



**EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY GHANAIAN FOOTBALL  
PLAYERS IN MARKETING THEIR BRANDS.**

BY

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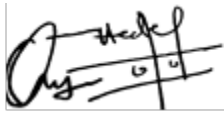
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

NOVEMBER 2025

# DECLARATIONS

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Hadel Abdulai, declare that this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere. Therefore, I bear the responsibility for any shortcomings.



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## SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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



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DATE: **07/11/2025** .....

MARTIN THOMPSON NTEM PhD

(Supervisor)

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this paper to my family, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the foundation of my academic journey.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am profoundly grateful to the Almighty God for granting me the strength to successfully complete this research.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr Martin Thompson Ntem, for his invaluable guidance and encouragement throughout this academic journey. Your insights and patience have been instrumental in shaping this work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines how Ghanaian professional football players use social media to construct personal brands and advance career opportunities. Grounded in an interpretivist paradigm and framed by Goffman's dramaturgical theory and Framing Theory, the research adopts a multiple-case, qualitative design and relies on semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to explore platforms, branding strategies, and perceived outcomes. Data were gathered from active Ghanaian players across the Premier League, Division One and the Women's Premier League (eight respondents: six males, two females), each of whom maintained at least one active social media account. Interviews probed platform choices, content strategies, audience engagement, and the role of social media in market visibility and career mobility. Findings indicate that Facebook and TikTok dominate platform choice, with Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp used for complementary purposes; choices were driven primarily by perceived reach, and ease of use. Players engage in deliberate impression management like frequently posting training videos, match highlights, and lifestyle content to project professionalism and discipline. Distinctive captioning, consistent posting patterns, and the strategic blending of performance and community narratives emerge as key framing tactics that increase relatability and sponsorship appeal. Participants reported tangible benefits from their online presence, including heightened public recognition, agent contacts, club interest, and occasional sponsorship leads, underscoring social media's role as a practical recruitment and networking mechanism. Simultaneously, players face constraints, such as limited access to professional media support, risks of scams and reputational harm, emotional strain from negative feedback, and infrastructural limitations that restrict content

quality. The study concludes that social media functions as a democratizing yet double-edged stage for Ghanaian footballers. It amplifies visibility and marketability but demands digital literacy and strategic communication skills to manage associated vulnerabilities. Practical recommendations include club-level digital literacy training, formal social media policies, and modest investments in content infrastructure to professionalize athletes' online practices. The research contributes context-specific insight to athlete branding literature and highlights avenues for future longitudinal and audience-focused studies.

**KEY WORDS:** Social Media, Ghanaian Football Players, Marketing, Branding, Tik Tok, X, Facebook, Instagram, Brand Marketing, Football fans Engagement.

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study, focusing on the background, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions. The significance of the study and the delimitation of the study are also outlined.

## 1.2 Background of the study

These days, social media has altered how people talk to each other, pass on news and construct their identity. In the digital world today, the online media has become important place for information gathering, sharing, and exchange of ideas (Kaya et al, 2024). The most influential of such online platforms is the social media, which offers an opportunity in which a brand can be shaped and represented. Recent academic studies have shown that latest customer decisions are based on Social Media application (Constantinides, 2014). Social media unlike the traditional media, are based on a two-way information sharing, that provides easy interaction, general accessibility devoid of usage barriers, simplified content creation and quick information sharing (Krzyżowski, & Strzelecki 2022).

Marketing as a discipline and a scholarly work has become a subject of great transformation in the last two decades (Constantinides, 2014). Social media marketing (SMM), an aspect of marketing, is an important strategic plan that can attain institutional goals and generate benefits for all stakeholders (McCarthy et al, 2022). As a result, the old discussion on the essence of a different marketing approach has attained a greater momentum (Constantinides, 2014).

Football has changed into something more than a simple sport. Nowadays, football players are ambassadors of brands and people of great influence in the society. Today, the valuation question

of players is of outmost interest to all stakeholders of the game (teams, managers players, scouts) who must appropriately check the right player valuation to properly engage in the marketing of players (Franceschi et al, 2023). It is important to appreciate how the valuation of players is linked to their performance (He et al, 2015). This has made it important for players to have a greater control in framing their image to the audience and possible agents of the sport.

In Ghana, formal studies focusing on how Ghanaian football players use social media to market themselves as brands is scarce. However, observations from industry players suggests that, football players can use social media to market themselves. For instance, there are informal claims that social media is the new way that Ghanaian footballers use to develop their personal brands when they want to attract endorsements. These observations, while common in the conversations of football enthusiast, and informal discourse, have not gained adequate scholarly attention. Understanding how Ghanaian football players use social media to market their own brands requires deeper, context-specific exploration.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

In contrast with other media, social media allows people to engage, share information fast and easily (Krzyżowski, & Strzelecki, 2023). More and more, football clubs see social media sites as key ways to keep in touch with their fans (Kaya et al. 2024). With social media, football clubs are in an ideal state to communicate with their fans and to maintain lasting relationships with them (Dvergedal, 2021).

Social media marketing (SMM) is a major strategic way that can help organizations to achieve their needed results and assist in creating high value for stakeholders both internal and external (McCarthy et al, 2022). As a result of the highly demanding markets in the world today and the

rapid rise of digitalization, sports institutions face the problem of interacting with fans, generating and retaining audiences and engaging with stakeholders effectively (Romero-Jara et al. 2023).

However, regardless of its popularity and application, a lot of questions regarding its usage, measurement and real benefits in the sports arena still remain unanswered (Romero-Jara et al. 2023). Despite the increasing scholarly works on Social Media Marketing in sport, there still remains a limited insights across other football leagues (McCarthy et al, 2022), particularly in Ghana, very limited academic research attention has been given to the field. Research into how social media can be used by players to market their brands in the Ghanaian context is still in its infancy.

Ghana has been a major player in the African football scene and its history is well rooted in the continent long before the nation made its mark in creating a memorable performance in the FIFA world cups hosted in Germany in 2006 and South Africa in 2010 (Owusu-Ansah, 2021). Football management in Ghana has evolved with clubs expected to interact and be concerned about their relationships with fans, players, sponsors, staff, and communities through the proper management of social media (Owusu & Pokumensah, 2020). Although there is a growing literature on football in Ghana, much of the discussions have centered on football clubs, giving very limited attention to football players. Owusu-Ansah, 2021, for instance, investigated how branding of clubs impact the patronage of fans of two popular clubs in Ghana. Owusu & Pokumensah, 2020, also Studied how four Ghanaian premier football clubs use social media. This research therefore aims to fill that gap by seeking to understand how football players use social media to market their brands and what effects this has on their career prospects.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To examine the types of social media platforms usually used by Ghanaian football players and why.
2. To explore the key branding strategies used by Ghanaian football players on social media.
3. To assess the effectiveness of social media in improving the public image and market value of Ghanaian football players.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the types of social media platforms usually used by Ghanaian football players and why?
2. What are the key branding strategies used by Ghanaian football players on social media?
3. How effective can social media improve the public image and market value of Ghanaian football players?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The research is important since it will add to the body of research that are being carried out on digital communication, personal branding, and sports marketing, especially in the Ghanaian context. Through the analysis of the social media activity of football players, the study will come up with useful information that can either support or dispute the current social view concerning the use of social media by the athletes. In addition, the finding seeks to provide practical information to Ghanaian footballers on how to leverage the social media applications in improving their personal brands and strive to succeed in their professional careers.

## **1.7 Scope/Delimitation of the Study**

This research study is aimed at investigating the content of how social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter (X), Facebook and Tik Tok and You tube have been used by the Ghanaian football players to promote their personal brand. It looks into the nature of content posted, branding direction being undertaken and the degree of interaction in audience. The study is confined to active professional Ghanaian football player who are under a valid contract and are active on social media. It will take into consideration players of different career heights with emerging talents as well as established players. Another aspect that has been explored in the study is the impact of the use of social media on brand perception, endorsement possibilities, and fan relationships. It does not discuss the traditional ways of branding the media and concentrates on accounts of clubs or federation. Focus will rather be on individual accounts which the players are operating on or moderating on behalf of these players, with respect to providing a picture on how the digital platform influences personal branding within the scenario of Ghanaian football.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research by presenting the background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance, and scope of the study. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on football, personal branding and social media marketing, and outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Chapter Three details the research methodology, including the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings, drawing connections between participants' experiences and the existing literature and theory. The final chapter, Chapter Five, concludes the study by summarizing key insights, offering practical recommendations for policy and practice, and suggesting directions for future research.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has introduced the study by providing a contextual background on social media marketing and personal branding of football players in Ghana, highlighting how social media can be used by Ghanaian football players for their personal branding. It outlined the problem of limited scholarly attention to football players personal social media marketing and branding in Ghana, establishing the need for an exploratory inquiry. The chapter presented the objectives, and research questions guiding the study, and underscored its significance for both academic and professional audiences. Finally, it detailed the scope of the research, clarifying its focus on Ghanaian football players.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section of the thesis is focused on reviewing empirical and conceptual literature on issues concerning social media, football and brand marketing. The literature reviewed in this chapter serves as the secondary source of data for the examination of the paper.

