-Civil Society Organisation

MoCD-Ministry of Communication and Digitalisation

API-Application Programming Interface

ISP-Internet Service Provider

ICT4D -Information and Communication Technologies for Development

NGOCC-Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Council

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study by providing a comprehensive overview of the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. It begins with the background of the study, which situates the research within broader discussions on social media, youth engagement, and grassroots development, before narrowing to the Ghanaian context. The chapter then presents the problem statement, highlighting the gaps in existing literature that focus largely on political activism while overlooking community-based development initiatives. It further outlines the research objectives, questions, aim, and significance of the study, emphasising the academic, policy, and community relevance of the research. Additionally, the scope and organisation of the study are clearly defined to guide the reader in understanding the boundaries of the research and the structure of the entire work

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The increasing role of digital communication technologies has significantly reshaped civic and community development participation globally, with Africa and Ghana in particular experiencing rapid transformations. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have become essential tools for mobilising youth engagement in civic action, political activism, and community-based initiatives. According to Dzisah (2018), the integration of social networking platforms into Ghana's sociopolitical fabric has not only democratised information dissemination but also expanded opportunities for marginalised groups, especially the youth, to contribute to national development discourses. Youth populations, who constitute the majority demographic in Ghana, are highly active on these platforms, using them to share ideas,

mobilize resources, and challenge traditional structures of governance that often excluded them (Nyianle, 2025).

The role of youth in community development is crucial, as they represent an energetic, creative, and increasingly technologically literate population. Historically, youth engagement in Ghana was mediated through physical community-based organisations, but the digital era has redefined their modes of participation (Grauenkaer & Tufte, 2018). Research by Markwei and Appiah (2016) shows that Facebook and Twitter are among the most widely used social media networks by young Ghanaians, with the platforms providing a space for interactive discussions and grassroots mobilization. Unlike traditional forms of media, which are often hierarchical and centralised, social media enables bottom-up forms of engagement, thereby empowering young people to initiate, organize, and implement development projects at the community level (Mohammed & Fiadzawoo, 2023).

In the Ghanaian context, the significance of social media mobilization is further evident in high-profile cases of digital activism that transitioned into tangible community action. For instance, movements such as #OccupyJolorbiHouse demonstrated how Facebook and Twitter could be used to rally citizens, particularly youth, around issues of governance and accountability (Nartey, 2022). Similarly, campaigns such as #StopGalamseyNow illustrate how online protests transitioned into offline mobilization against illegal mining, a pressing environmental and community development issue (Otoo, 2025). These examples show that the role of Facebook and Twitter in Ghana extends beyond virtual activism; it serves as a bridge between digital expression and physical participation in initiatives that directly impact local communities. The platforms thus offer new modalities for youth-led community development and social change.

Furthermore, the participatory potential of Facebook and Twitter is reinforced by their ability to facilitate information sharing, resource pooling, and networking across diverse social and geographical groups. Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) observed that in the Tamale Metropolis, youth groups increasingly utilised these platforms to realign participatory practices in sustainable development projects. The findings showed that over 61% of community support groups relied on Facebook and Twitter to mobilise resources and coordinate local action, suggesting that these platforms are essential in connecting like-minded individuals across neighbourhoods. In this way, social media provides what Bawa (2025) calls a development communication channel, wherein online spaces serve as extensions of local town halls, enabling youth to deliberate and take collective action on issues ranging from sanitation campaigns to education initiatives.

Another critical aspect of social media's influence is its ability to promote inclusivity and amplify voices that may otherwise be marginalised in mainstream media. Tawiah (2021) argues that social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter often provide safe spaces for young Ghanaians, allowing them to bypass exclusionary practices in society and engage in democratic and developmental conversations. This inclusivity is particularly important in Ghana, where structural inequalities often hinder the meaningful participation of youth in policymaking and governance processes. By facilitating horizontal communication flows, Twitter and Facebook have become arenas where ordinary young citizens can shape agendas, critique policies, and mobilise for community-oriented projects without the limitations imposed by gatekeepers of traditional institutions (Dzisah, 2020).

However, the influence of social media on youth engagement in Ghanaian community development is not without challenges. Scholars such as Kumapley (2018) emphasise that although platforms like Twitter and Facebook enhance communication between organizations and youth, they also risk creating superficial participation, where engagement is limited to

liking, sharing, or commenting rather than meaningful offline involvement. Similarly, Bokor (2015) cautions that the commercialisation and politicisation of these platforms can sometimes distort authentic youth voices, with algorithms favouring sensational content over substantive development discourse. This raises concerns about whether social media fosters sustainable civic engagement or merely offers episodic participation that fizzles out once trending hashtags lose momentum.

Despite these challenges, recent studies highlight that youth in Ghana increasingly leverage Twitter and Facebook to initiate self-organised development projects, independent of governmental or donor-driven programs. Weaver (2012) documented how youth-based non-profit organisations used Facebook and Twitter as virtual community-building spaces to raise funds and advocate for education initiatives. This finding aligns with Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) work on youth-led communication for social change in Northern Ghana, where citizen media fostered empowerment and cultivated new cultures of governance. In both cases, youth were not passive consumers of information but active creators of community development agendas, signalling the transformative power of digital platforms in reimagining civic participation.

The cultural and political context of Ghana also shapes how Facebook and Twitter influence youth mobilisation. Dzisah (2020) notes that in Ghana's 2016 elections, youth extensively used these platforms to engage in political debates that often overlapped with local community concerns such as unemployment and education. Similarly, Adasi, Fusheini, and Amuzu (2025) emphasise that religious and cultural groups have leveraged social media to promote not only theological discourse but also social services that directly benefit communities, further demonstrating the hybrid role of these platforms. By intertwining cultural, political, and developmental conversations, social media enables holistic youth participation that transcends narrow forms of activism and embraces broader community development goals.

Moreover, the global dimension of social media use allows Ghanaian youth to draw inspiration from international movements and adapt them to local development contexts. Nwogwugwu and Stephine (2022) argue that online political participation in Ghana mirrors global trends where Facebook and Twitter facilitate transnational solidarity, exposing local youth to innovative models of community action. This cross-pollination of ideas has enhanced the strategic capacity of Ghanaian youth organizations, equipping them with digital advocacy tools and tactical knowledge that can be adapted to local community development projects. Such exposure underscores the role of digital literacy as a crucial enabler of meaningful participation in the 21st-century public sphere.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The growing use of social media platforms such as Twitter (now X) and Facebook has generated extensive scholarly attention across Africa, particularly in relation to politics, civic engagement, and digital activism. In Ghana, studies have demonstrated how these platforms enhance political communication and democratic participation. For instance, Dzisah (2018) showed that Facebook and Twitter were pivotal in driving youth participation during elections, while Nartey (2022) explored their role in mobilising mass protests such as the #OccupyFlagstaffHouse movement. Similarly, Nyianle (2025) highlighted how youth in Sekondi-Takoradi used social media to engage in political debates, while Otoo (2025) examined the role of hashtags in converting online campaigns like #StopGalamseyNow into street-level activism. Although these works provide strong evidence that social media platforms shape political and advocacy-related activities in Ghana, they primarily focus on macro-level civic mobilization such as elections and national protests, leaving a gap in understanding how these same platforms influence micro-level, community-specific development projects.

Moreover, existing literature in Ghana tends to treat social media primarily as a tool for political mobilization, often overlooking its potential for grassroots development. For example, Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) focused on youth-led communication for governance in Northern Ghana, while Bokor (2015) linked new media to democratization and political activism. Even when youth-led initiatives are discussed, the emphasis is largely on advocacy for policy change rather than direct engagement in community development projects such as sanitation drives, educational campaigns, or environmental interventions (Mohammed & Fiadzawoo, 2023). This overemphasis on politics leaves a conceptual gap, as little attention has been paid to how Twitter and Facebook are being localized by youth to support tangible community improvements. Without addressing this gap, existing research risks portraying Ghanaian youth as politically active but developmentally passive, which is not reflective of on-the-ground realities.

Additionally, a significant limitation of earlier studies is their failure to differentiate between platforms in terms of mobilization styles, communication affordances, and participatory outcomes. Markwei and Appiah (2016) showed that Ghanaian youth were active on both Twitter and Facebook, but their study did not analyse how the affordances of each platform, such as Facebook's group-based organizing or Twitter's hashtag-driven discourse, shape distinct forms of participation. Similarly, Nwogwugwu and Stephine (2022) examined youth political participation in Ghana and Nigeria but treated social media platforms as homogenous spaces rather than exploring their unique contributions to community action. By aggregating all platforms together, these studies obscure the platform-specific mechanisms that influence youth participation in development projects. This gap is critical because understanding how Twitter and Facebook differ in mobilizing youth can inform tailored strategies for NGOs, community organizations, and policymakers seeking to leverage social media for sustainable local development.

Another gap lies in the methodological scope of existing studies. Much of the current scholarship on social media and youth participation in Ghana relies on case studies of national-level protests (Nartey, 2022; Otoo, 2025) or surveys focused on general social media use (Markwei & Appiah, 2016). While these approaches offer valuable insights, they fail to capture the localized, project-based use of Twitter and Facebook for community development initiatives. For example, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) noted that 61% of youth groups in Tamale used social media to organise community activities, but their study was geographically limited and did not provide a comparative analysis of platform use. Similarly, Tawiah (2021) acknowledged the role of social media as a safe space for youth engagement, but his work focused broadly on democratic participation rather than specific community development outcomes. Thus, there is a methodological and thematic gap in examining how youth across different regions of Ghana use these platforms to translate digital interactions into physical community projects.

The current study therefore seeks to address these gaps by critically analyzing the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. Unlike previous studies that emphasize elections, protests, or broad political engagement, this research shifts the focus to community-level development initiatives, such as sanitation campaigns, health education, and local fundraising efforts. It will also adopt a platform-specific approach, exploring how the unique features of Twitter and Facebook shape different mobilization strategies and outcomes. By doing so, this study builds upon the works of Dzisah (2020), Nwogwugwu and Stephine (2022), and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), but extends their findings into a less-explored domain of development communication. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to scholarly and practical understanding of how digital platforms can be harnessed not only for political advocacy but also for sustainable community development in Ghana, thereby filling the gaps identified in the existing body of literature.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana, with emphasis on how these platforms shape mobilisation strategies, facilitate engagement, and present both opportunities and challenges for sustainable community development.

The specific objectives are listed below;

1. To assess the level and pattern of Twitter and Facebook Use among Ghanaian Youth
2. To determine how the use of Twitter and Facebook influences youth participation in community development projects
3. To examine the role of Twitter and Facebook in empowering youth for sustainable community development.
4. To assess the challenges associated with the use of Twitter and Facebook for youth-led community development projects in Ghana.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. To what extent is the level and pattern of Twitter and Facebook use among Ghanaian youth?
2. How does the use of Twitter and Facebook influence youth participation in community development projects?
3. What role do Twitter and Facebook play in empowering youth for sustainable community development?
4. What challenges are associated with the use of Twitter and Facebook for youth-led community development projects in Ghana?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

First and foremost, this study is significant because it contributes to the academic discourse on digital communication and civic engagement in Africa by focusing specifically on community development rather than the more commonly studied political activism and electoral participation. While earlier works in Ghana have examined social media in the contexts of elections (Dzisah, 2018) and protest movements (Nartey, 2022), few have addressed its role in shaping localized development projects such as sanitation drives, health campaigns, or educational outreach. By narrowing the focus to Twitter and Facebook, the research provides a platform-specific analysis that enriches existing literature in communication studies, development studies, and youth empowerment. It therefore bridges the gap between political communication scholarship and community development studies, offering new insights into how digital platforms are reshaping grassroots participation in Ghana.

Secondly, the findings of this study will be valuable for policymakers, governmental agencies, and development practitioners who seek to enhance youth engagement in community development. By identifying how Twitter and Facebook influence mobilization strategies and youth participation, the study provides evidence-based recommendations for integrating social media into national and local development policies. For instance, insights into the opportunities and challenges of these platforms can guide the Ministry of Youth and Sports, local government authorities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in designing more effective outreach strategies that harness the digital skills of young people. This ensures that youth participation moves beyond rhetoric into structured, impactful community development projects, thereby strengthening sustainable development initiatives across Ghana.

Last but not least and at the community level, this study is significant because it empowers young people and community leaders with knowledge on how to effectively use Twitter and Facebook to promote grassroots initiatives. By highlighting best practices and challenges, the

research provides practical guidance for youth-led organizations and informal community groups seeking to leverage social media for fundraising, awareness creation, and mobilization. This is particularly important in Ghana, where resource constraints often limit traditional forms of mobilisation. Through digital platforms, youth can amplify their voices, expand their networks, and foster collective action that translates into tangible improvements in their communities. Ultimately, the study supports the empowerment of Ghanaian youth as active agents of development rather than passive recipients of policy interventions.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to examining the influence of Twitter (X) and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana, focusing on how these platforms facilitate mobilisation, engagement, and collective action at the grassroots level. The study will primarily target Ghanaian youth between the ages of 18 and 35, as this demographic constitutes the most active users of social media and represents a critical segment for community-driven development initiatives. Geographically, the research will cover selected urban and peri-urban communities across Ghana, including Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and Sekondi-Takoradi, where youth activism and digital engagement have been most visible. Thematically, the study will emphasize community development projects such as sanitation campaigns, health awareness initiatives, educational outreach programs, and environmental protection efforts, rather than broader political mobilisation or electoral campaigns, which have already been extensively studied. In terms of platforms, the study will specifically analyze Twitter and Facebook due to their widespread adoption among Ghanaian youth and their unique features that enable both real-time activism and sustained community organizing. While acknowledging the role of other platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok, these will not be the focus of the study, as the intention is to provide a platform-specific understanding of Twitter and Facebook. Methodologically, the study will rely on a mixed-

methods approach, combining surveys, interviews, and content analysis of selected online campaigns to provide both quantitative and qualitative insights into youth engagement. The time frame of analysis will span from 2015 to 2025, capturing a decade of increased social media penetration in Ghana and allowing for the assessment of evolving trends in digital youth participation in community development.

### **1.8 Organisation of the Study**

This study is organised into five main chapters, each systematically structured to provide a coherent flow of ideas and analysis. Chapter one introduces the study, presenting the background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and organisation of the study. Chapter two reviews existing scholarly literature on social media, youth participation, and community development, identifying theoretical underpinnings and gaps that justify the present research. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations. Chapter four presents the findings of the study, providing the analyses of the data collected on the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects. Finally, chapter five discusses the findings in relation to the literature, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations for policymakers, community leaders, and future researchers, ensuring that the study contributes both academically and practically to the understanding of social media's role in Ghanaian community development.

