



**ACCELERATING THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SDGs THROUGH SOCIAL
MEDIA: THE CASE OF YOUTH ADVOCATES GHANA (YAG)**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my/our own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute.


I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

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

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ABSTRACT

With the SDGs calling for broad participation, social media has become a vital tool for youth engagement, advocacy, and information sharing, especially in low- and middle-income settings. This study investigated the role of social media in promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advocacy among young people in Ghana, focusing on the strategic use of these platforms by Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG). Employing a qualitative research approach (case study), data was collected through in-depth interviews with YAG staff active in social media campaigns. The thematic analysis identified core themes in YAG's social media use: platform interactivity, engagement tactics, content diversity, challenges, and the future potential for digital advocacy. Findings show that social media offers NGOs significant benefits, particularly through multimedia options and interactivity, allowing YAG to connect directly with audiences. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn enable YAG to reach large youth audiences, facilitating awareness around key SDGs such as SDG 3 (Health), SDG 4 (Education), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). YAG creates space for youth expression, knowledge sharing, and advocacy through informational and educational content. Challenges include limited internet access, misinformation, cyberbullying, and data costs, which hinder campaign impact and create barriers for marginalised communities. Despite these limitations, social media offers opportunities for future growth. Participants suggested leveraging emerging platforms like TikTok to connect with new demographics and pursue platform verification to enhance credibility and use advanced analytics for better content targeting and audience engagement. The study therefore recommends including policies for affordable internet, digital literacy programs, and online safety initiatives, all of which are essential for empowering NGOs like YAG to maximize social media's advocacy potential. Future studies should examine platform-specific engagement strategies, cross-border advocacy collaborations, and the long-term effects of social media campaigns on youth perspectives and behaviour.

KEYWORDS: advocacy; digital engagement; NGOs; social media; sustainable development goals; youth empowerment.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty Allah for His faithfulness and guidance in this graduate studies journey. I also dedicate this work to my supportive husband for his continuous motivation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

YAG- Youth Advocates Ghana

UN- United Nations

SDGs- Sustainable Development Goals

MDGs- Millennium Development Goals

NGOs- Non-Governmental Organizations

CSOs- Civil Society Organizations

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, were adopted by the member states of the United Nations (UN) in 2015 to provide a comprehensive framework for building lasting prosperity for people and the planet. The 17 SDGs are designed not only to continue the progress made by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but also to address the shortcomings of the MDGs, which left critical gaps in areas such as inequality, environmental sustainability, and global partnerships (United Nations, 2015). To ensure the achievement of these ambitious goals, various strategies have been employed, including Public-Private Partnerships, strategic innovation, digitalization, and development financing (UNDP, 2021). Recognizing the urgency of these efforts, the UN Secretary-General launched a Decade of Action in 2020, aiming to accelerate progress towards the SDGs by the 2030 deadline. This declaration underscored the critical role of advocacy and communication in engaging people at all levels, thereby building broader coalitions and mobilizing action for effective SDG implementation (United Nations, 2020).

Achieving these ambitious goals requires collective and coordinated efforts from governments, civil society, and the private sector, with a strong emphasis on inclusive participation. As a dynamic and rapidly evolving tool, social media offers unprecedented opportunities to raise awareness, mobilize communities, and drive action towards the attainment of the SDGs. The ability of social media to reach vast audiences, facilitate real-time engagement, and spark global movements makes it a powerful platform for advocacy and change.

Social media also plays a crucial role in creating and sustaining networked communities. These platforms connect individuals with shared interests and goals, enabling them to collaborate on SDG-related initiatives across geographical boundaries (Wellman et al., 2001). The global reach of social media amplifies the impact of these efforts, making it easier to mobilize resources and support for SDG initiatives. Moreover, the viral nature of social media content means that messages can spread rapidly, reaching millions of users within a short period (Watts & Dodds, 2007). This is particularly advantageous for SDG campaigns, where raising awareness and driving action on a global scale is essential.

This characteristic makes social media an effective tool for engaging with a large, diverse audience and encouraging them to participate in SDG-related activities. Additionally, the user-generated content on social media democratizes the flow of information, giving voice to individuals and communities who may otherwise be marginalized in traditional media spaces (Smith, 2013). The ability to share personal stories and experiences related to the SDGs fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among users, further driving engagement and action.