#### **2.2.0 Definition of Key Terms**

##### **2.2.1 Social Media: Evolution, Impact, and Contemporary Issues**

The development of social media has become one of the most innovative pieces of the technology of the 21st century that has radically changed how people, organizations, and societies are communicating, sharing information and forming identities. In its general context, social media can be defined as the web-based applications and platforms through which users are able to produce, share, and communicate with each other in virtual communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media provides interactive, participatory and user-generated communicational processes as opposed to traditional media which is seen to be one-way communication with producers and consumers (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, Tik Tok and LinkedIn are among the platforms that, in the last twenty years, became vital to human interaction, marketing, political mobilization, and entertainment.

Social media have their origins in early internet forums in the 1990s and 1980s, through which text-based interactions could take place on the internet (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). The advent of Web 2.0 technologies at the beginning of the 2000s turned social media into a more active and user-generated race. Online social networking was first introduced by websites like Friendster

(2002), MySpace (2003), and Linked In (2003) and then Facebook was launched in 2004, YouTube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006. The platforms brought a transformation to digital communication as they focus on user profile, connections to other users, and sharing multimedia (Ellison et al., 2007).

The social media was even more adopted globally with the acceleration of mobile technology. By the 2010s, mobile-first applications like Instagram (2010), Snapchat (2011), and Tik Tok (2016) could be enabled by the proliferation of smartphones and affordable internet access. Social media has now achieved a size never seen before: by 2025, it is predicted that more than 5 billion individuals across the globe will be utilizing some form of social media or another (Statista, 2023). The history of social media represents a transformation of the stagnant website towards the participatory, algorithmic platform, which influences the consumption of culture, socialization and commerce.

Social media can play a variety of functions, which is not limited to casual communication. The functions could be divided into social, societal, personal and professional uses.

**Personal and Interpersonal Communication:** Social media, at its essence, gives people an avenue through which they can sustain interpersonal relationships. Studies have shown that social sites like Facebook tend to be relied on to maintain contact with friends as well as family members especially when the geographical distances cause a barrier (Ellison et al., 2007). Individuals can also perform self-presentation and identity construction by the curation of the profiles, photos and posts posted via social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

**News Consumption and information sharing:** Social media has become one of the sources of dissemination of news and information. Terhi-Anna Wilska and Jussi Nyrhinen, (2025), stated that a large percentage of users worldwide use applications such as Twitter and Tik Tok to get real-

time news updates. Social media has become a central place of citizen journalism and participatory communication because of the democratization of information. Nevertheless, it has presented the issue of misinformation and fake news as well (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017).

**Marketing and Business:** Brands, business organizations, and companies use social media to market, engage customers, and do marketing campaigns. Influencer marketing, specifically, has emerged as one of the leading trends, with people having gathered vast fanbase and collaborating with brands to advertise the products (Abidin, 2016). The social media also offers the tools of analysis and targeted advertising, which enables the business to market to specific people in a way never before achieved.

**Political and Social Mobilization:** Social media has become the increasingly significant political, activist, and civic actions. The Arab Spring (2011), the BlackLivesMatter, and the MeToo movements reveal how platforms can be mobilized to act and advocate as a collection (Terhi-Anna Wilska & Jussi Nyrhinen, 2025). Social media is also of significance to political actors as a tool of campaigning, communication, and agenda-setting, which is relevant in both democratic and non-democratic settings.

Although there are great benefits of social media, its effects on individuals and societies are multidimensional.

**Positive Impacts:** The social media improves the global interconnectedness, which allows the cross-cultural communication and sharing of knowledge. It improves the availability of information, enhances creativity, and communities of interest where individuals can access the social support (Subrahmanyam and Smahel, 2011). Social media has also been incorporated into

e-learning platforms in the learning process; hence, facilitating collaborative learning and exchanging of knowledge (Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

**Adverse Effects:** In contrast, the social media has been associated with a number of psychosocial dangers. Research indicates that there are links between excessive social media usage and anxiety, depression, and negative body image, especially with adolescents (Chua et al., 2015). Online harassment, cyberbullying and addictive use patterns also present a very serious challenge (Andreassen et al., 2017). Misinformation and echo-chambers can sabotage the workings of democracy and polarization at a societal level (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Moreover, the predominance of algorithmic content curation brings up issues with surveillance, privacy, and manipulations (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Several contemporary debates underscore the complexities of social media. First, the regulation of harmful content, misinformation, and data misuse continues to pose significant policy challenges. Governments and organizations are increasingly pushing for stricter regulatory frameworks to hold platforms accountable (Vallbé et al., 2019). Second, artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms are reshaping the way users interact with social media, raising ethical questions about bias, transparency, and manipulation. Third, there is an emerging discourse on digital well-being and the need to balance online and offline interactions.

Looking ahead, the future of social media will likely be shaped by the integration of immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), which promise to transform online interaction into more immersive experiences (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). However, these technological advancements will also amplify existing concerns about addiction, inequality in access, and the commodification of human attention.

Social media has grown into an effective medium that affects communication, culture, politics and business on an international level as compared to the mere online communities initially. Its advantages comprise the increase in connection, self-expression possibilities, and business development, whereas its drawbacks include the problem of misinformation, mental health and the problem of privacy. With the ever-changing nature of social media, scholars, policymakers, and users need to critically approach its possibilities and threats so that the social media can be used as an instrument of empowerment and not exploitation. Social media, in a way, is a symptomatic manifestation of the realities of the digital life in the modern period: it provides opportunities of relationship, as well as, poses pressing questions regarding the morals, politics, and the welfare of the human being.

### **2.2.2 Brand Marketing**

Brand Marketing is a strategic process through which products or services are marketed in a manner that creates and maintains a good brand image, creates trust by the consumers and imparts long-term loyalty to customers (Atwal & Williams, 2017). In contrast to product marketing, which involves producing marketing of particular goods or services, brand marketing involves the promotion of values, mission, and overall image of any particular brand that helps to develop emotional and psychological association between the brand and the audience (Calder et al., 2016).

Marketing of a brand is usually seen as promoting the brand through marketing tools in order to convey the identity, position, and value offering of the brand to the target market. Dewhirst and Davis (2005) defines a brand by indicating that brand is more than a name or logo but rather an association of names, marks, symbols with a product or service. Hence, brand marketing is associated with the development of these associations that might be appealing to the perceptions, beliefs, and values of consumers.

Brand marketing is an attempt at establishing brand equity which is the incremental value attached to a product or service brought about by a brand name (Atwal & Williams, 2017). According to Dwivedi and McDonald (2018), brand equity is the influence of brand knowledge on the reaction of the consumer toward brand marketing. This equity may give rise to competitive advantages that include customer loyalty, low cost of marketing and the ability to make high prices.

### **Major Elements of Brand Marketing**

1. Brand Identity: This can be defined as the visible and conceptual means of which a brand stands out among all the brands, name, logo, colors, typography and tone of voice (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005). Recognition and recall are established in the minds of consumers because of the strength of identity.

2. Brand Positioning: Positioning is the process of defining the distinctive position a brand occupies in the market. It is the response to a question of how one brand can be different than other brands or better than its competitors in a way that was meaningful to the consumer (Li et al., 2022). An established brand holds a niche position in the mind of the consumer, which contributes to long term brand loyalty (Tolba & Hassan, 2009).

3. Brand Communication: It is about getting the brand message across a range of marketing tools including advertising, social media, PR, and influencer marketing. The homogeneity in communication increases the degree of brand credibility and emotional attractiveness (Tolba & Hassan, 2009).

4. Brand Experience: According to Wang and Tzeng (2012), the path of modern brand marketing is now aimed at designing an overall brand experience by means of touchpoints, be it digital or

physical. Therefore, memories are shaped by experiences, and it is this fact, which influences perception and loyalty of consumers.

5. Emotional Purchase: Emotional branding is a key part of the marketing of brands. It is the plan of creating emotional attachment with consumers. Take the brands such as Nike and Apple as an example who have developed emotional involvement which extends further more than just functional advantages (Atwal & Williams, 2017).

There is a very competitive and globalized market that has focused on brand marketing. The powerful brands influence the purchase and consumer preference. Brands act as a promise to the consumer, lowering the perceived risk, easing the decision-making process, and increasing satisfaction (Calder et al., 2016). Moreover, as consumers in the digital era are overwhelmed with too many options to choose, a powerful brand can penetrate the clutter and elicit loyalty among customers.

Besides, brand differentiation depends on brand marketing. Branding can provide a sustainable competitive advantage in such adverse environments as markets with many products and services at their disposal. According to Dwivedi and McDonald (2018), the concept of brand equity has fundamental elements of its formation like the awareness and the perceived quality that may have a considerable impact on profitability.

