

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR CIVIC ACTIVISM IN GHANA.

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OCTOBER 2015

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that with the exception of references which I duly acknowledge, this study is entirely my own work

.....*Audrey*.....

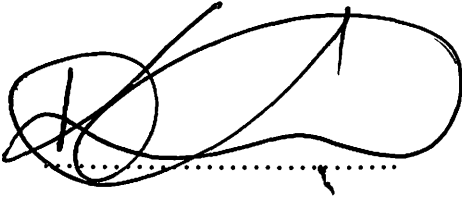
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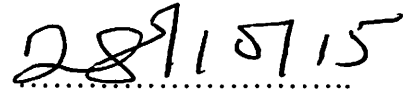
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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this research work has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a vertical stroke, positioned above a dotted line.

Dr Kobby Mensah

A handwritten date '28/1/15' in black ink, positioned above a dotted line.

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Derrick Dekalu for his love, support for our children Lois and Pearl while I spent long hours outside the home. And to all who supported and inspired me when I had to combine the role of a wife, mother, journalist and student. Most grateful and God bless you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With God all things are possible. I am grateful to the almighty God for his guidance, inspiration and strength to accomplish this study and for taking me through this programme successfully and making this work possible.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the role social media plays in civic activism in Ghana. It drew on recent actions or happenings that constitute civic activism and explored the relationship between them and social media. In effect, the study was aimed at identifying the role social media plays in terms of mobilizing and organizing people for demonstrations, which is a key component of civic activism in Ghana. The motivation for this study was derived from the significant roles social media played in major activities such as #DumsorMustStop vigil and #OccupyFlagstaff demonstration. The social network analysis and technological determinism theories underpinned this study, while some related literature were reviewed to identify how the current study relates to the previous existing scholarly materials on the subject. Through a survey of 100 respondents sampled from Madina, the study found out that social media tools are key components of recent civic activism actions. One key finding was that social media platforms are used by sections of the citizens to post their sentiments and identify themselves with the sentiments of the demonstrators. This means that through social media, even people who are unable to be physically on the demonstration grounds are able to express their positions on the cause of the demonstrations. Furthermore, this study revealed that social media appear to be a faster, cheaper, convenient and efficient way of mobilizing people for civic activism. The study concluded that social media, as new media channels, have come to stay, hence it behoves on organizers of protests via social media to sensitize their members to avoid using abusive language and insults on their social media during civic activism discourse. This, in the view of the researcher, is necessary for ensuring proper dispassionate discussion of issues of national interest.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter basically constitutes the introductory aspect of the study. It presents an overview of the study through the background statements as well as defining the problem of the study. In addition, this chapter contains the research questions, research objectives and the scope of study. This first chapter ends with the significance and the organization of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Ghana has witnessed a number of civic actions and movements throughout its history. Many groups have been formed with the motive of demanding good governance and accountability from government officials and elected representatives. In fact, the cause for civic activism was given a major boost following the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution, which returned the country into multiparty democratic rule. This period also ushered Ghana into the fourth republic. Under the new constitution, freedom of expression was significantly highlighted and it was given enough strength. What this meant was that, all individuals who could not demand accountability from the hitherto military regime, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), now had the voice and the platform to express their sentiments on how the country is being governed.

The demand for accountability and transparency was further enhanced by the creation of an independent and free press, as guaranteed by the constitution in chapter 12. In fact, Ghana is among the few countries that have devoted an entire chapter in their constitution to the press. This underscores the importance the nation attaches to free and uncensored flow of information, which is seen as a catalyst for demanding and ensuring accountability and transparency. Article 162 of the constitution reads:

- Freedom and independence of the media are hereby guaranteed.
- Subject to this Constitution and any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, there shall be no censorship in Ghana.
- There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information.
- Editors and publishers of newspapers and other institutions of the mass media shall not be subject to control or interference by Government, nor shall they be penalized or harassed for their editorial opinions and views, or the content of their publications.
- All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana.

Given the guaranteed backing of press freedom by the 1992 constitution, the private press, which was mostly gagged under the erstwhile authoritarian regime, began to spring up. In effect, it was

considered that there was no other means of achieving citizens' freedom of expression without linking it with media freedom and independence. This means press freedom is seen as the bedrock and the anchor around which the citizens' right and freedom of expression revolves.

The return to democracy also marked another feat in the annals of Ghana, in that it resulted in the formation of political parties which were to contest for power every four years to rule the country. This is in harmony with the principles of democracy and it is succinctly enshrined in the 1992 Constitution. The formation of political parties means diversity of opinions and an intensified demand for accountability, probity and justice from the populace. The multiparty nature of the fourth republic also meant that the citizens have the option of voting for another party during elections, which are to be held in an open, free and fair manner. Civil society organizations and pressure groups also emerged in this era to demand good governance from government. The pressure groups were either offshoots of political parties or independent concerned group of citizens.

These groups were expected to press home their demands in a more peaceful manner, without resorting to violence and bloodshed, as witnessed in the 1979 and 1981 revolutions. To this end, peaceful demonstrations, protests, picketing, roundtable discussions and dialogue were advanced as the most effective means of drawing government's attention to the concerns of the citizens or a particular group. This led to the era of civic activism, where workers' unions, trades union, civil society organizations and pressure groups were expected to adopt therefore mentioned strategies to achieve political, economic and social correctness. In view of the above, civic activism in Ghana has been on the rise since 1992, with the period between 1992 and 2000 being

the formative years of organized agitations. Some of the demonstrations that have been organized in this Fourth Republic era include “Kum me Preko” in 2000 by then opposition political party, New Patriotic Party (NPP) against the government over the introduction of the Valued Added Tax (VAT). Additionally, there were series of demonstrations by a pressure group known as the Committee for joint action (CJA) especially between 2000 and 2008. Within that same time, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), then in opposition, also embarked on a number of protests to register their displeasure with the NPP government at the time. Other notable groups that have organized demonstrations are the Alliance for Accountable Government (AFAG), Let My Vote Count Alliance among others.

In the organization of these demonstrations, the mass media were seen as the major mobilizer of the members of the agitated groups. The mass media were further used also a medium for conveying the demands of the disgruntled groups of citizens. Since the media were free from governmental control and repression, they offered their platforms for civic causes such as demonstrations. The assistance often came in the form of massive coverage of the demonstration, sometimes covered live, interviewing organizers to put their messages across to the populace with the aim of influencing public opinion and enriching the public sphere with discussions such as the demonstration. The media also acted as a mobilizer for the demonstrations by announcing the approved routes and designated locations of the demonstration for the interested audience.

So instrumental were the media in demonstrations that it became almost impossible to organize successful protests without the active engagement of the media. Radio, in particular, was most effective in conveying the exact mood of the protestors in the heat of the demonstration while the

newspaper and television afforded the opportunity to see the actions through still and motion pictures respectively. However, with the emergence of the new media, thus the internet and its attendant technologies, the phase of demonstration have changed drastically.

The internet has widened the scope and availability of media and communication channels. The growth of the internet is attributable to latest development in Information Communication Technologies that the Internet, with its attendant World Wide Web (www). The Internet has become more popular, despite the fact that it is the latest among the various media to appear on the scene. Due to the newness of the internet as a communication channel, it is classified under the broader umbrella of new media. As part of the new media technologies, social media appear to be dictating the mode of organization of protests and demonstrations in Ghana.

Recent demonstration such as the #OccupyFlagstaff and #DumsorMustStopwere engineered by social media in terms of mobilization and organization. The hashstags generated on social media to aid in mobilizing people for the demonstrations were coincidentally the actual names of the demonstrations.

1.3 Background of #OccupyFlagstaffHouse #DumsorMustStop Demonstrations

Arguably, since the social media era began, two demonstrations have dominated the news media space #OccupyFlagstaffHouse demoand #DumsorMustStopvigil. The unique feature of these civic actions is that the call for these protests was buoyed by public outcry of the poor governance in the country. These dissatisfactions were expressed on the social media space of individual citizens. Accumulation of these social media concerns indicated that majority of the citizens are not comfortable with the governance system in the country.

On 1st July 2014, a group known as Concerned Ghanaians for Responsible Governance (CGRG) but now commonly referred to as #OccupyGhana or #OccupyGhana movement staged a demonstration. It must be emphasized that members of the Occupy Ghana who partook in the demonstration used social media to mobilize themselves. They were predominantly in the middle class economic group. According to the organizers, the protest was triggered by the deteriorating economic situation and governance in the country. Some of the problems include Ghana's unstable currency, which was depreciating against the major currencies over the last seven months at the time. This situation was further compounded by inadequate supply of water, electricity, declining healthcare, astronomical rise in levels of joblessness, utility price hikes. There were also widespread reports of corruption involving senior public officials and their cronies in business.

On the scheduled date, the group assembled at the Efua Sutherland Children's Park in the capital, Accra, and marched to the Flagstaff House, the seat of the government, to present a petition to President John Dramani Mahama. The concerns raised by the protesters also corroborated that of countless individuals and diverse groups - ranging from faith-based organisations, academia, farmer-based associations, non-governmental organisations, women groups, students and political parties. As part of efforts to demand good governance, on July 11 2014, the group launched a new campaign tagged "The RED Campaign". The campaign sought to engage society through social media by entreating users to wear red shirts and dresses every Friday. In furtherance of this goal, Ghanaians were encouraged to wear locally-made dresses and wear the colour red to indicate solidarity with the campaign. They are also encouraged to post photos and

videos of themselves wearing red on various social media via hashtags #redfriday and #occupyflagstaffhouse.

Similarly, on May 16, 2015, the erratic supply of electricity, which had reached a crisis point and compelled the Occupy Ghana to demonstrate the previous year, continued unabated, thereby leading to another civic cause, a vigil. The name for the demonstration was also derived from a social media hashtag, #DumsorMustStop. "Dumsor" is an Akan word that was coined to describe the frequency with which power was turned on and off for public and commercial purposes. The complaints on social media again necessitated this action. It began with a series of tweets from Ghanaian actress, Yvonne Nelson, who took to Twitter, a social media platform, to express her disappointment in government for offering no solution to the problem, which has persisted for more than three years.

Her incessant tweets caught the attention of other celebrities such as Sarkodie, Lydia Forson and Van Vicker, who also 'tweeted' related messages to their numerous fans. Sooner than later, the buzz word "Dumsor", which had been enjoying a great deal of attention from social media users, was severely trending, with the hashtag, #DumsorMustStop, leading the crusade. A date was set up for the vigil, which was aimed at drawing government's attention to the negative impact dumsor was having on the commercial fortunes of the citizens. The vigil attracted thousands of people from far and near. It is the most single civic action that attracted a large pool of celebrities, from acting, music to comedy. From the perspective of Anangfio (2015), the attention the vigil got meant that, it was successful even before it was held. It had almost everyone including government officials, political parties, celebrities and even ordinary

Ghanaians talking and sharing their opinions about the movement. These feats were achieved mainly because of the effective deployment of social media tools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social media is no longer a tool for just social networking; it has assumed many dimensions and uses. Social media has proven to be useful tool for almost every facets of human living or economy, ranging from education, politics, marketing to organization of protests and demonstration. Unlike the early years in the development of computers and computer-based media, digital media are now commonplace and pervasive, having been taken up by a wide range of individuals and institutions in all walks of life. It is therefore not surprising that social media is now dictating and facilitating smooth and effective organization of demonstrations in Ghana and other countries.

The first widely-recognized use of social media as a tool of political revolution occurred in Moldova in 2009. Activists used Facebook, LiveJournal (an electronic diary service/social network), and Twitter to organize protests and bring attention to the political unrest in the former Soviet republic (Safranek, 2012). In the spring of 2011, the world watched as revolutions swept the Middle East, from Tunisia, to Egypt, to Syria and beyond. Startling images captured by civilians on the scene and shared on social media were viewed by people around the world. This means the use of social media as demonstration tool is becoming a phenomenon worth studying.