In this context, Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG), a youth-led organization with a significant reach across Africa, has aligned itself with these global efforts to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. As a convener of young people across the continent, YAG has mobilized and educated the youth on the SDGs, empowering them to take action within their communities. These initiatives are frequently highlighted through various social media platforms, connecting local efforts to the global community and amplifying their impact. Understanding how social media can accelerate progress towards these goals is crucial, as it can serve as a model for other organizations and communities aiming to contribute to sustainable development. This research will explore how Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) leverages social media to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs, highlighting the strategies employed, the impact of these efforts, and the lessons that can be drawn from YAG's initiatives.

1.1 Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG)

Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG), established in 2012 in Nsawam, Eastern Region of Ghana, is a nationally recognized youth-led organization advocating for the rights, responsibilities, and active participation of children and youth in decision-making processes. Through collaborations with prominent development partners, including UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and others, YAG has fostered inclusive youth engagement in policy-making and contributed to global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With a mission to create spaces for youth involvement in decision-making and a vision to empower young people, YAG emphasizes social media as a critical tool for advancing its objectives.

This research explores YAG's utilization of social media to enhance youth engagement and advocacy for the SDGs. By adopting an exploratory and descriptive methodology, the study seeks to uncover how YAG and similar organizations employ social media platforms to mobilize youth, foster participation, and influence policy. It documents the strategies and outcomes of these efforts, aligning with YAG's mission to amplify youth voices in development discourse.

The findings contribute to understanding the intersection of social media and youth-led advocacy, providing actionable insights for enhancing youth engagement in global development efforts. This study strengthens the discourse on leveraging digital platforms to empower youth and accelerate progress toward the SDGs by 2030.

1.2 Statement of the Problem/ Knowledge Gap

Many social media scholars have recognized and demonstrated the role of social media in engaging people, especially in politics, media, marketing and consumer science (Tsiotsou, 2020; Manning, 2014; Amegatcher, 2014). Although, some studies Silva et al., 2020, Tsiotsou, 2020 have shown how social media has been leveraged as an effective tool for stakeholders' engagement in many spheres, including business, education and activism, however, it is not yet

clear how the engagement power of social media is being leveraged to accelerate sustainable development communication (SDGs).

The existing literature on social media use for development communication primarily focuses on the theoretical advantages, such as increased outreach, real-time engagement, and low-cost communication channels (Khan et al., 2021; Dolan et al., 2019). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how these platforms directly contribute to development objectives, particularly in the context of specific regions or organizations. For instance, while social media has been widely acknowledged for its role in spreading awareness about the SDGs (Kamal et al., 2020), few studies have systematically assessed its effectiveness in engaging communities and driving concrete actions towards achieving these goals.

Furthermore, much of the research Dasgupta & Sarkar, 2022 , Sorce, 2021, and Sheombar et al., 2018 has concentrated on the use of social media by large international NGOs, in the developed world with little concentration in the sub-Saharan African context. Moreover, exist on youth-led organizations, particularly in developing countries like Ghana. Given that youth constitute a significant portion of social media users and are key drivers of the SDGs, understanding the role of organizations like YAG in leveraging social media for development communication is critical (UNDP, 2020).

This research aims to address these gaps by examining how Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) uses social media to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs. Using a case study approach, the study will specifically explore the types of social media content employed by YAG, the strategies used to engage stakeholders and the wider public, and the measurable impact of these efforts on SDG awareness and action. By providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of social media for development communication in a youth-led, NGO context, this research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of social media's role in advancing global development objectives.

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to explore how Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) uses social media to engage and mobilize actions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The specific objectives are:

1. To assess the role of social media in advancing awareness and understanding of the SDGs among young people in Ghana
2. To examine the strategies employed by Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) in using social media to promote the SDGs and engage stakeholders.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the various social media channels used by YAG.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What role does social media play in YAG's efforts to mobilize youth for the attainment of the SDGs?
2. Which social media channels are used by YAG to engage young people in the SDGs?
3. How effective are the social media channels deployed by YAG in engaging and mobilizing youth for the SDGs?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on the use of social media in communicating and mobilizing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) serving as the case study. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a particular instance, organization, or group within its real-life context. The case study method allows researchers to thoroughly investigate the complexities and unique features of the subject, making it particularly useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). This method's advantage lies in its ability to provide rich, qualitative insights and a deep understanding of the processes at play within the specific context being studied. However, a potential

disadvantage is that findings from a case study may not always be generalizable to broader contexts, as they are deeply rooted in the specificities of the case examined.

