

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SOGSAR)

COMMUNICATING GOVERNMENT POLICIES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A  
STUDY OF GHANA'S MINISTRY OF FINANCE

BY

EMMANUEL BOAKYE ANSAH

This Dissertation Is Submitted to the Ghana Institute of Journalism, In Partial Fulfillment of The  
Requirements for The Award of Master of Arts Degree in Development Communication

DECEMBER, 2021

## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature.....

Date.....

Name: Emmanuel Boakye Ansah

### **Supervisor's Declaration**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....

Name: Dr. Ebow Afful

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty who has made it possible for me to come this far and of course to family who supported me in diverse ways. Their support has been a source of strength for me in writing this dissertation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This is to show my gratitude to my parents, colleagues and friends who with their support and prayer helped and encouraged us to the successful completion of this course. And a special gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Ebow Afful as his insightful criticisms and thorough feedbacks have shaped the outcome of this project. I humbly say God bless you all.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to examine communicating government policies through social media: a study of Ghana's ministry of Finance. A qualitative research method was used in data collection and interview was the study instrument which was designed to cover the objectives of the study involving fifteen (15) respondents. Findings showed that the ministry communicates their policies through social media by formulating, planning, managing and implementing Ghana's economic policies, communicating strategic government policies to both internal and external stakeholders of the government and other forms of communication also complements social media. Lastly, challenges they faced were as poor internet connections in certain parts of the country, lack of smart phones by majority of stakeholders, lack of understanding and misinterpretation of government policies. It is recommended that be undertaken on a larger-scale in the various ministries will give researchers a wider scope on social media effectiveness and its challenges in communicating government policies and how these challenges can be mitigated.

## Table of Contents

<b>DECLARATION</b>	i
<b>DEDICATION</b>	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iv
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	viii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
Background of Study	1
Problem Statement	3
Significance of the Study	4
Scope of Study	4
Organization of study	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	6
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	6
Introduction	6
Social Media as a Phenomenon	6
Social Media and Public relations	7
Social Media and the Public Sector	8
Social Media Communication Channels	11

Online and Traditional Channels of Communication	13
Theoretical Framework	15
Empirical Review of Related Studies	16
Research Objectives	19
Definition of Terms	19
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction	21
Research Design	21
Data Sources	22
Population of Study	22
Sample and sampling techniques	23
Research Instrument	23
Data Collection Procedure and Analysis	24
Conclusion	24
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction	25
Demographic Data of Respondents	25
Gender of Respondents	25

Department / Responsibility Area of Respondents	26
Working Experience of Respondents	27
Roles in Communication of Government Policies Through Social Media	28
Communication of Government Policies Through Social Media	29
Social Media Communication Complements Other Forms of Communication	31
Challenges of Communicating Government Policies Through Social Media	32
Discussion of Findings	34
Chapter Summary	37
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	38
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION</b>	38
Introduction	38
Summary of Findings	38
Conclusion	39
Recommendation	40
<b>REFERENCES</b>	41
<b>APPENDIX</b>	48
<b>INTERVIEW GUIDE</b>	48

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Gender of Respondents.....	255
Table 2: Department / Responsibility Area of Respondents.....	27
Table 3: Working Experience of Respondents .....	28

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of Study**

Social media has exploded as a category of online discourse where people create content, share it, bookmark it and network at a prodigious rate (Jha and Bhardwaj, 2012). Due to its convenience, speed and reach, social media is fast changing the general public discourse in society and setting trends and agenda in topics that range from the environment and politics to technology and also the industry (Asur and Huberman, 2010). Within the last ten years, the net world has changed dramatically, due to the invention of social media, young men and girls now exchange ideas, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos at a really astonishing rate. Seventy-three percent of wired American teens now use social media websites (Oberst, 2010). Martn, (2008) & Lusk, (2010) share the identical concept of social media. To them social media is that the use of Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, My Space and LinkedIn for the aim of communication, sharing photos also as videos. However, for the aim of this study social media is captured within the utilization of internet through Facebook, Whatsap, Twitter, Skype, MySpace moreover as Yahoo Messenger for communication sharing of ideas, sharing of photos and videos by users. The increased use of Social Networking Websites has become a global phenomenon within the past several years. What started off as a hobby for a few computer literate people has become a social norm and way of life for people from everywhere the planet (Boyd. 2007).

Teenagers and young adults have especially embraced these sites as how to attach with their peers, share information, reinvent their personalities, and showcase their social lives (Boyd, 2007). Previously, public communication was largely conducted by a limited set of actors including policymakers, companies, and other groups like journalists (Chadwick, 2006). The spread and adoption of social media have transformed information diffusion, reduced information asymmetry, and created challenges for policymakers in managing and disseminating public policy. Therefore, social media has the potential, if harnessed effectively, to bridge this gap of delayed communication, and subsequently provide a chance for the creation of interactive public policy communication systems. For example, during the 2016 failed coup d'état attempt in Turkey, social media technology played a critical role in rallying citizens to square up for democracy and firmly fight against the soldiers leading the insurrection (Uras, 2016). A report by Al Jazeera stated, "President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a transportable text message to the general public for them to require to the streets against the coup plotters" (Uras, 2016). Social media has created audiences with demands for information that transcend the normal styles of information dissemination (Chapman et al., 2014). Most governments, in communicating with their constituents, gravitate from "top-down command government to devolved co-productive governance" (Firmstone & Coleman, 2015).

As access to information doesn't guarantee public participation, the current dynamic social media environment offers collaborative styles of communication that policymakers can adopt to foster relationships with citizens (Chapman et al., 2014). These collaborative features of social media are relevant now because the traditional tools of communications are often one-way information dissemination tools and don't foster public participation. Social media technology is increasingly becoming a requisite for social inclusion and economic process at the center of any

inclusive growth strategy (Dalberg, 2013). Social media also has the potential for catalyzing behavior change (Chapman et al., 2014). Therefore, it's imperative for policymakers to require advantage of the chance, which social media provides, to foster dialogue and an interactive relationship between government leadership and also the public (Firmstone & Coleman, 2015).

## **Problem Statement**

Technology is rapidly taking a brand-new turn and also the media technology has had a good impact on the way people communicate on a usual. Indeed, public institutions and government organizations have began to reply to the public's new demand for more noteworthy correspondence by using online networking methods to attach with their constituents (Mergel, 2012). In general, person-to-person communication, which is another unique feature of social media technology, offers a novel opportunity for the government to interface with citizens. Government's policy communication. Over the years, social networking among students has become more and more popular. It's the simplest way to create connections, not only on campus but with friends outside of faculty. Social networking could be a way that helps people feel they belong to a community. Thanks to the increased popularity of it, economists and professors are questioning whether grades of scholars won't be littered with what proportion time is spent on these sites.