In Ghana, two major civic actions, #OccupyFlagstaff and #DumorMustStop, were occasioned due to social media complaints by Ghanaians and other groupings. The organizers used the

aforementioned hashtags on Twitter and on Facebook to draw awareness to the situation in Ghana and called on people to partake in their cause. They have Facebook, Twitter accounts that help them mobilize support. People who wore red on Fridays in solidarity with the Red Friday Campaign posted their pictures on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to draw the public's awareness to their cause.

In view of the above, the study is being conducted to establish specifically, the role social media plays during civic protests and revolutions. The researcher is curious to know the impact social media is having on these activities and possibly come out with recommendations on how social media could be harnessed with regards to civic activism.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To identify the role social media play in civic activism
- To establish whether or not social media is effective for organizing people for civic causes
- To reveal the social media sites that enhance the actions of civic activists

1.4 Research Questions

- What roles do social media play in civic activism?
- Is social media an effective tool for mobilizing actions for civic activism?
- How is social media used as a tool for civic activism?

- Which social media platforms are most suitable for organizing activities of civic activists?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will add to the list of available resources on the social media concept and will be useful to other researchers as a secondary data for reference. This means the research will expand the frontiers of social media and civic activism and add to knowledge. Social media, as an emerging discipline, requires more researches to explore most of its numerous perspectives, one of which this study attempts to answer – how social groupings use them to protest in a civil manner.

The study will provide information on how organizers of #OccupyFlagstaff, #DumorMustStop and other mini demonstrations use the social media; hence it will be reliable material of reference for other civic groups who have the same intentions of using social media to mobilize public support and awareness of their cause.

Another significance of this study is its ability to underscore the essence of the social media and introduce people to the need to explore them beyond just social networking but also for socio-economic purposes.

1.6 Scope of Study

This research looked at social media in general but was limited to only Twitter and Facebook, because these two appear to dominate in terms of their demonstrations and protests. Also, Facebook and twitter are more popular than the rest of the social networking sites. However, the

research also touch on some minor social media such as YouTube, due to the strategic role it played, where people uploaded and viewed videos of the demonstrations and other activities of the group. Many actions constitute civic activism; however this study was confined to civic activism as a form of demonstrations. Hence, this study was limited to demonstrations that relied on social media for mobilization and organization.

1.7 Organization of Study

This study was divided into five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction to the study and other areas such as background of the study, problem statement, research questions and objectives which consist of specific and general objectives, scope of the study. significance of the study. Chapter two dealt with the literature review, which is made up of detailed review of related studies, formulation of theoretical or conceptual framework, testing and rationale for the hypothesis as well as operational definitions of terms. Chapter three looked at the methodology and methodological issues including research design, source of data used, population, sampling techniques and sample selection, data collection technique and instruments. Chapter four is basically data analysis, discussions and conclusions. Here the data were interpreted and translated from the tables, Graphs and charts in Chapter three. Responses by respondents were also analyzed. Finally, there was Chapter five, which talked about summary, limitations, conclusions and recommendations for the study. The research was finalized with select bibliography, appendix and questionnaires to and of the study for easy reference and further studies to be carried upon.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter appraises previous research by scholars and researchers. The chapter starts with the theoretical underpinnings of the research as well as the review of related studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study utilized the technological determinism theory.

2.1.1 Technological Determinism

Technological Determinism (TD) theory was postulated by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. It is a theory that explores the relationship between technology and society. ‘Because of the simple relationship between technology and its capacity to transform society, McLuhan is rightly labelled a technological determinist’ (Marshall, 2004: 31). Technological determinism, simply put, is the idea that technology has important effects on our lives (Adler, 2006). This theory has also had a long and controversial history in the social sciences in general and in organization studies in particular. In spite of the controversy, the theory is viewed as having contributed to knowledge on the impact of technology on society. To this end, McLuhan, who propounded this theory, is credited for having developed a very rich theory that explores the relationship between technology and media and their impact on society.

Technological determinism comes in “harder” and “softer” variants. The distinction characterizes views of both technology’s effects and its causes. Soft technological determinism

argues that technology is one important force amongst others, while hard technological determinism argues that technology is the main or the only significant driver. There another form of determinism which is anti-technological determinism. This view asserts that technology is “neutral,” and that its effects are a mainly or entirely a function of social context” (ibid). As concerns technology’s causes, one form of soft TD allows that social factors may shape technology even though, once shaped, technology’s effects are (weakly or strongly) determinate; hard TD argues that social influences have little effect on the nature of technology; anti-TD views highlight the social forces that shape the design and development of technology.

Fuchs (2010) asserts that three schools of thoughts have emerged when it comes to an analysis of the technology-society relationship. The first one is the technological determinism thesis, which assumes that technology has effects or influences society in many ways. The second position sees society as a major determinant of technology and that the former determines the extent to which the latter is used. The final one walks the middle ground by indicating that the relationship between the variables is symbiotic and dialectical. This means that each shapes and influences the other.

The theory is underpinned by some assumptions. Firstly, technological determinism scholars, led McLuhan (1964), posit that “media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how society operates as we move from one technological age to another”. Thus, according to the theory, technology influences and determines every activity of humans. Communication technologies precisely, changes and influences the lifestyles and activities of

humans. Technological determinism explores the causal relationship between media technology and society that assumes that a certain media or technology has exactly one specific effect on society and social systems (Fuchs, 2010). Technological determinism assumes that “technologies are the primary cause of major social and historical changes at the macro-social level of societal structures and processes and subtle but profound social and psychological influences at the micro-social level of the regular use of particular kinds of tools” (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004: 40).

A key element in McLuhan’s historical overview of communications is that electric information moving at the speed of light creates new patterns of communication and social interactions. He describes this as ‘an instant implosion’ that reverses the specialism of the print age and contracts the globe to a village in which ‘everybody lives in the utmost proximity created by our electric involvement in one another’s lives’ (McLuhan, 1964 cited in Logan, 2011: 45). This particular view of technological impacts often leads to technological determinism of which there are various forms, all related to traditional notions of determinism (Trusted, 1984).

There are variations of determinism and technological determinism, often distinguished by the extent of human intervention considered possible, the importance of technical constraints, the relative autonomy of technology, and questions of the historical development of technology (e.g., Constant 1989; Ellul, 1954/1964; Gille, 1978/1986b; Hickman, 1990a, 1990b; Ropohl, 1983; Wilkinson, 1964; Winner, 1977 cited in Pannabecker, 2001: 4).

Technological determinism sees technology as developing independently from society, but as inducing certain societal effects with necessity (Kling, Rosenbaum, & Sawyer, 2005:13; Lister et al., 2003:391; Shade, 2003). Technological determinism assumes that “technologies change, either because of scientific advancement or following a logic of their own; and [that] they then have effects on society” (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999:3). It is based on “a simple cause-and-effect-sequence” (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999b: xiv).

Robins & Webster (1999) see technological determinism as a fetishism of technology, with the idea that “technology develops as the sole result of an internal dynamic, and then, unmediated by any other influence moulds society to fit its pattern” (Winner, 1999: 29). Technological determinism is “typified by sentences in which ‘technology,’ or a surrogate like ‘the machine,’ is made the subject of an active predicate: ‘The automobile created suburbia.’ [...] ‘The robots put the riveters out of work’” (Marx & Smith, 1994: ix). These arguments are frequently accompanied by the assumption that technology drives history (Marx & Smith, 1994). Technological determinism can therefore also “be taken to mean that the laws of nature determining human history through technology” (Bimber, 1994, p. 87).

Relating to the topic, it can be explained that with the help of social media, the mode of organizing protests for civic causes has changed significantly. People no longer use the traditional means of mobilizing support. All one needs to do is to create a page on social media and request people to join their cause. Therefore, it can be said that social media, as a media technology, is currently dictating the ways and means in which civic actions are organized. To buttress this point further, the recent #DumsorMustStop demonstration equally rallied support

through social media. Similarly, the recent floods in Accra also generated uproar on social media with the hashtag #AccraFloods, #AccraDisaster and #ThisMustStop.

There is another dimension or alternative to technological determinism, which is the social construction of technology. Critics of TD argue variously that technology itself is socially determined, that technology and social structures co-evolve in a non-deterministic, emergent process, or that the effects of any given technology depend mainly on how it is implemented which is in turn socially determined (Adler, 2006). Given the proliferation of new technologies in modern capitalism, the TD debate is continually renewed. Like Marshall McLuhan's claim that the medium is the message (McLuhan and Fiore 1967), many scholars of digital media technology also believe that the "design of a social technology can greatly determine the kinds of actions that people may coordinate through it" (Bennett and Segerberg 2011: 34).

Pinch and Bijker (1987) argue that technologies are socially constructed, that their design is a manifestation of how groups interpret the social world, which problems they see, and which solutions to these problems they consider adequate. This approach suggests that technical things do not matter at all (Winner, 1999). Proponents of this approach neglect the fact that technologies shape society (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999) and reverses the tenets espoused in favour technological determinism. Therefore, the crux of the social construction of technology is that it is no longer technology that fully determines society, but society that fully determines technology.

Relating this to the current study, one can say that social media, as a technology, could not have organized on its own; it required human efforts to drive it and shape it. Even the extent of usage of social media during social movements and protests, is determined by the users and /or the organizers.

A critical theory of technology and society implies a particular mutual shaping approach that adds the idea that technological development interacts with societal contradictions. This allows us to see the causal relationship of media technology and society as multidimensional and complex: a specific media/technology has multiple potential effects on society and social systems. The potential effects are realized based on how society, interests, power structures, and struggles shape the design and usage of technology in multiple ways that are also potentially contradictory. Feenberg (2002) upholds this in a more succinct way:

Critical theory argues that technology is not a thing in the ordinary sense of the term, but an ‘ambivalent’ process of development suspended between different possibilities. On this view, technology is not a destiny but a scene of struggle. It is a social battlefield, or perhaps a better metaphor would be a ‘parliament of things’ in which civilizational alternatives contend. Critical theory holds that there can be at least two different modern civilizations based on different paths of technical development ... Technologies corresponding to different civilizations thus coexist uneasily within our society (Feenberg, 2002, p. 15).

Relating to the topic, Hughes (1994: 102) says that “social development shapes and is shaped by technology”. While social media has provided the fertile ground for mobilizing actions for

activism, it can also be said that organizers of demonstrations such #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #DumsorMustStop largely determined the extent to which the technology should be used.

In spite of the debate over the theory, Ciastellardi and Patti (2011:32) argue that there is no question that a central tenet of McLuhan's approach to understanding media is that they contribute in a very important if not dominant way to social, political, cultural, educational and economic transformations. McLuhan's notions that 'the medium is the message' and media are 'living vortices of power' are certainly two cases in point. Yet having established McLuhan as a technological determinist in the sense that technology's impact on societal processes is important we are left with the question as to whether or not he was a naïve technological determinist as some have claimed (Ciastellardi and Patti, 2011 p.32).

From the quote above, Ciastellardi and Patti (2011) believe that the theory of technological determinism has afforded insight into understanding the impact of technology on society. It also provided adequate understanding on the operations of the new technologies (which is social media, in the context of this study). McLuhan remarks that "We live today in the age of information and communication because electric media instantly and constantly create a total field of interacting events in which all men participate" (McLuhan, 1964 cited in Ciastellardi & Patti, 2011:32).

2.1.2 Social Network Theory

A social network is a social structure made up of individuals (or organizations) called "nodes", which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as "friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or

relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige” (Granovetter, 2007:1). In its simplest form, a social network is a map of specified ties, such as friendship, between the nodes being studied. Nodes are the individual actors within the networks, and ties are the relationships between the actors. The nodes to which an individual is thus connected are the social contacts of that individual. These concepts are often displayed in a social network diagram, where nodes are the points and ties are the lines. One theory that has been advanced to explain social network is the “social network analysis or theory”.

Social network is a theoretical construct useful in the social sciences to study relationships between individuals, groups, organisations or even entire societies (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). It simply focuses on understanding how patterns of relationships connecting individual people, groups or organizations generate opportunities and contexts for human behaviour. Kadushin (2004) defines a network “as a set of relationships. More formally, a network contains a set of objects and a mapping or description of relations between the objects or nodes (2004:3)”. The theory applies to a variety of levels of analysis from small groups to entire global systems.