The advent of the digital media has changed the paradigm of brand marketing. Influencer marketing, social media connection, and content marketing have become critical instruments in brand-building strategies (Li et al., 2022). The brands will operate more open, responsive, and socially aligned. That is why modern consumers view the brands who promote the concepts of sustainability, inclusivity, and authenticity more positively (Wang & Tzeng, 2012).

Data analytics and personalization have given marketers a chance to make brand experiences and messages personal in response to individual preferences of the consumers. This does not only bring more engagement but also grow conversion rates and customer lifetime value (Wang & Tzeng, 2012).

Brand marketing is a complex and strategic art that aims at developing and sustaining a brand and to establish a brand reputation, identity and relevance in the market (Tolba & Hassan, 2009). It involves all visual details and messaging, consumer experiences, as well as, emotional connections. As competition within the economy grows, and more and more assets move to the digital platform, marketing a brand can be the differentiation between dominance and obscurity (Li et al., 2022). Therefore, the principles of brand marketing are critical to know and implement in terms of the present-day business reality.

### **2.2.3 Football Fans Engagement**

Fan engagement in football is a complex term signifying both affective and behavioural relations that exist between fans and their teams. This is a crucial involvement to any club because it creates a source of revenue through merchandising, ticket sales, and sponsorship. Theorists have been stressing on effective fan engagement that goes beyond passive fan behaviour to an active involvement whereby fans make valuable contributions through interactions that form a sense of belonging and identity (Kuzma et al., 2014).

The concept of fan engagement is not reduced to transactional but to situations whereby the clubs seek to establish long last and mutually relations with its fans. As an example, the value co-create theory argues that fans and clubs jointly create experiences either in user generated content or feedback loop formats which helps increase satisfaction and loyalty (Kuzma et al., 2014). Such relational stance is especially seen in how clubs employ digital tools to market their brands. Clubs

also use players as club ambassadors in the quest to create a sense of intimacy. Besides, engagement is affected by motivating determinants such as the gaining of information, entertainment and social interaction that motivate fans to share more connection with clubs (Krzyżowski & Strzelecki, 2022).

Social media has transformed the way brands interact with fans in football. It has brought down the barrier that existed between the fans and the club, as well as allowing a two-way communication. Engagement platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and Tik Tok are channels on which clubs share material, seek opinions and get fans to interact with each other. The impact of such digital transformation is that clubs can have access to numerous audiences and even attain satellite fans who do not participate in the matches, enhancing the fan base beyond the local geographies (Wu, 2023).

Clubs in the Chinese context ensure that they engage mostly first-team-relevant posts and non-product communication (e.g., cultural and community-based messages) to maximise the emphasis on fan identification and fan engagement (Wu, 2023).

The European cases are similar with some twists related to culture of a particular league. Such an example would be Norwegian elite football clubs which apply a multi-platform strategy, wherein Instagram is used to conduct low-threshold communications (e.g., direct messages and stories), and TikTok to reach out to younger audiences (Kuzma et al., 2014).

The Polish football fans, in turn, attach precedence to the factor of social interaction as the most predictive of the formation of a bond on social media. Fan-to-fan, that is through polls, live sessions, or community discussions enable clubs to strengthen emotional bonds and make social media a virtual third arm of the stadium experience. Such a social aspect promotes an attitude that

fans should not only consume but also share the experiences, which strengthens their connection with the club (Krzyżowski & Strzelecki, 2023).

In Portuguese 2nd League, it will be shown that fan satisfaction and fan engagement is positively affected by social media marketing activities on Facebook. Fans who engage club pages cite increased satisfaction levels and stronger relationship quality due to the content which creates awareness and facilitates long term relationships (Faria et al., 2022).

There is one more model of Turkish football that helps to understand the relationships between engagement, identity, and loyalty more comprehensively. The engagement on social media is broken down as consumption (viewing posts), contribution (commenting) and creation (user-generated content). The consumption, creation, and team identification are greatly predictive, whereas consumers directly influence the aspects of liking and sharing which are loyalty behaviors. The participating clubs with a view to fostering loyalty can exclusively focus on consumption-oriented practices, including easily accessible and high-quality content, which enhances identification as an intermediary between engagement and loyalty indirectly (Kaya et al., 2024). Interestingly, though negative interaction, e.g., criticisms during the losses are not negative but evidence of passionate engagement, so long as they are met with empathetic reactions on the part of clubs to sustain trust.

Even though it has advantages, there are some challenges to fan engagement through social media, namely, fragmentation of platforms, time consuming dealing, and adverse feedback. Even the quick changes in technology, e.g., the emergence of new platforms, like TikTok, must not alienate younger fans (Kuzma et al., 2014). Also, strategic execution is influenced by cultural differences such as preference in information exclusivity by Chinese fans versus a strong interest in social

connections with the Polish fans, which will require differentiation in strategies (Wu, 2023; Krzyżowski & Strzelecki, 2023).

As in the case of football clubs, the implications are straightforward: investing in data-driven social media can produce greater engagement and loyalty. This includes audience segmentation, optimizing content to go viral (e.g. videos) and analytics.

Football fan involvement is an evolving phenomenon and is based on digital interactions by mixing sources of information, fun, and socialisation as a means of creating identity and commitment. As seen in various studies, social media can become one of the foundations of clubs, helping them to co-create value linked to fans and maintain a long-term relationship (Kaya et al., 2024; Faria et al., 2022). This model does not only add to existing theory but it is also a practical approach in improving the dynamism of fan-clubs within the global football environment.

### **2.3 Review of Related Literature**

The use of social media has altered the manner in which professional athletes, especially football players conduct themselves in front of the fans. The sports people can use such a tool as Instagram, X, Tik Tok, or Facebook to reach their audience, without going through conventional media filters (Pegoraro, 2010).

Football players use social media to create a filtered profile and can balance personal authenticity and presentations of themselves. In this regard, Goffman (1959) theory of self-presentation is often quoted whereby players act various versions of themselves on a different platform, depending on its intended audiences. Research has found that sportspeople are very strategic with the information that they release to have a relatable yet slightly professional appeal (Smith & Sanderson, 2015). For instance, research on Cristiano Ronaldo's Instagram presence demonstrates

how his posts blend personal moments with professional achievements to create a multi-dimensional public image (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016).

Nowadays, sport stars, especially football players, use social media more and more often to communicate with the fans. In contrast to conventional media, social sites allow two-way communication, so the opportunity is availed to their fans to form social relationships with athletes (Sanderson, 2011). This two-way interaction increases the sentiment attachment to fans and makes them loyal. Hambrick and Kang (2015) use the results of their study to maintain that players who have routinely interacted with fans on Twitter receive increased growth in followers and their sentiment is more positive. Moreover, the interactive nature of activities and utilizing Q&A sessions, live videos, and responding to comments enhances the senses of genuineness and access (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010).

The development of a powerful social media presence is part and parcel of the personal branding efforts made by contemporary football players. Effectively maintained online presence can play an essential part as a recommendation and a commercial success (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016). Other professional athletes, such as Paul Pogba and Neymar Jr., have taken advantage of their immense following to earn their places as brand ambassadors of international organizations that they often use their platforms to advertise commercial products along with charitable initiatives (Parmentier & Fischer, 2012). The intersection between the worlds of athleticism and influencer has led to a new conceptualization of fame and authenticity as a way of assuring the recognition of the sports industry (Geurin, 2017).

Social media gives footballers a chance of telling their story, particularly in times of controversy. Rather than journalists or press conferences, players are able to pile on rumors, answer critics or formulate personal opinions right to their audience (Sanderson & Truax, 2014). As another

example, Marcus Rashford used his Twitter account to promote child food poverty efforts in the UK, successfully reframing the narrative in the eyes of the audience, changing the perception of an athlete to that of an activist (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016). In this scenario, the social media existence of the player can be used as a means of social instrumentality and restoration of the image.

In as much as there are benefits, there are also pitfalls of using social media. Misunderstood posts, cyberbullying, and the necessity to always display a positive image have been put under scrutiny on the part of athletes (Sanderson, 2011). The in-the-moment nature of social media may cause you to communicate hastily, doing damage to your reputation. Also, there may be increased stress and decreased privacy due to the uncertain border between the personal and professional life (Sanderson & Browning, 2013).

The literature emphasizes the complexity of social media in determining the perception of the viewers towards the football players. Social media is useful not only in terms of creating a personal brand but also when it comes to communicating with fans and handling scandals. But along with higher visibility and expectations, come the greater risks, where strategic communication and digital literacy are essential.

Although the research that has been conducted is fruitful in comprehending the sense of the fan involvement on social media, none of them studied how individual football players market their personal brands through social media. This gap is important to fill to comprehend the possibility of influencing public opinion through social media by the football players.

## **2.4.0 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.4.1 Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory**

This research is founded on the theoretical framework which sheds some light through which analysis and interpretation of the use of social media by the Ghanaian football players in marketing their brands can be made. The Dramaturgical Theory of Erving Goffman (1959) is selected as one of the theories because it focuses on the presentation of oneself, the management of impressions, and the action of social roles. It starts with the contextual discussion of the theory, its origin, and use in previous studies. It then supports the selection of this theory as suitable in the study, how it can be used to analyze past studies and finally details the creation of a theoretical framework of how the important concepts and the linkages on the research problem are interrelated.