Choney, (2010), MehMood & Taswir, (2013), Kist (2008), Jacobsen & Forste, (2011), believe that the utilization of technology like internet is one amongst the foremost important factors that may influence educational performance of scholars positively or adversely. Many parents and guardians are worried that students are spending an excessive amount of time on

Facebook and other social media sites and haven't enough time to check. Though parents are worried about students' constant use of the social media sites, many students still utilize these sites on a day to day. Several studies are conducted on the communication through social media in academic institutions but there's little study in Ghana that has checked out communicating government policies through social media. This study therefore seeks to fill this dearth by using the Ghana Ministry of Finance.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be of relevance to the policymakers to help them know and examine the extent to which how government communicate their policies through social media, to examine how social media communication complements other forms of communication and too ascertain how they can harness the interactive nature of social media, There is limited research in the use of social media in government policy dissemination and policy feedback. Hence, this study will fill this gap in literature with Ghana's Ministry of Finance as the case study.

### **Scope of Study**

The study examined the communication of government policies through social media. A study of Ghana's Ministry of Finance. The study was done by collecting primary data from staff at the ministry of finance in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana.

## **Organization of study**

The study is organized into five major chapters outlined as follows: Chapter one provides a study background, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study and the scope of the study, provides organization of the study.

Chapter two deals with the literature review. It comprises the review of related works that have been done in the subject area of communicating of policies through social media.

Chapter three provides details on how data was collected for this research work. This chapter discusses the research design, sample and sampling techniques, how the questionnaires are designed and administered. It also provides detailed information regarding how the data was analyzed. Chapter four focused on the presentation and analysis of results.

Chapter five is the final chapter which summaries the whole study carried out by the researcher. Here, the researcher gives the necessary conclusions based on the various findings and makes the necessary recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the relevant literature in the area of communication through social media. It discusses social media as a phenomenon, social media communication in public relations and the public sector. It also discusses social media communication channels, online and traditional channels of communication, the theoretical framework and empirical review of related studies.

#### **Social Media as a Phenomenon**

Social media is defined as a communication platform that allows for exchanges between the audience and the author (Yi, Oh, & Kim, 2013). However, individual users could double as audience members and, at different times, as writers (Bertot, Jaeger, & Hansen 2012; Yi et al., 2013). It is a virtual socialization system that allows the connection of two or more people for different reasons (Lee & Kwak, 2012). In general, terms, social media can be viewed as a set of online tools designed and engineered for social conversation attenuated by the characteristics of social media, particularly the increased bidirectional communication capability (Yi et al., 2013). Moreover, social media has not only made communication easier between individuals but has also further increased intimacy in conversations. In broad terms, social media has been categorized into two main types defined primarily by purpose (Lee & Kwak, 2012): expressive social media and collaborative social media. Expressive social media provides a conduit for expressing one's self via texting, video, picture, and music. Prominent outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Flickr fall into this expressive social media category (Lee & Kwak, 2012). In

contrast, collaborative social media provides an outlet for individuals to organize themselves into groups to pursue common tasks through interaction and social processes; specific examples include Wikipedia, Google Docs, and Dropbox (Lee & Kwak, 2012; Mainka et al., 2014). The ability to share media and ease of networking are the results of social media proliferation (Mainka et al., 2014).

The growth and importance of social media are not limited to only the social aspects of humanity, but also profoundly affected economics, sciences, and other critical life disciplines. For instance, social media has become pivotal in the promotion of consumer awareness and their decision-making process as well as provide an outlet for communication between the public and businesses. Various scholars have attempted (Bertot et al., 2012; Lee & Kwak, 2012; Mainka et al., 2014). The barriers that existed in communication from traditional media to the public have attempted to capture the multifaceted definition of social media. According to Berger (2008, as cited in Baruah, 2012), social media is the new electronic and web-based communication media including such forms as blogs, podcasts, Wikis, chat rooms, discussion forums, websites, social networks, and other dialogue creating media. Specifically, Berger (2008) was of the view that social media is considered electronic as it employs the use of computers and other mobile devices; further, social media is defined as web-based because it requires the Internet to be fully utilized. The Internet can be considered the greatest promoter of social media (Dunu & Uzoichukwu, 2015).

### **Social Media and Public relations**

In a research conducted by Curtis et al. (2010) on the “adoption of social media for public relations by non-profit organizations,” social media tools have become beneficial methods of

communication for public relations officers. They noted that social media was being adopted by organizations with well-established public relations departments for achieving organizational objectives (Curtis et al., 2010). Public relation officers have resorted to the use of social media tools because they find them dependable enough to transmit information rapidly. Public relations practitioners have taken into consideration the effectiveness of social media in performing their tasks, its usage will increase more and more in reaching their target audience and in further developing communication strategies (Curtis et al., 2010). Verhoeven et al. (2012) also undertook a study to examine how European public relations practitioners handle digital and social media. They found out that social media was becoming relevant in European organizations. However, Verhoeven et al. (2012) realized that print media was still the most important channel of communication for European public relations professionals. Further, Verhoeven et al. (2012) predicted that online communication generally was likely to take over from the print media, the leader of public communication in the next few years.

### **Social Media and the Public Sector**

Communication within the public sector, aided by social media technologies, has the potential to increase government participation, collaboration, and transparency in sharing content with its citizens (Song & Lee, 2016). In addition, the use of social media technologies by many government agencies is not common; hence, the impact measured by a few digital interactions (Song & Lee, 2016). These modern ways of digital relations between government and its stakeholders have the potential to broaden democratic reach by accessing Internet users who previously were unable or not inclined to participate in policymaking activities (Bertot, Jaeger &

Grimes, 2010 as cited in Criado, Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2013). Social media technologies also serve as platforms for governments to disseminate vital information to its citizens and workers for appropriate policy practices to be adapted and reviewed (Song & Lee, 2016). Quite a number of public sector agencies are reluctant in measuring their interactions online or are inhibited by their interpretation of laws and regulations in existence (Mergel, 2013). For governmental processes to be more effective and efficient, the government must invest social and human capital into social media usage in order to acquire innovative knowledge from its stakeholders (Mergel, 2013). Notwithstanding, merely opening more routes to provide widespread information to inform the public, without providing a parallel mechanism for reacting to the public's feedback and attitude, could create loopholes in communication that might harm the government's image (Criado et al.,2013). Social media technologies have had numerous impacts, both positively and negatively, on the public sector. A vital step in using the appropriate measures include a wider understanding of the behavior and social feature challenges coupled with social media data interpretations by public managers and media experts in government (Happer & Philo, 2013).