In this research, the case of YAG is particularly significant because it is an active youth organization in Ghana with an African reach, working with and for young people to ensure youth engagement as a key component in the attainment of the SDGs. Studying YAG as a case allows the researcher to involve diverse youth voices, providing a comprehensive view of how social media is utilized to accelerate efforts toward achieving the SDGs. By focusing on YAG, the study will ensure that data is not generated from just one segment of a larger community but rather from a key organization actively engaged in social media-driven SDG advocacy across various regions.

1.6 Significance of The Study

With less than 7 years to meet the 2030 deadline for the attainment of SDGs, this study aims at accelerating the attainment of the goals using social media. It will not only contribute to broadening existing literature and knowledge on the use of social media to communicate for the SDGs, but it will also help YAG and other development partners to understand how best harnessed the potential of social media to call young people and other stakeholders to accelerate action in support of the SDGs. Furthermore, given that engagement and participation are the backbone of development communication, findings of this study will provide an important guide to development communication practitioners who are interested in leveraging digital technology such as social media to deepen participation in development processes.

Finally, the study findings will be important to academia and scholars. The findings will add to the literature in the field of social media and sustainable development. The findings can also be used in learning and teaching by scholars and students while the limitations and suggestions for further research provided in this study can be used by researchers to conduct further research in the field of social media and sustainable development.

1.7 Structure of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter one entails an introduction, a statement of the problem, research questions and objectives, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two entails an introduction, theoretical foundation, review of related and relevant literature, assumptions, conceptual definitions of terms, operational definitions of concepts, importance of the study and conclusion. Chapter Three provides the Methodology, methods, research design, population, sampling technique and sample frame and size, sources of data collection and data collection instruments, techniques of data analysis and limitations and delimitations. Chapter Four provides the analysis and discussions of key findings, while Chapter Five summarizes the key findings, draws conclusions and makes some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines literature from studies that have previously been conducted and are of relevance to this research. The review will focus on existing relevant literature on social media, its types, components, and forms, social media and content creation, types of social media content, impacts of social media in communication, and social media and development communication. The chapter will elaborate on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning this research.

2.1 Social Media

There is no universally accepted definition of social media, either in academic or everyday terms. This is largely because social media evolves rapidly, making it challenging to establish a fixed description for these dynamic interaction tools. However, according to Carr & Hayes's (2015) Social media are online platforms, that enable non-live communication, facilitate interactive and social exchanges, derive their main value from content created by users, and allow individuals to share personal interactions with broad audiences. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 50). Social media utilizes mobile and web technologies to build highly interactive platforms that allow individuals and communities to share, collaborate, discuss, and modify content created by users. Social media is now a central aspect of our everyday routines, drastically changing how we communicate, exchange information, and engage with others. Its importance in the modern digital world is immense. Whether for personal connections or professional networking, social media

platforms have reshaped the way we create, share, and consume content (Carr & Hayes,.2015). A wide and varied ecosystem of social media platforms currently exists, each differing in purpose and functionality.

2.2. Social Media Forms and Types

Social media can be categorized into different types and forms based on their primary functions and user engagement models. Broadly, social media platforms fall into five key categories: social networks, media-sharing networks, discussion forums, bookmarking and content curation platforms, and blogging and publishing networks.

- **Social Networks:** These platforms focus on connecting people, enabling users to build personal and professional relationships. Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter allow individuals and organizations to create profiles, share updates, and engage with others through comments, likes, and shares (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social networks primarily facilitate peer-to-peer communication and are widely used for both personal interaction and professional networking.
- **Media-Sharing Networks:** Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are centred around sharing visual or multimedia content. Users can upload, comment, and share images, videos, and music, with the aim of expressing creativity, sharing life moments, or disseminating information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These platforms emphasize user-generated content and often serve as hubs for influencers and content creators.
- **Discussion Forums:** Online forums like Reddit and Quora focus on community-based discussions where users can ask questions, provide answers, and participate in conversations about a variety of topics. These platforms support information exchange and foster knowledge sharing, often around niche or specialized subjects (Zuniga et al., 2012).