#### ***2.4.1.1 Discussing Theories in Context***

The *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* by Goffman (1959) provided the dramaturgical approach of social interaction that places an actor into the role of a performer in order to shape the perception of others. In this performance metaphor, the idea of social life being organized according to the staged presentation is highlighted. According to the theory, two main performance environments can be identified, the front stage, where people behave in a certain way that is expected of them in the society, and the back stage, where people feel free to display some parts of their personality that cannot be demonstrated in the front stage. Impression management enables people to carefully observe and manipulate their behaviors, speech and actions so as to make a good self-image. They also practice audience segregation, where they will perform differently to different groups and they will not step on each other because this may reveal discrepancies in how they present themselves (Goffman, 1959).

The dramaturgical approach has played a role in digital and mediated studies of environment as the online platforms serve as platforms of identity performance. An example of this application is the work by Marwick and boyd (2011) to Twitter, which pointed out the conflicting forces between authenticity and self-promotion that users, including celebrity users, have to face. In their study of sports, Geurin-Eagleman and Burch (2016) examined athlete self-representation on Instagram and found that there are gender differences in the balance between the individual expression and professionalism of athletes. The same was also reported by Smith and Sanderson (2015) who noted that athletes on Instagram shared personal information with highly curated and sponsor-appropriate content, which is a symptom of impression management. The above studies indicate the diversity of the concept of dramaturgy in describing online branding and identity.

The strength of the theory in this study research context is that it can be used to describe the performativity of the activity of the athletes on the internet. Similar to footballers on the international scenes, the Ghanaian footballers fill various functions: as professionals who seek sponsors, as national symbols who instill national pride, and as familiar faces who relate with fans. The framework provided by Goffman allows examining how these overlapping identities are dealt with by players on the platform of curated performances. Nevertheless, some constraints have to be mentioned. The dramaturgical theory based on face-to-face relationships fails to explain the impact of algorithms which determine how visible a person is on a social media platform (Bucher, 2012). Moreover, the intentional performance assumption might not be completely true to the reality since there are posts that are not planned, are emotional, or driven by others (e.g., managers, agents). These restrictions remind that one has to use the theory critically, adjusting its ideas to the digital era and admitting its limitations.

#### ***2.4.1.2 Justifying the Theoretical Approach***

In spite of its shortcomings, the dramaturgical approach of Goffman offers a good basis to this study. The branding practices of Ghanaian footballers are themselves performative, as platforms of social media are the arenas where they set out to perform certain images with the aim of attaining specific objectives. These are the attraction of commercial endorsements, creation of fans loyalty and preservation of professional identity in the world of global sports. Impression management according to the conceptualization of Goffman directly concerns the way in which footballers choose to disclose some of their life and withhold some. As an example, training, community service, and endorsements are usually brought to the forefront (on the front stage), whereas personal hardships or provocative views remain in the background (on the back-stage).

The theory has a lot in common with the research questions of the study like: How do Ghanaian footballers project themselves on social media? Which are their impression management strategies? What is their authenticity-professionalism balance? By embracing the ideas of Goffman, the present study gets the necessary instruments to challenge the complex performances of athletes so that their branding practices could be examined better. In addition, the theory will offer a reference point in understanding the contradictions, including the tension between individual expression and sponsor requirements, that can frequently be apparent in branding of online athletes.

Regarding methodological instructions, the dramaturgical theory will guide the analysis of data. As an example, in case of content analysis of the posts, captions, and interactions of the footballers on their social media, the performance will be classified as a front stage or back stage. Impression management tactics- portraying humility, demonstrating discipline or displaying luxurious living- will be determined and correlated with the audience engagement results. Interview with players

could also help identify the conscious choices of these performances, and help understand how they manage various audiences (e.g., fans, sponsors, and clubs). This way, this theory not only forms the basis of the study but it also dictates its practical implementation.

#### ***2.4.1.3 Applying Theories to Analyze Previous Research***

Applying the dramaturgical theory to past studies, it is possible to view the similarities in patterns of athlete branding in different settings. Smith and Sanderson (2015) demonstrated that the American sportspersons on Instagram supported authenticity and commercial requirements, which represented front-stage behavior concerning sponsors and the personal administration in terms of fans. According to Pegoraro (2010), Twitter athletes tailored their tone and content according to the visibility of an event, which is in line with the concept of audience segregation developed by Goffman. Geurin-Eagleman and Burch (2016) also put an emphasis on the visual presentation on Instagram, which was utilized strategically as female athletes tend to focus on looks, whereas male athletes focused on professionalism. All these studies prove the relevance of dramaturgical theories to the discussion of online athlete behavior.

Using these studies in the framework of Goffman, one can conclude that the strategies of branding athletes online are complicated and multi-level. Front-stage performances have affected promotional content, which has been honed to appeal to sponsors, whereas back-stage shots such as family album photos or an amateur training video, help to make the athletes more human and connect with the fans on a personal level. Impression management therefore turns out to be a balancing issue between relatability and aspirational imagery. Nevertheless, gaps in the literature are still apparent. The vast majority of studies are done on athletes in Western environments, and they do not consider African backgrounds where cultural and economic forces, as well as digital infrastructure, are dramatically different. In Ghana, football players encounter distinct problems

including the need to manage the demands of community accountability coupled with the impact of internationalisation of brands influenced by sponsors and international soccer teams. In addition, although the current literature focuses on the self-presentation of athletes, little is done to assess the perception of the audiences, with the unexplored area being how fans and sponsors interpret and react to these performances. This paper aims to fill these gaps by concentrating on Ghanaian footballers and discussing their tactics as well as the socio-cultural context in which they are in.

#### ***2.4.1.4 Building a Theoretical Framework***

Based on the literature and the dramaturgical theory, this research paper will form a theoretical framework based on which the research will be conducted. The main ideas within the framework include self-presentation, impression management and front and back stage and audience segregation. The concepts offer a framework of analyzing how Ghanaian footballers market their brand identities on the social media. The social media sites serve as the front stages whereby performances are tailored to the expectation of the audience, whereas some of the darker or taboo elements of existence are pushed to the back stage. Impression management enables footballers to focus on achievements, professionalism, and lifestyle choices to set perceptions, whereas audience segmentation enables them to perform differently to fans, sponsors and clubs.

In this context, the independent variable will be the content of social media generated (e.g., personal postings, training postings, endorsement campaigns). The mediating variable is the type of impression management strategy practiced, which can be the projecting authenticity, humility, or prestige. The dependent variable is the result regarding the engagement of the audience, sponsorship appeal, and the perception of the brand as a whole. The examples of these relationships demonstrate how the choices of self-presentation affect the ability of footballers to create and

sustain a marketable brand. As an example, regular updates on professional training programs can elevate the perception of discipline and gain the attention of the club whereas personal posts can make the fans more relatable and foster the loyalty.

This theoretical framework will inform the research design of the study; development of research questions, coding of data and interpretation of findings. It will allow the study to go beyond the descriptive narrative of the use of social media, and provide a systematic study of the way performances are constructed, handled and accepted. By basing the research on the dramaturgical theory of Goffman, the research places the branding practices of Ghanaian football players in a wider sociological perspective of identity performance, and also takes into account at the same time the cultural and technological peculiarities of the Ghanaian context.

#### **2.4.2 The Framing Theory**

Framing Theory is adopted as one of the guiding theories in this research that examines how Ghanaian football players use social media to market their brands. The importance of this theory is that it can be used to understand how communicators choose and focus on specific aspects of reality to influence audience interpretation. Framing Theory is a suitable analysis instrument as branding is a process that entails creating a desirable image and then strategically projecting it to different audiences. The theory is put in perspective, provides reasons why the theory is relevant, applies it to existing literature and constructs a framework that will be used to analyse the study.

##### ***2.4.2.1 Origins and Key Concepts of the theory***

In sociology, Framing Theory was first developed by Erving Goffman (1974) who defined frames as interpretive schemata which enable people to systematize their experiences and interpret events. The communication studies incorporated his ideas in their explanation of how messages are formed and interpreted. Frames, which Gitlin (1980) demonstrated are used by mass media to construct

social movements, were defined by Entman (1993) who has given a widely used definition of it, that framing is defined as a choice and prominence of aspects of reality to advance certain problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral assessment and treatment prescriptions.

Framing research draws the line between frame building (the way in which communicators construct frames) and frame setting (the way in which frames are used to make the audience interpret them) (Scheufele, 1999). Frames may be episodic, i.e. discretely based, or thematic i.e. based on larger contexts (Iyengar, 2025). Based on social movement research, Abeza et al., (2013) proposed diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames, which present the process of problem identification by the actors, solutions offered, and mobilization.