In recent years, many public sectors started to use social media platforms to promote online information and keep in touch with their audiences. The definition of 42 social media also extends to the public sector as a collection of technologies that gives way to public agencies to foster agreement with citizens and other organizations using the philosophy of Web 2.0 (Criado et al., 2013). One way social media technologies have benefitted the public sector is the massive collection of data resources made known from interactive activities with the public, businesses, and many other government-related activities with ease due to media technologies (Criado et al., 2013).In conclusion, Chun and Luna (2012 cited in Criado et al., 2013) suggested that these

technologies enabled the government have the ability to achieve productivity through search capabilities for employees to effectively identify knowledge and resources; this allows customers and employees to share relevant information. Governments have been gradually moving towards social media due to its powerful attributes. Governments are increasingly using tools like blogs, wikis, and social networking to increase communication between the public and government at various levels, to solve problems and to exchange ideas on pressing national issues of mutual interest (Mainka et al. 2014). They enhance communication within organizations and help government agencies to remain informed with events in the fast-changing world (Mainka et al. 2014).

Social network platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn are the most common services used by government agencies (Mainka et al. 2014). In theory, social media's evolution is deemed to be the perfect tool for increased transparency and accountability in public officers' discharge of responsibilities and duties and serves as a tool for encouraging citizens' participation in the sphere of public 43 policymaking (Eom, Hwang, and Kim 2018; Mainka et al., 2014). The facilitation of information flow reduces moral hazards and adverse selection in the public space and potentially reduces illegal solicitation by public officers (Eom et al., 2018; Mainka et al. 2014). Social media is accredited to have had an impact on transparency and accountability, but these are country specific (Eom et al., 2018); countries with adequate infrastructure and educated public servants turn to use more social media outlets in dissemination and sharing of information compared to countries without these resources. The criticism of this dogma is that it is defective when examined from the beneficial effects concept perspective (Eom et al., 2018). In addition, many of the discussions on this dogma seem unsupported by a lack of evidence on the impact of social media expansion on beneficial effects in the public sector (Eom

et al., 2018). On the other hand, social media is argued to have the ability to enhance public service output delivery (Bertot, Jaeger, and Hansen, 2012). The proponents of the idea postulate that social media presents an immense array of possibilities for the government to engage the public in government works thereby increasing openness in the conduct of government business (Lee & Kwak, 2012). At the same time, it enables for extension of governmental services, acts as incubators for the breeding of new ideas, assists with decision making as well as problem-solving (Bertot et al., 2012). They are particularly helpful in situations where governments are committed to increase openness in government business and eventually deepen transparency, participatory policymaking, and collaboration for social value co-creation and service delivery (Lee & Kwak, 2012).

### **Social Media Communication Channels**

According to Junco et al., 2010, social media are a collection of internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing". The growing dimension of the use of social media among the youth of today cannot be over emphasized (Owusu-Acheaw and Larson, 2015). In the past years, social media websites have become common; giving young people a new way to interact with each other and communicate with the world. Social networking became popular between 2004 and 2006, after Facebook and MySpace were created. Facebook, for example has over 500 million members and it is still growing and approximately 85% of undergraduate students are Facebook users (Schneider, 2009). These numbers are expected to grow since Facebook users will continue to grow. And this is not only true for Facebook, numbers for YouTube users closely follow as well (University of New Hampshire, 2009). Social networking websites provide tools by which people can communicate,

share information, and create new relationships. With the popularity of social networking websites on the rise, our social interaction is affected in multiple ways as we adapt to our increasingly technological world. The way web users interact and talk to each other has changed and continues to change. These users now socialize through the internet and it takes away from the person socialization that has been around forever. Social networking websites have affected our social interaction by changing the way we interact face-to-face, how we receive information, and the dynamics of our social groups and friendships (Asur and Huberman, 2010). Communicating through the internet and social networking websites is quite different from communicating in person- to- person situation. When users communicate through these websites, they use things like instant message (IM) and chatting as well as status or Twitter updates to talk to friends and express themselves (Kaitlin, 2010). Kaitlin (2010) further opines that social networking websites also affect the way we receive information and news. The sites open up different portals through which we get information and create more diverse news outlets.

Research shows that the use of social media in organizations and institutions, both in the public and private sectors, has gained momentum (Bria, 2013; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014; Woods, 2016). This phenomenon has been propelled by global technological advancement augmented by increasing Internet access. Social media offers opportunities for local governments to address the challenges of increasing organizational transparency and improving citizen engagement. Yang and Holzer (2005) pointed out the erosion in public trust of government agencies in relation to citizens' perceptions of these agencies as inefficient at best and corrupt at worst. Moreover, Yang and Holzer argued that by demonstrating performance effectiveness, government agencies could restore the public's sense of trust. However, Mossberger et al. (2013) asserted that the successful adoption of social media by local government organizations in the

United States and for that matter, Ghana, requires understanding and awareness of how to use social media tools; particularly, governments need to understand and implement strategies to achieve improved transparency that leads to increased and productive citizen engagement. Many studies have documented successful social media initiatives by government, but few researchers have focused on the investigation and documentation of best practices or identification of risks and challenges involved along with potential solutions.

### **Online and Traditional Channels of Communication**

Communication may be defined as a way of expressing one's opinion through speech or actions. With two channels of communication namely; online channels and the traditional channels. The online channels of communication include social media such as websites and e-mails, chats, and online discussion forums. Traditional channels of communication include print media, broadcast media, face-to-face, town hall meetings, and billboards. Inasmuch as many people may prefer online communication channels to the traditional type, each channel has its advantages and disadvantages. The online communication channel is widely used in an organization because of the channel's efficiency in the management of task-oriented events or meetings (Fensel et al., 2012). With this channel, immediate feedback is granted to support effective output. Knowing what communication channel to use is necessary in order to reach out to the appropriate audience at the right time with the right information (Fensel et al., 2012). A social media communication channel is a means of exchanging information in the online space (Fensel et al., 2012). For instance, Facebook provides around forty different methods of spreading information (Fensel et al., 2012). One major benefit of using the online communication channel is

that it has the ability to broadcast static information (Fensel et al., 2012). That is, information reflecting the structure of the contents provided through the aid of websites and because of this provides users a better way to access this content (Fensel et al., 2012).