- **Bookmarking and Content Curation Networks:** Pinterest and Flipboard are examples of platforms that allow users to discover, curate, and share content. These networks enable users to collect and organize information or media from the web, and present it in a shareable format, often around specific interests or themes (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
- **Blogging and Publishing Networks:** Platforms like WordPress, Medium, and Tumblr provide users with spaces to publish long-form content, articles, and blogs. These networks allow individuals to express ideas, opinions, and creative work in a more detailed and narrative-driven format, engaging audiences through storytelling (Meraz, 2009).

2.3 Social Media Content

Kamal et al. (2020) categorised social media content into four key types: informational content, entertaining content, remunerative content, and relational content. These are further explained below

- **Informational content** involves posts that provide quick and helpful information to users. This type of content includes posts that notify or alert users about specific topics or areas of interest, to benefit others. Thoughtfully curated, such information can influence or affirm users' opinions on various issues (Kamal et al., 2020; Laryea, 2021).
- **Entertaining content** is characterized by posts that users find enjoyable and engaging. These posts are often perceived as fun, humorous, trendy, or exciting, which makes them appealing to users. In an online space filled with countless media options, entertaining content helps platforms capture and retain users' attention, emphasising the importance of providing content that enhances user satisfaction (Dolan et al., 2019; Kamal et al., 2020; Le, 2018).
- **Remunerative content** involves scenarios where users engage with social media platforms expecting some form of reward. These rewards could be financial incentives like discounts

or cash prizes, job-related opportunities such as networking and professional exposure, or personal gratification through entertainment or social validation. This expectation drives user engagement, fostering loyalty and continued interaction with the platform (Menon et al., 2019; Kamal et al., 2020).

- Relational content relates to how well social media meets users' needs for participation, communication, and social rewards. This type of content facilitates personal connections, encouraging users to share experiences, offer support, and engage in conversations that nurture a sense of community and belonging (Dolan et al., 2019; Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, 2019; Kamal et al., 2020).

The emergence of social media has opened up new avenues for content creators and publishers to connect with a vast audience. It enables content creators and publishers to access a global and diverse audience quickly, engage directly with followers in real time, and receive immediate feedback. Additionally, social media offers a cost-effective and scalable solution for content distribution, making it a more accessible and efficient option compared to traditional media (Gu., 2022).

2.4 Impacts of Social Media on Communication

Social media has increasingly become a major tool of communication for professional and personal purposes. Social media platforms have facilitated instantaneous communication, allowing users to share ideas, news, and experiences in real time. This has dramatically altered traditional communication, as platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram enable users to broadcast information to large audiences, blurring the lines between personal and mass communication. The concept of "masspersonal communication," where individuals can communicate privately with others while simultaneously sharing content publicly, reflects the hybrid nature of social media interactions (Carr & Hayes, 2015).

Moreover, social media enhances participatory communication, enabling marginalised voices to be heard. Individuals, communities, and organisations can use social platforms to advocate for social change, hold leaders accountable, and promote inclusivity (Dolan et al., 2019). However, the rise of social media has also contributed to the spread of misinformation, leading to significant challenges in maintaining the quality and reliability of information. The viral nature of false content can undermine trust in media and institutions, a key issue for effective communication (Hameleers et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the accessibility of social media platforms allows anyone to create and disseminate messages to millions worldwide, leading to the emergence of disinformation groups that exploit public ignorance and anxieties.

2.5 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Development traditionally focused on delivering immediate prosperity and meeting current needs, often with less regard for long-term impacts. This approach has been increasingly challenged by the complex and interconnected nature of contemporary global issues. As a response, the concept of sustainable development has emerged, emphasizing a balance between present and future needs. Sustainable development aims to ensure that today's advancements do not undermine the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, thus integrating environmental, economic, and social dimensions (United Nations, 1987). This holistic approach recognizes the importance of preserving resources and fostering equitable growth while addressing pressing global challenges.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, represent a comprehensive framework for advancing sustainable development globally. Comprising 17 goals and 169 targets, the SDGs build upon the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a broader and more inclusive agenda. These goals address a wide array of issues, including poverty eradication, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and climate action (Johnston, 2016). They are designed to be universal, applicable to all countries

regardless of their level of development, and are intended to be indivisible and integrated, balancing economic, social, and environmental dimensions while respecting national contexts and priorities (United Nations, 2015).