These ideas are very applicable in athlete communication where frames are used as identity presentation strategies. Footballers may position themselves in a variety of ways: as athletes (with the focus on sporting performance), as part of a community or country, as a commercial actor (through endorsements), as a religious and virtuous person, as one with an aspirational lifestyle, or as a more interactive figure who is in direct contact with fans. Both of these frames focus on various elements of their character and how they are perceived by the audiences.

Research demonstrates how framing is used in sport communication. According to Hambrick et al., (2010), professional athletes on Twitter position themselves as professionals and as people that people can relate to. Pegoraro (2010) demonstrated that by sharing informational and personal posts, athletes balance informational and personal posts to increase the level of fan involvement. On the same note, Abeza et al., (2013) emphasized the aspect of using social media to frame relations with stakeholders, whereas reviews by Filo et al., (2015) and Hoff et al., (2022) focus on the importance of framing strategies in the context of marketing of sport activities online. As Šíma,

(2021) also showed, commercial posts work better when integrated into larger performance or thematic stories.

The strength of the Framing Theory is that it demonstrates the selectivity of football players in emphasizing their qualities, e.g. professionalism, patriotism, or religion to build a marketing identity. It supports the usage of various overlapping frames which represent the multidimensionality of athlete branding.

There are limitations to the theory though. Innovative framing studies are more inclined to focus on content, rather than on technological affordances. It fails to consider the effect of algorithm and platform design on message reach in totality (Scheufele, 1999). Furthermore, a significant amount of framing research has been conducted in the text realm, which makes visual and multimodal communication analysis difficult, including the short-form videos that are prevalent on Tik Tok (Filo et al., 2015). Lastly, the theory itself does not necessarily focus on real audience response which usually needs to be complementary practices.

#### ***2.4.2.2 Justification of the theory***

Framing Theory fits perfectly in this study since branding is about strategic choice and focus and that is what the theory talks about. Ghanaian footballers are not only utilizing social media to promote themselves as athletes but also to advance cultural identity, morality and business associations. To see these strategies, there must be a framework that will be able to define the way in which identity is built and communicated.

The study questions of this research are in line with Framing Theory. The question that attempts to discover the frames that Ghanaian footballers employ is the first one: frame categorization directly relates to it. The latter, the frames as determinants of engagement and branding

performance, is related to the frame setting concept. The third, where the authors investigate contextual factors including platform affordances and cultural relevance, portrays the frame-building process.

The concept of framing is particularly applicable in Ghanaian context, as such aspects of culture as religion and national pride take center stage in the dialog. Faith-based posts or national symbols are actually used by footballers to position themselves in a manner that appeals to the locals. These culturally mediated practices can be analyzed in Framing Theory. Moreover, the theory also shapes the methodology, as it allows developing a coding scheme that will help to systematize the analysis of the social media content, facilitating comparison of framing strategies by platforms and participants.

#### ***2.4.2.3 Applying Framing to Previous Research***

In terms of the Framing Theory, past studies have shown that communication between athletes has a single trend. Hambrick, et al. (2010) and Pegoraro (2010) note the manner in which the athletes present themselves as professionals and also develop relatability by interacting with fans. Abeza et al. (2013) show how organizations position social media connections as participatory and community based. Šíma, (2021) demonstrates that commercial messages are the most efficient when they are incorporated into performance or community stories, and the commercial frames are not that persuasive when isolated. According to reviews conducted by Filo et al. (2015) and Hoff et al., (2022), the increased focus on authenticity and visual storytelling may be viewed as the changes in framing strategies in different platforms.

However, there are still large gaps. Virtually no studies are conducted on African contexts, leaving more questions open about how cultural frames, especially frames involving faith, morality and national identity affect branding. Another aspect that has not been theorized properly is the

emergence of Tik Tok and short-form video as a frame-creating practice. In addition, there is little known about the relationship between framing strategies and algorithmic visibility. The research fills the gaps by discussing Ghanaian footballers as well as by examining the multimodal strategy of framing through the multiple social media platforms.

#### ***2.4.2.4 Building the Theoretical Framework***

The theoretical framework constructed in this study makes framing strategies a focal point of independent variables that affect audience engagement and brand outcomes. It identifies six frames that are dominant; performance, community, commercial, faith, lifestyle, and interaction. It is postulated that these frames can have the following effects: engagement measurements (likes, comments, shares and views), sentiment, and brand equity indicators (sponsorship visibility).

The model includes mediating variables of authenticity, fan identification, and parasocial interaction. For instance, believing-based posting may facilitate authenticity and deepen identification with viewers, and performance and interaction framing can bolster perceivers' parasocial bonds. Moderators are the type of platform (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook/X), the level of the league, gender, and cultural land. These frames are expected to moderate the comparative effect of frames.

From this framework, several hypotheses also arise: Performance Interaction posts are expected to generate higher levels of engagement than Performance posts alone, Performance or Community narratives that feature commercial content will be viewed in a more favorable light, Faith frames will contribute to perceived authenticity in Ghana, and contextual manipulation (platform affordances) will influence the effectiveness of frames strategies.

Overall, the framing theory is relevant in explaining the use of social media by Ghanaian footballers for brand advertising. The model is said to "subsume" the selection and emphasis processes of branding practices and make it possible to identify systematically the frames activated through athlete-led communication. Even if it is highly reliant on structural explanations and pays less attention to the affordances of the platform and the reception behavior of the audience, the theory is a strong instrument to explain branding in sports from Ghana. By placing the study in this theoretical framework, the analysis makes a contribution to the framing/sport communication literature and helps to fill in gaps in knowledge of African athlete coverage, cultural frames and newest digital platforms.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

This part of the research discussed the relevant concepts and literature related to this study. Previous studies by scholars have been discussed to put the work into perspective and provide a foundation on which this current work will be built. The review has revealed that research on Ghanaian football players use of social media to market their brands is lacking, and therefore much of the discussions have been extracted from studies situated in Europe and elsewhere.

The chapter established a robust conceptual framework by synthesizing the evolution of social media, the principles of brand marketing, and the dynamics of football fan engagement through the lenses of Goffman's dramaturgical theory and framing theory. These perspectives collectively illuminate how Ghanaian football players navigate digital spaces to construct and project their brands. The insights and gaps identified here lay the foundation for the subsequent methodology and analysis chapters, which will empirically investigate how these theoretical and conceptual elements manifest in the lived experiences of Ghanaian professional footballers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Introduction**

The chapter examined the study's methodology in detail, detailing the techniques and instruments employed. The research methodology ensured that the research process was systematic, valid and trustworthy by serving the link between the study's objectives and its findings. The following sections elaborated on the study's methodology, sampling procedures, data collection techniques and analytical instruments.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm can be described as a philosophical worldview or belief system that a study is based on (Creswell, 2013). It is the system of assumption regarding reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and methodology (how knowledge is received) (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The key paradigms are positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and pragmatism.

This research article used the interpretivist paradigm or the social construction of reality. This paradigm concurs with qualitative research because of admitting the fact that knowledge is subjective and depends on the human experience and interaction (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The meaning of the constructivist approach in the context of this study is that it offers a background to the interpretation of how Ghanaian players can use social to market their brands.

The interpretivist paradigm was suitable as the study aimed at investigating meanings, processes, and relationships, and not measuring any variables or testing hypothesis. Social media use and brand marketing are not a fixed process that has universal definitions, but there are some variations in its practices depending on the practice. This paradigm can help the researcher to unravel various

realities as constructed by the participants, hence an informed realization about how Ghanaian players can use social to market their brands. (Kroeze, 2012).

Using this paradigm in the research, it is expected that the research would determine how Ghanaian football players use social media, the type of social media platforms they use and how they use these platforms to market their brands. All these are interpretive issues which can best be delved into with interpretivism.

### **3.2.1 Philosophical Assumptions**

The paradigm embraced poses with it some philosophical suppositions that affected the conduct of the study. Such assumptions are a manifestation of the qualitative nature of the work and its impact on the general direction to investigation.

#### **(I). Ontological assumption**

The ontological stance of this research is relativist, which accepts the fact that there is no objective definite reality. Rather, there are several realities that are formed on the basis of experience and interaction that people have (Kroeze, 2012). Within the present research, every football player can perceive his or her use of social media differently because of the strategic priorities, and industry expectations. This is sufficient reason to apply open-ended interviews to discuss variety of experiences and meanings.

#### **(II). Epistemological assumption.**

The epistemological position is an indication that knowledge is co-developed by the researcher and participants. It implies that knowledge is achieved in the process of dialogue, reflection, and interpretation but not in the process of disinterested observation (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The

researcher in this study is proactive in helping to decipher the meanings that football players attach to their social media use.

### (III). Axiological assumption

Qualitative research does not deny the fact that inquiry is value laden. The researcher has his or her own experiences, prejudice and point of view which define the research process (Kroeze, 2012). The knowledge of the social media use by the researcher is discussed in this case, and the data interpretation process will be influenced by it, whereas reflexivity will be used to make sure that the findings will reflect the voices of the participants and not certain presumptions.