Another basic benefit is the ability for its content to be constantly changed and flexibility. Malicious activities, such as modifying a large number of people's opinions through social media platforms, and the use of crowd-sourcing platforms are becoming very popular (Wang et al., 2011 as cited in Fensel et al., 2012). One demerit of online communication channels is the fact that it can make the users' feel isolated, especially for people who love to work in groups. This is because most of the focus is shifted from them to the Internet thus creating isolation. Online communication channels facilitate communication at a faster rate for managers thereby saving them time and money, as well as a reduction in the overload of information for its consumers (Fensel et al., 2012). Overtime, communicators use less traditional channels of communication because of the increase in the positive use of online channels. Traditional channels are the mode of communication through word of mouth or face-to-face interactions (Obiora, 2011). Some benefits of this model are that it can be used for effective grassroots mobilization and serves as communication tools for grassroots development (Obiora, 2011). It is also beneficial when one wants to observe the reaction of audiences. However, it does not effectively support two-way symmetry of communication; feedback is most often delayed (Obiora, 2011). It is also expensive to run a full communication activity. Therefore, it is necessary to have a blend of both forms of communication channels in delivering policy and public services. In summary, the traditional communication channel is very effective for grassroots development and mobilization which as compared to the online channel of communication.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Jones and McBeth (2010) put forward seven hypotheses and found support for four of them by research. The first supported hypothesis theorized that there is very little reason for individuals to modify their attitudes and behaviors when the world is functioning as expected (Jones & McBeth, 2010). However, when policy narratives interfere with an individual's state of normalcy, the individual's expectations are challenged. Narrative theory refers to canonicity as the state where things are as expected; in contrast, a breach is the difference between narrative and expectations (Jones & McBeth, 2010). Indeed, Jones and McBeth stated that when the reach of the narrative is extended, its ability to convince the individual is strong. In the second supported hypothesis, Jones and McBeth (2010) posited that when a reader is immersed in the narrative, the reader is affected by the narration. Referred to as the process of transportation, the narrative measures the impact on the reader by the outcome of being persuaded via the narrative (Jones & McBeth, 2010). Narrative transportation considers the level to which a reader becomes involved in the narrative being read. Therefore, the more an individual is transported into a narrative, the more that individual is likely to be persuaded by that narrative. The third supported hypothesis is the suggestion that it is easy for individuals to process new information presented in narratives when the narratives are aligned with what is perceived as the normal sequence of life for the individual processing the information (Jones & McBeth, 2010). This goes to mean that people do not always act on decisions or process information based on only objective scientific evidence, but are influenced by their personal beliefs and emotional understandings of the world (Jones & Crow, 2017). In such instances, the narrative is aligned with the individual's belief system and, therefore, easily convinces or persuades the individual. Therefore, provided there is sustained consistency, the individual is likely to be won over by the narrative (Jones & McBeth, 2010). The last supported

hypothesis is that the trustworthiness, accuracy, objectivity, expert status, and ideology of a narrative influence a recipient's willingness to accept a message (Jones & McBeth, 2010). "A source's trustworthiness, accuracy and objectivity, expert status, likability and ideology influence a recipient's willingness to accept a message" (Jones & McBeth, 2010, p.344). In other words, the individual is more likely to be persuaded by narratives as the level of trust increases. The importance of source effects is well noted as an important factor in message persuasion.

### **Empirical Review of Related Studies**

Drs. Kwasi Opoku-Amankwa and Callistus Mahama conducted a study to approach the subject of local governance and decentralization in Ghana from the perspective of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)' communication of Government policies to the communities within their jurisdictions, an approach to the subject of the study of policy effectiveness. The authors concede that the country has made some a lot of achievements in decentralization implementation, but that communication of, and participation in, those achievements remain major challenges. Using the survey method and 40 District Coordinating Directors (DCDs) from the southern zone of Ghana were the main questionnaire respondents, they confirm that communication of Government policy by the MMDAs is generally effective because it gets to its target audience timeously, is reliable and it puts its recipients on track. Their findings however were limited by restrictions imposed by the parameters of the study itself: its numerical inadequacy (18.5% out of 216 MMDAs); its geographical limitation (MMDAs in 5 regions out of 10 and in the southern zone only); the use of only one methodology (the survey method); and its restriction to only one category of bureaucrats and technocrats (DCDs). The study also makes

some interesting findings about the 40 respondent DCDs who formed the study group. Their relative old age (over 50% of the 40 DCDs were over 50 years of age) argues for a recruitment and succession plan for DCDs; and the paucity of females (only 2 out of the 40 DCD respondents or 5%) argues for an aggressive female recruitment policy to address the issue of gender disparity.

Also, Bernard and Dzanda (2018) conducted a study on the effect of social media of academic performance on student in Ghanaian University using the University of Ghana as their case study. They used a sample size of two hundred (200) students and they were randomly selected from the total population of thirty-eight thousand (38,000) in eight (8) randomly selected halls of residence out the sixteen (16) halls of University of Ghana; using cluster sampling method of probability sampling. The findings revealed that students of university of Ghana are well exposed to social media networks; all 197 respondents use one social media platform or the other. All the respondents are on Facebook and WhatsApp. Other major social media platforms used by the students are twitter, Instagram. This corroborates the findings of Wiley and Sisson (2006), that previous studies have found that more than 90% percent of tertiary school students use social networks.

Zeitel-Bank and Tat, 2014 also conducted a study on the possible effects of social media on both, individuals and the society as a whole. They first illustrated the current situation of social media in terms of facts and figures before they deepened selected aspects of new forms of virtual interaction. With a specific focus on recent neuroscience research findings the following main research question that were to be answered: How does the brain deal with these new forms of information technologies and what the possible consequences for our social behaviour? There is a broad range of diverse interpretations related to the usefulness of social media as a powerful source of communication and learning. Through examining several advantages and disadvantages they

highlighted the circumstances for responsible handling of social media and they concluded that social Media is widely used and boon and bane at the same time. It facilitates global communication in seconds, connects deserted areas with the civilization, plays an important role in e-commerce and above all in the participation and democratization process. But the list of disadvantages and threats is also long. Does it not signify the abandoning of search machines, which are processing in an unpredictable algorithm logistic, a threat to scholarly knowledge? Do researchers jeopardize losing their gatekeeper function of deciding what is important and which results are relevant? Does global communication suggest one world or one system, in its purest form would it be “one world culture, one world economy, one political power and one language”? (Warlaumont, 2010, p. 205). Again, they indicated “These The long-term effects of the social media revolution are not known yet neither on the society as a whole nor on the individuals. Therefore, a thorough reflection is indispensable. Since the effect of social media is subtle and develops over time Wilcox (2012) suggests “Ultimately, the way you counteract this is by raising your self-awareness. It's not about don't spend time on Facebook, but just be aware of what it might be doing to you." days, one witty tweet, one clever blog post, one devastating video – forwarded to hundreds of friends at the click of a mouse- can snowball and kill a product or damage a company’s share price” (Weber, 2010).

However, findings from other studies indicates that there is little to no research conducted on the communication of government policy through social media the purpose of this study is therefore to bridge this gap in literature and the Ghana Ministry of Finance was used as our case study.

## **Research Objectives**

The main objectives of the study is to:

- i. To examine how Ministry of Finance communicates government policies through social media.
- ii. To examine how social media communication complements other forms of communication.
- iii. To determine the challenges of communicating government policies through social media.

## **Definition of Terms**

**Policy:** Policy defines a statement by the government of intention to implement law regulations, rulings, decisions, orders, or a combination of these directives (Birkland, 2014).

**Social media:** Social media captures the range of communication technologies used for sharing information and opinions between or among individuals, groups, and organizations (Christensson, 2013)

**Government:** Government describes the formal institutions and processes through which binding decisions are made for society (Raadschelders, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter outlines the relevant literature in the area of communication through social media. It discusses social media as a phenomenon, social media communication in public relations and the public sector. It also discusses social media communication channels, online and traditional channels of communication, the theoretical framework and empirical review of related studies. The next chapter outlines the methods used in the study and provides detailed information on data gathering and data analysis. The chapter again outlines the research design, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methods used in the study and provides detailed information on data gathering and data analysis. The chapter again outlines the research design, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure.