### **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter laid the foundation for the study by establishing the context in which Twitter and Facebook are analysed as tools for youth mobilisation in community development projects in Ghana. It has identified the key research problem, set out the aims and objectives, and explained

why the study is significant to scholarship, policy, and practice. The scope of the research has been clarified to focus specifically on Ghanaian youth and community development, while the organization of the study has been outlined to provide a roadmap for subsequent chapters. This introduction thus sets the stage for the detailed literature review in Chapter Two, where existing studies will be critically examined to further highlight gaps and theoretical perspectives that inform this research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature and the theoretical framework underpinning this study. The chapter critically examines existing scholarly works on social media use, youth empowerment, and community development, highlighting how Twitter and Facebook have become instrumental in facilitating civic participation and grassroots mobilisation in Ghana. It explores key thematic areas, including social media and youth empowerment, community development in Ghana, Twitter as a mobilisation tool, Facebook and civic engagement, and digital literacy and participation. Through an in-depth synthesis of empirical studies, the chapter identifies the commonalities, methodological approaches, and research gaps in current literature, particularly the limited attention given to how social media engagement translates into tangible community development outcomes. The chapter also introduces and explains the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) as the guiding theoretical lens for the study, emphasising its relevance in explaining why and how Ghanaian youth use Twitter and Facebook to meet social, informational, and participatory needs. This theoretical grounding helps situate the study within a broader communication and development discourse while establishing the conceptual link between media use, motivation, and community participation.

#### **2.1 Review of Related Literature**

The rise of social media platforms such as Twitter (X) and Facebook has significantly altered the communication landscape across Africa, reshaping civic participation, social activism, and community development practices. Dzisah (2018), in a study on social media and elections in Ghana, employed a mixed-method design combining interviews with content analysis of

campaign posts to examine how digital platforms fostered democratic engagement. The study concluded that both Twitter and Facebook enhanced participatory democracy by allowing citizens to bypass traditional media filters. However, its focus on political mobilisation during elections overlooked grassroots-level development efforts, resulting in a research gap regarding community-based applications of these platforms. In contrast, Weaver (2012) conducted a qualitative study in Accra, examining how non-profit organisations utilised Facebook and Twitter for virtual community building. Using interviews with NGO leaders and volunteers, Weaver found that social media enhanced collective identity and community belonging, suggesting that, beyond politics, digital tools can sustain networks crucial for local development projects.

Markwei and Appiah (2016) conducted one of the earliest Ghana-based empirical studies focusing on social media usage among youth in Accra's Nima and Maamobi communities. Their study adopted a descriptive survey method with a purposive sample of 200 respondents to explore patterns of Facebook and Twitter usage. They found that 95% of respondents used at least one social networking site daily, with Facebook being the most dominant. The general objective was to determine the social, educational, and developmental impacts of social media on urban youth. Their conclusion emphasised that while these platforms supported self-expression and peer mobilisation, their contribution to structured community development remained underexplored. This indicates a methodological and conceptual gap, as the study emphasised frequency of use rather than the quality or developmental intent of online engagement.

Further insight into youth-led digital engagement was offered by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018), whose study in Northern Ghana used participatory action research to examine how youth employed social media as communication tools for social change. The researchers combined focus group discussions with community-based digital storytelling projects to assess

empowerment outcomes. Their study, which centred on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, concluded that youth leveraged these platforms to share local narratives, promote accountability, and foster civic responsibility. The uniqueness of this study lies in its ethnographic grounding in rural communities, where digital access is relatively constrained. However, the authors primarily framed social media within the context of “communication for social change,” not as instruments for tangible community development, leaving the functional dimension of youth mobilisation under-analysed.

A related Ghanaian study by Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) explored how social media influenced sustainable development participation among youth in the Tamale Metropolis. Employing a quantitative survey complemented by key informant interviews, they analysed responses from 120 community development workers. Their objective was to evaluate whether social media use redefined participatory development. The study revealed that over 61% of respondents relied on Facebook and Twitter for mobilising resources and promoting local development projects, while 52% used WhatsApp for organising campaigns. The authors concluded that social media not only enhances communication efficiency but also democratizes participation, allowing youth to lead community projects independently of formal institutions. This study directly connects social media to community development, yet its limitation lies in its regional scope, as findings from Tamale cannot be generalised to all Ghanaian youth.

Dzisah (2020) expanded his earlier work to analyse the role of Twitter and Facebook in Ghana’s 2016 elections, employing discourse analysis of campaign materials alongside elite interviews. His central finding was that social media platforms had become key instruments for mobilising not just votes but also discussions on governance and accountability. Though conducted at the national level, Dzisah’s research reinforces the participatory potential of social media, which parallels their use in community-level activism. However, unlike Mohammed

and Fiadzawoo (2023), Dzisah's emphasis was on political communication, illustrating a consistent scholarly bias toward electoral contexts over developmental applications.

Tawiah (2021), in a qualitative exploratory study at the University of Stirling, analysed Ghanaian youths' use of Facebook and Twitter for democratic engagement. Using in-depth interviews with 20 participants aged 18–35, she found that social media platforms created safe spaces for civic expression, particularly among marginalised youth. The study's conclusion was that Facebook and Twitter mitigate social exclusion by enabling free expression and networked activism. While the research does not directly address community development, it contributes valuable insights into youth empowerment through social media, an element central to sustained community participation.

Nyianle (2025) investigated the political participation of youth in Sekondi-Takoradi through Facebook and Twitter, employing a mixed-method approach combining surveys and interviews. The objective was to evaluate how online discussions translated into offline participation. The study found that while digital platforms effectively raised awareness and stimulated discussions on governance, their direct impact on concrete community projects remained limited. This aligns with the findings of Nwogwugwu and Stephine (2022), who conducted a comparative study between Ghana and Nigeria. Using questionnaires and focus group discussions, they concluded that although Twitter and Facebook heightened political consciousness among youth, there was little evidence of sustained engagement in development-oriented initiatives. Both studies underscore a pattern where social media-driven participation is often episodic and politically centred rather than developmentally sustained.

Otoo (2025), in her master's thesis at Uppsala University, explored how the hashtag campaign #StopGalamseyNow evolved from online protests to physical activism. Using content analysis of Twitter data and interviews with campaign organisers, she demonstrated how digital

mobilisation led to community-based environmental initiatives against illegal mining. The study's objective was to understand the transition from digital to physical activism, concluding that Twitter, due to its real-time and viral nature, was more effective than Facebook in fostering quick mobilisation. This study is particularly relevant to community development, as it shows the practical outcomes of social media activism in addressing local environmental issues.

Similarly, Nartey (2022) analysed Ghana's #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #RedFriday movements using critical discourse analysis of protest tweets and Facebook posts. Conducted in Accra, the study examined how linguistic framing in digital discourse contributed to civic engagement. The research concluded that both platforms played complementary roles, Twitter served as a rapid mobilisation tool, while Facebook fostered community discourse and coordination. Unlike earlier works, Nartey explicitly linked online mobilisation to physical protests and community engagement, suggesting a clear intersection between digital activism and social development outcomes.

In Nigeria, Bawa (2025) conducted a qualitative study that parallels the Ghanaian context by exploring the role of Facebook and Twitter in promoting development communication. Using interviews with youth leaders and community organisers, he found that both platforms facilitate awareness creation and resource mobilisation for local projects. The study concluded that the success of social media in community development depends on youth digital literacy and the degree of access to reliable internet. The Nigerian findings provide a comparative backdrop for Ghana, highlighting shared regional challenges such as digital divides and information credibility issues.

Another key contribution comes from Kumapley (2018), whose study at the University of Ghana examined how health NGOs used social media to engage youth. Adopting a case study approach, she analysed the Facebook and Twitter activities of Marie Stopes Ghana and the

Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana. The objective was to determine how social media enhances health communication with youth audiences. The study concluded that these platforms improve outreach efficiency and foster community engagement around reproductive health. While not directly centred on youth-led initiatives, it underscores how institutional use of social media complements grassroots engagement, bridging the gap between formal organisations and community beneficiaries.

Tetteh and Kankam (2024) used a quantitative design in Tema, Ghana, to examine how youth used social media for interaction and information dissemination. Using structured questionnaires distributed to 300 respondents, they found that Facebook and Twitter were essential for sharing knowledge and mobilising around social issues. Their study concluded that these platforms enhance youth networking and awareness, but their potential for structured community development projects was underutilised. Compared to Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), their work was more focused on communication patterns than developmental outcomes, illustrating a disciplinary gap between communication research and development studies.

Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) and Weaver's (2012) studies share a methodological emphasis on qualitative participatory research, highlighting the empowerment dimension of social media. Both authors conceptualised digital spaces as enablers of collective identity, essential for community development. However, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) extended this discourse by quantitatively measuring actual participation levels in development projects. The difference in methodology, qualitative narrative versus quantitative survey, explains their divergent findings: empowerment versus measurable participation. Collectively, these works reveal that while empowerment is often achieved, actual development outcomes depend on sustained engagement and structural support.

A notable pattern across these studies is the urban bias in sampling. Most Ghana-based studies, including those by Markwei and Appiah (2016), Nyianle (2025), and Nartey (2022), focus on major cities like Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi. Rural communities, where infrastructural constraints hinder social media use, remain largely underrepresented. Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) are among the few who addressed this gap by conducting research in Northern Ghana. This imbalance suggests the need for future research to adopt a geographically inclusive approach that captures both urban and rural experiences of digital mobilisation for development.

Methodologically, the reviewed studies show a heavy reliance on qualitative and cross-sectional designs. Only a few, such as Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), adopted mixed methods that integrate numerical data with narrative insights. The predominance of qualitative inquiry, though insightful for contextual understanding, limits generalizability. This methodological gap supports the rationale for the present study to combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess the influence of Twitter and Facebook across different communities and youth demographics in Ghana.

Overall, the literature demonstrates a clear consensus that social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, play an influential role in shaping youth communication, mobilisation, and civic participation (Dzisah, 2018; Nartey, 2022; Mohammed & Fiadzawoo, 2023). However, a divergence exists in the specific focus areas, while some prioritise political activism, others explore social change communication or institutional outreach. Very few have directly examined how these digital interactions translate into tangible community development outcomes. This gap justifies the current research, which seeks to bridge these domains by empirically investigating the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects across Ghana.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which provides the conceptual foundation for understanding how and why Ghanaian youth use social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook, to engage in community development projects. The theory assumes that audiences are active, goal-oriented users who select specific media channels to satisfy various personal, social, and psychological needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). In the context of this study, UGT is relevant because it explains the motivations behind youth participation in community development activities facilitated through digital media. Ghanaian youth increasingly employ social media not only for communication and entertainment but also for empowerment, collaboration, and civic engagement (Mohammed & Fiadzawoo, 2023; Nartey, 2022). By applying UGT, the study seeks to establish the link between the gratifications sought, such as information access, social interaction, and empowerment, and the outcomes achieved, including mobilisation and participation in local development initiatives. The framework thus situates Twitter and Facebook as dynamic tools that transform individual media use into collective social action, aligning user motivations with broader developmental goals in Ghana.

### **2.2.1 Uses and Gratification Theory**

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) emerged in the 1940s and matured in the 1970s through the seminal works of Blumler and Katz (1974), Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), and Rosengren (1974), who shifted media research from a “media effects” paradigm to a “media use” paradigm. Unlike earlier theories such as the *Hypodermic Needle Model*, which assumed that audiences were passive recipients of media influence, UGT posits that audiences are active agents who purposefully select and use media to satisfy their individual and social needs. According to Blumler and Katz (1974), people engage with media content for various reasons, including information acquisition, personal identity, social interaction, and

entertainment. Over time, the theory expanded to include new communication technologies, emphasising that users consciously choose media forms that align with their goals and motivations. In this way, the theory explains not only *why* people use media, but also *how* their patterns of use shape broader social participation. In the context of Ghanaian youth, who are among the most digitally active demographics in West Africa, UGT provides a framework for understanding why Twitter and Facebook have become preferred platforms for expressing opinions, organising community actions, and fostering development-oriented engagement (Markwei & Appiah, 2016; Mohammed & Fiadzawoo, 2023).

At its foundation, the Uses and Gratifications Theory rests on several assumptions about audience behaviour and media interaction. First, it assumes that media use is goal-directed; individuals actively choose specific media to fulfil distinct needs. Second, it proposes that audience members are aware of their needs and can articulate the gratifications they seek from media consumption (Katz et al., 1973). Third, UGT asserts that media competes with other sources of satisfaction, such as interpersonal communication, religious institutions, or community activities, implying that users weigh alternatives before choosing media as their primary outlet. Fourth, the theory suggests that audiences are active, meaning they interpret and use media messages differently based on their motivations, social backgrounds, and personal circumstances. As Ruggiero (2000) argued, UGT's strength lies in its adaptability; it accommodates changing media environments and recognises that gratifications evolve with technology. For instance, with digital media such as Facebook and Twitter, gratifications have expanded to include *social connectedness*, *identity formation*, *self-presentation*, and *collective mobilisation*. This explains why Ghanaian youth use these platforms not only for communication and entertainment but also to participate in social change and community development (Dzisah, 2018; Tawiah, 2021).

In recent decades, scholars have adapted UGT to digital environments, particularly social media. Sundar and Limperos (2013) introduced the concept of *new media gratifications*, emphasising that interactive features such as commenting, sharing, and liking create new forms of satisfaction that traditional media could not provide. Similarly, Whiting and Williams (2013) identified ten key motivations for social media use, including information seeking, social interaction, relaxation, entertainment, communicatory utility, and convenience. Applying these ideas to the Ghanaian context, studies such as Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) and Markwei and Appiah (2016) confirm that Ghanaian youth use Twitter and Facebook for similar gratifications but with a strong civic dimension. For instance, youth participants in Tamale reported using Facebook groups to organise health campaigns and sanitation projects, which provided both informational and social gratification. Meanwhile, Twitter users in Accra, according to Nartey (2022), found gratification in advocacy and identity expression during campaigns such as #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #StopGalamseyNow. These examples illustrate that the motivational structure underlying social media use in Ghana aligns closely with the gratifications proposed by UGT, extending beyond personal entertainment to collective empowerment and community participation.