Wellman (1988, cited in Adamoli, 2012:46) defines network analysis as a “comprehensive paradigmatic way of taking social structure seriously by studying directly how patterns of ties allocate resources in a social system” (Wellman, 1988: 20). van Dijk (2006) offers two definitions for social network by explaining that they are “social systems with concrete ties in abstract relationships” and “connections between social units made of interactions” (cited in Lehtonen, 2014). These definitions place social network within the sociological context, with major emphasis on how relationships are formed and maintained within a particular system.

Therefore, a social network can be explained as a social structure made up of individuals (or organizations) called "nodes", which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige.

According to Kadushin (2004), social scientists have investigated that three kinds of networks exist – ego-centric, socio-centric and open system networks. Kadushin further explained that ego-centric networks are those networks that are connected with a single node or individual, for example, my good friends, or, all the companies that do business with a particular organisation. To be considered networks these connections must not only be lists of people or organizations, but information must be available about the connections between these people or organizations. Otherwise, there is no network to analyse. A person with a large number of good friends whom he or she can count on is said to have a large “network.” This network cannot be discussed in social network terms, however, unless we know whether and how these people are connected with one another.

According to Kadushin (2004), socio-centric networks are “networks in a box”, and comprising connection between children in a classroom, between executives or workers in an organization. In effect, this is the type of network that exists in formal organised institutions. It is the type of network most human resource managers deploy in line with their duties. The open system networks were identified as the networks in which the boundaries are not necessarily clear; they are not in a box. It is that complex kind of relationship that exists among corporations, nations and global bodies. It usually happens from the adoption of new practices and largely linked to

Everett Rogers's 'Diffusion of Innovation Theory' (Rogers, 1983). In some ways these are the most interesting networks. They are also the most difficult to study.

While the above definitions depict how the phenomenon applies in the context of society, social network theory in the context of this study will be viewed from the media perspective, particularly social media. This means the theory will be applied in a manner such that it can depict how social media enables the formation of relationships and networks for a cause. To this end, van Dijk (2006) explains the term media network, as "media systems connecting senders and receivers and filled with symbols and information" (cited in Lehtonen, 2014). Adamoli (2012) stresses that studies on network analysis tend to focus on the structure of relationships between the internet and society. Lehtonen (2014) asserts that in society, social networks are ably established through various media networks. This means that the media is a critical tool when it comes to explaining how groups, movements and relationships are formed, organized and managed.

Owing to the major influence of the internet over the formation of relationships and networking in modern times, Castells (2009) and van Dijk (2006) have described the current society as a network society. At the heart of the network society is social media, which are technologies that aid in connecting people from all parts of the world. The internet and social media enable communication and connections between ordinary citizens; hence national and transnational network ties are facilitated (Seo & Thorson 2012:347). Furthermore, the internet is now a fundamental information infrastructure for contemporary social movements when it is used as communication tool for building and maintaining social relations (ibid). Recent studies on social

network analysis have explored networking activities, not only in national or global terms, but in virtual spaces as well (Castells, 2006, 2008, 2009; Diani, 2004; Pickerill, 2000; Wellman, 1988).

Many scholars (Castells, 2009; van Dijk, 2006) believe that social network theory is a valid theory to use when discussing themes of social media and its effect on events in society such as uprisings. Similarly, there are several studies (Diani, 2004; Kavada, 2003) which have used social network analysis has also been used to expand research on social movements and civic activism. Diani (2004) provides an application of social network theory to social movements. He explains that an analysis of social networks have facilitated the understanding of processes of recruitment and individual participation. He concludes by suggesting that scholars to look into the role of digital networks in replacing physical ties and constructing trust.

Kavada (2003) deepens the discussion of social movements and network analysis by observing that new communication technology has pushed scholars to rethink social movements theories by incorporating other approaches. In her view, the Internet facilitates communication and organizational structure of networks that make social movements. “The Internet is thought to influence the characteristics of the movement itself, its structure, ideology and scale” (Kavada, 2003:4). Thus, traditional theories are not sufficient to understand new phenomena.

Diani and McAdam (2003) provide a detailed account of various applications of social network analysis theory to social movements, by highlighting the applicability of the concept; “its flexibility...enables researchers to deal with phenomena of change, which are difficult to contain within the boundaries of formal bureaucracies or nation states, or at the other pole, the individual

actor” (Diani & McAdam, 2003: 4). Commenting on how interactions in smaller groups can escalate into a major activity, Granovetter (2003) argues that through interpersonal networks of small-scale interactions, the strength of interpersonal ties (strong, weak, or absent) become translated into large-scale patterns, which then feed back into small groups. This is where social media becomes very important because it is capable of connecting people to engage in such interactions easily. This makes it easier for organizers of mass protests to organize and mobilize people easily. However, Krackhardt (2003) argues that though social media can enhance effective mobilization, it does not guarantee that there will be strong ties among the participants.

Castells (2009) applies social network theory to look at the relationship between power and digital communication technology. He contends that new technology has allowed for the decentralization of communication (from vertical to horizontal) and a more interactive and accessible model of communication, which has redefined power relationships. Castells argues that the rise of new technology in communication has created a mass self-communication, “increasing the autonomy of communicating subjects vis-à-vis communication corporations, as the users become both senders and receivers of messages” (cited in Adamoli, 2012).

To this end, organizers of civic actions such as demonstrations create social media groups, where they disseminate information among themselves and to the general public to create awareness of their intentions and plans to demonstrate against a particular issue in the country. This means per the assumptions of the social network theory, social media has created the enabling environment for people to form new relationships, and that makes it easier for organizers to mobilize people

for their cause. This means the social network theory proves to be very relevant in explaining the phenomenon of social media and civic activism.

2.2. Review of Related Literature

A literature review is a body of text that aims to review the critical points of current knowledge on a particular topic. Its ultimate goal is to bring the reader up to date with current literature on the topic and forms the basis for another goal, such as the justification for future research in the area. This current study reviewed the following studies from journal articles, books and conferences.

Adamoli (2012) - Social Media and Social Movements: A Critical Analysis of Audience's Use of Facebook to Advocate Food Activism Offline

This research explored the role and impact of Facebook as it pertains to the food movement in the United States. The research questions were anchored on the three theories that underpinned the study - Public Sphere, Network Analysis and leadership theories. First, through the lens of Habermas's concept of the public sphere this study addressed whether Facebook reinforces or challenge the notion of the public sphere. Second, Castells's work of network analysis served to understand how virtual relations affect a movement both online and offline. Third, applying leadership theories, this study explored how leadership is manifested on Facebook and who takes the lead both online and offline. In addition, the study explored a question - Does Facebook offer a bridge to civic engagement offline? Applying three main theories derived from communication and sociology, this study investigated the usage of Facebook among ordinary citizens who take leadership roles to make a social difference at the policy level.

The Right to Know Rally was chosen as the case study through a qualitative content analysis of all posts of the 42 Facebook pages related to Right to Know Rally. Interviews were also conducted with selected participants of the event in attempt to answer the three main questions. From Adamoli's (2012) perspective, while Facebook poses problems for the privacy of an individual, its power lies in the functionality of reaching heterogeneous networks made up of individuals who might or might not being part of the Right to Know Rally movement.

The findings of the study suggested that Facebook reinforces Habermas's notion of the public sphere, in which individuals from the comfort of their home can pitch in, taking at times leading roles in mobilization of support for social movements. In this way new leaders emerge to buttressing the leadership theory associated with social media. In terms of the impact of Facebook on online settings, while this study could not generalize its finding, it was blatant during the analysis that the social medium has an effect on offline mobilization. More specifically, Facebook expands social networks outside the realm of the web, through the function of event planning. This means the event attracted bystanders who were encouraged to visit the web to find further information and take action. The findings underscored the assertions that Facebook is a major mobilizing agent in terms of mobilizing people for a certain cause.

Arif (2014): Social movements, YouTube and political activism in authoritarian countries: a comparative analysis of political change in Pakistan, Tunisia & Egypt.

Arif's study explored the role of social media in political activism in authoritarian societies, using as case studies the use of YouTube as an alternative channel of communication and resistance

during the political crises in Pakistan, Tunisia, and Egypt. Pakistan was chosen because social media played a major role in the overthrow of the regime of military leader, General Pervez Musharraf in 2007 whereas Tunisia and Egypt were chosen because these two countries are seen as the iconic nations of the Arab Spring 2011. Arif (2014) argued that the term “Arab Spring” itself limits the scope of ongoing online and offline political uprisings in the Muslim World, which is spreading beyond the geographical boundaries of the Middle East. The investigation anchored the definition and theorization of “social movements” on the works of Hirschman (1970), Lohmann (1994), Olson (1965), and Tarrow (1994; 1998) as its theoretical foundation to describe and explain how YouTube was part of the information activism of the movements that sprang up during the revolutions in Pakistan, Tunisia and Egypt.

A comparative methodological approach was used to analyze the “most viewed” YouTube videos of political protests in the three countries. Through a critical examination of a purposive sample of 60 most viewed protest-related YouTube videos, the study explored how these videos served as a “voice,” (alternative channels of communication) when the authoritarian governments controlled all the media in the three countries. Using quantitative content analysis and thematic analysis approaches, the study investigated YouTube’s role and content during Pakistan’s political crisis of 2007, and compared it with that platform’s role as an alternative avenue of communication, as well as its content in the 2011 Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt. Eight research questions were asked for this investigation. These questions were derived from Hirschman (1970), Lohmann (1994), Tarrow (1998), and Perlmutter’s (1998) works. Issues that were investigated in these questions include: identifying the cultural and ideological frames used in the most viewed videos of each revolution, YouTube videos as “informational cascades.” *Al-*

Jazeera's role as “informational cascade,” YouTube videos as a “Voice,” and the most iconic images of each revolution.

The findings of these research questions showed that in the absence of traditional media sources, YouTube can serve as an alternative platform of communication and dissent. The study found that the social movements in the three countries utilized YouTube as an alternate channel of communication to disseminate information on political protests against the dictatorial regimes for purposes of promoting resistance. Also, the visual content analysis of these videos revealed that the YouTube videos of political protests utilized common religious and national ideologies as a part of cultural and ideological frames to spread the narratives of political protests online. The findings of this study supported the view that the most viewed videos contributed to serve as informational cascades for the observers (YouTube viewers) of these protest-related videos.

The visual content analysis of the most viewed videos of protests suggested that social movements in Pakistan, Tunisia and Egypt used YouTube to amplify their voice against corruption, unemployment, and authoritarianism in the three countries. The findings of this research identified that three images (one from each country) were treated as the icons of outrage in the 60 most viewed protest-related videos. These icons of outrage include the images of Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation (Tunisia), torture-disfigured face of Khaled Said (Egypt), and the arrest of Pakistani Chief Justice, Iftikhar Chaudry.

Based on its findings, the dissertation argued that the ongoing political struggle in Muslim-majority countries is a much bigger phenomenon than the “Arab Spring of 2011.” This study also

made a strong case that Pakistan experienced online informational activism long before the Arab Spring of 2011. The study contributed to the existing literature on communication, social movements and political activism, which is predominantly specific to Western settings, but in the context of this study, was applied to non-Western settings.

Ng (2013) - Contemporary Female Activism: Female Activists and Social Movements in the Cyber-Era

According to Ng (2013), the media portrayed female activists in the Arab Spring and their involvement in the revolutions as extraordinary because women are typically confined to the private sphere, and activism is a decidedly public activity which goes beyond them. In view of the above, this research was embarked upon to determine how gender-identity and social media intersect in the young female social media activists. The study sought to find out: 1) how gender-identity is expressed in their choice or resistance tactics, 2) what the expressive content in blogs reveal about their understanding their involvement as female activists in social movements, and 3) how the use of social media in social movements challenges existing understandings of female activists and their place in the public/private spheres.