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative method design was used. Qualitative research is defined as an approach to empirical inquiry that collects, analyses, and displays data in narrative rather than in numbers (Cresswell, 2009). Information gathered qualitatively is restricted to the setting in which it was obtained and cannot be generalized. Carson et al. (2001) argue that the qualitative research method allows flexibility and variation in a study of a complex phenomenon in a dynamic environment. Since the qualitative research allows a large amount of flexibility and variety, the qualitative research also enables researchers some amount of freedom when analyzing the results from the study. Also, Elo and Kyngäs (2008) emphasized that qualitative studies do not generate data that can be used in statistical procedures that enable generalizations of a population. The qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it enabled the researcher to collect subjective data with respondent expressing the views. According to Schreier (2014), the wealth of detail provided by qualitative interviews serve as a significant advantage.

## **Data Sources**

The data sources for the study included both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from employees at the Ministry of Finance. Primary data were sought because of the need for current data to address the research objectives. Secondary data were obtained from the websites, journals and textbooks.

## **Population of Study**

A population is the pool of individuals from which a statistical sample is drawn for a study (Momoh, 2021). The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning is the government ministry responsible for the economic and monetary health of Ghana. The ministry is involved with economic planning, fiscal policy, national accounting, the national budget, and creating an environment for investment and growth. It was formed in the year 1957. The Securities and Exchange Commission, institute of accountancy training, internal revenue service (IRS), value added Tax Service (VATs) and Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) are the government agencies of the ministry. Also, the ministry has nine (9) divisions namely; Budget Division, Economic Strategy and Research Division, Revenue Policy Division, External Resource Mobilization Division, Human Capital and General Administration Division, Policy Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation and Financial Sector Division. The total number of staff which is the size of the population is 630.

## **Sample and sampling techniques**

According to Lunet (2012), sample size depends on the subjects under study, the kind of data to be collected, the quality of the analysis to be carried out and the availability of funds for the study. Convenience sampling approach was used to select the respondents due to the fact that it is fast and inexpensive. This involves using respondents who are convenient to the researcher (Galloway, 2005). It can also be defined as method the researcher adopts to collect data from a conveniently available pool of respondents and it is the most commonly used sampling technique as its prompt, uncomplicated and very economical.

The convenience sampling procedures were used to select staff at the Ministry of Finance. A total number of 15 employees were selected. These comprised 5 respondents from the Budget Division, 2 respondents from the Economic Strategy and Research Division, 3 respondents from the Revenue Policy Division, 1 from the External Resource Mobilization Division, 1 respondent from the Human Capital and General Administration Division and 3 respondents from Policy Coordination Division.

## **Research Instrument**

### **Interviews**

Interviews was the study instrument and as designed to cover the objectives of the study. It involved asking open-ended questions to converse with respondents and collect data about the study. The interview questions were well-structured to get different types of answers to the same questions from various respondents.

## **Data Collection Procedure and Analysis**

The qualitative data was collected from respondents through the use of structured interviews and was analyzed using thematic analysis. Consent were sought from respondents before the researcher conducted the interview and also explained to respondents the purpose for which the interviews were conducted. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and organized into sections. This was followed by familiarization where the researcher repeatedly listened to the recorded tapes after familiarization with the data collected, the researcher did some preliminary coding which serves to start the process of categorizing and analyzing the data. At this stage, the data had been broken down into sections. The researcher then began to identify themes or new concepts and was engaged in re-coding to develop more well-defined categories based on the objectives of the study.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the methods used in the study and provides detailed information on data gathering and data analysis. The chapter again outlined the research design, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. The next chapter evaluates the results and analysis of the qualitative data and the findings are also discussed and interpreted.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the results acquired from the analysis of data collected from primary sources. The analysis was conducted according to the research objectives.

#### Demographic Data of Respondents

##### Gender of Respondents

As indicated in Table 1, majority of respondents were male with a frequency of 9 representing 60% while 6 were females representing 40% of the population. This indicates a balanced distribution in data collection among both genders.

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	9	60
Female	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2021**

## **Department / Responsibility Area of Respondents**

As indicated in Table 2, majority of respondents were in the public relations department representing 40% of the population, 26.7% were in the IT department and 33.3% of respondents in the human capital department. Respondents in the public relations department stated their role in the ministry of finance as,

“The public relations unit of the ministry of finance is the unit responsible for communicating strategic government policies to both internal and external stakeholders of the government.” (Respondent 1)

Also, respondents in the IT department explained their role at the IT department as,

“I am with the IT department and as an IT personnel one of the key things that we seek to do is to protect government data with respect to information, how it is accessed the restrictions level, what data you can see and not see depending on your grade and all this is done with respect to the OECAS Civil Service and Public Service guide and it is done within the scope of government regulations.” (Respondent 7)

Lastly, respondents in the human capital and general administration department explained their responsibility area as,

“I am a Schedule officer for the implementation for the right to information law.” (Respondent 12)

**Table 2: Department / Responsibility Area of Respondents**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Human Capital	5	33.3
IT	4	26.7
Public Relations	6	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2021**

### **Working Experience of Respondents**

As shown in Table 3, majority of respondents at the Ministry of Finance has worked there between 1 – 5 years and they represent 40% of the population, 26.7% had a working experience of 6 – 10 years and 11 – 15 years while 6.6% had worked for 16 and above years.

**Table 3: Working Experience of Respondents**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1 – 5	6	40
6 – 10	4	26.7
11 – 15	4	26.7
16 and above	1	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2021**

### **Roles in Communication of Government Policies Through Social Media**

The first level of data analysis sought to determine how the Ministry of Finance communicates government policies through social media. The following section outlines what the various responses and data reveal about the use of social media in the government’s policy communication. Respondents first explained the role of ministry of finance in communicating government policies. They disclosed that the Ministry of finance is a government institution that formulates, plans, manages and implements Ghana’s economic policies.

Specifically, Respondent 1 shared the view that

ministry of finance is the unit responsible for communicating strategic government policies to both internal and external stakeholders of the government

Respondent 3 further explained that,

The ministry of finance role in communicating government policy is diverse in summary it liaises to the other ministries, agencies and departments to inform them about governments economical developmental agenda.

### **Communication of Government Policies Through Social Media**

Various ways by which the ministry of finance communicate their policies through social media were cited by respondents to reflect the importance of social media in the overall communication of government policy. Information through social media was easily available at any time as long as there was access to the internet and a smart phone. According to Respondent 4, he stated that the ministry has officers who are in charge of the social media channels and the public relations unit is in charge of communicating government policies. It was further stated by Respondent 4 that, excerpts of the policies are posted on social media channels in the form of flyers, info graphs, word documents, videos and so on.