Twitter and Facebook embody the core principles of the Uses and Gratifications Theory because they allow users to fulfil diverse informational, social, and participatory needs through customizable interaction. Blumler and Katz (1974) identified *cognitive*, *affective*, *personal integrative*, *social integrative*, and *tension release* needs, all of which are observable in Ghanaian youth's online behaviours. For example, the *cognitive gratification* is met when youth use Twitter to access real-time information about local events or community initiatives, as observed by Otoo (2025) in her study of the #StopGalamseyNow movement. *Affective and integrative gratifications* emerge when users derive emotional satisfaction from being part of digital communities, such as Facebook groups focused on youth empowerment. Moreover,

*social integrative gratifications* are realised when youth build networks with peers and organisations that share similar developmental goals, fostering a sense of belonging. Studies by Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) and Dzisah (2018) confirm that young Ghanaians actively use these platforms to engage in both online and offline community initiatives, thereby validating UGT's relevance to digital civic engagement. Through these examples, it becomes evident that Twitter and Facebook function as both *media channels* and *community spaces* where youth gratify multiple needs simultaneously: information, influence, belonging, and contribution to social progress.

Empirical studies in Ghana consistently demonstrate the relevance of UGT in explaining youth media behaviours and motivations. Markwei and Appiah (2016) conducted a quantitative survey of youth in Accra's Nima and Maamobi communities and found that young people used social media primarily for communication (85%), entertainment (68%), and self-expression (45%), but increasingly for civic and developmental engagement (30%). Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) employed a mixed-method approach in Tamale to explore how youth leveraged Facebook and Twitter for community mobilisation. Their results revealed that users sought gratification from *information sharing*, *community recognition*, and *collective empowerment*. In another study, Tawiah (2021) reported that Ghanaian youth viewed Facebook as a "safe space" for discussing democratic issues, which provided them with psychological gratification through freedom of expression. These findings collectively validate the central claim of UGT: that individuals use media to fulfil personal and social needs that extend beyond entertainment. More importantly, they demonstrate that the gratifications sought by Ghanaian youth, such as belonging, empowerment, and social change, are directly linked to their participation in community development activities facilitated by social media.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is particularly useful in connecting individual media motivations to collective development outcomes, making it ideal for understanding how social

media drives youth participation in Ghana's community development. According to Servaes (1999), effective community development communication must be participatory, interactive, and need-driven, principles that align closely with UGT's assumptions. When Ghanaian youth use Facebook to organise clean-up exercises or Twitter to promote educational campaigns, they are essentially translating individual gratifications into collective social actions. Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) observed that social gratifications (like belonging and recognition) often lead to sustained participation in community projects, while cognitive gratifications (such as access to information) enhance efficiency and coordination. Furthermore, Dzisah (2020) and Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) noted that social media engagement strengthens civic responsibility by fulfilling young people's desire for social inclusion and leadership. Therefore, UGT provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how digital media use can evolve from personal satisfaction into community-oriented development engagement in Ghana.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory offers a comprehensive and empirically grounded framework for analysing how and why Ghanaian youth use Twitter and Facebook to engage in community development initiatives. Its relevance lies in its ability to explain both motivation (why youth choose these platforms) and outcomes (how these choices result in participation and empowerment). Studies such as Dzisah (2018), Nartey (2022), Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), and Tawiah (2021) all support the theory's applicability in the Ghanaian context, showing that youth derive gratifications not only from information and interaction but also from empowerment, recognition, and civic impact. By emphasising active user participation, UGT complements participatory development theories that view communication as a tool for social transformation. In this sense, Twitter and Facebook become not merely communication technologies but empowerment instruments that align with Ghana's vision for inclusive and sustainable community development. Thus, UGT provides the theoretical backbone for the

present study, allowing it to interpret youth digital participation not as a byproduct of technology, but as a deliberate, need-driven, and socially meaningful form of engagement

## **2.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed exploration of the literature related to social media use and youth participation in development, drawing on empirical evidence from Ghana and other African contexts. It reviewed how Twitter and Facebook have evolved as tools for youth mobilisation, civic engagement, and digital empowerment, while identifying key limitations in prior research, particularly the lack of focus on community-level development projects. The chapter also established the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) as the study's theoretical foundation, explaining its central assumptions and applicability to digital participation among Ghanaian youth. By linking individual motivations for social media use to collective community outcomes, the theory provides a robust framework for analysing how online activities translate into real-world development initiatives. Thus, the chapter not only situates the study within relevant scholarly debates but also lays the conceptual groundwork for the methodological and analytical discussions presented in subsequent chapters.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology adopted to investigate how Twitter and Facebook influence youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. It presents a detailed explanation of the philosophical, methodological, and procedural choices that guided the study. The chapter begins with the research philosophy and approach, grounded in a positivist and quantitative orientation, which emphasises objectivity and measurable evidence. It then describes the research design, population, sampling technique, and data sources, ensuring methodological transparency and replicability. The data collection method and descriptive procedure are also discussed, highlighting how structured questionnaires were used to gather empirical data from Ghanaian youth active on Twitter and Facebook. Furthermore, the data analysis approach, based solely on descriptive statistical techniques, is explained to show how quantitative summaries such as frequencies, percentages, and means were used to describe trends in social media use and participation. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations that ensured confidentiality, voluntary participation, and integrity throughout the research process. Together, these methodological components provide a systematic framework for achieving the study's objectives and ensuring that the findings are valid, reliable, and contextually grounded in Ghana's social media landscape.

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

The study was grounded in the positivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is objective, observable, and measurable through empirical investigation. Positivism emphasises the use of quantitative data and statistical tools to test relationships between variables, providing verifiable and generalizable conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study,

the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development is examined through measurable indicators such as frequency of use, engagement levels, and participation outcomes. This philosophy was justified because it allowed the researcher to maintain objectivity and minimise bias while establishing causal or correlational relationships between social media use and community involvement. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), positivism is ideal for studies that seek to explain social phenomena through quantifiable data rather than interpretive analysis. Thus, the positivist worldview enables the researcher to systematically investigate patterns of youth digital behaviour and their implications for community development in Ghana, where social media penetration continues to rise (Mohammed & Fiadzawoo, 2023).

Positivism further aligns with the study's goal of testing theoretical assumptions derived from the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) within a Ghanaian context. As noted by Ruggiero (2000), UGT lends itself to positivist inquiry because it allows for operationalisation of constructs such as information seeking, social interaction, and empowerment into measurable variables. This makes it possible to empirically test how these gratifications influence participation in development projects. Similar methodological orientations have been adopted in studies by Markwei and Appiah (2016) and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), who used surveys to measure social media engagement and civic participation among Ghanaian youth. The choice of a positivist philosophy thus reflects both the nature of the research problem, quantifying social influence, and the need for objectivity and replicability in generating evidence-based insights that can inform youth and development policy in Ghana.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

This study adopted a quantitative research approach, which involves the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical data to identify relationships among variables (Bryman, 2016). The approach is suitable for investigating the measurable influence of Twitter and

Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. Quantitative research allowed for precision, generalizability, and hypothesis testing, which aligns with the study's aim of establishing empirical relationships between social media use and youth engagement. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasise, quantitative research is ideal for studies seeking to explain social behaviour through observable data rather than subjective interpretation. In this study, variables such as “frequency of social media use,” “type of engagement,” and “level of community participation” will be quantified through survey responses. The quantitative approach is justified because it provides a systematic way of comparing responses across a large sample, allowing conclusions that are statistically sound and representative of Ghanaian youth.

The quantitative approach also facilitated the testing of theoretical propositions derived from the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which posits that individuals use media to fulfil specific needs that can be empirically measured (Blumler & Katz, 1974). By operationalising constructs such as information needs, social interaction, and empowerment gratification, the study can assess how these motivations influence participation in community development. Previous Ghanaian studies, such as those by Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) and Nartey (2022), successfully applied quantitative surveys to analyse youth social media usage patterns and civic engagement. Adopting a similar approach ensures methodological consistency while allowing for comparative analysis. The quantitative approach was further justified by its objectivity, reproducibility, and suitability for policy recommendations, which makes it ideal for development-focused communication studies in the Ghanaian context.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which sought to describe and quantify relationships between variables as they occur naturally (Creswell, 2014). This design is appropriate for understanding how Twitter and Facebook influence youth participation in

community development without manipulating the variables. The descriptive survey design enabled the researcher to capture patterns of behaviour, attitudes, and perceptions among Ghanaian youth regarding their use of social media for development purposes. According to Kothari (2014), descriptive designs are effective in social research because they allow for an accurate depiction of existing phenomena. In this study, the design helped measure how often youth engage with social media for developmental purposes, the extent of their participation in community projects, and the factors influencing these behaviours. It is therefore justified because it enabled the researcher to establish relationships between digital engagement and youth involvement while maintaining a large, diverse sample that enhances the generalizability of findings.

Furthermore, a descriptive survey design aligns with similar studies conducted in Ghana and other developing contexts. For instance, Markwei and Appiah (2016) used a descriptive survey to investigate social media's impact on youth communication behaviour, while Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) used a similar design to explore social media's role in participatory development in the Tamale Metropolis. Both studies successfully employed structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data from youth populations. Following their approach, this study's design emphasises collecting standardised responses through structured survey instruments to facilitate statistical analysis and comparison. The choice of this design was justified by its flexibility and efficiency in gathering large amounts of data within limited timeframes, critical in youth-centred studies where digital engagement patterns shift rapidly.

### **3.4 Population**

The target population for this study comprised Ghanaian youth aged 18 to 35 years who actively use Twitter and Facebook. This demographic was chosen because it represents the largest and most digitally active segment of Ghana's population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). According to Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), youth are central actors in the digital

communication ecosystem, particularly in urban centres such as Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and Sekondi-Takoradi, where internet penetration and mobile connectivity are highest. The population also included members of youth-led organisations, student associations, and community development volunteers who use social media to promote developmental causes. By focusing on this group, the study aligns with previous research highlighting the youth's pivotal role in leveraging digital technologies for civic participation and local development (Dzisah, 2018; Tawiah, 2021).

The justification for selecting this population lies in its direct relevance to the research objectives and the theoretical framework. Since the Uses and Gratifications Theory emphasises individual motivation and behaviour in media use, youth provide the most suitable population for examining how and why people use Twitter and Facebook for development engagement. Additionally, focusing on youth allows the study to assess generational differences in social media adoption and its implications for participatory development. Previous studies, such as those by Nartey (2022) and Otoo (2025), have shown that young people dominate online activism and digital mobilisation efforts in Ghana. Therefore, this population is ideal for investigating how digital participation transitions into tangible community development outcomes.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The study used a convenience sampling technique to select participants who are easily accessible and active on Twitter and Facebook. Convenience sampling, a non-probability method, involves selecting respondents based on availability and willingness to participate (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This technique was justified because it allowed the researcher to reach a large number of active social media users within a limited timeframe and budget. Given that social media users are geographically dispersed, convenience sampling

provides a practical means of gathering data efficiently from online communities and youth networks. As Saunders et al. (2019) explain, convenience sampling is appropriate for exploratory and descriptive studies where the goal is to understand trends rather than make statistical generalisations.

The sample consisted of 400 respondents, comprising Ghanaian youth from major cities such as Accra. This sample size ensured adequate representation across various districts in Accra, thereby enhancing the reliability of the statistical analysis. Similar studies, including Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) and Markwei and Appiah (2016), have successfully applied convenience sampling to research youth digital behaviours in Ghana. The method's strength lies in its ability to yield rich, timely data from actual users of the platforms under study. While the technique limits external validity, the large and diverse sample mitigates this limitation by capturing varying experiences and participation levels across gender, education, and geographic lines.

### **3.6 Sources of Data**

The study relied primarily on primary data, supported by secondary data. Primary data was collected directly from respondents through structured questionnaires distributed online and in-person. This approach ensures firsthand information about youth behaviours, motivations, and perceptions regarding Twitter and Facebook use in community development. Secondary data were obtained from published academic journals, government reports, and institutional studies on social media usage and youth participation in Ghana. The inclusion of both data types ensures a richer, more comprehensive analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Using primary data was justified because it allowed for the measurement of current social media behaviours that may not yet be captured in secondary sources. Secondary data, such as the works of Dzisah (2018), Nartey (2022), and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), provide

theoretical and contextual grounding for interpreting the findings. According to Saunders et al. (2019), triangulating data sources enhances validity and reliability in communication research by allowing comparison between existing literature and new empirical evidence. Therefore, combining both sources ensured a balanced methodological approach that strengthens the study's credibility.

### **3.7 Data Collection Method**

The primary data collection method was a structured questionnaire survey administered electronically and in person. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” This method allowed for standardised data collection and facilitates quantitative analysis. The survey was distributed via Google Forms for online participants and through printed copies for those with limited internet access. This dual-mode approach ensured inclusivity and higher response rates (Bryman, 2016).

The justification for using questionnaires lies in their efficiency and objectivity in collecting large volumes of data. As Creswell (2014) notes, structured questionnaires are ideal for quantitative studies where comparability and statistical rigor are essential. Moreover, similar studies in Ghana, such as those by Markwei and Appiah (2016) and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), successfully used survey questionnaires to assess youth social media behaviours. The Likert scale format allowed for nuanced analysis of attitudes, frequencies, and perceptions, making it ideal for operationalising constructs from the Uses and Gratifications Theory, such as information seeking, social interaction, and empowerment.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection process followed three stages: pre-testing, administration, and validation. First, the questionnaire was pre-tested on a pilot sample of 30 youth respondents in Accra to

assess clarity, reliability, and validity. Feedback was incorporated to refine the instrument. Second, data collection will proceed both online and offline over four weeks. Online questionnaires were distributed through social media channels such as Facebook groups and Twitter handles targeting youth associations, while field assistants administered printed copies to respondents without regular internet access. This hybrid method ensured comprehensive coverage and minimises sampling bias (Saunders et al., 2019).

The procedure is justified by its flexibility and inclusivity, which are critical in Ghana, where internet access varies across regions. Online administration leverages social media's reach among urban youth, while in-person distribution ensures participation from those in less-connected areas. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), such blended approaches are essential for maintaining data validity in geographically diverse populations. Ethical protocols, including informed consent and anonymity, will be observed throughout the process to ensure compliance with research standards.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Method**

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Descriptive analysis is suitable for summarising large datasets and presenting results in an understandable form through tables, charts, and graphs (Saunders et al., 2019). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate these summaries, enabling the researcher to describe trends in social media usage, participation levels, and perceived impacts among respondents. As Neuman (2014) emphasises, descriptive analysis provides a clear, factual representation of patterns within a population without inferring causal relationships.