In Ghana, the implementation of the SDGs has been marked by significant efforts to integrate these goals into national policies and development strategies. The government, alongside various stakeholders, has embarked on initiatives to align national development plans with the SDGs, focusing on areas such as improving educational outcomes, enhancing healthcare access, and promoting sustainable agriculture. However, achieving these ambitious goals requires coordinated efforts and active participation from various sectors of society, including civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector actors, and the general public (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022).

Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) plays a pivotal role in this context by leveraging its advocacy platform to engage young people in the SDGs. YAG's initiatives focus on raising awareness, mobilizing action, and driving participation among youth to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. By using social media and other communication tools, YAG amplifies the voices of young people and fosters a participatory approach to addressing sustainable development challenges. Their work aligns with the global call for inclusive and multi-stakeholder partnerships essential for realizing the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda (YAG, 2023).

Through its active engagement in SDG-related campaigns and projects, YAG exemplifies how grassroots organizations can contribute to global goals while addressing local needs. Their efforts in promoting climate action, gender equality, and youth empowerment illustrate the practical application of the SDGs and highlight the importance of involving diverse societal actors in the pursuit of sustainable development. This context underscores the relevance of YAG's work and its alignment with the broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda (YAG, 2023).

2.6 Social Media and Sustainable Development Communication

Understanding social media requires recognizing its evolution from a basic digital interaction tool to a sophisticated platform for communication, engagement, and mobilization. Since the early 1990s, traditional media helped raise awareness about sustainable development. However, the advent of social media has allowed sustainable development concepts to spread more effectively through peer learning and shared experiences (Balaswamy & Palvai, 2017).

Traditional mass media have not been highly effective in conveying the SDGs, whereas social media platforms are praised for their potential to educate the public and foster the social and behavioural changes required to meet these goals. Advancements in information and communication technologies have facilitated mediated communication, which has, in turn, supported the development of relationships and helped promote awareness of sustainable development issues (Balaswamy & Palvai, 2017). One of the key properties of social media is its interactivity, which allows for real-time conversations, idea-sharing, and collaboration. This is particularly important for mobilizing communities, as collective action and collaboration are essential in the context of the SDGs. Social media campaigns can quickly go viral, reaching a wide audience and generating significant engagement (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The significance of social media in this context cannot be overstated as social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, among others, are characterized by their interactivity, user-generated content, and community-building capabilities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These platforms enable users to engage in two-way communication, where they can both receive and disseminate information, thereby fostering a more dynamic and participatory communication environment. This makes social media a powerful tool for raising awareness about the SDGs, mobilizing communities, and encouraging active participation in initiatives aimed at achieving these goals.

In the past decade, social media has significantly impacted organisational practices, particularly in terms of transparency and stakeholder engagement. Kang and Park (2018) argue that social media has pushed organisations to a new level of transparency, enhancing connections between companies and customers and prompting a re-evaluation of their societal roles. This change has been driven by social media's capacity to facilitate open communication and foster a shared sense of purpose among stakeholders. As organisations adapt to this new communication landscape, they are increasingly using social media to align their sustainability goals with broader social movements.

Social media's interactive nature is pivotal for its role in social activism and education. Napoli and Obar (2014) highlight that social media serves as a vital tool for mobilising people around social causes and movements. The platform's ability to organise, communicate, and educate has made it an essential component in raising awareness and driving action on various issues. This interactive feature allows users to share ideas, ask questions, and set learning goals, thereby transforming social media into a valuable learning environment for understanding and supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related initiatives. Busch and Barkema (2020) emphasize the importance of creating effective multi-stakeholder partnerships through social media. The recent global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest, have underscored the need for more deliberate partnership-building and attention to effective collaboration. Social media platforms offer a space for stakeholders to come together, share insights, and work towards common goals. This collaborative potential is crucial for addressing complex global challenges and promoting impactful solutions.

According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), social media encompasses three key functions that are particularly beneficial for nonprofit organizations: "information," "community," and "action." These functions enable nonprofits to engage strategically with their stakeholders, mobilize support, and drive collective action. By leveraging these features, nonprofits can enhance their

outreach, foster community engagement, and facilitate actionable responses to social issues. Understanding these functions helps organizations effectively utilize social media to achieve their mission and goals.