Similarly, respondent 7 also stated that,

The ministry of finance communicates its policies through the use of its infographics on its websites as well as through its social media handles on the various social media platforms.

“We deploy a lot of infographics system so the information will be quite precise and straight forward. Social media is a platform where people are not ready to read so many texts so the idea and the concept is to share information that is very precise, it has a lot of visuals that is well explained by itself. Thus, it is a combination of visuals and texts put in a simple format so that the lay person can get a forehand information.” (Respondent 9).

Respondents also stated the ministry has various social channels they use in communication they policies some of which are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp.

Respondent 7 stated that,

Facebook and twitter are most effective because they appeal to different audience, Facebook has its own audience, twitter has its audience and so these channels bring different feedback and varying opinions from the audiences they appeal to.

Also, Respondent 8 gave an elaborate explanation that,

We have our website, social media handle we also have our internal structures that we use in communicating to our staff so we have things like share point, stream, we have Yama, these are all internally built systems that helps, we even have things like skype for business these are things we effectively use to communicate policies internally and with external audience we use our website, Facebook, twitter we are even looking to go beyond other social media account, there is an option to look at Instagram but sometimes you have to be very careful because when you talk about government policies we need to be very careful where we place the information. There is an impact to weigh where you can put the information, the audience that

you are targeting, so you need to be quite careful, sometimes Yama and twitter are more of a corporate social media platform while the audience target is far different from Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. I cannot say that we have an official WhatsApp platform to communicate to people outside the ministry. Internally, other different divisions within our internal scope use WhatsApp as a mode of sending out information but keyly we have a smart workspace that we use so this give them access to our email system that we use to communicate to all staff and that share point is also one of the things that we use, we also use the Skare for business when we want to use video blogs when we want to make it more visual and audio put together to get the attention that we need.

### **Social Media Communication Complements Other Forms of Communication**

In exploring the respondent's responses concerning social media communication complementing other forms of communication, all participants agreed that there was a need to blend other forms of communication and social media channels. They indicated other forms of communications to be the use of newspapers, radio, television and website as well as face to face engagement of stakeholders.

“Social media is a way of helping people gets quick information. Social media is complementing what we cannot do on a wider scope and it helps a lot in propagating government agenda.” (Respondent 3)

“Due to the diversity of audiences or target group, it is important for government communicators to use both social media tools and traditional channels in a

complementary way and this has helped in reaching the right target with the right information.” (Respondent 5)

Respondent 6 further explained that, even if one medium failed to capture some of the intended population, the other medium would definitely reach the missed population. As such, it is necessary to integrate both traditional and social media in communicating government policy. And so if we rely on just one medium, the chances of missing out on a particular stakeholder is higher so we usually will post whatever message intended for our stakeholder on all these platforms just so that if one happens to miss out on the other, you are rest assured that the person could fall on the other for very information you intend to share with such.

### **Challenges of Communicating Government Policies Through Social Media**

In trying to understand the challenges the Ministry of Finance encounters in an efforts to communicate government policies through social media, the responses from respondents revealed that the major challenges the ministry of finance encounters are poor internet connections in certain parts of the country, lack of smart phones by majority of stakeholders, lack of understanding and misinterpretation of government policies. Respondents explained that,

“Some of the challenges are poor network in certain areas of the country as well as lack of sophisticated phones such as smart phones to be able to access WhatsApp and Facebook and lack of understanding of the economy or economic jargons and others in general.” (Respondent 2)

“Once the ministry has varying audience sometimes comprehension of the information posted on the social media channels is challenging because Ministry of Finance is technical and is finance biased and economic bias so if you don’t know their jargons and all that you find it a little difficult to comprehend what they post there so I will say that not everybody who comes to the website or visits the social media channel understands what is posted there is one of the challenges we encounter when we come to social media in communicating government policies. And because they misunderstand sometimes the feedbacks and comments posted there does not even relate and this tells us that they don’t understand or have little understanding of the things we do” (Respondent 5)

Respondent 6 further stated that,

“Because of how social media and these applications have been designed it has to be very straight forward and you can’t load too much information so you have to be very precise. One of the key challenges is that people just read the surface of the information sent out and don’t go beyond the infographics and some of the short videos we share and it becomes a challenge and with social media too you don’t have that luxury to do an elaborate video and post it for people to listen. On the other hand, you probably have to do a live feed and its biggest challenge doing so on social media is geographically in terms of infrastructure and internet they vary a lot people might have good internet connectivity and others might not.”

“Lack of smart phones and proper networking are some of the challenge’s being faced now.” (Respondent 10)

## **Discussion of Findings**

Research Objective 1: To examine how Ministry of Finance communicates government policies through social media.

Social media has been defined as a communication platform that allows for exchanges between the audience and the author by Yi, Oh, & Kim, (2013). In a research conducted by Curtis et al. (2010) on the “adoption of social media for public relations by non-profit organizations,” social media tools have become beneficial methods of communication for public relations officers. They noted that social media was being adopted by organizations with well-established public relations departments for achieving organizational objectives (Curtis et al., 2010). Public relation officers have resorted to the use of social media tools because they find them dependable enough to transmit information rapidly. Communication within the public sector, aided by social media technologies, has the potential to increase government participation, collaboration, and transparency in sharing content with its citizens (Song & Lee, 2016). In addition, the use of social media technologies by many government agencies is not common; hence, the impact measured by a few digital interactions (Song & Lee, 2016). These modern ways of digital relations between government and its stakeholders have the potential to broaden democratic reach by accessing Internet users who previously were unable or not inclined to participate in policymaking activities (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010 as cited in Criado, Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2013). Social media technologies also serve as platforms for governments to disseminate vital information to its

citizens and workers for appropriate policy practices to be adapted and reviewed (Song & Lee, 2016).

Findings from this study also affirms that the ministry of finance also uses social media in communicating government policies and the public relations unit is the division responsible for communication of the policies. They also indicated that the Ministry of finance formulates, plans, manages and implements Ghana's economic policies, communicating strategic government policies to both internal and external stakeholders of the government.

Research Objective 2: To examine how social media communication complements other forms of communication.

According to Berger (2008, as cited in Baruah, 2012), social media is the new electronic and web-based communication media including such forms as blogs, podcasts, Wikis, chat rooms, discussion forums, websites, social networks, and other dialogue creating media. Specifically, Berger (2008) was of the view that social media is considered electronic as it employs the use of computers and other mobile devices; further, social media is defined as web-based because it requires the Internet to be fully utilized. The Internet can be considered the greatest promoter of social media (Dunu & Uzochukwu, 2015). Verhoeven et al. (2012) also undertook a study to examine how European public relations practitioners handle digital and social media. They found out that social media was becoming relevant in European organizations. However, Verhoeven et al. (2012) realized that print media was still the most important channel of communication for European public relations professionals. Further, Verhoeven et al. (2012) predicted that online communication generally was likely to take over from the print media, the leader of public

communication in the next few years. Online communication channels facilitate communication at a faster rate for managers thereby saving them time and money, as well as a reduction in the overload of information for its consumers (Fensel et al., 2012). Overtime, communicators use less traditional channels of communication because of the increase in the positive use of online channels. Traditional channels are the mode of communication through word of mouth or face-to-face interactions (Obiora, 2011).