Textual Analysis was used to code the blog entries of young women activists from the Egyptian Revolution and the Occupy Bay Area movement in order in order to examine whether a link exists between female gender-identity and certain modes of activism. In order to understand how they position themselves in their respective social movements as young female activists, and because securing interviews with them was out of my reach for various reasons. including time

constraints and limited resources, the study examined the blog entries they produced during their participation in the social movement.

Findings from the textual analysis revealed that in the context of female cyber activism, the use of the Internet as a medium to conduct social resistance disrupts the traditional boundaries between “private” and “public.” The findings challenged the characterizations of contemporary female activists by popular media, which simplify their existences as “private” social actors stepping out of the “private” sphere into the “public.” Therefore, the findings of the study suggest that women are actively using social media for activism purposes.

Kassem (2013) - Young Egyptian Activists' Perceptions Of The Potential Of Social Media For Mobilisation

The motivation to conduct this study, from the perspective of the Kassem, was borne out of how young Egyptians were empowered by new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to spark off a revolution in the tightly repressed political environment of Egypt. This is because the time that led to the uprising was marked by vibrant political mobilisation and witnessed several endeavours through which Egyptians expressed their aspirations for social and political reforms. Therefore, this study sought to explore the perceptions of a sample of young Egyptian activists about the potential of social media for mobilising collective action. Themes of media usage, dispositions and actions (online and off-line) that appear to relate to these perceptions were investigated and analyzed.

This study aimed to enhance original research in three main ways: (i) to contribute to a growing body of empirical research about new media potential for mobilisation, (ii) to deepen academic understanding of young activists' uses of social media and practices in the realm of political activism and social movement construction, (iii) most importantly, this study comprised a scholarly and proactive approach that explored evolving political changes that have taken place in Egypt since 2008 from a media perspective and thus provides a qualitative research basis that is beneficial in comparing and contrasting new media roles prior to the 25th January 2011 uprising and in its aftermath.

The thesis began with a critical literature analysis in two parts: the first explored the socio-political context of the Egyptian polity in the last decade of Mubarak's presidency. and the second discusses issues of social movements' growth and development, predominantly in how new ICTs, particularly social media, may contribute to the organisation of social movements, creating opportunities through which to gain experience and acquire participatory skills, and finally to practise collective action that forms the skeleton of the second part of the literature review. Empirical data were collected through a mixed method approach, involving qualitative and quantitative methods. Specifically, surveys and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used to gather data from the sampled respondents. Data from questionnaires and FGD were presented around key themes and issues and presented in an integrated fashion.

The findings of this study built a moderate case for social media's influence on the mobilization of collective action. It established that although young activists purposively use the social media repertoire as instruments through which to mobilize collective action, they believe that the role these media may play varies significantly, depending on the media user, i.e., the contribution of

social media to creating favourable dispositions towards the participation and mobilization of individuals to move from behind their keyboards and to take to the streets differs between activists and non-politicized individuals. The findings suggested that social media are not perceived as a suitable arena for the building of an activist identity, which consequently raises concerns about the commitment to and sustainability of social movements organized on social media platforms. The findings of the study were organized along three themes - young activists' uses of social media; young activists' contextual perceptions and political dispositions and the perceived opportunities to link to off-line space.

Bardici (2012) - A Discourse Analysis of the Media Representation of Social Media for Social Change: The Case of Egyptian Revolution and Political Change

Bardici (2012) opine that social media have introduced new communication practices, provided newfound interaction patterns, created new forms of expressions, stimulated a wide civic participation, and so forth. He further asserted that they are rapidly evolving and their significance is increasing while their role is changing in social and political processes. Hence, social media are increasingly becoming an instrumental approach to, and power for, social change due to their potential in bringing new dynamics to its underlying processes such as public mobilization. Bardici cited the Arab Spring and particularly the Egyptian revolt where social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were transformed into effective means to fuel revolt and bring about political transformation. This marked a victory for social media and corroborates that they are an enduring resource for the successful mobilization of bottom-up, grassroots movements and leaderless collective actions. As a result, this phenomenon is gaining an increased attention in the media and the academia, particularly, research publications

emphasizing the fundamental role the online media played in the reproduction of the role of social media in the Egyptian revolution and political change.

The aim of this study was to establish, by means of a discourse analysis, how and with what purpose in mind, the online media report on – represent – the relationship between social media and the Egyptian uprising and political transformation. This underlying motive behind the discourse analysis was to reveal what was undervalued, overvalued and excluded, as well as the intersection between the media discourse, subjects and ideology. To achieve this aim, the discourse analysis approach was used to examine the set of selected media texts. The findings showed that the media representation was deterministic as to the role of social media in the Egyptian revolution and political transformation.

Thus, it exaggeratedly depicts the power of social media by describing the Egyptian revolution as a Facebook revolution. It also tended to be rhetorical and exclusionary. The findings also suggest that event of the revolution and the reality of political change in Egypt was far more complicated than how it was reconstructed by most journalists. Further, social media played a role in constructing a positive image of different corporate players, namely Facebook, Twitter and media companies, as well as in constituting their identities. In addition, the media representation did ideological work. It sustained and served corporate power as well as advances ideological claims. This discursive research enhanced the current understanding of the phenomenon of social media in relation to revolution and political change, although the findings might not be generalized.

In another related study, Lehtonen (2014) explored the role of social media among women during the Arab uprising in Egypt in 2011. It examined women's participation in the revolts from their own viewpoint and pursued an explanation for women's social media use and their opinions about whether it enabled women's participation in those revolts. The study adopted the qualitative research methods, namely textual documentary analysis (qualitative content analysis) and interview, through a semi-structured interview guide. In all, the data for this study was collected from eight written documents and two YouTube interviews.

Lehtonen (2014) found out that women's use of social media during the uprising was varied. Basically, social media was used by women as a tool for participating, information, mobilizing and organizing the events. The study further established that social media also had a deeper role in empowering women and encouraging them to partake in the demonstrations and protests that were associated with the uprising. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that women in Egypt were eager to participate in the uprising and in the politics of their country, hence social media came in handy as the appropriate tool which offered them a place for freedom of expression, increased awareness, and encouragement among women.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology and procedure. The chapter begins with the philosophical foundation of the research, evaluating the research methods selected, and continues by identifying the reasons for adopting the selected methods. The chapter then presents the research procedure and the overall research design.

3.2 Purposes of Research

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), research can be categorized into four different types depending on the nature of the purpose or research problem: Exploratory, Explanatory, Descriptive and Predictive. This research will serve two main research purposes:

Explanatory research– Emphasis is on studying a problem or a phenomenon in order to establish a causal relationship among variables (Saunders et al., 2000). The motive behind this purpose is to help explain and establish the relationship between social media phenomenon and civic activism.

Descriptive Research: The objective of the descriptive is to “portray an accurate profile of a person, event or situation” (Robson, 1993). It is used when the research problem is known but the researcher is not fully aware of situation. According to Zikmund (2000), descriptive research will answer who, what, where and how questions and does not give any explanation for the cause of the findings.

3.3 Research Approach

There are two approaches to research - Quantitative and Qualitative Research methods. This study employed the former. Lehtonen (2014) argues that social media use is amenable to quantitative research methods because it can be summarized in numbers and statistics. This enabled the researcher to examine participants' and non-participants' perspectives, knowledge, and experiences on social media and civic activism.

Quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of instrument and observation, and the test of theories), employing strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys and collecting data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative research is frequently referred to hypothesis-testing research. Characteristically, studies begin with statements of theory from which research hypotheses are derived. Then an experimental design is established in which the variables in question (the dependent variables) are measured while controlling for the effects of selected independent variables. In the study the subject included is randomly selected is desirable to reduce error and to cancel bias. The sample of subjects is drawn to reflect the population (Newman & Benz, 1998). The quantitative method to be used in this study is Survey.

3.4 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is survey.

3.4.1 SURVEY

A survey is any activity that collects information in an organised and methodical manner about characteristics of interest from some or all units of a population using well-defined concepts, methods and procedures. (Statistics Canada, 2010: 1). The survey data would be gathered through questionnaires which will be administered to a select group of people. The reason behind the survey is to help establish the effectiveness of social media in civic activism, as captured in the research objectives and questions previously. It seeks to note whether social media is able to trigger both online or offline activism among the respondents for the survey.

3.5 Population and Sample

Population is a group of people or objects from which the sample for statistical measurement is going to be taken. A population for study is defined as a group or class of subjects, variables, concepts or phenomena (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Population for a study according to Babbie (2005), is a group (usually of people) about whom conclusions are drawn in research. The population for this study will be residents of the Accra metropolis in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Per the results of the 2010 Population and Housing Census, there are 4,010,054 people living in the region (Ghana Statistical Services, 2012). This research will be conducted at selected areas in Accra (the capital and largest city in Ghana). It is believed that a considerable number of individuals residing in Accra comprise the 'upper and middle class' of Ghanaian society. Also, this is where the researcher lives and works, hence it will be easier to collect the required data from the subjects or respondents. Moreover, data from the Ghana Statistical service

reveal that the region is composed of numerous people with diverse background, making the data very rich and representative of the general population.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Technique

Based on the population, the sample size of the study was 100. This number is chosen in order to have a wide sample frame necessary for generalization to the whole population. The study will employ the Probability sampling technique. This type of sampling gives equal chance of selection to all members in the population of interest. This makes it easier for generalization of findings and also enhances reliability. Under the broad probability approach, the stratified and simple random system will be used. These methods are deemed appropriate because, apart from giving equal chances of participation to all members of the population, they also reduce subjectivity and errors that are associated with the non-probability techniques.

The stratified sampling method divides the population into strata (subsets) and the sample are picked from each stratum. For the purposes of this study, the strata are selected suburbs for the research, which are Madina, Lapaz, Dansoman, Osu and Circle. All these areas in Accra and each locality will constitute a stratum from which the samples will be chosen randomly. This means the stratified sampling will be employed first to segment the population into stratum while the simple random sampling technique is later used to get the respondents from each stratum.

This means the stratified sampling was employed first to segment the population into stratum while the simple random sampling technique was later used to get the respondents from each stratum.

3.7 Instrumentation

Questionnaire was used to collect data for the survey. It used both open and close and ended questions to enable easy analysis and interpretation. The rationale behind was to gather data that will help establish in accurate terms the role social media is playing in their activities.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

After the data have been gathered from the questionnaires and the semi-structured interview guide, analysis will follow up. The analysis will be done through the SPSS software. The analyzed information will be presented using frequency tables, charts and diagrams while responses from the interview will be coded for analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the raw data collected from the responses of the sample size is collated and analyzed. The data collation software 'SPSS' was used to analyse the data obtained from respondents and the findings have been depicted using frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs to make them very easy to understand.

4.1 Research Findings

These findings were obtained after an analysis of the 100 questionnaires which were distributed and retrieved. It captures respondents' views on issues pertaining to the research objectives and the research questions.

4.2.1 SEX

Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
MALE	58	58.0
FEMALE	42	42.0
Total	100	100.0

Source field work 2015

Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.1 above shows that almost three out of five respondents (58%) are males while slightly more than two-fifth (42%) were females.

4.1.2 AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
18-30 YEARS	54	54.0
31-40 YEARS	24	24.0
41-50 YEARS	12	12.0
ABOVE 50	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

Source Fieldwork 2015

Majority of the respondents (78%) were below 40 years, an indication that the respondents were generally youthful. Slightly more than half of the respondents (54%) were within the youthful age bracket of 18 to 30 years; almost one-fourth of the participants (24%) were 30 to 40 years. One out of ten respondents was above 50 while more than 12% were between 40 and 51 years.

4.1.3 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 4.3: Respondents' highest educational level

	Frequency	Percent
DIPLOMA	15	15.0
HND	9	9.0
FIRST DEGREE	47	47.0
POSTGRADUATE DEGREE	29	29.0
Total	100	100.0

Source field work 2015

Three out eight respondents (15%) hold diploma certificates, with one in ten respondents being a Higher National Diploma (HND) certificates holders. Almost half of the respondents (47%) are either pursuing their first degree education or already have completed. More than one-fourth of the respondents have received post-graduate degree education. This means the respondents were fairly exposed and highly educated.