### (IV). Methodological assumption (method of inquiry)

The study is methodologically fulfilled in a qualitative and inductive manner and is flexible. People do not aim to find out anticipated outcomes; instead, the research is conducted to enable emergence of patterns and themes through the data. This methodology will be in line with the overall objective of seeking detailed in-depth information on how social media can be used to market brands (Creswell, 2013).

## **3.3 Research Approach**

A research approach is the plan or procedure that links the philosophical assumptions with the specific methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013). The two main approaches are quantitative and qualitative, while a mixed-methods approach integrates both (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

The research approach used in this study is qualitative research, which is very suitable to studying a complex phenomenon, such as the use of social media by Ghanaian football players to market their brands (Silverman, 2020). The qualitative method allows exploring subjective experience,

perceptions of meanings and values attributed by football players and their social media use (Hammarberg et al., 2016). As part of the research, we want to have the individual perspective of the football players, which is their personal views on social media use in marketing brands.

Qualitative methods are ideal for in situations for appropriately answering the “how” and “why” questions, particularly in fields like strategic social media and brand marketing, where meanings and interpretations are central (Creswell, 2013).

The qualitative approach equally supports the study’s objective to examine the types of social media platforms usually used by Ghanaian football players and why, as well as the key branding strategies used, rather than testing predefined hypotheses.

### **3.4 Research Design**

A research design is the overall strategy that integrates the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed (Creswell et al., 2007). Common designs include descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, case study, ethnographic, and phenomenological designs (Silverman 2020).

A case study is one of the qualitative research methods which examines a modern phenomenon in its natural setting, particularly when a definite line between the phenomenon and the setting cannot be easily observed (Creswell, 2013). With regards to this study, the phenomenon is the use of social media for personal brand marketing by Ghanaian professional football players and the context includes the cultural, sporting and commercial environment in which they operate.

The selection that motivated the adoption of the case study method is based on the research purpose, to explore how Ghanaian football players market their brands on social media, and how they define the sense they derive out of such activities. Case studies are also specifically applicable

when the research questions are either exploratory or explanatory and the researcher does not control events much, (Silverman 2020). The researcher will not be able to control the activity of the participating players on social media in this study; however, one can consider the social media practice through detail interviews.

Since the process of personal branding is influenced by various factors, including fan culture, sponsorship demands, and different stages of a football career, a case study will enable the researcher to represent a sophisticated combination of the above factors (Dodgson, 2017).

This research adopts a multiple-case study design. Hammarberg et al. (2016), recommends multiple cases when the goal is to achieve theoretical replication, that is, to examine whether similar results occur across cases or whether contrasting results can be explained by predictable reasons. In this study, each case represents a Ghanaian professional footballer with an active social media presence. Selecting players from different career stages (e.g., Premier league stars, Division one players, women premier players) will allow for comparisons and the identification of patterns and variations in branding strategies.

### **3.5 Population**

In qualitative research, the population is understood as the entire number of individuals, objects, or materials that have certain features pertaining to the research goals (Dodgson, 2017). It is a collection of all possible data sources that a study can possibly derive information to respond to its research questions (Creswell et al., 2007).

In this investigation, the population was identified as Ghanaian professional football players that are active on social media.

Two criteria are reflected in this definition.

(I) Professional Status: The players were registered professionals either playing in the Ghana premier league or other recognized domestic leagues. This guarantees that the participants were integrated into the football professional system where individual brand value has a direct effect on sponsorship deals, endorsement, and career prospects.

(II) Active Social Media: Participants operate or maintain at least one authenticated or generally accepted account on Social Media, e.g., Instagram, X (used to be Twitter), Facebook or Tik Tok. One of the most important factors involved in the branding of modern-day athletes is social media activity, which enables them to develop an image that is shared by the public, create fan bases, and enter into commercial agreements without necessarily going through traditional media channels (Pegoraro, 2010)

The incorporation of these criteria made sure that the population complies with the research subject of digital self-presentation and personal brand marketing. It also acknowledged the idea that social media acts as a channel of communication and an example of digital artefact that captures the branding practices through time (Marwick, 2015).

### **3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A sample is a subset of the population selected for study, while a sampling technique is the procedure used to select this subset (Creswell et al., 2007). In qualitative research, non-probability sampling is typically employed because the aim is to gather deep insights rather than generalize findings (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

In this study, a sample of 10 Ghanaian football players were selected. This sample size was adequate for such a qualitative inquiry, allowing for data saturation while enabled deep exploration.

The sampling technique employed in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a deliberate choosing of subjects principled on their capacity to interpret a particular subject, notion, or circumstance (Silverman, 2020). It involves selecting participants based on their relevance to the research question (Dodgson, 2017). This ensured that those selected posed the requisite knowledge, experience, and professional insight necessary to contribute meaningfully to the research.

As Hammarberg et al. (2016) opines, as used in qualitative and mixed approaches in research, purposive sampling includes a repetitive system of choosing research subjects more often than commencing with a prearranged sampling setting. The choosing mechanism includes identifying topics, ideas, and criteria via monitoring and reflection.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection instruments refer to the tools or techniques used to gather information relevant to the research questions (Creswell et al., 2007).

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the main instruments for data collection. This is due to its flexibility, how depth it allows information to be collected and richness of the data. The research spoke with football players, to delve into how they use social media for their brand marketing. The approach enabled the researcher to investigate the predetermined topics and additionally to inquire beyond the unexpected topics that arise in the discussion (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The questions of the interview are open, and are developed around these areas:

- Types of social media platforms used and why.
- Brand strategies used on social media.

- Effectiveness of social media in improving their market value.
- Effectiveness of social media in improving their public image.

The interview was carried out on a face-to-face and online format (via Zoom), depending on the availability and willingness to cooperate. In some instances, audio recording was obtained and transcribed.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of Instruments (Including Pre-testing)**

In qualitative research, validity refers to the credibility or trustworthiness of findings, while reliability concerns the consistency of the research process (Silverman, 2020).

To ensure rigor authenticity and trustworthiness of this qualitative research, the study adopted the following criteria.

First is the Triangulation. The Triangulation is a key strategy used in this qualitative research to enhance credibility, trustworthiness and depth to the findings by combining multiple sources or perspectives (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

Triangulation is appropriate and valuable in enriching the interpretive process and confirming patterns in participant narratives. Data triangulation was used to study the multiple data sources.

Using varied sources for the study enabled the researcher cross-validate themes and ensure a more comprehensive or in-depth understanding and also give credibility and authenticity to findings (Silverman, 2020).

Another mechanism used is member checking, also known as participant validation. It is an important trustworthiness strategy used in qualitative research to ensure findings accurately reflect participants' experiences and meanings. It entails returning data, themes or interpretations

collected to the participants to confirm that their views are accurately represented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In this study, this step is particularly crucial as it enabled the validation of the lived experiences of participants being interpreted and thematically analyzed.

To ensure reliability, a pre-test of the interview guide was conducted with two Ghanaian footballers who did not form part of the main study. Feedback from this pre-test helped to refine the wording and sequence of questions for clarity and relevance.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. They were held online over the Zoom, and face-to-face where feasible, provided that the participants are available. Each of the interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and aimed at discussing the motivation, strategies, and experiences of the players in using social media to build their personal brands.

The discussion was guided by an interview guide containing open-ended questions and there was flexibility of probing and follow-up questions. The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants to provide accuracy and detailed notes were made in case recording is not allowed.

The transcription was done word-to-word and stored under secured conditions with the use of pseudonyms to guarantee confidentiality. The studies provided chances to the respondents to go through their transcripts to ensure accuracy and to elaborate answers. This study offers in depth information on how Ghanaian football players utilise social media in their quest to build and market their brands and maintain ethical and methodological integrity.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Procedure**

Data analysis involves organizing and interpreting collected information to derive meaning (Dodgson, 2017). The study utilized the thematic analysis as the primary method for data analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing and interpreting themes within qualitative data. Thematic analysis was employed because of its flexibility to explore different angles of participants' perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It led to the in-depth comprehension of the lived experiences of the participants which aligned with the design of the study.

It works especially well for exploratory research that aims to comprehend the experiences, viewpoints and tactics of participants, in this case the way Ghanaian football players use social media to market their brands (Creswell, 2013).

The process includes:

1. Familiarization with the data (reading and re-reading transcripts).
2. Coding significant statements or elements.
3. Identifying emerging themes and patterns.
4. Interpreting themes in relation to existing literature and theories (Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory and Framing Theory).

The analysis focused on how Ghanaian footballers represent themselves online, how they frame their brand messages, and how followers engage with their digital personas.

### **3.11 Ethical Consideration**

Research ethics safeguard participants and maintain scholarly integrity (Smith et al., 2019). Informed Consent as an ethical consideration was applied. I made sure the participants (football

players) at least understand what they were doing. I gave elaborated explanation of how the data will be utilized, retained and shared. I consider the use of consent forms especially in the interviews.