Findings from the study also shows how social media communication complements other forms of communication. Respondents indicated some of the social media channels they use in communicating government policies as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp and participants agreed that there was a need to blend other forms of communication such as the use of newspapers, radio, television and website as well as face to face engagement of stakeholders with the social media channels. They further explained how they complement each other as due to the diversity of audiences or target group, blending both social media tools and traditional channels in a complementary way will help in reaching the right target with the right information.

Research Objective 3: To determine the challenges of communicating government policies through social media.

A study conducted by Mahama, (2020) indicated some barriers that exist in policy communication and the study revealed that there were certain barriers which impeded the free flow of information between the government and the public such as the same kind of information could be accessed on private websites and not on the government agency's website and this kind of bureaucracy affected the authenticity of policy information since there was no timely information from a credible source. Also, findings from this study proved that although social media is an effective way of communicating government policy and reaching out to a larger audience, it comes

with its own challenges. Some challenges respondents indicated they face in communicating government policies were poor internet connections in certain parts of the country, lack of smart phones by majority of stakeholders, lack of understanding and misinterpretation of government policies.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the results acquired from the analysis of data collected from primary sources. The analysis was conducted according to the research objectives. The next chapter summarizes the research findings, further provides a conclusion for the study and offers recommendations based on the objectives of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the research findings, further provides a conclusion for the study and offers recommendations based on the objectives of the study.

#### **Summary of Findings**

The objectives of the study were to examine how Ministry of Finance communicates government policies through social media, examine how social media communication complements other forms of communication and determine the challenges of communicating government policies through social media. Findings from the study indicated that the Ministry of Finance uses social media in communicating government policies and the public relations unit is the division responsible for communication of the policies. They also indicated that the Ministry of finance formulates, plans, manages and implements Ghana's economic policies, communicating strategic government policies to both internal and external stakeholders of the government.

Secondly, respondents stated that social media communication complements other forms of communication and indicated some of the social media channels they use in communicating government policies as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp and participants agreed that there was a need to blend other forms of communication such as the use of newspapers, radio, television and website as well as face to face engagement of stakeholders with the social media channels. They further explained how they complement each other as due to the diversity of

audiences or target group, blending both social media tools and traditional channels in a complementary way will help in reaching the right target with the right information.

Lastly, although social media is an effective way of communicating government policy and reaching out to a larger audience, it comes with its own challenges. Some challenges respondents indicated they face in communicating government policies were poor internet connections in certain parts of the country, lack of smart phones by majority of stakeholders, lack of understanding and misinterpretation of government policies.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to investigate how the Ministry of Finance communicates government policies through social media, examine how social media communication complements other forms of communication and determine the challenges of communicating government policies through social media. The ministry communicates their policies through social media by formulating, planning, managing and implementing Ghana's economic policies, communicating strategic government policies to both internal and external stakeholders of the government. With the positive effects of social media, attention has been on expanding the frontiers to areas such as the direct benefit of social media to citizens and this medium is able to effectively and efficiently complement other forms of communications by reaching other stakeholders who do not have access to social media. However, there have downsides and challenges in communicating government policies through social media such as poor internet connections in certain parts of the country, lack of smart phones by majority of stakeholders, lack of understanding and misinterpretation of government policies.

## **Recommendation**

The major recommendation of the study is for a study to be undertaken on a larger-scale. This is particularly important, since there are other ministries in Ghana and further studies conducted in the various ministries will give researchers a wider scope on social media effectiveness and its challenges in communicating government policies and how these challenges can be mitigated.

## REFERENCES

- Asur, S. & Huberman, B. A., 2010. Predicting the Future with social media. WI-IAT'10 Proceedings of the 2010 IEEE/WIC/ACM *International Conference on Web Intelligence and Intelligent Agent Technology*. 1. DOI:10.1109/WI-IAT.2010.63.
- Baruah, T. D., 2012. Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*. 2(5), 1-10.
- Berger, B., 2008. Employee/organizational communications. *Institute for Public Relations*.
- Bertot, J.C., Jaeger, P.T. and Hansen, D., 2012. The impact of polices on government social media usage: Issues, challenges, and recommendations. *Government information quarterly*, 29(1), pp.30-40.
- Birkland, T.A., 2019. *An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making*. Routledge.
- Boyd, D. M & Ellison, N. B., 2007. *Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship*. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13, pp.210-230.
- Bria, F., 2013. Social media and their impact on organisations: building Firm Celebrity and organisational legitimacy through social media.
- Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C., & Gronhaug, K., 2001. *Qualitative Marketing University of Education, Winneba*. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 20(3), 390–392.

- Chadwick, A., 2006. *Internet politics: States, citizens, and new communication technologies*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Chapman, B., Raymond, B. and Powell, D., 2014. Potential of social media as a tool to combat foodborne illness. *Perspectives in public health*, 134(4), pp.225-230.
- Choney, S., 2010. Facebook use can lower grades by 20 percent, study says.
- Christenson, P., 2013. Social media definition. Retrieved from <https://techterms.com>
- Cresswell, W. J., 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications, 35(2), 260.
- Criado, J.I., Sandoval-Almazan, R. and Gil-Garcia, J.R., 2013. Government innovation through social media.
- Curtis, L., Edwards, C., Fraser, K.L., Gudelsky, S., Holmquist, J., Thornton, K. and Sweetser, K.D., 2010. Adoption of social media for public relations by nonprofit organizations. *Public relations review*, 36(1), pp.90-92.
- Dalberg, 2013. Impact of the internet in Africa: Establishing conditions for success and catalyzing inclusive growth in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal. Dalberg Global Development Advisors & Dalberg Research.
- Dunu, I.V. and Uzochukwu, C.E., 2015. Social media: An effective tool for social mobilization in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20(4), pp.10-21.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H., 2008. The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115.

- Eom, S.J., Hwang, H. and Kim, J.H., 2018. Can social media increase government responsiveness? A case study of Seoul, Korea. *Government information quarterly*, 35(1), pp.109-122.
- Fensel, D., Leiter, B., Thaler, S., Thalhammer, A., & Toma, I., 2012. *Effective and efficient online Communication*. International Workshop on Database and Expert Systems Applications, Database and Expert Systems Applications (DEXA).
- Firmstone, J. and Coleman, S., 2015. Public engagement in local government: The voice and influence of citizens in online communicative spaces. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(6), pp.680-695.
- Galloway, A., 2005. *Non-probability sampling*. *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement*.
- Harper, C., 2013. The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Societal Change. *Journal of Political Psychology*, 1, pp.1-10.
- Jacobsen, W.C. and Forste, R., 2011. The wired generation: Academic and social outcomes of electronic media use among university students. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(5), pp.275-280.
- Jha, V. and Bhardwaj, R., 2012. The new marketing renaissance: Paradigm shift in social networks. *International Journal of Engineering and management Sciences*, 3(3), pp.384-387.
- Jones, D., M. and Anderson Crow, D., (2017). 'How can we use the "science of stories" to produce persuasive scientific stories?'. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), pp. 1-9
- Jones, M.D. and McBeth, M.K., 2010. A narrative policy framework: Clear enough to be wrong?. *Policy Studies Journal*, 38(2), pp.329-353.