4.1.4 OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents for this study come from a diverse professional and occupational background. Majority of them were students while a number of journalists and media practitioners also featured strongly in this study. Other respondents include lawyers, development officers, pharmacists, ICT technicians and instructors, civil servants amongst others. This means majority of the respondents are engaged in form of economic activity or the other, hence they were in the right position to know the impact of on their earnings (salary/income).

4.1.5 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL MEDIA SITES HAVE YOU SUBSCRIBED?

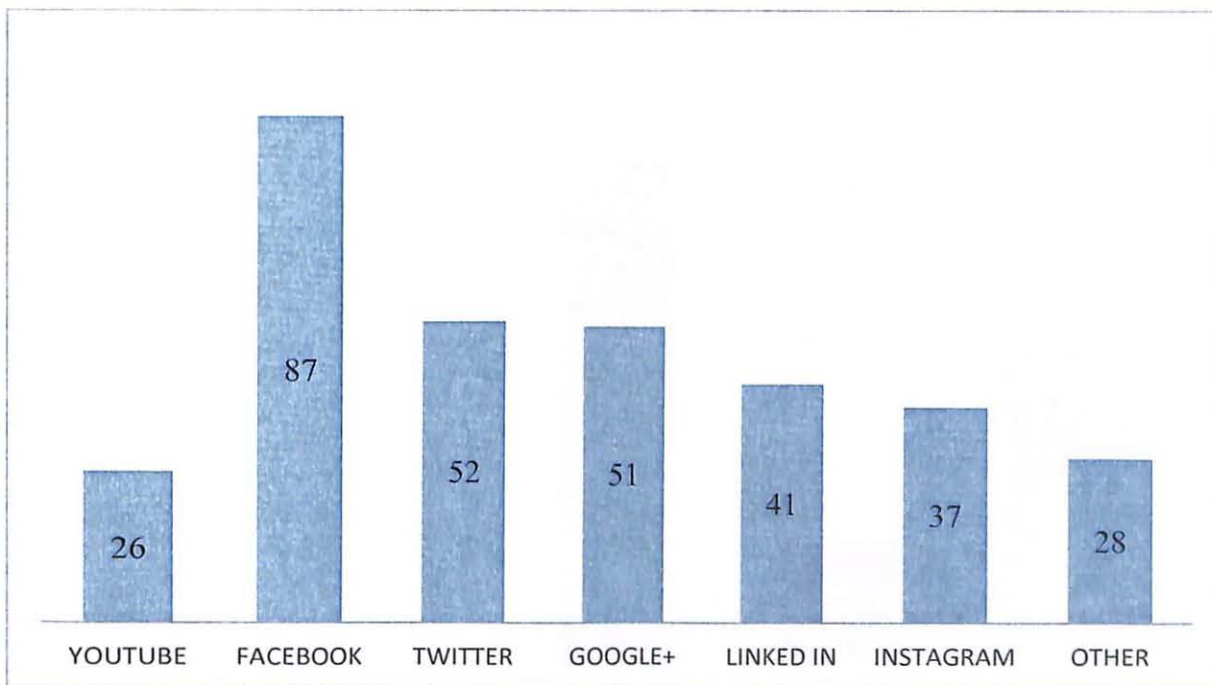


Figure 4.1: Respondents' Social Media Platforms

From figure 4.1, it can be deduced that all the respondents use at least one of the social media platforms. Facebook is the most popular social media platform among the participants, with almost nine out ten participants (87%) using it. Twitter is the second most popular social media platform having slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) on it. Google+ is the third most popular with just one respondent less of the total number of respondents who use Twitter. LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube follow in that order with specifically 41%, 37% and 26% of the respondents respectively. More than a quarter of respondents use other social media tools such as Whatsapp, Twoo, Tumblr and Tinder.

4.1.6 ON AVERAGE, HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA DAILY

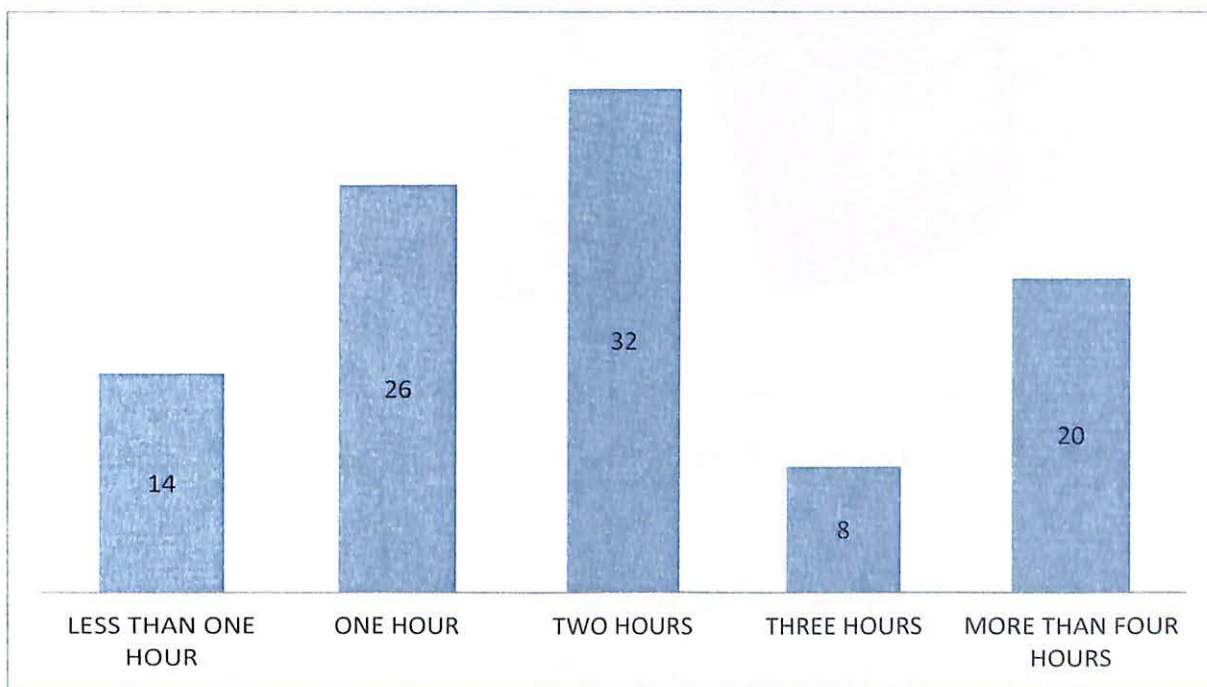


Figure 4.2: The number of Hours Respondents Spend on Social Media Everyday

Averagely, the participants actively engage in some activities on social media daily. From figure 4.2, nearly one out of three respondents (32%) spends two hours on social media everyday, with slightly more than a quarter of them engaging in social media an hour per day. One in five respondents spend more than four hours on social media while just one-sixth (14%) and below 10% of the respondents spend less than one hour and three hours on social media respectively.

4.1.7 WHAT ISSUES DO YOU MOSTLY DISCUSS ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

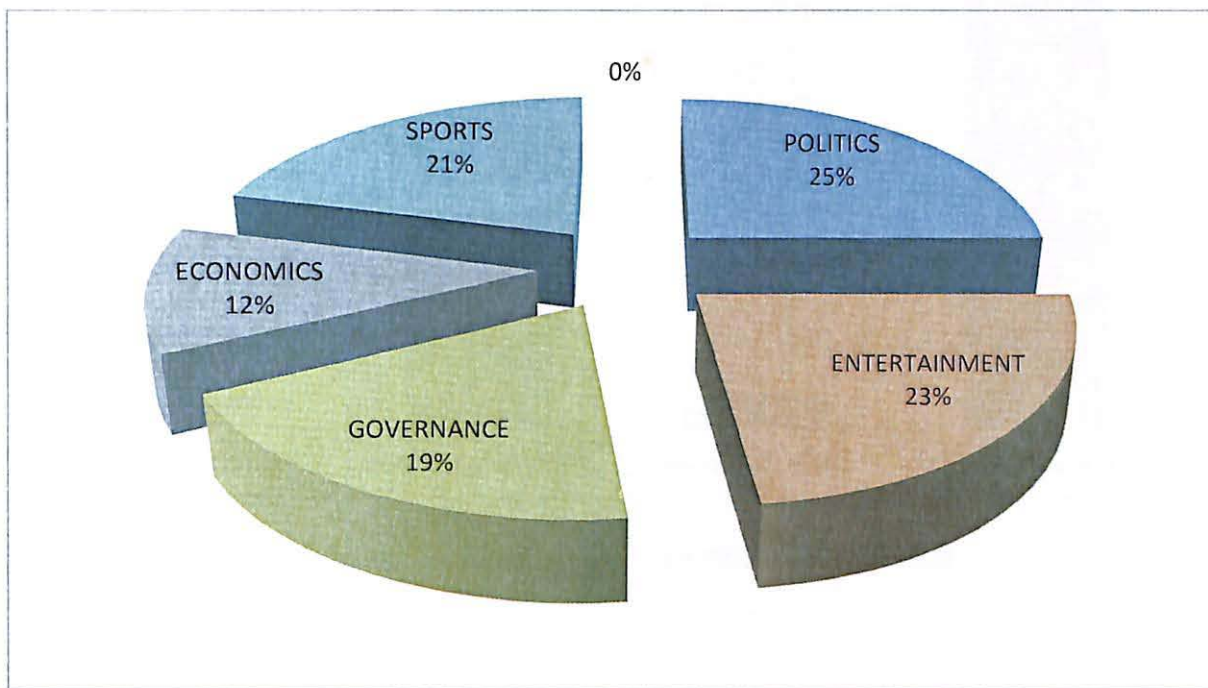


Figure 4.3: Graph showing what Respondents Mostly Discuss on their Social Media Platforms

Figure 4.3 shows that politics ranks as the number one issue that is discussed on social media, with one-quarter of the respondents (25%). Entertainment follows as the second most popular issue discussed by slightly below one-quarters of the respondents. Sports and governance are the third and fourth issues discussed with one out of five respondents (21% and 19% respectively).

Economics is the least most discussed issue, accounting for only a little above one out ten respondents' activities on social media.

4.1.8 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE YOU JOINED?

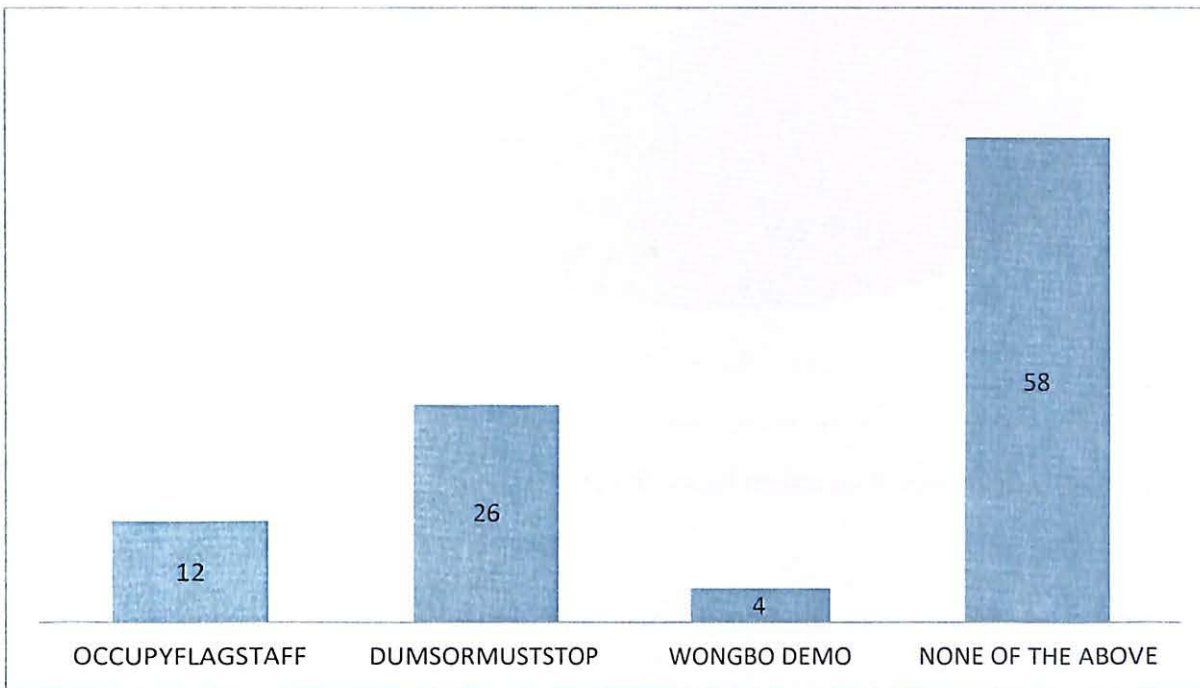


Figure 4.4: A graph showing Demonstrations Respondents have joined

In terms of the participants' engagement in civic actions such as demonstrations, it appears a number of them (58%) have not joined any of the demonstrations before. Among the various demonstrations listed, #DumsorMustStop was the most popular with a little above a quarter of the respondents (26%) partaking while #OccupyFlagStaff was the second most popular with more than one-tenth of the respondents. Only 4% of the participants took part in Wongbo demonstration.