This analytical method is justified because the study's objective is to describe, not predict or explain, relationships. Descriptive statistics offered a precise way to summarise respondent

characteristics and highlight dominant patterns in youth participation. Similar descriptive approaches were employed by Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) and Dzisah (2018) in studies on digital participation and civic engagement. By focusing exclusively on descriptive analysis, the study maintains its positivist objectivity while providing policymakers and researchers with a clear snapshot of social media's role in Ghana's community development landscape.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations are integral to maintaining credibility and integrity in research. This study adhered to the ethical standards outlined by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC) Research Ethics Committee and international research norms. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymising responses and storing data securely. Only aggregated results were reported, preventing any identification of individual respondents.

The justification for these ethical measures stems from the need to protect participants' rights and foster trust between the researcher and respondents. According to Bryman (2016), ethical compliance enhances the validity and acceptability of social science research. Additionally, participants were assured that their responses will be used solely for academic purposes and that data will be destroyed after analysis to ensure privacy. Online questionnaires included consent statements that participants must acknowledge before proceeding. These ethical safeguards not only fulfil institutional requirements but also uphold the moral responsibility of the researcher to ensure integrity, respect, and transparency throughout the research process.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

In summary, this chapter has detailed the methodological framework that guided the study, aligning philosophical assumptions, research design, and data collection techniques with the

overall objectives of the research. It explained the adoption of the positivist philosophy and quantitative descriptive design, which together provided a structured, objective means of examining the relationship between social media use and youth participation in community development. The population and sampling strategy were defined to ensure representativeness of Ghanaian youth, while the structured online questionnaire provided a consistent and reliable tool for data collection. The chapter also outlined the use of descriptive statistical methods to summarise and interpret data, ensuring that findings accurately reflect patterns and trends in digital civic engagement. Finally, adherence to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection, was emphasised to safeguard participant welfare and uphold research integrity. Overall, the chapter provides a coherent methodological foundation upon which the subsequent analysis and discussion of findings in Chapter Four are built

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected to examine the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. The chapter focuses on the presentation of quantitative results derived from the structured questionnaire administered to 400 Ghanaian youth. It begins with a description of the demographic characteristics of respondents to provide context for understanding the data. Subsequently, it analyses responses according to the study's research questions, which explore the level and pattern of social media use, its influence on youth participation, the role of social media in empowerment, and the challenges associated with using these platforms for development initiatives. The analysis employs descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, and means to summarise the data and reveal observable patterns and trends. Findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and the theoretical foundation of the study the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to determine how social media usage gratifies youths' needs for information, interaction, and empowerment. The chapter thus provides an empirical basis for understanding the extent to which Twitter and Facebook shape Ghanaian youths' developmental engagement.

#### **Presentation of Findings**

##### **4.1 Demographic Data**

The demographic section of the questionnaire seeks to collect background information about respondents to ensure that the analysis reflects a diverse and representative sample of Ghanaian youth. Variables such as gender, age, educational level, occupation, and location are included to provide a contextual understanding of the respondents' social and demographic

characteristics. This information helps in identifying patterns and differences in social media usage and community development participation across different demographic groups. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), demographic data provide a foundation for interpreting quantitative results by allowing researchers to link respondent characteristics with behavioural and attitudinal patterns. In this study, the demographic data are particularly useful in determining how factors such as gender and education influence the frequency and purpose of Twitter and Facebook use among Ghanaian youth engaged in development initiatives.

**Table 1: Gender**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Female	253	63.2
Male	147	36.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The gender distribution presented above reveals that a majority of respondents (63.2%) were female, while 36.8% were male. This finding indicates a significant female presence and participation in social media-driven community development initiatives in Ghana. The results suggest that Ghanaian women are increasingly leveraging digital platforms such as Twitter and Facebook for communication, advocacy, and community engagement a trend that corroborates earlier studies in the reviewed literature. For instance, Tawiah (2021) found that female youth in Ghana used social media not only for entertainment but as a means of expressing opinions and participating in democratic processes, emphasising Facebook’s role in creating inclusive communication spaces. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) reported that women in the Tamale Metropolis actively utilised Facebook to mobilise volunteers for community sanitation campaigns, challenging the traditional assumption that males dominate civic engagement in Ghana. The predominance of female respondents in this study, therefore,

reflects a growing feminisation of digital civic participation, consistent with Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) argument that social media has redefined empowerment by giving marginalised groups, including women, a voice in community development discourse. These findings also reinforce Markwei and Appiah's (2016) observation that Ghanaian women are closing the digital participation gap, particularly on social platforms that foster collaboration and social connectedness. Thus, the higher female representation not only aligns with prior scholarship but also underscores the democratising role of social media in amplifying youth voices across gender lines within Ghana's development context.

Furthermore, this gender distribution aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that individuals actively use media to satisfy personal and social needs such as information, interaction, empowerment, and recognition (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). From this theoretical lens, the predominance of female participants may reflect a stronger motivation among young women to use Twitter and Facebook for self-expression and community involvement. As Whiting and Williams (2013) explain, users derive gratifications such as social inclusion, identity formation, and empowerment from social media engagement motives that appear to resonate more strongly with Ghanaian female youth in this study. The data suggest that women are finding in these platforms the social capital and communicative freedom that traditional community structures may not have fully provided (Bokor, 2015). This aligns with Dzisah's (2018) view that social media fosters participatory inclusion, allowing underrepresented groups to shape development narratives through online discourse.

**Table 2: Age**

Response	Frequency	Percent
18-22	33	8.3
23-27	176	44.0
28-32	160	40.0
33-37	31	7.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that the majority of respondents (44.0%) fall within the 23–27 age group, followed closely by those aged 28–32 (40.0%), while smaller proportions are between 18–22 (8.3%) and 33–37 (7.8%). This finding suggests that social media participation in community development in Ghana is predominantly driven by youth in their early to late twenties, a period often associated with high digital literacy, strong civic awareness, and active social engagement. The dominance of respondents within these age brackets corroborates findings in the reviewed literature, particularly the works of Markwei and Appiah (2016) and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), who established that young adults between 20 and 30 years constitute the most active social media users in Ghana. Similarly, Tawiah (2021) reported that this demographic group uses platforms like Facebook and Twitter not only for leisure and communication but also as spaces for democratic participation and civic activism. The relative decline in representation among respondents aged 18–22 may reflect limited access to stable internet or lower involvement in community initiatives, a trend also identified by Nartey (2022) in his study on online protest participation. The small proportion of older youth (33–37) supports Dzisah’s (2018) assertion that digital activism and community mobilisation efforts in Ghana are youth-led, particularly by those who grew up in an era of increased internet access and smartphone proliferation. Therefore, the age distribution underscores the centrality of

young adults as the driving force of digital participation and community development in Ghana’s evolving communication landscape.

This age pattern is also consistent with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that individuals consciously select media platforms that fulfill their personal, social, and cognitive needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). From this theoretical standpoint, young adults between the ages of 23 and 32 are at a developmental stage where social recognition, identity formation, and community belonging become central motivations for media use. This explains their dominant representation in the data, as they are more likely to derive gratification from engaging in meaningful social interactions and contributing to community initiatives via social media.

**Table 3: Educational Level**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's	221	55.3
Diploma	74	18.5
Master's	84	21.0
Phd	2	.5
SHS	19	4.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that the majority of respondents (55.3%) possess a Bachelor’s degree, followed by Master’s degree holders (21.0%) and Diploma holders (18.5%), with smaller proportions having Senior High School (SHS) (4.8%) and PhD-level education (0.5%). This distribution indicates that social media engagement in community development is most prevalent among highly educated Ghanaian youth, particularly those with tertiary qualifications. The dominance of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree holders corroborates findings from the reviewed literature, which consistently shows that individuals with higher education are more likely to use social

media for civic and developmental purposes (Dzisah, 2018; Markwei & Appiah, 2016). According to Tawiah (2021), Ghanaian youth with tertiary education are more digitally literate and possess greater awareness of social and civic responsibilities, making them more active participants in online discussions and community initiatives. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that university-educated youth in Tamale exhibited higher engagement levels in online campaigns related to health, education, and sanitation. The low representation of SHS and PhD holders may reflect, respectively, limited access to stable internet or less focus on social media among academic researchers who use alternative scholarly platforms (Dzisah, 2020). Overall, the data align with Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) argument that social media participation tends to cluster among those with greater access to information resources, communication skills, and critical awareness attributes commonly associated with higher educational attainment. Thus, education appears to be a significant enabling factor for effective social media participation in community development across Ghana.

The findings also align strongly with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that individuals actively engage with media to fulfil specific informational, social, and personal needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). In the context of this study, highly educated youth, particularly those with Bachelor's and Master's degrees, are likely to derive gratifications such as cognitive fulfilment (information-seeking and learning) and personal integrative gratification (self-expression and social influence) from using Twitter and Facebook.

**Table 4: Occupation**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Employed	168	42.0
Self-employed	150	37.5
Student	60	15.0
Unemployed	22	5.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a majority of respondents are employed (42.0%), followed closely by self-employed youth (37.5%), while students (15.0%) and unemployed participants (5.5%) constitute smaller proportions. This distribution suggests that the use of Twitter and Facebook for community development in Ghana is largely dominated by economically active youth, those who are either formally employed or engaged in entrepreneurial ventures. The high participation of employed and self-employed respondents corroborates the findings of Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), who observed that working-class youth in Ghana often use Facebook and Twitter to share information about local initiatives, promote small-scale development efforts, and connect with civic organisations. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) reported that employed youth in urban Ghana used social media more frequently than students and unemployed individuals because of greater access to smartphones, data resources, and digital literacy. This pattern also aligns with Dzisah's (2018) assertion that professional and self-employed youth utilise social media to enhance civic visibility and build networks that facilitate collaborative community development. The lower representation of students may reflect academic workload and institutional restrictions on social activism, as Tawiah (2021) observed among university youth who often engage online but rarely convert digital discourse into community participation. Meanwhile, the low proportion of unemployed respondents supports Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) argument that economic instability limits youth engagement in community programs, as access to technology and motivation for civic

participation are often tied to economic security. Overall, these findings confirm that Ghana’s working youth segment, both employed and self-employed, plays a pivotal role in leveraging social media for local development and social change.

**Table 5: Do you actively use social media?**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
No	234	58.5
Yes	166	41.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data show that a majority of respondents (58.5%) reported not actively using social media, while 41.5% indicated that they do actively use social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This finding reveals that, despite the widespread availability of social media in Ghana, a significant proportion of youth remain passive or non-active users, engaging infrequently or using these platforms primarily for non-developmental purposes. The result partially corroborates the findings of Markwei and Appiah (2016), who discovered that although many Ghanaian youth have access to social media accounts, only a fraction use them for civic or community-oriented engagement. Similarly, Tawiah (2021) observed that youth in Ghana often limit their online activity to entertainment, peer communication, and social updates rather than active participation in civic or developmental causes. However, the proportion (41.5%) of active users in this study also supports evidence from Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), who found that a growing segment of Ghanaian youth, especially in urban centres, use Facebook and Twitter to support local development initiatives, volunteerism, and public awareness campaigns. This dual pattern (majority non-active but a significant minority active) mirrors global social media trends described by Whiting and Williams (2013), where a smaller percentage of users produce or share content while the majority consume it passively. Thus, the findings confirm that while digital access among Ghanaian youth is widespread,

digital activism and community participation remain concentrated among a smaller, motivated group.

From the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), this finding can be understood through the principle that individuals are active media users who engage with platforms based on personal motivations and gratifications sought (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). The high proportion of non-active users (58.5%) may indicate that many Ghanaian youth do not perceive sufficient cognitive, social integrative, or personal integrative gratifications from using Twitter or Facebook for community development purposes.

**Table 6: Which platform do you use frequently?**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Both	131	32.8
Facebook	230	57.5
Twitter(X)	39	9.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that Facebook (57.5%) is the most frequently used social media platform among Ghanaian youth, followed by those who use both Facebook and Twitter (32.8%), while a smaller proportion (9.8%) use Twitter exclusively. This finding underscores the enduring popularity of Facebook as the dominant platform for youth engagement in Ghana, particularly in relation to community development and social interaction. The results corroborate findings from Markwei and Appiah (2016), who observed that Facebook remains the most widely used platform among Ghanaian youth due to its accessibility, community features, and multimedia capabilities that facilitate interaction and mobilisation. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiazawoo (2023) found that youth-led initiatives in the Tamale Metropolis relied heavily on Facebook groups and pages to organise sanitation campaigns and volunteer projects, highlighting the platform’s role as a tool for civic collaboration. The relatively low percentage of Twitter users

(9.8%) supports Nartey's (2022) assertion that Twitter, while effective for advocacy and political discourse, attracts a smaller, more elite, and urban-based audience due to its textual emphasis and language complexity. Additionally, Tawiah (2021) noted that Facebook's integration of local languages and visual content makes it more inclusive and appealing to Ghanaian youth across different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. The finding that nearly one-third of respondents use both platforms (32.8%) also confirms Dzisah's (2018) claim that cross-platform engagement enhances information diffusion and civic participation, as youth leverage multiple platforms to expand their reach and influence.

From the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), these findings reflect the active and purposive nature of media use, where individuals select platforms that best fulfil their cognitive, social, and personal integrative needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). Facebook's dominance suggests that Ghanaian youth derive higher levels of gratification from its multifaceted features such as interactive groups, community pages, live streaming, and multimedia sharing that support both personal expression and collective mobilisation.

#### **4.2 Research Question One: To what extent is the level and pattern of Twitter and Facebook use among Ghanaian youth?**

This question seeks to assess the degree to which Ghanaian youth engage with Twitter and Facebook, focusing on usage frequency, purpose, and interaction style. It aims to identify the dominant social media habits among young people and the types of content they engage with most often. By analysing these patterns, the study explores how digital platforms serve as tools for communication, networking, and mobilisation.