2.7 Social Media's Effectiveness as an Engagement Tool

The discussion on social media's effectiveness as an engagement tool is incomplete without highlighting its unique features that distinguish it from traditional communication channels. Social media platforms are designed with interactive elements that enhance user engagement and facilitate real-time communication. These features make social media a potent tool for organizations seeking to connect with and involve their stakeholders.

Interactivity is a fundamental feature of social media that differentiates it from other forms of communication. Platforms like Twitter incorporate various interactive features such as retweets, likes, direct messages, hashtags, and public messages, which collectively enhance user engagement (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). For instance, Twitter's retweet function allows users to share content with their followers, while hashtags facilitate the categorisation and discovery of topics. These features not only amplify messages but also encourage users to interact with content in diverse ways, fostering a dynamic dialogue between organisations and their audiences.

Real-time responses are another critical feature of social media. The immediacy of interactions on platforms like Twitter allows organisations to respond to stakeholder inquiries and feedback quickly. Lim and Lee-Won (2017) define "dialogic retweeting" as retweets made in response to mentions, highlighting how this practice signifies an organization's intent to listen and engage with the public. This real-time interaction enhances the visibility and legitimacy of an organization's messages, as timely responses can increase public trust and demonstrate attentiveness to stakeholder concerns.

Dialogic Communication is facilitated by social media features that support ongoing conversations. Social media platforms enable continuous exchanges through comments, replies, and mentions. Saxton and Waters (2014) emphasise that the frequency of actions such as sharing and liking can serve as indicators of public participation and engagement. When users actively engage with content through these actions, it signals a successful dialogic communication strategy, where organisations can gauge the impact and reach of their messages.

Behavioural Indicators of engagement, such as likes, shares, and comments, provide valuable metrics for assessing the effectiveness of social media strategies. These interactions are not merely quantitative measures but also reflect the level of public interest and involvement in the organization's activities. Studies have shown that high engagement levels, indicated by frequent retweets and likes, correlate with increased popularity and influence of the content shared (Saxton & Waters, 2014). This underscores the importance of leveraging social media features to build and sustain meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

Social media also plays a crucial role in creating and sustaining networked communities. These platforms connect individuals with shared interests and goals, enabling them to collaborate on SDG-related initiatives across geographical boundaries (Wellman et al., 2001). The global reach of social media amplifies the impact of these efforts, making it easier to mobilize resources and support for SDG initiatives. Moreover, the viral nature of social media content means that messages can spread rapidly, reaching millions of users within a short period (Watts & Dodds, 2007). This is particularly advantageous for SDG campaigns, where raising awareness and driving action on a global scale is essential.

Finally, social media platforms offer robust analytics tools that provide insights into user behaviour, engagement levels, and content performance. These data-driven insights can be used to optimize SDG campaigns, ensuring they reach the right audiences and achieve the desired

impact (Zeng et al., 2010). For example, organizations can track the success of their social media campaigns in real time, making adjustments as needed to improve their effectiveness.

In light of these properties, it is clear that social media has significant potential to contribute to the attainment of the SDGs. By harnessing the interactivity, user-generated content, and networked communities that social media facilitates, organisations like Youth Advocates Ghana can effectively mobilise young people across Africa to contribute to the global effort towards achieving the SDGs. Social media's ability to create viral content and provide data-driven insights further enhances its utility in this context. As such, the strategic use of social media is crucial for maximizing impact and driving meaningful change toward the realisation of the 2030 Agenda.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is based on the Social Media Engagement Theory, which posits that social media platforms can serve as powerful tools for engaging and mobilising communities toward specific goals (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The conceptual framework provides insight into the mechanisms that drive interaction and participation on digital platforms. In the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this framework examines how Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) leverages social media to foster awareness, advocacy, and action towards the SDGs.