4.1.9 WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION INFLUENCED BY WHAT YOU READ OR SAW ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

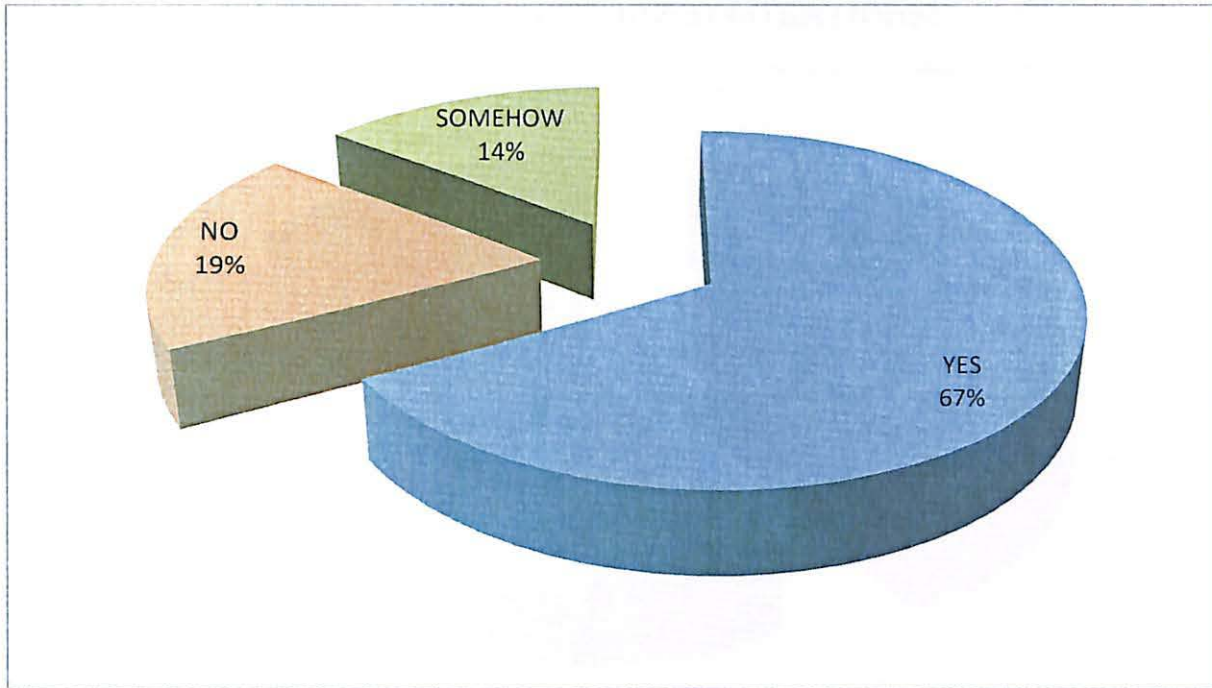


Figure 4.5: A pie chart bearing the influence of social media on Respondents' Participation in the Demonstration

This question was addressed by only the respondents who ticked that they have taken part in the demonstrations before. Out of the number, two-thirds confirmed that their decision to take part was solely influenced by the posts they saw or read on social media. Almost one-fifth of the respondents said they were not influenced by social media while 14% were indecisive as to how social media influenced their participation.

4.1.10 WHICH CHANNEL OR MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION DID YOU FIRST RECEIVE THE NEWS ABOUT THESE DEMONSTRATIONS?

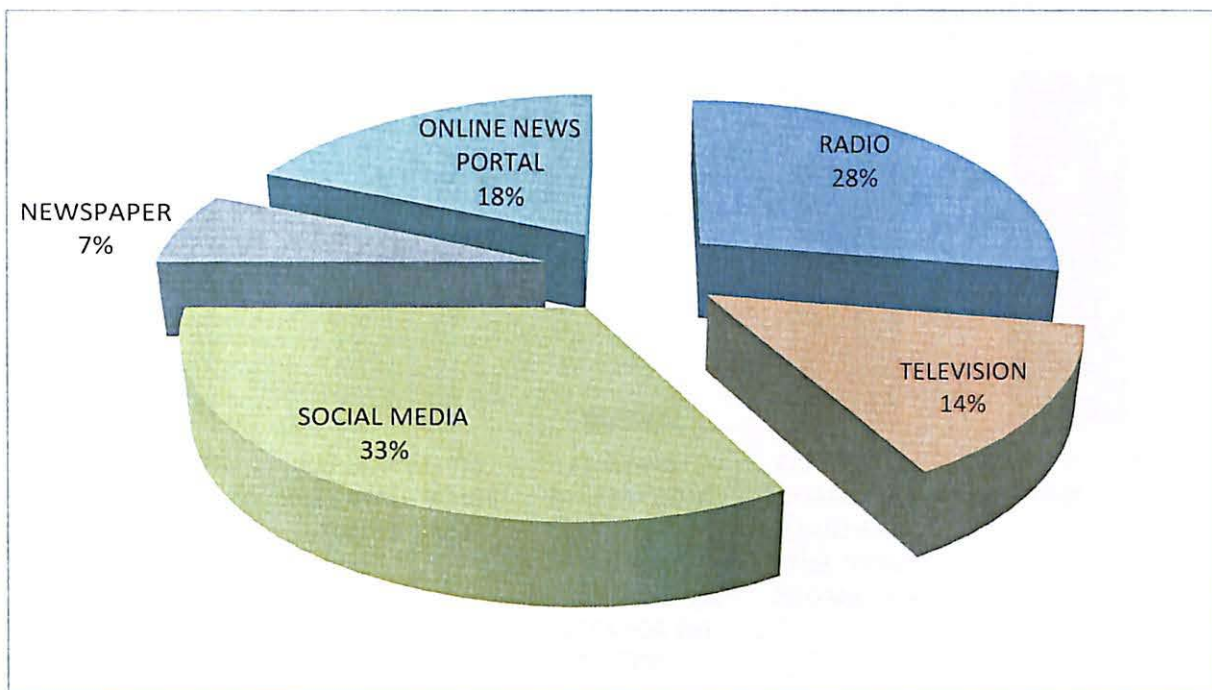


Figure 4.6: A Pie Chart Showing the Channel of Communication through which Respondents Received Information on the Demonstrations

Source: Field Work, 2015

In terms of access to information on these demonstrations, one-third of the respondents (33%) claimed they first heard of these demonstrations on social media. A little above one-quarter of the participants (28%) chose radio while online portals, television and newspapers were respectively picked by 18%, 14% and 7% of the respondents as the communication medium that first gave them information.

4.1.11 WHAT DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR DURING TIMES OF DEMONSTRATIONS?

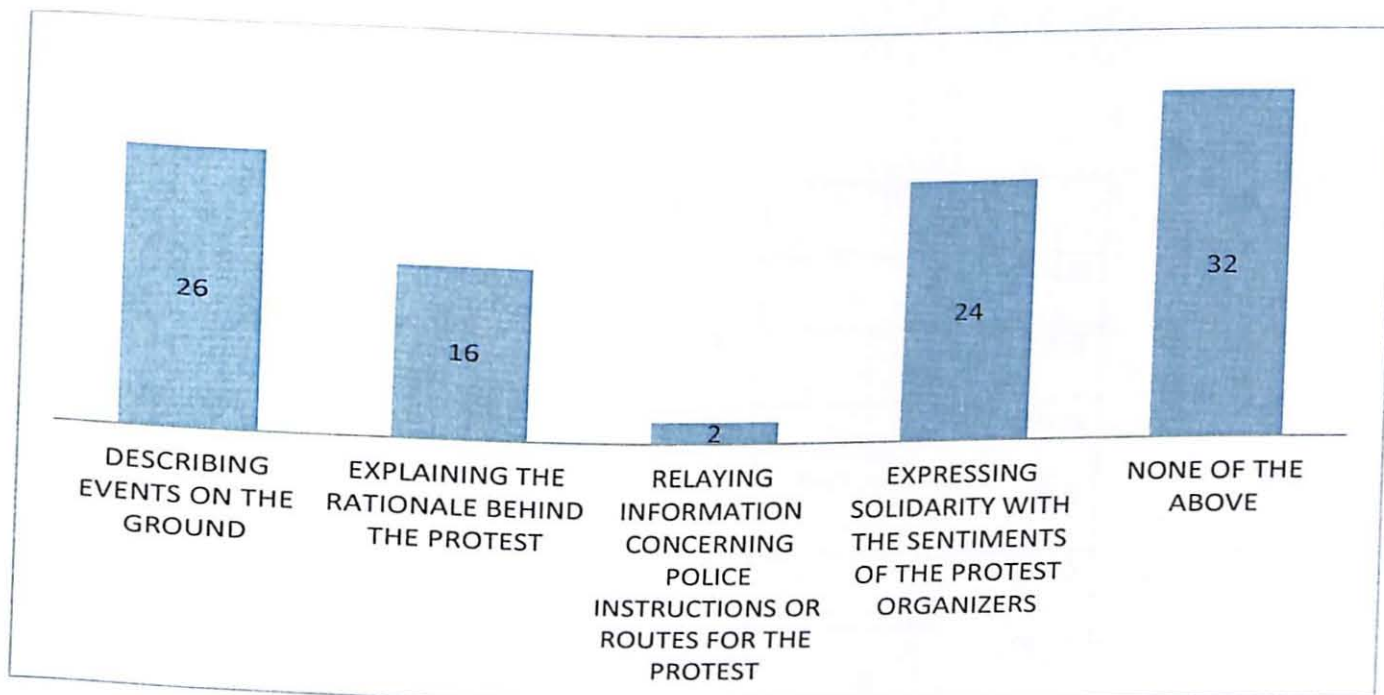


Figure 4.7: A graph depicting Respondents' Social Media Use during times of Demonstrations

In times of demonstrations, figure 4.7 demonstrates that a little above a quarter of the participants (26%) use their social media space to describe events and happenings on the demonstration grounds. A little below one-fourth of the respondents also use their platform to express solidarity with the sentiments of the demonstration organizers, with a combined almost one-fifth (18%) of the participant using social media to explain the rationale behind the protest (16%) and also relaying information concerning the guidelines and routes earmarked for the demonstrations.

4.1.12 Respondents' Social Media Activism

Table 4.4: The Frequency at which Respondents Post Links to News Stories on their Social Media Platforms

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	14	14.0
OFTEN	22	22.0
SOMETIMES	36	36.0
SELDOM	8	8.0
NEVER	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

The tables below show the various activities on social media which are considered to be related to civic activism. The objective behind this question was to elicit from the respondents the frequency or their extent of engagement in these activities on social media.