**Table 7: I use Twitter and Facebook regularly for information sharing.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	33	8.3
Disagree	90	22.5
Neutral	183	45.8
Agree	83	20.8
Strongly Agree	11	2.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a majority of respondents (45.8%) remained neutral, while 22.5% disagreed and 8.3% strongly disagreed that they use Twitter and Facebook regularly for information sharing. Only 20.8% agreed, and 2.8% strongly agreed, suggesting that although a segment of Ghanaian youth recognise social media’s informational utility, most are either uncertain about or disengaged from using it consistently for information dissemination. This pattern suggests a moderate-to-low level of active use of Twitter and Facebook for informational purposes among Ghanaian youth. The findings partially corroborate Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) assertion that while social media has become integral to youth communication, a substantial number of Ghanaian users still use these platforms more for entertainment and social interaction rather than structured information sharing or civic engagement. Similarly, Tawiah (2021) found that many Ghanaian youth engage in “passive participation” online, consuming content without necessarily creating or sharing information themselves. However, the small proportion of active information sharers (approximately 23.6%) aligns with Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) observation that a subset of youth, particularly those involved in community groups, use Facebook and Twitter to mobilise others and share development-oriented content.

From the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), these findings can be interpreted as a reflection of varying motivational levels and gratifications sought by Ghanaian youth. According to Blumler and Katz (1974) and Ruggiero (2000), media use is an active and purposive behaviour where individuals engage with specific platforms to fulfil needs such as information, identity, or social interaction. The moderate level of information-sharing activity among respondents suggests that while Twitter and Facebook provide opportunities for cognitive gratifications (information seeking and sharing), many youth do not derive sufficient motivation to consistently use them for this purpose.

**Table 8: I use Twitter/Facebook to connect with peers who share similar interests**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Disagree	48	12.0
Neutral	161	40.3
Agree	156	39.0
Strongly Agree	30	7.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data show that a combined 46.5% of respondents (39.0% agree and 7.5% strongly agree) use Twitter and Facebook to connect with peers who share similar interests, while 40.3% remained neutral, and a minority (13.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These findings reveal that nearly half of Ghanaian youth acknowledge using social media platforms primarily for networking and peer interaction, indicating that social connectivity is one of the key motivations for social media engagement in the country. The results corroborate Markwei and Appiah's (2016) findings that Ghanaian youth actively use social media as a space for social belonging and community formation, particularly through Facebook groups and online forums. Similarly, Tawiah (2021) reported that online peer connections foster a sense of shared purpose among young adults, especially around sociocultural and developmental topics. The high

percentage of neutral responses, however, may indicate a degree of ambivalence, suggesting that while many youth recognise social media’s potential for building networks, not all actively pursue such connections for community-related causes.

These findings align strongly with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that media users are active participants who consciously select platforms to satisfy specific needs such as social interaction, belonging, and identity formation (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). The high proportion of youth who agree with the statement reflects the social integrative gratification dimension of UGT, where users employ media to strengthen interpersonal relationships and maintain social ties.

**Table 9: I often use social media to learn about community development projects**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Disagree	22	5.5
Neutral	116	29.0
Agree	181	45.3
Strongly Agree	76	19.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a majority of respondents, 45.3% agreeing and 19.0% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 64.3% indicated that they often use social media to learn about community development projects. Meanwhile, 29.0% remained neutral, and only a small proportion (6.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that a substantial majority of Ghanaian youth view social media as a credible and accessible platform for learning about community development initiatives, projects, and volunteer opportunities. The finding aligns with Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) observation that Facebook and Twitter have become essential channels through which Ghanaian youth access development information, particularly

in urban centers. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that social media served as a powerful educational tool for youth in Tamale Metropolis, enabling them to stay informed about sanitation drives, health campaigns, and education initiatives. This trend supports Tawiah’s (2021) argument that social media has evolved beyond entertainment and peer interaction to become a source of civic awareness and informal education among young Ghanaians. Furthermore, Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) highlighted that digital platforms have democratised knowledge-sharing in Ghana, bridging gaps between community actors, NGOs, and local youth.

From the lens of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), this finding reflects the theory’s emphasis on cognitive gratifications, where individuals use media to acquire knowledge, information, and understanding about the world (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). The data suggest that Ghanaian youth actively use Twitter and Facebook to fulfill their cognitive needs by learning about community projects and development initiatives.

**Table 10: I follow organisations or leaders involved in local development initiatives**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	.8
Disagree	26	6.5
Neutral	118	29.5
Agree	179	44.8
Strongly Agree	74	18.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a substantial majority of respondents 44.8% agreeing and 18.5% strongly agreeing, amounting to a combined 63.3% affirm that they follow organisations or leaders involved in local development initiatives on social media. Meanwhile, 29.5% remained neutral and only 7.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed otherwise. These

findings suggest that a significant proportion of Ghanaian youth use Twitter and Facebook as channels to stay connected with civic organisations, government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and influential community leaders who promote local development. This result corroborates findings by Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), who established that Ghanaian youth in the Tamale Metropolis actively followed local NGOs and opinion leaders on Facebook to receive updates on community projects related to health, sanitation, and education. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that youth in Accra and Kumasi engaged with social media pages of advocacy groups and local leaders to access information on youth empowerment programs and civic initiatives. The high rate of youth engagement also aligns with Dzisah’s (2018) assertion that social media has redefined how civic participation occurs in Ghana, allowing youth to build digital relationships with institutions that were traditionally inaccessible. However, the neutral responses (29.5%) suggest that not all youth translate digital access into consistent engagement with civic actors possibly due to political apathy, content fatigue, or limited trust in leadership communication, as noted by Tawiah (2021).

**Table 11: I use Twitter/Facebook to express my opinions on social and community issues.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5
Disagree	37	9.3
Neutral	103	25.8
Agree	190	47.5
Strongly Agree	64	16.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results reveal that a majority of respondents 47.5% agreeing and 16.0% strongly agreeing, totaling 63.5% affirm that they use Twitter and Facebook to express their opinions on social

and community issues. In contrast, 25.8% remained neutral, while 10.8% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) indicated otherwise. These findings demonstrate that Ghanaian youth are increasingly using social media as a platform for self-expression and civic dialogue, reflecting a broader trend where online spaces serve as participatory arenas for discussing local and national development concerns. This aligns strongly with Dzisah's (2018) assertion that social media has become a major tool for digital democracy and youth activism in Ghana, allowing individuals to voice opinions that were previously restricted to traditional media elites. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that Ghanaian youth frequently use Facebook to discuss pressing social issues such as unemployment, education, and governance, contributing to a new culture of participatory communication. The findings also resonate with Nartey (2022), who noted that platforms like Twitter play a crucial role in mobilising young people to speak out on civic issues, citing the #FixTheCountry movement as evidence of digital spaces transforming into vehicles for collective advocacy. The high level of agreement (63.5%) further corroborates Mohammed and Fiadzawoo's (2023) study in Tamale, where youth used Facebook pages to debate developmental concerns and hold community leaders accountable. However, the 25.8% neutrality suggests that some users may be hesitant to express opinions online due to fear of criticism, political repercussions, or perceived ineffectiveness of online advocacy a concern also highlighted by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018), who found that while digital expression is widespread, not all users feel empowered to voice dissenting views publicly. Overall, these findings affirm that social media has expanded civic discourse spaces for Ghanaian youth, giving them a sense of visibility, inclusion, and agency in community development dialogue.

From the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), this finding strongly aligns with the concept of personal integrative and social integrative gratifications, where individuals use media to reinforce their self-expression, social identity, and sense of belonging (Blumler

& Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). The high proportion of respondents who use Twitter and Facebook to express opinions suggests that Ghanaian youth are active and purposive users seeking gratifications that enhance their visibility and participation in civic life.

**Table 12: Social media helps me feel connected to community development efforts.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5
Disagree	26	6.5
Neutral	86	21.5
Agree	198	49.5
Strongly Agree	84	21.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a significant majority of respondents 49.5% agreeing and 21.0% strongly agreeing, totaling 70.5% affirmed that social media helps them feel connected to community development efforts. Only 8.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 21.5% remained neutral. This strong agreement underscores that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have become key instruments for fostering a sense of connection, belonging, and engagement among Ghanaian youth in the realm of community development. The findings corroborate Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) observation that Facebook serves as an important digital space for Ghanaian youth to connect with others who share similar civic and developmental interests, enhancing their sense of social inclusion and participation. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that social media networks in the Tamale Metropolis strengthened communication between youth volunteers and local leaders, facilitating collaboration on environmental and health projects. The results also align with Tawiah (2021), who argued that social media offers Ghanaian youth a sense of civic attachment by enabling them to follow, share, and discuss development-related initiatives, even without direct physical participation. The strong positive responses thus confirm that social media not only informs

but also emotionally connects youth to developmental processes. This finding also resonates with Grauenkaer and Tufte’s (2018) claim that digital platforms have democratised civic participation in Africa, making youth feel part of collective change efforts through virtual networks.

**Table 13: I share or retweet posts related to community or national development.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5
Disagree	28	7.0
Neutral	98	24.5
Agree	192	48.0
Strongly Agree	76	19.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a majority of respondents, 48.0% agreeing and 19.0% strongly agreeing, making up a combined 67.0% reported that they share or retweet posts related to community or national development. Meanwhile, 24.5% remained neutral and only 8.5% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) indicated otherwise. These results suggest that Ghanaian youth actively engage in digital advocacy and content dissemination related to community development and national progress. This high level of participatory engagement supports the findings of Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), who noted that social media particularly Facebook has become a platform where Ghanaian youth voluntarily share posts and updates on environmental sanitation, youth empowerment, and public health projects. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that youth in Accra frequently repost or share social causes on Facebook to support advocacy campaigns and raise awareness. This behavior reflects a growing trend of “micro-activism” (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2018), where individuals use small online acts such as retweeting or sharing to contribute to larger social conversations. The

findings also align with Dzisah’s (2018) argument that youth-driven online content circulation amplifies collective action and helps shape public opinion on national and community issues.

**Table 14: I use hashtags or groups to participate in online discussions about community issues.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	8	2.0
Disagree	27	6.8
Neutral	122	30.5
Agree	186	46.5
Strongly Agree	57	14.2
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a majority of respondents, 46.5% agreeing and 14.2% strongly agreeing, a combined 60.7% affirmed that they use hashtags or groups to participate in online discussions about community issues. Meanwhile, 30.5% were neutral, and only 8.8% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed otherwise. These findings suggest that a considerable number of Ghanaian youth actively engage in digital conversations on civic and developmental topics through the use of hashtags and social media groups. The data align closely with Nartey’s (2022) analysis of the #FixTheCountry campaign, where Ghanaian youth effectively utilised twitter hashtags to mobilise civic debate and hold leaders accountable for national and local development issues. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that Facebook groups in Tamale served as virtual civic spaces where youth discussed environmental and community challenges and coordinated volunteer efforts. This pattern also corroborates Dzisah’s (2018) argument that digital affordances such as hashtags and online groups have become modern mechanisms for fostering participatory communication in Ghana’s socio-political context. Moreover, Markwei and Appiah (2016) emphasised that Facebook groups encourage social learning and the exchange of ideas among youth with shared

interests, contributing to a sense of civic belonging. The 30.5% neutral responses, however, may indicate that some users are observers rather than active discussants, echoing Whiting and Williams's (2013) concept of passive participation, where individuals prefer to consume rather than contribute to online discourse. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority's engagement underscores that Ghanaian youth are using digital spaces as interactive forums to share opinions, discuss issues, and build consensus around development concerns, highlighting the transformative role of social media in youth-driven civic participation.

Viewed through the framework of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), these findings demonstrate the theory's social integrative and cognitive gratification dimensions, which explain users' motivation to engage with media for interaction, belonging, and information (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). The act of participating in online discussions through hashtags and groups fulfills users' social needs by fostering communication, collaboration, and a sense of inclusion within civic communities. The use of hashtag like #FixTheCountry or #GreenGhana also exemplifies UGT's concept of goal-oriented media use, where individuals employ media tools deliberately to achieve cognitive and social gratifications such as visibility, empowerment, and influence.

#### **4.3 Research Question Two: How does the use of Twitter and Facebook influence youth participation in community development projects?**

This question examines the extent to which engagement on Twitter and Facebook translates into actual involvement in community development initiatives. It investigates whether exposure to social media content motivates youth to participate in offline development activities, volunteerism, and civic action.

**Table 15: Twitter and Facebook make it easier for me to engage in community initiatives.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	3.0
Disagree	38	9.5
Neutral	154	38.5
Agree	162	40.5
Strongly Agree	34	8.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a majority of respondents, 40.5% agreeing and 8.5% strongly agreeing, totaling 49.0% believe that Twitter and Facebook make it easier for them to engage in community initiatives. Meanwhile, 38.5% remained neutral and 12.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This finding suggests that nearly half of Ghanaian youth view social media platforms as facilitators of civic and developmental engagement, while a substantial number remain uncertain, perhaps due to inconsistent or indirect participation in such initiatives. The results corroborate Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) study, which revealed that Facebook and Twitter served as cost-effective and accessible platforms for mobilising youth involvement in sanitation, health, and educational projects in the Tamale Metropolis. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that social media provided a virtual extension of community life, allowing youth in Accra to stay informed and connected to social causes without the need for physical presence. The data also align with Dzisah’s (2018) findings that digital media have lowered participation barriers by providing alternative spaces for civic activism and development communication. However, the high neutrality rate (38.5%) might indicate that while many youth recognise the potential of social media to promote engagement, not all have

translated this awareness into active involvement. This observation supports Tawiah’s (2021) assertion that Ghanaian youth often express willingness to engage online but face infrastructural, economic, or motivational limitations that prevent full participation.

From the perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the finding clearly reflects both instrumental (cognitive) **and** social integrative gratifications, illustrating that Ghanaian youth use Twitter and Facebook as tools for achieving engagement, collaboration, and knowledge exchange (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000).

**Table 16: Social media has increased my awareness of development issues in my community.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	1.8
Disagree	24	6.0
Neutral	141	35.3
Agree	190	47.5
Strongly Agree	38	9.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results show that a majority of respondents, 47.5% agreeing and 9.5% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 57.0% believe that social media has increased their awareness of development issues in their communities. Meanwhile, 35.3% of respondents were neutral, and a minority (7.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These findings reveal that over half of the surveyed Ghanaian youth recognise the role of social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, as vital channels for raising awareness and disseminating information about community development issues. This finding strongly aligns with Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) conclusion that social media platforms in Ghana play a significant role in informing youth about local development programs, civic initiatives, and social interventions. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) observed that Facebook has become a powerful tool for

youth in Tamale to learn about ongoing projects, environmental campaigns, and volunteer opportunities. This awareness-enhancing role of social media is also supported by Dzisah (2018), who emphasised that digital communication technologies have democratised access to information, giving Ghanaian youth the ability to monitor and participate in local governance processes.