Privacy and Confidentiality of participants was respected. Anonymization was used to preserve the data of participants. Audio forms, transcripts and electronic files are safely stored in encrypted and password off protected formats. Publications or presentations exclude any content that can be identified. The study fully complies with the Data protection act and institutional ethics.

There was also a voluntary participation and right to withdraw. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or penalty.

### **3.12 Chapter summary**

The chapter has provided the blueprint of the methodology used to investigate how Ghanaian football players utilize social media to sell their brands. The study followed an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative case study design and relies on semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the players who have an active social media presence were part of the study, and the validity, reliability, and ethical considerations guaranteed the credibility of the study. The data analysis and results will be given in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with Ghanaian football players across the Premier League, First Division, and Women's League. Guided by three research questions, the findings are analyzed through a qualitative lens, employing thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights.

#### **4.2 Preliminary Descriptions**

This study explored the social media use among eight Ghanaian football players (six males, two females) drawn from the Ghana Premier League, Division One and the Ghana Women's Premier League. Participants were aged 20–26 years, representing a range of experience levels and league participation. All participants were active on at least one social media platform, predominantly Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and X (formerly Twitter). Most respondents managed their social media accounts personally, with no professional public relations or media managers.

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual football player, focusing on their personal accounts, posting behaviors, audience engagement, and perception of social media as a branding and career development tool.

### 4.3 Participant Demographics

<b>RESPONDENT</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>LEAGUE</b>
R1	Male	24	Premier League
R2	Male	20	Premier League
R3	Male	20	Division One
R4	Male	24	Division One
R5	Female	22	Women's Premier League
R6	Male	23	Premier League
R7	Female	26	Women's Premier League
R8	Male	23	Division One

This demographic overview illustrates the diverse sample in terms of gender, age, and league level, allowing for a holistic understanding of social media use and personal branding among Ghanaian football players.

### 4.4 Findings Organized by Research Questions

#### 4.4.1 Research Question 1: What are the types of social media platforms usually used by Ghanaian football players and why?

##### **Social Media Platforms and Motivations**

All eight respondents actively used at least one social media platform, most commonly Facebook, TikTok and WhatsApp, with some using Instagram and X.

Respondents described their use of these platforms as motivated by communication, visibility, and access to information.

(R7) stated:

“I use WhatsApp to chat with my friends and I get important football information from Facebook.”

(R4) added:

“Facebook, X and TikTok have huge numbers and this sends my content to a global audience... I use this opportunity to market myself.”

The platforms were selected based on familiarity, ease of use, and potential reach. For many respondents, Facebook offered the largest audience, while TikTok and Instagram were valued for their visual storytelling potential, especially for sharing training videos, match highlights, and lifestyle snippets.

From Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective, these platforms serve as stages for self-performance, allowing athletes to manage how their professional identities are perceived by diverse audiences. Within Framing Theory, these platforms also allow footballers to shape narratives, emphasizing success, discipline, and engagement to attract attention and validation.

#### **4.4.2 Research Question 2: What are the key branding strategies used by Ghanaian football players on social media?**

##### **Branding Strategies**

###### Professional Content and Performance Image

Respondents predominantly presented themselves as disciplined professionals through carefully curated posts highlighting training sessions, match highlights, awards, and achievements.

(R1) shared:

“I mostly post a video of me training or playing matches for people to know how hard working I am.”

This aligns with Goffman’s idea of front-stage performance, where footballers project commitment and athletic ability to impress their audience. Through the lens of Framing Theory, such posts function as identity frames that define what kind of player they are, dedicated, focused, and deserving of recognition.

### **Personalized and Unique Branding Styles**

Respondents described unique approaches to self-presentation, such as using distinct captions or styles.

(R7) noted:

“The styles and the captions I give to my posts are always unique.”

This personalization is a framing act, emphasizing individuality and marketability in a crowded digital field. Footballers shape their frame to appeal both emotionally and professionally to audiences.

### **Self-Management and Resource Constraints**

Most respondents managed their social media independently due to limited financial resources.

R1 explained:

“I manage my social media platforms myself. I can’t afford the services of a social media manager.”

This self-management represents backstage labor in Goffman's dramaturgical model. The unseen work behind maintaining a polished front-stage appearance. Despite lacking professional support, players demonstrated intuitive understanding of digital branding principles.

### **Balancing Professional and Personal Life**

Respondents were cautious about sharing too much personal information.

R5 stated:

"I normally post my professional activities during the league season and post non-football activities during the off-season periods."

This selective self-disclosure reflects strategic impression management, balancing authenticity with professionalism. Through framing, players emphasize their dedication while minimizing personal vulnerability.

### **4.4.3 Research Question 3: How effective can social media improve the public image and market value of Ghanaian football players?**

#### **Effectiveness of Social Media**

##### **Visibility and Recognition**

Social media significantly enhanced the visibility of the players.

(R1) mentioned:

"Through social media, a lot of people I never dreamt of knowing have got to know me and some of them even share my posts when they find them interesting."

(R3) also affirmed:

“I have become popular through the use of social media. People meet me and mention my name even though I’ve never met them”

This visibility creates a positive feedback loop: increased engagement leads to validation, reinforcing the player’s digital persona. In dramaturgical terms, this audience feedback maintains the actor’s confidence and role performance.

### **Career Opportunities and Market Value**

Respondents cited tangible benefits of social media, such as club transfers, agent contacts, and sponsorships.

R2 recounted:

“I shared videos from the national team and I got contacted by my current team.”

Similarly, R4 shared:

“Through social media I met an agent... that gave me an opportunity.”

These experiences illustrate the instrumental framing of social media: posts are curated to project professionalism and attract market attention. Players deliberately frame themselves as valuable commodities in the global football market.

### **Managing Negative Publicity**

Respondents reported developing resilience toward criticism.

(R7) reflected:

“They used to affect me emotionally but now, I’ve understood that not everyone will like you, so criticisms are normal.”

In Goffman's dramaturgical terms, this shows a mature ability to separate front-stage and back-stage experiences, acknowledging criticism privately but maintaining composure publicly. Framing Theory helps explain how these athletes recontextualize negative feedback as growth opportunities rather than threats to their self-image.

### **Long-Term Impact and Digital Reputation**

Most players believed that social media would continue to shape football careers in Ghana.

R8 explained:

“Branding is a part of marketing... and this can easily be done through social media.”

Through both theoretical lenses, this finding highlights social media as a performative marketplace, where continuous framing of the self-determines visibility, trust, and employability.

### **Challenges and Risks**

While most respondents viewed social media as beneficial, they acknowledged risks such as scams, reputational harm, and emotional strain.

R1 warned:

“If you don't take care, you can be scammed or even end up having a problem with someone.”

These vulnerabilities reflect the fragility of front-stage performances, where missteps or misunderstandings can threaten carefully built reputations. Framing Theory also suggests that once an athlete's frame is disrupted through controversy or misinformation, it becomes difficult to restore control over public perception.

#### **4.5 Discussion of Findings**

The study demonstrates that Ghanaian football players strategically employ social media to construct and sustain their public identities. Viewed through Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory, social media serves as a digital stage for impression management, where footballers perform professionalism, skill, and determination before their online audiences. Their carefully selected posts, captions, and interactions represent front-stage acts that align with societal expectations of successful athletes.

Behind this, however, lies extensive back-stage work, the emotional labor, planning, and self-regulation required to maintain the illusion of control and consistency. Players consciously curate what to reveal and conceal, managing boundaries between personal authenticity and professional image.

From the perspective of Framing Theory, footballers construct frames that highlight specific aspects of their identity - discipline, talent and resilience, while minimizing vulnerability. Their posts act as interpretive cues guiding how fans, scouts, and clubs perceive them. By consistently framing themselves as "dedicated professionals," they increase their marketability and appeal in a highly competitive sporting environment.

The findings also underscore how social media democratizes branding: athletes without formal representation can independently build their public image, connect with global audiences, and attract professional opportunities. However, this autonomy also exposes them to new challenges, emotional fatigue, online abuse, and reputational risk, making digital literacy and strategic communication training essential for sustainable career growth.

Ultimately, social media operates as both a platform for self-promotion and a site of identity negotiation. Footballers must continuously perform, adapt, and reframe themselves to maintain audience relevance. Through the combined lenses of dramaturgy and framing, this study reveals the complexity of being a modern athlete, where the pursuit of visibility merges with the performance of authenticity.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study, integrating them with Goffman's and Framing theoretical perspectives. The results underscore that Ghanaian footballers use social media as a stage for professional self-performance, strategically framing themselves as disciplined and marketable athletes. While social media democratizes visibility and opportunity, it also demands careful management of authenticity, emotion, and risk. These insights provide a foundation for informed policies and future scholarly inquiry into the intersection of sport, identity, and digital media

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the study's key findings, draws conclusions grounded in the empirical evidence and theoretical lenses used (Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory and Framing Theory), acknowledges the study's limitations, and offers practical and research-oriented recommendations. The aim is to provide a clear, actionable close to the thesis and to indicate next steps for stakeholders and future researchers.