4.1.12.1 I Post Links to Stories on Corruption, Bad Governance and Poor Governmental Policies

Table 4.4: The Frequency at which Respondents Post Links to News Stories on their Social Media Platforms

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	14	14.0
OFTEN	22	22.0
SOMETIMES	36	36.0
SELDOM	8	8.0
NEVER	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 4.4 demonstrates that respondents post links of news stories on corruption, governance and poor governmental policies. More than one-third of the respondents sometimes post links of such stories, with one-fifth of them not engaging in such activities at all while more than one-third said they post links to news stories very often and often.

4.1.12.2 I Post Videos Related To Issues on National Interest

Table 4.5: The Frequency at which Respondents Post Videos to News Stories and Issues of National Interest on their Social Media Platforms

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	8	8.0
OFTEN	12	12.0
SOMETIMES	22	22.0
SELDOM	20	20.0
NEVER	38	38.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field work, 2015

In terms of posting videos which border on national interest, only approximately one-fifth of the respondent do such activities often and very often on their social media platforms. Nearly three-fifth of them (58%) cited that they rarely and never engage in that activity.

4.1.12.3 I Join Social Media Groups Which Is Actively Engaged In Activism

Table 4.6: Tables Showing How Frequent Respondents join Social Media Groups Engaged in Activism

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	4	4.0
OFTEN	10	10.0
SOMETIMES	22	22.0
SELDOM	22	22.0
NEVER	42	42.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Joining social media groups to engage in civic activism is not common among the respondents because majority (68%) of them said they never and seldom do so while below 15% join such groups often and very often.

4.1.13.4 I Post Photos of Events Involving Demonstrations

Table 4.7: Frequency at which Respondents Photos of events Involving Demonstrations

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	8	8.0
OFTEN	16	16.0
SOMETIMES	34	34.0
SELDOM	10	10.0
NEVER	32	32.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Social media allows the use of pictures and other forms of content in telling and discussing all manner of issues. Respondents moderately do use pictures in telling stories on demonstrations, protest and activism on their social media space. Out of the respondents surveyed, nearly a quarter of them (24%) post photos often and very often in telling stories involving demonstrations; slightly more than one-third of them use pictures sometimes. A little above two-fifth of the participants (42%) have either hardly and never posted pictures on issues of that nature via their social media sites.

4.1.12.5 I Create Groups Which Focus On Discussing National Issues And Holding Government Accountable

Table 4.8: A table showing how often Respondents Create Groups to Demand Accountability

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	4	4.0
OFTEN	8	8.0
SOMETIMES	18	18.0
SELDOM	24	24.0
NEVER	46	46.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Respondents in the survey hardly create social media groups to discuss issues bordering on accountability and transparency. While majority (70%) do not and seldom do so, only 30% create such groups sometimes (18%), often (8%) and very often (4%).

4.1.12.6 I Use My Personal Social Media Space to Advance My Opinion on National Issues

Table 4.9: Rate at which Respondents use their Social Media Platforms for Discussing Civic Issues

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	18	18.0
OFTEN	36	36.0
SOMETIMES	22	22.0
SELDOM	12	12.0
NEVER	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

From table 4.9, it can be deduced that the respondents actively use their social media space to advance their opinions and voice their perspectives on national interest issues and news. Slightly more than half of the respondents (54%) surveyed write opinionated posts that outline their viewpoints on matters relating to the nation and all of its citizens. More than one in five respondents (22%) sometimes post their views on social media. Nearly a quarter of them seldom and never use social media to perform such functions.

4.1.12.7 I Monitor Developments On Demonstrations Through Social Media

Table 4.10: A table of how frequent respondents monitor demonstrations and other developments through social media

	Frequency	Percent
VERY OFTEN	28	28.0
OFTEN	24	24.0
SOMETIMES	22	22.0
SELDOM	12	12.0
NEVER	28	14.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Social media also allows people who did not physically engage in the demonstration to monitor developments from the demonstration grounds. In this regard, slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) engage in this very often and often. A little above one-fifth of the respondents (22%) sometimes observe the demonstration through social media.

4.13 Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms as Tools for Civic Activism (Protest)

4.1.13.1 Most Effective Platform for Mobilizing People for Demonstration

Table 4.11: Social Media Platform Most Suitable for Mobilizing People for Demonstrations

	Frequency	Percent
YOUTUBE	2	2.0
FACEBOOK	61	61.0
TWITTER	35	35.0
INSTAGRAM	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

From table 4.11, Facebook (61%) and Twitter (35%) are the most suitable platforms for organizing people for demonstration, with 96% of the respondents choosing these two.

Source: Field Work, 2015

4.1.13.2 The Best Social Media Tool For Posting Messages About Demonstrations

Table 4.12: Respondents' Best Social Media Tool for posting Messages on demonstrations

	Frequency	Percent
YOUTUBE	5	5.0
FACEBOOK	37	37.0
TWITTER	54	54.0
INSTAGRAM	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

More than half of the respondents (54%) in the survey consider Twitter as the most appropriate tool for posting messages concerning the motive, reasons and rationale behind the demonstrations. More than one-third (37%) use Twitter. One in twenty respondents picked YouTube while one out of every twenty five respondents chose Instagram as the right to use when posting such messages.

4.1.13.3 The Most Appropriate Platform For Sharing Information On Demonstrations

Table 4.13: The Most Appropriate Platform for Sharing Information on Demonstrations among Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
YOUTUBE	9	9.0
FACEBOOK	47	47.0
TWITTER	36	36.0
INSTAGRAM	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

The table in 4.13, indicate that nearly half of the participants in the survey considers Facebook as the most suitable platform for sharing information on demonstrations. More than one-third of the respondents chose Twitter while YouTube and Instagram were together chosen by 17% of the surveyed participants as the best tools for sharing protest-related information. This means that Facebook and Twitter have functions and features that enable the sharing of information to be more convenient.

4.1.13.4 The Most Effective Platform For Informing People About Forthcoming Demonstrations

Table 4.14: Respondents' Favourite Platform for Informing People about Demonstrations

	Frequency	Percent
FACEBOOK	53	53.0
TWITTER	35	35.0
INSTAGRAM	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 4.14 reveals that a little more than half of the respondents (53%) were of the opinion that Facebook is the best tool for informing people about forthcoming demonstrations. Slightly more than one-third chose Twitter as the tool with more than one in ten respondents saying Instagram is the best in this endeavour.

4.1.13.5 The Best Social Media for Posting Multimedia Messages (Texts, Pictures And Videos)

Table 4.15: Respondents' Best Social Media Tool for posting Multimedia Messages

	Frequency	Percent
YOUTUBE	46	46.0
FACEBOOK	36	36.0
TWITTER	4	4.0
INSTAGRAM	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

YouTube is considered by the nearly half of the respondents (46%) as the best social media platform for posting multimedia messages, thus a combination of texts, photos and videos. More than third of the respondents (36%) use Facebook as the best tool for posting multimedia messages. Nearly one out of five respondents (18%) considers Twitter and Instagram as the most appropriate platform.

4.1.13.6 The Social Media That Is Most Suitable For Tracking Feedback on Information on Demonstrations

Table 4.16: Respondents' Most Suitable Tool for Tracking Public Response on Demonstrations

	Frequency	Percent
YOUTUBE	5	5.0
FACEBOOK	60	60.0
TWITTER	27	27.0
INSTAGRAM	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Three out of five respondents (62%) picked Facebook as the best social media tool suitable for tracking feedback on the demonstrations. More than a quarter of the respondents (27%) chose

Twitter as very good for identifying public response or reaction to their messages on social media.

4.1.14 In All, Which Of The Social Media Platforms Is Most Effective And Helpful To Demonstrations?

Table 4.17: Respondents' Social Media Platform that is most effective for Demonstrations

	Frequency	Percent
YOUTUBE	11	11.0
FACEBOOK	60	60.0
TWITTER	25	25.0
INSTAGRAM	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Overall, Facebook was chosen by 60% of the respondents as the most useful social media platform for organizing, mobilizing people for demonstration as well as sharing messages and information related to such activities. A quarter of the respondents preferred Twitter as the best and most important social media tool for demonstrations. Slightly more than one-tenth (11%) picked YouTube while Instagram was picked by one in twenty five respondents (4%).

4.2 Bivariate Analysis of Findings

This subsection seeks to analyse the relationship among the various variables that are being measured on the questionnaire. This was achieved through a cross-tabulation of the variables, with the help of the SPSS software.

4.2.1. Cross-Tabulation of Level of Education and Participation in Demonstration.

Table 4.18: A table showing respondents level of education and the influence of social media in their participation of the demonstrations

4.2.1. Cross-Tabulation of Level of Education and Participation in Demonstration. Table 4.18: A table showing respondents level of education and the influence of social media in their participation of the demonstrations

		WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION INFLUENCED BY WHAT YOU READ OR SAW ON SOCIAL MEDIA			Total
		YES	NO	SOMEHOW	
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	DIPLOMA	6	2	0	8
	HND	7	0	0	7
	FIRST DEGREE	9	3	4	16
	POSTGRADUATE DEGREE	7	4	0	11
Total		29	9	4	42

Source: Field Work, 2015

The cross-tabulation in table 4.18 shows that respondents with low education were more influenced to partake in the demonstration than those with higher educational qualifications. For instance, almost nine out of ten respondents with Diploma and HND said they partook in the demonstrations mainly because of what they read on social media. The results differ slightly from the respondents with first and postgraduate degree qualifications, three out of five respondents responded in the affirmative. From the foregoing, it can be emphasized that one's level of education impacts their susceptibility to social media content, and in the context of this study, demonstrations and civic activism.

4.2.2 Cross tabulation of Sex and Social Media Influence in Participating in a Demonstration

Table 4.19: A table showing the variables sex and social media influence on participation in demonstration

		WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION INFLUENCED BY WHAT YOU READ OR SAW ON SOCIAL MEDIA			Total
		YES	NO	SOMEHOW	
SEX	MALE	13	5	1	19
	FEMALE	16	2	5	23
Total		29	7	6	42

Source: Field Work, 2015

4.2.3 Cross-Tabulation of Respondents' Age and their Daily Social Media Use

Table 4.20: A table involving two variables, namely age and average daily social media use

		ON AVERAGE, HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA DAILY					
		LESS THAN ONE HOUR	ONE HOUR	TWO HOURS	THREE HOURS	MORE THAN FOUR HOURS	Total
AGE	18-30 YEARS	1	11	19	6	18	55
	31-40 YEARS	2	7	9	1	1	20
	41-50 YEARS	7	4	4	0	1	16
	ABOVE 50	4	4	0	1	0	9
Total	14	26	32	8	20	100	

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 4.20 shows that respondents who are relatively younger tend to spend more time on social media. Nearly four out of five of the respondents (78.8%) within the youthful age bracket of 18 to 30 spend at least two hours daily on social media. This contrasts sharply with those in the mature age group (above 40 years), out of whom three-fourth spend below two hours on social

media. This establishes the point that social media usage is very popular among the youth than those elderly.

4.2.4 Cross-tabulation of Respondents' Age and Social Media Influence

Table 4.21: A table showing respondents' age and their participation in demonstrations

		WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION INFLUENCED BY WHAT YOU READ OR SAW ON SOCIAL MEDIA			Total
		YES	NO	SOMEHOW	
AGE	18-30 YEARS	13	2	5	20
	31-40 YEARS	5	2	0	7
	41-50 YEARS	6	2	2	10
	ABOVE 50	2	3	0	5
Total		26	9	7	42

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 4.21 indicates that nine out ten respondents within the youth age bracket (18-30 years) were influenced and somehow influenced by social media to partake in the demonstration. However, the mature respondents were not fully influenced compared to the formers. Out of 15 respondents who are above 40 years and partook in the demonstration, nearly half of them said their participation was not influenced by social media posts on the demonstrations.