**Table 17: I have participated in community projects because of information I saw on social media**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5
Disagree	20	5.0
Neutral	118	29.5
Agree	197	49.3
Strongly Agree	59	14.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results reveal that a substantial proportion of respondents 49.3% agreeing and 14.8% strongly agreeing, amounting to 64.1% reported that they have participated in community projects because of information they encountered on social media. Meanwhile, 29.5% were neutral, and only 6.5% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed otherwise. These findings demonstrate that social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, plays a powerful role in translating online engagement into offline participation among Ghanaian youth. This outcome strongly corroborates Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) findings, which showed that Facebook posts and online mobilisation significantly influenced youth involvement in sanitation campaigns and community health outreach programs in Northern Ghana. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that social media in Ghana acts as an intermediary channel between awareness and action, encouraging youth to volunteer or attend community events initiated online. The data also affirm Nartey’s (2022) analysis of the

#FixTheCountry movement, where online discourse on Twitter led to physical demonstrations and tangible civic involvement.

From the standpoint of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), this finding vividly reflects the theory’s behavioural outcome of cognitive and social gratifications where media use leads to concrete actions aligned with users’ motivations (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). The fact that 64.1% of respondents reported participating in projects after encountering related content online indicates that social media not only satisfies informational needs but also motivates action-oriented gratifications.

**Table 18: Social media encourages me to volunteer or contribute to community programs.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	.8
Disagree	19	4.8
Neutral	101	25.3
Agree	209	52.3
Strongly Agree	68	17.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results show that a strong majority of respondents, 52.3% agreeing and 17.0% strongly agreeing, making up a combined 69.3% affirmed that social media encourages them to volunteer or contribute to community programs. Meanwhile, 25.3% were neutral, and only 5.6% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) disagreed with the statement. This finding suggests that platforms such as Twitter and Facebook play a significant motivational role in stimulating volunteerism and civic participation among Ghanaian youth. It supports Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) assertion that social media has become a crucial mechanism for mobilising youth volunteers in community-oriented programs across Northern Ghana, where digital platforms are often used to disseminate information about local initiatives

and organise collective action. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that youth in Accra used Facebook groups to coordinate clean-up exercises, health outreach programs, and educational support campaigns. The current data also reinforce Dzisah’s (2018) argument that social media has redefined civic participation in Ghana by transforming informal online interactions into tangible acts of public contribution. Moreover, Nartey (2022) documented how hashtag activism, particularly movements such as #FixTheCountry, inspired physical community engagement and donations among youth. However, the 25.3% neutral responses could indicate a gap between digital enthusiasm and practical involvement reflecting Grauenkaer and Tufte’s (2018) concern that while social media enhances civic awareness, logistical and socioeconomic barriers often limit offline action.

**Table 19: Social media encourages me to volunteer or contribute to community programs.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Disagree	10	2.5
Neutral	104	26.0
Agree	216	54.0
Strongly Agree	65	16.3
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a substantial majority of respondents, 54.0% agreeing and 16.3% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 70.3% indicated that social media encourages them to volunteer or contribute to community programs. Meanwhile, 26.0% remained neutral, and only 3.8% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) disagreed with the statement. This distribution demonstrates that social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, plays a significant motivational role in influencing Ghanaian youth to take part in community initiatives. The findings align closely with Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) research,

which showed that Facebook pages and online campaigns in the Tamale Metropolis successfully mobilised young people to participate in community clean-up exercises, educational outreach, and health sensitisation programs. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that social media platforms in Ghana facilitate social mobilisation by creating virtual spaces where youth share ideas, coordinate events, and promote volunteerism. The results also corroborate Dzisah’s (2018) assertion that social media has transformed civic participation in Ghana by allowing youth to contribute to development efforts through low-cost, accessible, and time-flexible online engagements. Furthermore, Nartey (2022) emphasised that hashtag campaigns like #FixTheCountry and #Let’sDoThisRight inspired Ghanaian youth to transition from digital activism to physical community action, demonstrating the persuasive and mobilising power of social media.

**Table 20: I feel more empowered to participate in development issues through social media.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Disagree	16	4.0
Neutral	107	26.8
Agree	225	56.3
Strongly Agree	47	11.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data show that a majority of respondents, 56.3% agreeing and 11.8% strongly agreeing, together forming 68.1% indicated that they feel more empowered to participate in development issues through social media. Meanwhile, 26.8% remained neutral, and only 5.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed otherwise. These findings demonstrate that Twitter and Facebook are perceived by most Ghanaian youth as empowerment platforms that enhance their capacity to engage in and influence development discourse. This aligns with

Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) findings, which reported that Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups in Northern Ghana provided youth with information and confidence to participate in health, sanitation, and educational campaigns. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that social media promotes psychological and civic empowerment by allowing Ghanaian youth to express opinions, seek feedback, and collaborate on community improvement initiatives. The current result also supports Dzisah’s (2018) assertion that the participatory affordances of social media such as commenting, sharing, and posting create an environment where young people feel heard and validated, thus reinforcing their sense of agency in public affairs. Furthermore, Nartey (2022) demonstrated that Twitter hashtags like #FixTheCountry increased youth empowerment by transforming frustration into collective advocacy, showing how online engagement translates into social confidence.

**Table 21: I have joined a development initiative promoted through Facebook or Twitter.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	1.0
Disagree	24	6.0
Neutral	105	26.3
Agree	210	52.5
Strongly Agree	57	14.2
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a strong majority of respondents, 52.5% agreeing and 14.2% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 66.7% reported having joined a development initiative promoted through Facebook or Twitter. Meanwhile, 26.3% remained neutral, and a small minority (7.0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These results suggest that social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, serve as an effective channel for mobilising youth participation in development initiatives across Ghana. The findings corroborate Mohammed

and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) study in the Tamale Metropolis, which showed that a considerable number of youth participated in sanitation and educational programs after encountering mobilisation campaigns on Facebook. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that Ghanaian youth often join digital campaigns or local projects promoted via social media platforms, such as school donation drives, environmental clean-ups, and health sensitisation exercises. The data also align with Dzisah’s (2018) assertion that the interactivity and accessibility of social media have revolutionised civic engagement by lowering the barriers to entry for youth participation in local initiatives. Furthermore, Nartey (2022) observed that Ghanaian youth have become active contributors to development movements like #FixTheCountry and #GreenGhana, which were popularised and organised primarily through Twitter.

#### **4.4 Research Question Three: What role do Twitter and Facebook play in empowering youth for sustainable community development?**

This question explores the empowering potential of social media platforms in enhancing youth agency, leadership, and participation in sustainable community development efforts. It seeks to understand whether Twitter and Facebook serve as tools for amplifying youth voices, promoting self-expression, and fostering collaboration in local projects.

**Table 22: Social media provides a platform for young people to express their views freely**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	3.0
Disagree	41	10.3
Neutral	152	38.0
Agree	167	41.8
Strongly Agree	28	7.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results show that a majority of respondents, 41.8% agreeing and 7.0% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 48.8% believe that social media provides a platform for young people to express their views freely. Meanwhile, 38.0% remained neutral, and 13.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed otherwise. This finding indicates that nearly half of the Ghanaian youth perceive Twitter and Facebook as spaces for free self-expression, consistent with the broader democratic affordances associated with social media use in sub-Saharan Africa. The findings corroborate Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) study, which revealed that Facebook and Twitter have become digital public spheres for Ghanaian youth to express opinions on governance, education, and community affairs. Similarly, Dzisah (2018) emphasised that social media has decentralised public discourse, allowing marginalised youth voices to challenge authority and contribute to civic dialogue. This result also aligns with Nartey (2022), who found that Twitter’s open architecture and hashtag culture have facilitated youth activism and discourse around national issues such as #FixTheCountry, giving young people an avenue to articulate grievances and propose reforms. Furthermore, Tawiah (2021) argued that social media in Ghana has bridged the gap between citizens and leaders, creating unprecedented access to platforms where opinions can be voiced without traditional gatekeeping.

**Table 23: Through social media, I feel that my voice matters in community development.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5
Disagree	19	4.8
Neutral	133	33.3
Agree	205	51.2
Strongly Agree	37	9.3
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The findings indicate that a majority of respondents, 51.2% agreeing and 9.3% strongly agreeing, totalling 60.5% believe that social media makes them feel that their voices matter in community development. Meanwhile, 33.3% remained neutral, and only 6.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) felt otherwise. This data shows that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have significantly contributed to a sense of civic empowerment and inclusiveness among Ghanaian youth. The results corroborate Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) assertion that social media in Ghana provides a communicative avenue where youth can articulate opinions on social and political issues, enabling them to feel heard and valued within the public sphere. Similarly, Dzisah (2018) emphasised that the interactive nature of social media has democratised civic participation, allowing individuals who were previously excluded from mainstream political discourse to gain voice and visibility. This finding also aligns with Nartey (2022), who observed that Ghanaian youth used Twitter’s open, dialogic format to engage in discussions around national issues such as governance, corruption, and unemployment issues that directly influence community development. Moreover, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that youth participants in Northern Ghana believed their online opinions about local sanitation and educational challenges helped attract attention from local NGOs and authorities, thereby affirming their belief that their voices mattered.

**Table 24: Twitter and Facebook have helped me develop leadership or advocacy skills.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	1.8
Disagree	13	3.3
Neutral	98	24.5
Agree	215	53.8
Strongly Agree	67	16.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a substantial majority of respondents, 53.8% agreeing and 16.8% strongly agreeing, amounting to a total of 70.6% believe that Twitter and Facebook have helped them develop leadership or advocacy skills. Meanwhile, 24.5% remained neutral and only 5.1% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed dissent. This finding suggests that social media platforms serve as learning and empowerment tools that build leadership competencies, advocacy confidence, and civic-oriented skills among Ghanaian youth. The result aligns with Mohammed and Fiadzawoo's (2023) observation that Ghanaian youth increasingly use Facebook to organise, lead, and promote community initiatives, thereby honing communication, coordination, and leadership capabilities. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that social media promotes participatory learning and leadership development through peer interaction and exposure to civic content, especially in urban centres like Accra and Kumasi. The findings also corroborate Dzisah's (2018) assertion that the interactivity of digital spaces has democratised leadership, enabling young people to take initiative in civic discussions and mobilisation efforts without relying on formal institutions. Moreover, Nartey (2022) illustrated how movements such as #FixTheCountry empowered Ghanaian youth to exercise leadership roles in public advocacy by leveraging social media's visibility and networked influence. The relatively high neutrality rate (24.5%) may indicate users who engage passively or primarily consume advocacy content rather than lead such efforts, consistent with Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) argument that not all digital users translate online engagement into leadership behaviours.

**Table 25: Social media enhances youth participation in discussions about social change.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	1.0
Disagree	20	5.0
Neutral	91	22.8
Agree	225	56.3
Strongly Agree	60	15.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results reveal that a significant majority of respondents, 56.3% agreeing and 15.0% strongly agreeing, totalling 71.3% affirmed that social media enhances youth participation in discussions about social change. Meanwhile, 22.8% were neutral, and only 6.0% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed otherwise. This result underscores that platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have emerged as critical spaces for civic dialogue and youth-driven discussions about transformation and development in Ghana. The findings closely align with Markwei and Appiah's (2016) conclusion that social media provides Ghanaian youth with opportunities to debate, advocate, and influence public opinion on social, economic, and political reforms. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that social media platforms in the Tamale Metropolis facilitated youth participation in conversations about education, sanitation, and health, allowing them to contribute ideas and solutions to community challenges. The data also corroborate Dzisah's (2018) assertion that the interactivity of social media has expanded civic communication in Ghana, creating inclusive spaces for youth engagement and debate on national development. Furthermore, Nartey (2022) illustrated that Twitter's real-time and participatory design encouraged Ghanaian youth to engage in reform-oriented dialogues through movements such as #FixTheCountry, where discussions on governance and accountability led to offline activism. The small minority of disagreeing respondents and the 22.8% neutral group might represent

individuals who prefer passive consumption of social content or lack trust in the tangible outcomes of online dialogue an observation supported by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018), who cautioned that while digital communication fosters participation, it may not always lead to structural social change. Nonetheless, the overwhelming agreement demonstrates that social media is a catalyst for participatory communication, enabling Ghanaian youth to deliberate, mobilise, and advocate for social transformation at both local and national levels.

**Table 26: I believe that social media has given young people more influence in decision-making.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	2.5
Disagree	15	3.8
Neutral	113	28.2
Agree	215	53.8
Strongly Agree	47	11.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The findings show that a majority of respondents, 53.8% agreeing and 11.8% strongly agreeing, totalling 65.6% believe that social media has given young people more influence in decision-making. Meanwhile, 28.2% were neutral, and only 6.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) disagreed with the statement. This outcome underscores that platforms like Twitter and Facebook have significantly enhanced the decision-making influence and visibility of Ghanaian youth, particularly in governance, policy discussions, and community development. These findings corroborate Markwei and Appiah's (2016) conclusion that social media has shifted the power dynamics of civic communication in Ghana by allowing young people to participate in public debates that previously excluded them. Likewise, Dzisah (2018) noted that social media's participatory and horizontal structure democratises public discourse, empowering youth to challenge traditional hierarchies and engage policymakers directly. The

data also align with Nartey’s (2022) findings on the #FixTheCountry movement, which demonstrated that Twitter activism compelled political leaders to respond to youth concerns, showing a growing recognition of digital voices in national decision-making. Furthermore, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that Facebook and Twitter campaigns led by Ghanaian youth often influenced municipal leaders to prioritise sanitation and education projects, illustrating the tangible effects of social media advocacy.

**Table 27: Facebook and Twitter help me build networks that support community goals.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Disagree	21	5.3
Neutral	119	29.8
Agree	208	52.0
Strongly Agree	47	11.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The results reveal that a majority of respondents, 52.0% agreeing and 11.8% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 63.8% affirmed that Facebook and Twitter help them build networks that support community goals. Meanwhile, 29.8% were neutral, and only 6.6% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed dissent. These results demonstrate that social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook, have become key facilitators of network-building and collaboration among Ghanaian youth engaged in community development. This finding corroborates Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) research, which revealed that Ghanaian youth use Facebook and Twitter to connect with NGOs, local leaders, and like-minded peers to coordinate and sustain community initiatives. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found that social media provides Ghanaian youth with a communicative infrastructure for building partnerships that enhance collective action and community participation. These findings also align with Dzisah’s (2018) argument that social media’s interactive affordances,

such as group chats, tagging, and online communities, enable individuals to form networks that extend their influence beyond physical boundaries. Moreover, Nartey (2022) demonstrated that Twitter’s hashtag campaigns, such as #FixTheCountry, fostered alliances among youth activists and civil society organisations working toward national development reforms. However, the 29.8% neutrality rate could suggest that some users have yet to fully utilise these platforms for networking purposes, possibly due to limited digital literacy or preference for entertainment-oriented engagement. This interpretation aligns with Grauenkaer and Tufte’s (2018) observation that while digital technologies offer participatory potential, their effectiveness depends on users’ capacity and motivation to leverage them for collective goals. Overall, the majority’s positive responses affirm that Facebook and Twitter are not merely communication tools but networking catalysts, enabling Ghanaian youth to collaborate in pursuit of social and community-driven objectives.