#### **5.2 Summary of Key Findings**

The study explored how Ghanaian football players use social media for branding and career advancement. Data were collected from eight players (six males; two females) across the Ghana Premier League, Division One League and the Women's Premier League. The findings are summarised below by research question.

##### **RQ1: Platforms and motivations**

**Dominant platforms:** Players most commonly used Facebook and TikTok, with regular use of WhatsApp for personal communication and selective use of Instagram and X/Twitter for career visibility.

**Motivations:** Platform choice was driven by audience reach, ease of use/familiarity, entertainment/information value, and career-promotion potential. Players used platforms both to connect socially and to expose their football performance to wider (sometimes global) audiences.

## **RQ2: Branding strategies**

Professional content focus: Players consistently posted training videos, match highlights, goals and achievements to convey work ethics and competence.

Distinctive self-presentation: Some players used unique captions, dressing style, or signature playing traits (e.g., free-kick specialist) to differentiate themselves.

Self-management: All participants managed their social media accounts themselves; hiring PR or social media managers was uncommon due to resource constraints.

Boundary-management: Players typically minimised personal disclosures, sharing personal content only occasionally or strategically (e.g., off-season).

## **RQ3: Effectiveness for image & market value**

Visibility & recognition: Social media increased players' public recognition. Fans, journalists, coaches, and agents often discovered players via online content.

Career opportunities: Several respondents reported direct career benefits: national team call-ups, agent contacts, club interest and contract offers traced to social media posts.

Emotional/ reputational management: Players developed strategies to cope with criticism (ignoring comments, limiting exposure), showing growing digital resilience.

Long-term outlook: Participants generally believed social media would continue to shape career trajectories and the visibility of Ghanaian football.

### **Cross-cutting: Challenges and constraints**

Risks: Scams, critical comments, copyright strikes and misinterpretation of content were recurring concerns.

Resource limitations: Lack of professional support (media officers/PR) and logistical constraints for content creation (no designated photographers, poor infrastructure) limited players' capacity to capitalize on social media.

Gendered notes: While both genders used platforms similarly, some female respondents described an emotional adjustment process to criticism, suggesting potential gendered nuances in experience.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Grounded in the data and interpreted through Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory and Framing Theory, the study concludes that social media now functions as a dynamic digital stage where football players engage in continuous impression management. In line with Goffman's front-stage performance, players curate their posts to project professionalism, discipline, ambition, and marketability. These visible performances are supported by extensive back-stage work, planning content, editing visuals, rehearsing captions, assessing audience reactions, and navigating criticism. Together, these processes demonstrate that self-presentation on social media is intentional, strategic, and deeply tied to players' aspirations for upward mobility in the sport.

The findings further revealed that athletes actively frame their identities and opportunities by choosing what aspects of their lives, skills, and personalities to highlight or conceal. Through selective posting, narrative construction, and calculated visibility, players frame themselves as competent, desirable, and coachable. These framing choices influence how scouts, agents, clubs,

and supporters interpret their value, ultimately shaping their perceived worth and potential within competitive football ecosystems.

Additionally, the evidence shows that social media has a direct and material impact on players' career trajectories. It does not merely offer symbolic visibility; it serves as a practical recruitment and networking tool. In environments like Ghana, where traditional scouting systems are weak or underdeveloped, digital platforms enable players to reach decision-makers who would otherwise remain inaccessible. As a result, online presence becomes not just an optional supplement but an essential mechanism for talent discovery and career advancement.

However, this autonomy in digital self-presentation also introduces significant vulnerabilities. While players gain more control over their narratives, the lack of professional guidance exposes them to reputational risks and emotional strain. Poorly framed content, miscommunication, or low-quality posts can undermine opportunities, while constant audience scrutiny can contribute to psychological stress. Thus, the freedom to self-manage online identities is accompanied by potential pitfalls that can negatively affect career prospects.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

The study generated valuable and nuanced insights into how Ghanaian football players use social media for identity construction, career advancement, and audience engagement. However, several methodological and contextual limitations constrain the generalizability and scope of the findings.

First, the study relied on a purposive sample of eight players. While this sample size was suitable for in-depth qualitative exploration, it restricts the extent to which the findings can be broadly generalized across other national contexts. The limited number of participants means that important variations in experiences and practices may not be fully captured.

Additionally, although the sample included both male and female players from different leagues, it did not systematically account for diversity in terms of player positions, years of experience, club resources, or geographical backgrounds. These factors may influence social media practices and could have enriched the analytical depth had they been intentionally incorporated.

Another constraint relates to the reliance on self-report data gathered through interviews. Participants' accounts may have been shaped by social desirability, with respondents potentially presenting idealized versions of their online behaviors or downplaying practices they perceived as unprofessional.

The study also adopted a cross-sectional design, capturing players' experiences at a single point in time. This limits understanding of how digital practices and career trajectories evolve longitudinally, particularly as players transition through different career stages or adapt to emerging trends online.

Finally, the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms poses a temporal constraint. Platform-specific features, norms, and affordances change frequently; therefore, some insights may be time-bound and may not fully apply as platforms evolve. Collectively, these limitations call for cautious interpretation of the findings and highlight opportunities for strengthening methodological approaches in future studies.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

### **For Clubs and the Ghana Football Association (GFA):**

Clubs and the GFA should prioritise structured digital literacy and branding training for players and staff. Regular workshops focusing on social media strategy, privacy management, copyright

awareness, basic content creation, and crisis communication would equip stakeholders with essential skills for navigating the digital sports ecosystem.

Additionally, clubs should strengthen their internal media capacity by assigning a digital or media officer to support players with content planning, production, scheduling, and rights management. Establishing a formal social media policy is vital. One that outlines acceptable conduct, ethical content practices, response mechanisms to negative engagement, and guidelines for safeguarding personal data.

Beyond training and policy frameworks, clubs should also invest in basic content infrastructure by providing simple tools such as phone mounts, editing software, and periodic professional photography or videography sessions to enhance the quality and consistency of player-generated media.

### **For Players:**

Players are encouraged to adopt a more strategic and intentional approach to their online presence. Developing a content calendar that aligns with matchdays, training sessions, personal achievements, and club-related events can help maintain consistent branding and professional visibility while still incorporating occasional personal posts to build relatability.

Mental health protection is also crucial; players should employ coping strategies that limit exposure to harmful comments, such as disabling comments on sensitive posts or seeking support from peers and professionals when necessary. Increasing awareness of digital rights and copyright laws will also help players avoid issues related to content takedowns or infringement.

Moreover, players can strengthen their visibility and marketability by leveraging networked amplification by collaborating with teammates, clubs, journalists, and influencers to broaden their reach and enhance opportunities for scouting.

### **For Agents and Journalists:**

Agents and journalists play an important role in shaping athletes' digital narratives and career trajectories. Agents should work collaboratively with clubs to create transparent and ethical scouting pathways that utilise curated digital content for talent identification.

Journalists, on the other hand, must adhere to standards of ethical reporting by verifying information and providing context for online performances. Avoiding sensationalism is especially important, as inaccurate or exaggerated reporting can harm players' reputations and distort public perception. By practising responsible media engagement, journalists and agents can contribute to a healthier and more supportive digital environment for Ghanaian footballers.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a comprehensive synthesis of the study, integrating its key findings, theoretical interpretations, limitations, and recommendations for both practice and future research. It began by clearly outlining its purpose: to consolidate the evidence gathered across the study, draw meaningful conclusions grounded in Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory and Framing Theory, and critically reflect on the methodological constraints that shaped the research. Additionally, the chapter aimed to present practical, actionable guidance for players, clubs, and other stakeholders within Ghanaian football to enhance digital engagement and career development.

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# **Appendix**

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Verbal Consent**

Do you confirm that you have read or been informed about the purpose of this study, understand that your participation is voluntary, and that you consent to take part in this interview?

### **Interview Questions**

#### **1. Types of Social Media Platforms Used**

- a. What's your name, age and the league you play?
- b. Which social media platforms do you actively use (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, Snapchat)?
- c. What motivates you to choose these particular platforms over others?
- d. How do you think each platform helps you connect with your fans or showcase your career?
- e. Are there any challenges you face when using these platforms?

#### **2. Key Branding Strategies**

- a. How would you describe your personal brand as a football player?
- b. What specific strategies do you use on social media to build and promote this brand (e.g., posting match highlights, lifestyle content, endorsements)?
- c. Do you work with a manager, agent, or PR professional to manage your social media branding?
- d. How do you balance between sharing personal life content and professional football-related posts?

e. In your opinion, what makes your branding style unique compared to other Ghanaian footballers?

### **3. Effectiveness of Social Media in Image & Market Value**

a. In what ways has social media helped you improve your public image as a footballer?

b. Do you believe your presence on social media has increased your market value or career opportunities (e.g., sponsorships, transfers, endorsements)?

c. Can you share an example where social media directly benefited your career?

d. How do you handle negative publicity or criticism on social media?

e. What role do you think social media will play in shaping the future careers of Ghanaian football players?