- Junco, R., Heiberger, G. and Loken, E., 2011. The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of computer assisted learning*, 27(2), pp.119-132.
- Kaitlin, C., 2010. Social media changing social interactions. *Student journal of media literacy education*, 1(1), pp.1-11.
- Kist, W., 2008. Digital literacies:“I gave up MySpace for Lent”: New teachers and social networking sites. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(3), pp.245-247.
- Bernard, K.J. and Dzandza, P.E., 2018. Effect of social media on academic performance of students in Ghanaian Universities: A case study of University of Ghana, Legon.
- Lee, G., & Kwak, Y. H., 2012. An open government maturity model for social media based public engagement. *Government Information Quarterly*, 29, pp. 492–503.
- Lunet, N., 2012. The Use of Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis in Modern Epidemiology. *Epidemiology-Current Perspectives on Research and Practice*, pp.195-210.
- Lusk, B., 2010. Digital natives and social media behavior: an overview. *The prevention researcher*, 17(S1), pp.3-7.
- Mahama, W.N., 2020. *Social Media Technologies in Policy Communication: A Case Study of Ghana's Information Services Department* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).
- Mainka, A., Hartmann, S., Stock, W.G. and Peters, I., 2014, January. Government and social media: A case study of 31 informational world cities. In *2014 47th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 1715-1724). IEEE.

- Mehmood, S. and Taswir, T., 2013. The effects of social networking sites on the academic performance of students in college of applied sciences, Nizwa, Oman. *International Journal of Arts and Commerce*, 2(1), pp.111-125.
- Mergel, I., 2012. *Social media in the public sector: Participation, collaboration, and transparency in the networked world*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bas
- Mergel, I., 2013. A framework for interpreting social media interactions in the public sector. *Government information quarterly*, 30(4), pp.327-334.
- Momoh, O., 2021. Understanding Population Statistics. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/population.asp>
- Mossberger, K., Wu, Y. and Crawford, J., 2013. Connecting citizens and local governments? Social media and interactivity in major US cities. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(4), pp.351-358.
- Obiora, I.V. and CAMPUS, E., 2011. Uses and impact of traditional communication as effective tool for grass-roots mobilization and development in south-east Nigeria. *Institute for Development Studies University of Nigeria Enugu Campus*). Retrieved from: [www.unn.edu.ng/publication/files/.../VIN%20MARTHIN%20ILO%20PWORK](http://www.unn.edu.ng/publication/files/.../VIN%20MARTHIN%20ILO%20PWORK).
- Opoku-Amankwa, K. and Mahama, C., 2014. Disseminating Government Policy To Local Communities A Communication Audit of MMDAs.
- Owusu-Acheaw, M. and Larson, A.G., 2015. Use of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(6), pp.94-101.

- Raadschelders, J.C., 2003. *Government: A Public Administration Perspective: A Public Administration Perspective*. Routledge.
- Sandoval-Almazan, R. and Gil-Garcia, J.R., 2014. Towards cyberactivism 2.0? Understanding the use of social media and other information technologies for political activism and social movements. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(3), pp.365-378.
- Schneider, N., 2010. Facebook. *Other Social Network Sites Could Lead to Lower Grades for Students*.
- Schreier, M., 2014. Qualitative content analysis. *Flick, U. The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*, pp.170-183.
- Song, C. and Lee, J., 2016. Citizens' use of social media in government, perceived transparency, and trust in government. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 39(2), pp.430-453.
- University of New Hampshire., 2010. Student Grades Not Affected by Social Networking. <http://www.newswise.com/articles/student-grades-not-affected-by-social-networking-new-research-finds>. Retrieved 20/08/13
- Uras, U., 2016. Turks pessimistic about future after coup attempt: Al Jazeera asks young Turkish citizens about their views on the coup attempt and their expectations for the future.
- Verhoeven, P., Tench, R., Zerfass, A., Moreno, A. and Verčič, D., 2012. How European PR practitioners handle digital and social media. *Public Relations Review*, 38(1), pp.162-164.
- Wang, Q., Chen, W. and Liang, Y., 2011. The effects of social media on college students. *MBA Student Scholarship*, 5(13), pp.1548-1379.

- Warlaumont, H.G., 2010. Social networks and globalization: Facebook, YouTube and the impact of online communities on France's protectionist policies. *French Politics*, 8(2), pp.204-214.
- Weber, T., 2010. Business editor, BBC News website. Why companies watch your every Facebook, YouTube, Twitter move.
- Wilcox, K., 2012. Facebook makes you spend more, research suggests. Interview with Herb Weisbaum, NBC News, on Today Money.
- Wiley, C. and Sisson, M., 2006, November. Ethics, accuracy and assumption: The use of Facebook by students and employers. In *Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education Special Topics Forum, Dayton, OH* (pp. 227-238).
- Woods, W., 2016. " *Government 2.5": The Impact of Social Media on Public Sector Accessibility* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).
- Yi, M., Oh, S.G. and Kim, S., 2013. Comparison of social media use for the US and the Korean governments. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(3), pp.310-317.
- Zeitel-Bank, N. and Tat, U., 2014. Social media and its effects on individuals and social systems. *Journal Management, Knowledge, And Learning*.

## **APPENDIX**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

#### **SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSAR)**

Dear Respondent,

My Name is Emmanuel Boakye, an MA student at the Ghana Institute of Journalism. As part of the requirements for the award of the MA Degree, I am conducting a study titled **COMMUNICATING GOVERNMENT POLICIES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF GHANA'S MINISTRY OF FINANCE**. I kindly request you to spare few minutes of your busy schedule to partake in this interview. The information given will be treated very confidentially, and will only be used for academic purposes. Thank you for you time and willingness to participate.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Boakye

1. Tell me about Ministry of Finance and your role in the organization.
2. How long have you worked there?
3. What are the roles of Ministry of Finance in communicating government policy?
4. Are you involved in planning and implementing of policy communications campaigns?
5. How do you communicate government policies through social media?
6. What are the social media channels used for the communication of government policies?
7. Which of the social media channels do you consider most effective to generate the necessary feedback and why?
8. What other mediums do you use in communicating government policies aside social media?
9. How does social media complement the other form of communication?
10. What are the challenges of communicating government policies through social media?