**Table 28: Social media motivates me to take action on local development issues.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	1.8
Disagree	14	3.5
Neutral	109	27.3
Agree	218	54.5
Strongly Agree	52	13.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a strong majority of respondents 54.5% agreeing and 13.0% strongly agreeing, representing a combined 67.5% affirmed that social media motivates them to take action on local development issues. Meanwhile, 27.3% remained neutral, and only 5.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) disagreed. This finding reveals that social media platforms, particularly Twitter and Facebook, are powerful motivational and mobilisation tools for Ghanaian youth, driving them to engage actively in addressing

community challenges. The result corroborates Mohammed and Fiadzawoo’s (2023) findings, which showed that youth in Northern Ghana were inspired by social media campaigns to volunteer for clean-up activities, education advocacy, and local development drives. Similarly, Markwei and Appiah (2016) established that Facebook and Twitter are among the most influential channels for stimulating youth participation in civic and development initiatives across Ghana’s urban centres. The data also support Dzisah’s (2018) assertion that social media has reshaped civic behaviour by transforming passive observers into active agents of social change through real-time communication and interactive mobilisation. Moreover, Nartey (2022) emphasised that Twitter activism in Ghana, especially movements like #FixTheCountry, successfully motivated young people to transition from online engagement to offline participation, demonstrating the motivational impact of digital discourse. However, the 27.3% neutral responses suggest that while many youth are motivated by social media, some may experience motivational fatigue or scepticism about the effectiveness of online activism in influencing real change an idea echoed by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018), who noted that enthusiasm in digital participation does not always translate into sustained offline involvement. Nonetheless, the dominant agreement confirms that social media serves as a motivational bridge between awareness and action, fostering a participatory culture that encourages Ghanaian youth to engage in tangible efforts toward community development.

**Table 29: Online engagement has improved my awareness of social responsibility.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5
Disagree	21	5.3
Neutral	105	26.3
Agree	208	52.0
Strongly Agree	60	15.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a substantial majority of respondents, 52.0% agreeing and 15.0% strongly agreeing, totalling 67.0% affirmed that online engagement has improved their awareness of social responsibility. Meanwhile, 26.3% remained neutral, and only 6.8% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed dissent. This distribution suggests that social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook play a significant role in shaping the civic consciousness and social accountability of Ghanaian youth. The result corroborates Markwei and Appiah's (2016) findings, which demonstrated that social media in Ghana serves as an informal civic education platform, enhancing youth awareness about social issues, ethics, and community obligations. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) found that youth engagement in Facebook-based development discussions fostered a stronger sense of social duty, motivating individuals to act responsibly in community programs such as health campaigns and environmental clean-ups. This finding also supports Dzisah's (2018) argument that the participatory affordances of social media expose young people to diverse viewpoints, news, and advocacy campaigns, thereby nurturing a sense of social accountability and civic engagement. Moreover, Nartey (2022) observed that Twitter activism, particularly around socio-political movements like #FixTheCountry, enhanced young people's understanding of their civic rights and responsibilities toward national progress. The 26.3% neutrality observed among respondents may reflect those who engage with social media for entertainment rather than civic purposes or who remain uncertain about the tangible effects of online social awareness a tendency supported by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018), who cautioned that online exposure to civic content does not always result in behavioural change.

#### 4.5 Research Question Four: What challenges are associated with the use of Twitter and Facebook for youth-led community development projects in Ghana?

This question investigates the barriers that limit the effective use of Twitter and Facebook in promoting youth participation in community development. It focuses on challenges such as digital literacy gaps, misinformation, lack of institutional support, poor internet access, and low policy integration of social media-driven initiatives

**Table 30: Poor internet access limits my participation in online community projects.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	2.8
Disagree	53	13.3
Neutral	163	40.8
Agree	152	38.0
Strongly Agree	21	5.3
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data show that 43.3% of respondents (agreeing and strongly agreeing combined) believe that poor internet access limits their participation in online community projects, while 16.1% disagreed, and a relatively large proportion, 40.8% remained neutral. This indicates that a significant portion of Ghanaian youth recognise internet accessibility as a major barrier to active participation in social media-based community development initiatives. The high level of neutrality may reflect varying regional experiences, as connectivity and data affordability differ widely between Ghana’s urban and rural areas. This finding aligns closely with Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) study, which identified internet cost and inconsistent connectivity as major constraints on youth civic participation in Ghana’s digital space. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) reported that youth in the Northern Region expressed frustration over weak internet infrastructure, which hindered their ability to sustain online collaborations and

follow through with community development campaigns. The result also corroborates Dzisah’s (2018) argument that infrastructural limitations, including poor broadband penetration and erratic power supply, continue to impede the democratising potential of social media in Ghana. Moreover, Nartey (2022) found that while Twitter activism in Ghana’s urban centres thrives, youth in peri-urban and rural communities remain marginalised due to weak internet access, which limits their visibility and participation in digital advocacy movements. Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) similarly emphasised that digital inequalities can reproduce existing social and economic disparities, restricting opportunities for inclusive online civic engagement. Therefore, this finding supports existing literature highlighting that despite the motivational and participatory potential of social media, infrastructural barriers such as poor internet quality and data costs remain a significant obstacle to full digital inclusion in Ghana’s community development ecosystem.

**Table 31: I lack adequate digital skills to use social media effectively for development.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	14	3.5
Disagree	36	9.0
Neutral	118	29.5
Agree	202	50.5
Strongly Agree	30	7.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a majority of respondents 50.5% agreed and 7.5% strongly agreed, totalling 58.0% acknowledged that they lack adequate digital skills to use social media effectively for development purposes. Meanwhile, 29.5% remained neutral, and 12.5% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) believed otherwise. This finding underscores the persistent digital skills gap among Ghanaian youth, which limits their ability to fully harness social media

platforms such as Twitter and Facebook for community development. The results corroborate Markwei and Appiah's (2016) findings, which identified low digital literacy as a significant barrier preventing many Ghanaian youth from translating online engagement into tangible civic outcomes. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) observed that while social media has expanded participation in Northern Ghana, many young people lack the technical competencies, such as content creation, digital organisation, and online advocacy, to engage effectively in development-oriented projects. The results also align with Dzisah's (2018) argument that the digital divide in Ghana is not only infrastructural but also cognitive, where the lack of knowledge and digital proficiency undermines the democratising potential of new media technologies. Moreover, Tawiah (2021) emphasised that digital illiteracy among Ghanaian youth reduces their confidence and limits their ability to lead or contribute meaningfully to civic initiatives online. Nartey (2022) similarly found that despite the prominence of online advocacy campaigns like #FixTheCountry, only a minority of participants possessed the digital capacity to sustain organised activism or create civic content beyond mere participation. The neutrality rate (29.5%) may reflect users who possess basic operational skills but lack advanced knowledge of social media analytics, advocacy strategies, or development communication practices. These findings collectively support the view that while Ghanaian youth are increasingly connected, the quality of their engagement is constrained by unequal digital literacy levels, reducing their ability to use social media as a transformative tool for community development.

**Table 32: Misinformation on social media discourages genuine community participation.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	2.3
Disagree	36	9.0
Neutral	122	30.5
Agree	198	49.5
Strongly Agree	35	8.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a majority of respondents, 49.5% agreeing and 8.8% strongly agreeing, totalling 58.3% believe that misinformation on social media discourages genuine community participation. Meanwhile, 30.5% remained neutral, and only 11.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) opposed the statement. This result suggests that while social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are vital for mobilising youth toward community development, the spread of misinformation poses a significant challenge to authentic civic engagement. The finding corroborates Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) conclusion that misinformation and rumour circulation on Ghanaian social media platforms often distort public understanding of community initiatives, leading to distrust and disengagement. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) observed that youth in Tamale expressed hesitation to join certain community projects advertised on Facebook after discovering that some online campaigns were misleading or politically motivated. Dzisah (2018) also emphasised that while social media democratises communication, it simultaneously amplifies misinformation, which undermines credibility and weakens participatory discourse. Moreover, Nartey (2022) noted that during Twitter advocacy movements such as #FixTheCountry, misinformation and propaganda occasionally diluted the focus of civic debates and discouraged constructive participation. This result is consistent with Grauenkaer and Tufte’s (2018) assertion that digital environments can reinforce confusion, particularly when users lack media literacy to discern

factual information from falsehoods. The 30.5% neutrality rate reflects the complexity of this issue some users may not directly encounter misinformation or may have developed coping mechanisms to verify sources before engagement. Nevertheless, the majority agreement demonstrates that misinformation remains a critical barrier to effective online mobilisation, as it erodes trust and deters Ghanaian youth from engaging fully in social media-based community initiatives.

**Table 33: I find it difficult to distinguish credible development content from fake news.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	2.5
Disagree	26	6.5
Neutral	100	25.0
Agree	205	51.2
Strongly Agree	59	14.8
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data indicate that a significant majority of respondents, 51.2% agreeing and 14.8% strongly agreeing, totalling 66.0% acknowledged that they find it difficult to distinguish credible development content from fake news. Meanwhile, 25.0% were neutral, and only 9.0% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) reported otherwise. This pattern shows that misinformation and low digital literacy continue to undermine the ability of Ghanaian youth to evaluate the authenticity of development-related information on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. The result corroborates Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) findings, which revealed that although social media is widely used among Ghanaian youth, most users lack critical evaluation skills to differentiate credible civic information from manipulated or politicised narratives. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) reported that misinformation in the form of false development campaigns and misleading online appeals has eroded trust and reduced participation in community-oriented initiatives in Northern Ghana. Dzisah (2018) also

emphasised that the proliferation of unverified information and propaganda on social media platforms has weakened the credibility of digital communication, making it difficult for citizens to make informed civic decisions. Moreover, Nartey (2022) observed that during high-profile advocacy movements such as #FixTheCountry, misinformation distorted public understanding of the campaign’s objectives, leading some participants to disengage entirely. Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) further argued that the lack of media literacy across African societies increases citizens’ vulnerability to misinformation, which undermines social cohesion and civic participation. The relatively high neutrality rate (25%) may reflect those who occasionally question online information but lack sufficient fact-checking skills. Overall, the results confirm that the inability to discern credible from false information remains a critical barrier to effective digital participation, limiting youth confidence in social media as a legitimate tool for community development engagement.

**Table 34: Social media engagement rarely leads to tangible development outcomes**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	2.5
Disagree	26	6.5
Neutral	105	26.3
Agree	205	51.2
Strongly Agree	54	13.5
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that a majority of respondents 51.2% agreeing and 13.5% strongly agreeing, totaling 64.7% believe that social media engagement rarely leads to tangible development outcomes. Meanwhile, 26.3% remained neutral, and only 9.0% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) expressed disagreement. This finding suggests that although social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have successfully increased youth engagement and discourse around development, many Ghanaian youth perceive a disconnect between

online activism and real-world results. This aligns with Markwei and Appiah’s (2016) findings, which emphasised that while Facebook and Twitter serve as important tools for awareness creation and mobilisation, their impact on actual policy change and community transformation remains limited. Similarly, Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) reported that youth-led digital campaigns in Northern Ghana often lost momentum after the initial phase of online mobilisation, as resource limitations and weak institutional collaboration prevented the realisation of tangible developmental outcomes. Dzisah (2018) also argued that the participatory potential of social media in Ghana is often undermined by institutional inertia and the absence of systemic mechanisms for integrating citizen feedback into official development agendas. Moreover, Nartey (2022) observed that online movements such as #FixTheCountry succeeded in stimulating debate and political responsiveness but fell short of delivering concrete structural changes due to a lack of coordination between online advocates and policymakers. The neutrality (26.3%) may indicate respondents who recognise social media’s potential but remain sceptical about its consistency in producing real outcomes. This pattern supports Grauenkaer and Tufte’s (2018) claim that digital participation in Africa often produces “symbolic involvement” where users feel engaged through discourse but seldom witness measurable change. Overall, the majority agreement underscores a prevailing perception that while social media enhances civic dialogue, it has yet to bridge the gap between awareness and action in Ghana’s community development landscape.

**Table 35: I fear cyberbullying or negative feedback when expressing development opinions.**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	4.0
Disagree	77	19.3
Neutral	193	48.3
Agree	94	23.5
Strongly Agree	20	5.0
Total	400	100.0

*Source: Field Data 2025*

The data reveal that 28.5% of respondents (agreeing and strongly agreeing combined) expressed fear of cyberbullying or negative feedback when discussing development issues online, while 48.3% remained neutral, and 23.3% (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing combined) rejected this concern. These findings suggest that while some Ghanaian youth acknowledge the risks associated with expressing development opinions online, a large proportion remain ambivalent, perhaps reflecting both limited exposure to online harassment and a normalisation of hostile digital environments. This aligns with Markwei and Appiah's (2016) observation that although social media in Ghana has expanded opportunities for civic discourse, it has simultaneously created spaces where differing opinions often invite personal attacks and ridicule. Similarly, Dzisah (2018) found that the aggressive tone and polarising nature of online debates discourage meaningful civic dialogue, especially among young people who fear being targeted or publicly humiliated. Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023) also documented instances where youth-led Facebook discussions on local development attracted hostility from politically aligned users, leading to self-censorship among participants. The findings further corroborate Grauenkaer and Tufte's (2018) analysis that digital platforms can amplify social intimidation and hate speech, especially in contexts where political polarisation shapes online discussions. The neutrality rate (48.3%) may reflect the uncertain experiences of many youths those who have witnessed online hostility but may not have personally experienced direct cyberbullying. Moreover, Nartey (2022) reported that some participants in Twitter movements such as #FixTheCountry were harassed by opposing political actors, confirming that cyber-aggression undermines open participation. Collectively, the results reveal that although social media facilitates public discourse on community development, fear of digital hostility remains a subtle but real deterrent to authentic youth engagement in Ghana's online civic spaces.