4.2.4 Cross-tabulation of Respondents' Age and Social Media Influence

Table 4.21: A table showing respondents' age and their participation in demonstrations

		WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION INFLUENCED BY WHAT YOU READ OR SAW ON SOCIAL MEDIA			Total
		YES	NO	SOMEHOW	
AGE	18-30 YEARS	13	2	5	20
	31-40 YEARS	5	2	0	7
	41-50 YEARS	6	2	2	10
	ABOVE 50	2	3	0	5
Total		26	9	7	42

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 4.21 indicates that nine out ten respondents within the youth age bracket (18-30 years) were influenced and somehow influenced by social media to partake in the demonstration. However, the mature respondents were not fully influenced compared to the formers. Out of 15 respondents who are above 40 years and partook in the demonstration, nearly half of them said their participation was not influenced by social media posts on the demonstrations.

4.2.5 Cross-Tabulation of Respondents' Involvement in Demonstrations and their use of Social Media for discussing politics

Table 4.22: A table showing how respondents use social media to discuss politics and their involvement in the demonstrations

		WHAT DO YOU MOSTLY DISCUSS ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS?	Total
		POLITICS	
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE YOU JOINED?	OCCUPYFLAGSTAF	14	14
	DUMSOR MUST STOP	11	11
	WONGBO	3	3
	NONE OF THE ABOVE	28	28
Total		56	56

Source: Field Work, 2015

Half of the respondents who discuss politics on their social media pages did not partake in any of the demonstrations. This means out of the 42 respondents who took part in the demonstrations, 28 (67%) of them were respondents who discuss politics on social media. This indicates that people who discuss politics are more likely to join protests than those who discuss who issues like governance, sports and entertainment.

4.2.6 Cross-tabulation of Respondents' Level of Education and Social Media Use Table

4.23: A table showing respondents' educational level and their various uses of social media

		WHAT DO YOU MOSTLY DISCUSS ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS?					Total
		POLITICS	ENTERTAINMENT	GOVERNANCE	ECONOMICS	SPORTS	
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	DIPLOMA	5	4	2	0	6	17
	HND	4	3	4	1	1	13
	FIRST DEGREE	14	11	15	8	12	60
	POSTGRADUATE DEGREE	11	8	8	5	4	36
Total		28	29	21	10	21	100

Source: Field Work, 2015

The cross tabulation in table 4.23 shows how the respondents' level of education impact on their social media use, specifically the issues they discuss. Seven out of the seventeen respondents who hold diploma certificates do engage in politics and governance issues discussions on social media. Those with higher educational qualifications, thus first degree and postgraduate degree, approximately half of them devote their social media space for discussions bordering on politics and governance. This means highly educated people are more likely to engage in civic activism on social media. Meanwhile, sports and entertainment feature significantly among the lesser educated people.

4.2.7 Cross-tabulation of Respondents' Information Source and their Participation in Demonstration

Table 4.24: A table showing the medium or channel that first exposed respondents to the demonstrations and the influence of social media

		WHICH MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION DID YOU FIRST RECEIVE THE NEWS ABOUT THESE DEMONSTRATIONS?								
			RADIO	TELEVISION	SOCIAL MEDIA	NEWSPAPER	ONLINE PORTAL	TOTAL		
WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION	YES		6	2	14	0	4	26		
INFLUENCED BY WHAT	NO		3	1	2	2	2	10		
YOU READ OR SAW ON SOCIAL MEDIA?	SOMEHOW		1	1	2	0	2	6		
TOTAL			10	4	18	2	8	42		

Source: Field Work, 2015

Out of the 26 participants who said they took part in the demonstrations mainly because of what they saw and/or read on social media, more than half of them (54%) said they received the news about these demonstrations first on social media. Only a little below a quarter of the number partook in demonstrations due to the information they got through radio. Similarly, out of the total number of respondents who received the news on social media, majority (77%) said they participated in the protests mainly because of the updates they got from social media. This means that the more an individual is exposed to social media content, the more likely they are to be influenced. This emphasizes the relevant role social media played in terms of persuading people in joining civic actions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary, recommendations, suggestions for future and conclusions of the study.

5.2 Summary of Study

This study set out to achieve the following objectives: to identify the role social media play in civic activism activities; to establish whether or not social media is effective for organizing people for civic causes, and to reveal the social media sites that enhance the actions of civic activists. It was underpinned by the social network theory and the social capital theories. Data was gathered through survey, with questionnaire as the instrument of data collection and a sample size of 100.

5.3 Discussion of Findings

This section seeks to provide answers to the research questions set out in chapter one of this study.

1) What roles do social media play in civic activism?

Social media enables people to engage activities that constitute civic activism through a number of ways. Firstly, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have such features that

enable them to partake in civic activism discourse such as providing platforms for discussing political and governance issues. Until the advent of social media, the only access to discussing political and governance issues were through mainstream mass media such as radio, newspaper and television. However, with social media anybody with an account can choose discuss whatever they consider important. It is therefore, not surprising that each of the respondents use at least one social media tool, with Facebook being the most popular. Nearly half of the respondents (44%) use social media to discuss politics and governance issues.

2) Is social media an effective tool for mobilizing actions for civic activism?

From the data available through the study, social media play important roles in terms of mobilizing people for civic actions. For instance, the findings show that 42% of the respondents have partaken in #DumsorMustStop, Wongbo demo and #OccupyFlagstaff demonstrations. Out of this number that had partaken in the demonstration, two-thirds indicated that their participation was heavily influenced by what they read, saw and watched on social media. Only one-fifth noted that their participation was not influenced by social media. This means social media can affect people and move them to take part in demonstrations.

3) How is social media used as a tool for civic activism?

Social media enhances civic activism through a number of ways. According to the findings, through social media, people are able to advance their opinions and join public discourse on national issues to advance opinions and views on national issues. More than half of the respondents (54%) said they proffer their views very often and often on issues of national interest through social media. Additionally, more than half of the respondents (52%) use social media often and very often to monitor developments on social media. This means social media

can allow one to observe proceedings from demonstrations without physically joining the demonstrators.

4) Which social media platforms are most suitable for organizing activities of civic activists?

Not all social media platforms are suitable for organizing and mobilizing cause for civic activism. However, among the various social media platforms, Facebook is the most popular and effective for demonstration purposes. Specifically, slightly more than three-fifth (62%) of the respondents consider Facebook is the most effective social media platform for mobilizing people for demonstration. Again, Facebook is seen by a little below half of the respondents (47%) as the most appropriate platform for sharing or spreading information on the demonstration. Additionally, respondents' best social media tool for posting messages on demonstrations is Twitter with majority (54%) of the respondents.

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Firstly, this study was limited to only residents of Accra. This affected the scope of the study in terms of projecting and generalizing findings to the general population of Ghana, especially those living outside the capital. Future studies must focus on extending and expanding their scope to include other residents of other cities, towns and rural areas. This will help in painting a national picture of how social media can be used towards achieving civic activism purposes.

Secondly, this study was limited in terms of the sample size. Only 100 people were selected, a number which is woefully inadequate. However, this constraint was arrived as a result of time and financial problems which could not permit the researcher to extrapolate the findings. To nib

this problem in the bud, more time should be given to researchers to enable them gather more data from a larger number of respondents.

Future studies should do content analysis of social media posts and the various trending topics that emerge as a result of the demonstration. This is to help determine the kind of language that is used on social media in terms of civic activism.

5.5 Conclusion of Study

This study sought to identify how people use social media to engage civic activism causes, particularly demonstrations. It adequately answered the research questions and confirmed the theories that underpinned the study. The study found out that during demonstrations, people use their social media platforms to express their sentiments or identify with the cause of the demonstrators. Furthermore, it was revealed that social media tools are effective and more convenient means of organizing and mobilizing people to engage in civic activism. Additionally, the findings of the current study duly confirmed the findings of scholars such as Arif (2014), Kassem (2013), Adamoli (2012) and Bardici (2012). Additionally, the theory of technological determinism was elaborately reinforced by the study. The findings indicate that social media has usurped the major roles that traditional media used to play in the past regarding demonstrations. Just as McLuhan asserted that the media technology of the day determines how society organizes their activities, so has social media also influenced and transformed the organization and mobilization of people for collective actions. Similarly, Castell's scholarship on social network analysis is adequately confirmed in the study, in that social media creates the enabling environment for like-minded people to share ideas and come together for a common purpose. In

sum, this study was empirically sound, theoretically grounded and above all, duly met the objectives.

5.6 Recommendations for Policy Consideration

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations have been proffered to enable proper usage of social media for civic action:

- Organizers of demonstrations must ensure that their members do not use intemperate, abusive and insulting language on their social media space. This is important in order to ensure order and civility in discourse on national issues on social media.
- Social media has become an inevitable tool in the lives of people, and for civic activism purposes. It is therefore, imperative for government and other regulatory agencies such as the National Communications Authority (NCA), to formulate policy framework which will serve as a guide to social media users in the country. To achieve this goal, legislation is required to give the policy the necessary legal backing and strength.

To enable efficient and effective mobilization of people for civic activism through social media, it is recommended that groups must be created for that purpose. This means, for example, if there is a forthcoming demonstration on corruption, the ring leaders must create a specific group on social media to invite interested people to join. This is the most effective way of measuring feedback and public response to the cause. The number of people in the group gives an indication of the actual number of people to expect on the demonstration grounds. Knowing the total number in advance helps in planning, in terms of security arrangement and the venues or routes of the demonstration. Creating groups also makes sensitization of the members on the

rules and regulations of the demonstration easier, since they all belong to one collective group or association.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

My name is Audrey Dekalu, a student at Ghana Institute of Journalism. I am undertaking a research on “*Social Media as a Tool for Civic Activism: A Study of Occupy Ghana Movement*”, as part of requirements for the award of a Master’s degree in Development Communication. I will be very grateful if you would provide answers to the questionnaire. Your personal details will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

INSTRUCTION: Please fill the spaces provided. Mark (√) where applicable and specify where necessary.

Demographic Data

1. Sex: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 28-30 years [] 31-40 [] 41-50 years [] 51 years & above []
3. Level of education:
 Diploma [] HND [] Bachelor’s Degree [] Postgraduate []
4. Occupation:

Social Media Use

5. Which of the following social media sites have you subscribed? (Please tick as many as you use)
 YouTube [] Facebook [] Twitter [] Google + [] Linked In []
6. On average, how much time do you spend on social media daily?
 Less than one hour [] One Hour [] Two Hours [] Three Hours [] More than four hours []
7. Which medium or channel of communication did you first receive the news about OccupyFlagstaff demonstration?

Radio [] Television [] Social Media [] Newspaper []
 Online news portal [] Other [] Specify.....

The Role of Social Media in the organization of the protest

8. Please indicate your extent of agreement with the following statements

Reason	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I heard of this demonstration first on social media					
I monitored developments on the demonstration on social media					
I was motivated to partake in the demonstration because of posts I saw/read on social media					
I posted something on social media in support of the demonstration					
I partook in the demonstration because my social media friends were in it					
I used social media to draw people's attention to the demonstration					
I followed Occupy Ghana's social media accounts before the protest					
I tagged/mentioned friends in posts on the protest					

Online Activism Activities

10. Please indicate the frequency at which you engaged in online activities which are civic in nature

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I post links to news stories that border on corruption, bad governance, poor governmental polices					
I post videos related to issues of national interest					
I join a group which is actively engaged in activism					

I post photos of events and activities that					
I create groups which focus on discussing national issues and holding government accountable					
I use my personal social media space to advance my opinion on national issues					

Social Media Platforms

11. Various social media have specifically different roles they play in terms of organizing, mobilizing and disseminating information concerning the demonstration. With reference to the OccupyFlagstaff demonstration, please pick the social media tool that **most** corresponds with the sentence against it.

	YouTube	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
The most effective social media platform for mobilising people for the demonstration				
The best tool for posting information/messages about the demo				
The most appropriate platform for sharing/spreading information on the demonstration				
The most effective for informing people about the demonstration				
The best social media platform for posting multimedia messages (pictures, videos, texts)				
The social media tool that yielded most fruits in terms of feedback				

12. In all, which of the social media platforms was most effective and helpful to the demonstration?

YouTube [] Facebook [] Twitter [] Instagram []

13. In your estimation, what do you think are the advantages social media has over traditional media, in terms of mobilizing and organizing for demonstration?

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