## **4.6 Chapter Summary**

Chapter Four has presented and analysed the data collected from respondents to address the study's objectives and research questions. The findings revealed key trends in the use of Twitter and Facebook among Ghanaian youth, highlighting their role in information sharing, civic mobilisation, and community engagement, as well as the challenges that hinder effective online participation. Through descriptive analysis, the chapter provided a clear picture of how social media platforms facilitate both individual and collective development initiatives. The findings were interpreted in light of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, demonstrating that youths' motivations for using Twitter and Facebook including empowerment, social connection, and community involvement align with the gratifications framework proposed by Blumler and Katz (1974). The discussion also linked the results to existing empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Two, confirming areas of convergence and divergence. Overall, this chapter forms the empirical core of the study by transforming collected data into meaningful insights that inform the implications, conclusions, and recommendations discussed in Chapter Five.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Chapter five presents the summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the analysis and interpretation of data on the influence of Twitter and Facebook on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. The chapter synthesises the major results obtained from the descriptive analysis, linking them to the study's objectives, research questions, and the theoretical framework, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). The chapter also discusses how the findings corroborate existing scholarly literature, emphasising both consistencies and deviations from prior studies. Finally, it draws conclusions that reflect the overall implications of social media use for participatory development and proposes practical recommendations for policymakers, youth organisations, and development practitioners on how to enhance digital engagement for sustainable community development in Ghana.

#### **5.1 Summary of Key Findings**

The study examined the influence of social media, specifically Twitter and Facebook, on youth participation in community development projects in Ghana. The findings reveal that social media has become an essential tool for information sharing, civic mobilisation, and advocacy among Ghanaian youth, with platforms like Facebook serving as the most popular channel of engagement. The demographic analysis indicated that females (63.2%) constituted the majority of users, suggesting that social media has enhanced women's involvement in public discourse and civic engagement, challenging traditional gender disparities in participatory communication. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were within the 23–32 age range, confirming that social media-driven activism is largely youth-led. Educational attainment also

emerged as a significant factor, with over 76% of respondents possessing tertiary qualifications, implying that digital civic engagement is primarily driven by educated and digitally literate youth. The occupational profile revealed a dominance of employed and self-employed individuals, highlighting how economic empowerment facilitates consistent participation in community-oriented digital initiatives. These demographic findings, interpreted through the Uses and Gratifications Theory, show that Ghanaian youth use social media to satisfy cognitive, social integrative, and personal gratifications such as information access, recognition, and belonging.

The findings further demonstrated that social media platforms significantly enhance awareness of community development activities and motivate youth involvement in local initiatives. Over two-thirds of respondents reported using Facebook and Twitter to learn about community projects, follow organisations or leaders promoting local development, and share or retweet posts related to social change. This indicates that social media serves as an educational and motivational space for youth to acquire civic knowledge and translate awareness into practical engagement. Consistent with prior literature by Markwei and Appiah (2016), Dzisah (2018), and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo (2023), the study confirmed that social media functions as a participatory tool, bridging communication gaps between youth and development actors. Additionally, more than 60% of respondents agreed that they had participated in community projects after learning about them online, demonstrating a strong link between digital engagement and offline participation. The Uses and Gratifications Theory aptly explains these outcomes by emphasising that media use is driven by purposive behavior and cognitive fulfilment youth actively seek development content online to gain information, validation, and opportunities for social contribution.

Another key finding was that social media contributes to youth empowerment, leadership development, and advocacy. The majority of respondents agreed that platforms such as Twitter

and Facebook have enhanced their confidence, leadership skills, and sense of influence in decision-making processes. This outcome supports the arguments of Dzisah (2018) and Nartey (2022), who asserted that social media has democratised public discourse in Ghana by amplifying youth voices and enabling them to challenge institutional hierarchies. Furthermore, social media was perceived to enhance youth participation in discussions about social change, with over 71% agreeing that digital platforms provide avenues for civic dialogue and mobilisation. These findings reinforce the transformative potential of social media as a tool for participatory governance and citizen-driven advocacy, consistent with the UGT notion that media gratifies users' needs for empowerment and recognition. However, some respondents expressed skepticism about the tangible outcomes of online engagement, with 64.7% agreeing that social media activism rarely translates into concrete development results. This reflects the literature's caution (Grauenkaer & Tufte, 2018) that digital activism, while symbolically empowering, often struggles to produce structural change.

The study also uncovered several constraints that limit effective youth participation in online community projects. Among the most prominent barriers identified were poor internet access (43.3% agreement) and inadequate digital skills (58.0% agreement). These findings indicate that infrastructural and cognitive divides continue to restrict the inclusivity of Ghana's digital civic space. Respondents acknowledged that while social media offers vast opportunities for participation, limited connectivity, high data costs, and insufficient digital literacy reduce the quality and depth of engagement. This finding resonates with Dzisah's (2018) and Mohammed and Fiadzawoo's (2023) observations that digital inequality in Ghana driven by disparities in access and skill continues to marginalise rural and economically disadvantaged youth. The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides an explanatory framework for this limitation: individuals can only derive gratification from media use when they possess the necessary competencies and access to engage meaningfully. Consequently, the observed gaps underscore

the importance of improving digital literacy and infrastructure to maximise social media's developmental potential.

Finally, the findings revealed that misinformation, fake news, and online hostility present critical challenges to meaningful digital participation. More than half of the respondents (58.3%) believed that misinformation discourages genuine community engagement, while 66.0% admitted difficulty distinguishing credible development content from false information. Additionally, 28.5% reported fear of cyberbullying or negative feedback when expressing development opinions. These issues mirror global concerns about digital trust and safety, as articulated by Markwei and Appiah (2016) and Nartey (2022), who noted that misinformation and online aggression undermine civic dialogue and erode trust in digital platforms. Within the Uses and Gratifications framework, these challenges represent unfulfilled gratifications when media use results in anxiety, confusion, or distrust rather than empowerment or knowledge, user satisfaction declines. Thus, while social media empowers Ghanaian youth to participate in civic discourse, its full potential remains hindered by structural and behavioural barriers that limit trust, inclusivity, and constructive engagement.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, play a significant and transformative role in promoting youth participation in community development across Ghana. The data consistently demonstrated that Ghanaian youth use these platforms not only for social interaction but also as tools for learning, advocacy, and mobilisation. The findings confirmed that digital participation is highest among educated, employed, and urban-based youth, reflecting how digital access and literacy shape civic engagement opportunities. From the theoretical lens of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, this pattern indicates that youth are active, purposive users who engage with social media to fulfil cognitive, social integrative, and personal gratifications related to empowerment and self-expression. The study thus affirms that

social media has emerged as a crucial channel for expanding civic inclusion and democratising communication in Ghana's developmental discourse.

However, despite these positive developments, the study concludes that social media's potential as a tool for sustainable community development remains partially realised. Although online engagement promotes awareness and motivation, many participants perceive a gap between digital activism and tangible outcomes. This disconnect suggests that online participation alone is insufficient without corresponding institutional responsiveness and resource support. The evidence that 64.7% of respondents believe online activism rarely leads to real-world change highlights the need for stronger linkages between digital participation and policy implementation. Consequently, the study concludes that the transformative power of social media depends not only on user motivation but also on the systemic capacity of development institutions to integrate youth input from online spaces into concrete development programs. Within the Uses and Gratifications framework, this underscores the necessity for media systems that translate psychological gratifications into social outcomes.

Furthermore, the study concludes that while social media has democratised civic spaces, challenges such as poor internet access, misinformation, and cyberbullying continue to impede inclusive participation. These constraints create uneven opportunities for engagement, privileging urban and literate users while marginalising rural and low-skilled youth. The persistence of misinformation and hostile online behavior undermines trust and discourages open dialogue, thereby reducing the quality of civic engagement. Therefore, while the findings confirm that social media enhances youth empowerment, awareness, and collaboration, the study concludes that Ghana's digital civic ecosystem must be strengthened through infrastructural investment, media literacy, and institutional partnerships to achieve equitable and meaningful youth participation in community development.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that government agencies, telecommunication companies, and development organisations collaborate to improve internet accessibility and affordability across Ghana. Poor internet infrastructure remains a key barrier to youth participation in digital civic engagement, particularly in rural areas. Expanding broadband networks and reducing data costs will enhance inclusivity and allow more young people to engage in online development initiatives. The government's digital inclusion agenda should prioritise community-based internet hubs, especially in educational institutions and rural communities, to bridge connectivity gaps and strengthen civic engagement capacities among youth. Reliable access to the internet is essential for achieving the full developmental potential of social media in Ghana.

Secondly, the study recommends that civil society organisations and educational institutions intensify digital literacy programs focused on social media management, content creation, and online safety. The finding that 58% of respondents lack adequate digital skills demonstrates an urgent need for structured training in media literacy, fact-checking, and advocacy communication. NGOs and local universities could develop workshops or online courses that teach youth how to use social media responsibly and effectively for development communication. By enhancing technical and critical skills, youth can become more capable of identifying misinformation, leading online campaigns, and transforming digital participation into practical community outcomes.

Thirdly, development institutions should integrate social media-based engagement strategies into their community development frameworks. The study revealed that most youth view social media as a motivating and informational tool for community involvement, suggesting its potential as a participatory channel for project communication. Organisations such as district assemblies, NGOs, and international development partners should use platforms like Facebook

and Twitter to disseminate project updates, crowdsource feedback, and recognise youth contributions. Integrating digital participation into traditional governance processes will help bridge the gap between online discourse and offline development outcomes.

Furthermore, the study recommends that policymakers establish regulatory frameworks and digital ethics guidelines to mitigate misinformation and cyberbullying. As over half of the respondents reported exposure to misinformation and fear of online hostility, there is a need for coordinated national strategies that promote safe digital spaces. Media commissions, in partnership with tech companies, should design public awareness campaigns emphasising responsible online behavior, fact verification, and respectful discourse. Encouraging transparency and accountability in digital communication will strengthen trust and sustain meaningful participation in development-related discussions.

Finally, the study recommends that youth-led organisations and social influencers leverage social media's networking power to foster collaborative community initiatives. Since 63.8% of respondents agreed that Facebook and Twitter help them build networks supporting community goals, these platforms should be used strategically for mobilisation and partnership-building. Collaborative online campaigns between youth groups, NGOs, and government agencies can enhance collective visibility and attract resources for local development. Empowering youth to take leadership in such initiatives will ensure long-term sustainability and encourage the transition from online mobilisation to tangible community outcomes.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

This study was limited by its focus on two social media platforms, Twitter and Facebook, which may not capture the full spectrum of youth engagement occurring on emerging platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Consequently, the findings may not comprehensively represent the evolving landscape of digital civic participation among Ghanaian youth.

Additionally, the study relied primarily on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability and recall inaccuracies, potentially influencing how participants described their social media use and participation levels.

Another limitation concerns the geographical scope of the study. Although the data reflect diverse youth perspectives, the majority of respondents were urban-based and relatively well-educated, which may limit the generalisability of findings to rural or less digitally connected populations. Future studies could expand sampling to include underrepresented groups and explore regional variations in digital engagement patterns.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research should adopt mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups to capture deeper insights into how social media shapes youth attitudes, motivations, and behavioral change. While this study provided robust statistical analysis, qualitative perspectives would enrich understanding of the emotional, cultural, and contextual factors influencing digital civic engagement in Ghana.

Secondly, researchers should explore the role of emerging digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp in youth participation and community development. As social media usage trends evolve, these newer platforms may play increasingly important roles in mobilisation, advocacy, and peer learning. Comparative studies across multiple platforms would provide a more comprehensive picture of Ghana's digital civic ecosystem.

Finally, future studies should investigate institutional responsiveness to social media-driven activism in Ghana. Since this research found a perceived gap between online engagement and tangible outcomes, exploring how government bodies, NGOs, and local authorities respond to youth-led digital advocacy could reveal the systemic factors that enable or constrain the translation of online discourse into real development actions. development.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “The Influence of Twitter and Facebook on Youth Participation in Community Development Projects in Ghana.” The purpose of this study is to examine how the use of Twitter and Facebook affects the participation of Ghanaian youth in community development initiatives.

Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Please answer all questions as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

Thank you for your valuable contribution.

#### **Section A: Demographic Data**

##### **Gender**

Male

Female

Other:

##### **Age**

18-22

23-27

28-32

33-37

##### **Educational Level**

SHS

Diploma

Bachelor's

Master's

Other:

##### **Occupation**

Student

Employed

Self-employed

Unemployed

##### **Do you actively use social media?**

Yes

No

##### **Which platform do you use frequently?**

Twitter(X)

Facebook  
Both

**SECTION B: Use of Twitter and Facebook among Ghanaian Youth**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**I use Twitter and Facebook regularly for information sharing.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I use Twitter/Facebook to connect with peers who share similar interests.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I often use social media to learn about community development projects.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I follow organizations or leaders involved in local development initiatives.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I use Twitter/Facebook to express my opinions on social and community issues.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Social media helps me feel connected to community development efforts.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I share or retweet posts related to community or national development.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I use hashtags or groups to participate in online discussions about community issues.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**SECTION C: The Influence of Social Media on Youth Participation in Community Development.**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**Twitter and Facebook make it easier for me to engage in community initiatives.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Social media has increased my awareness of development issues in my community.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I have participated in community projects because of information I saw on social media.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Social media encourages me to volunteer or contribute to community programs.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I use social media to mobilise others for community projects.**

- 1
- 2

- 3
- 4
- 5

**I feel more empowered to participate in development issues through social media.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Facebook and Twitter enhance my collaboration with others on community projects.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I have joined a development initiative promoted through Facebook or Twitter.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**SECTION D: Youth Empowerment and Perceived Impact of Social Media**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**Social media provides a platform for young people to express their views freely.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Through social media, I feel that my voice matters in community development.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Twitter and Facebook have helped me develop leadership or advocacy skills.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Social media enhances youth participation in discussions about social change.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I believe that social media has given young people more influence in decision-making.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Facebook and Twitter help me build networks that support community goals.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Social media motivates me to take action on local development issues.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Online engagement has improved my awareness of social responsibility.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

#### **SECTION E: Challenges in Using Twitter and Facebook for Community Development**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**Poor internet access limits my participation in online community projects.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I lack adequate digital skills to use social media effectively for development.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Misinformation on social media discourages genuine community participation.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I find it difficult to distinguish credible development content from fake news.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Social media engagement rarely leads to tangible development outcomes.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**I fear cyberbullying or negative feedback when expressing development opinions.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5