The framework is divided into four parts; inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes which outlines the process of social media engagement for the SDG. The Framework begins with the premise that social media is a powerful tool for engagement, particularly in creating awareness around the SDGs. It recognises that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn are essential for reaching diverse audiences, especially youth, by providing accessible and immediate channels for information dissemination and serves as inputs. The first element of the framework focuses on social media content—the various forms of posts and messages shared by YAG, including

informational, entertaining, relational, and remunerative content. Each of these content types serves a distinct purpose: informational content educates the public about the SDGs, while entertaining and relational content fosters emotional engagement and community building. All these serves as inputs into the advocacy strategy to mobilise youth for the SDGs. The second element is audience engagement strategies, which are critical for ensuring that SDG-related messages do not simply reach the target audience but also resonate with them. YAG's approach may include tactics such as interactive campaigns, live discussions, and user-generated content that allow for greater interaction and co-creation of advocacy messages. The framework posits that higher levels of audience engagement result in stronger support for SDG initiatives and increased participation in SDG-related activities. These elements serve as the processes in which the inputs will go through to yield immediate results (outputs).

The immediate results which are the outputs includes stakeholder involvement which represents the third key component of the framework. In addition to engaging the general public, YAG collaborates with various stakeholders, including government agencies, international organisations, and local communities. This element highlights the role of partnerships in amplifying social media's impact. Collaborative efforts ensure that SDG messages are aligned with national and global agendas, and they help mobilise resources for SDG projects on the ground. At the centre of the framework is youth advocacy. As a youth-led organisation, YAG focuses on empowering young people to take active roles in the SDG movement. Social media serves as a platform where youth can express their views, share success stories, and rally support for different SDG goals. This advocacy is further strengthened by digital literacy initiatives that help young people develop the skills needed to navigate and maximise the potential of social media for social change.

The long term benefits of the advocacy (outcomes) represents the final element of the framework and addresses the broader societal impact. Social media, through the efforts of organisations like

YAG, facilitates public participation in SDG-related discourse, fosters partnerships for action, and enables large-scale mobilisation. It also drives behavioural changes by influencing perceptions, norms, and actions toward sustainability. Ultimately, the framework suggests that when these elements are integrated effectively, they accelerate progress toward the SDGs by enhancing awareness, building support, and driving collective action aligning with the social media engagement theory. Figure 2 gives a graphical representation of the framework.

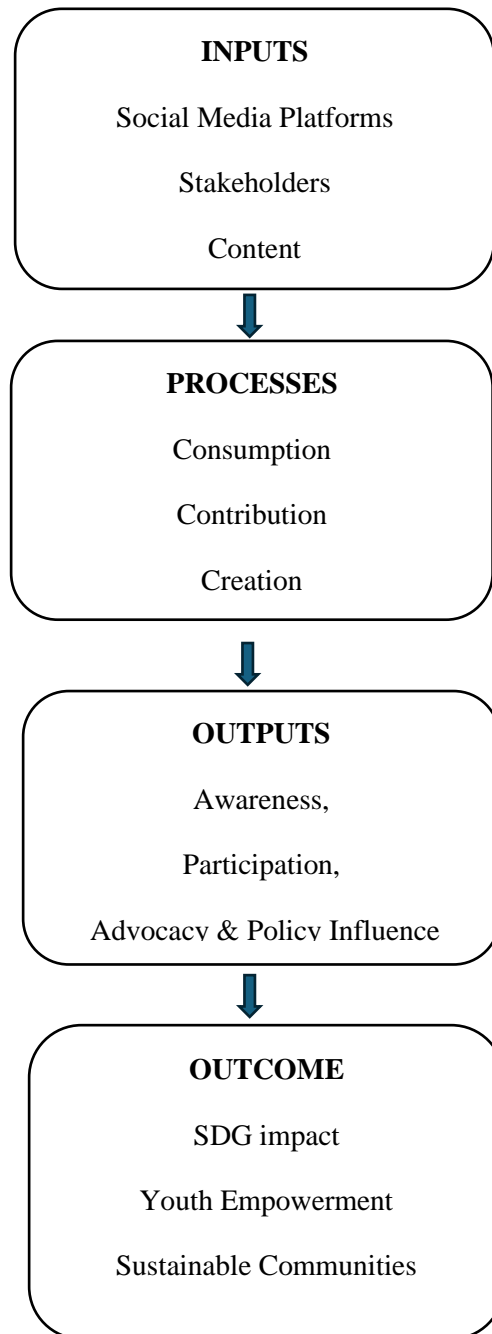


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Study

Source: Authors own construct, 2024

2.9 Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG).

Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) is a prominent non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 2012, with a mission to empower young people and enhance their role in civic and social spheres. The organization was established in response to the growing need for youth representation and involvement in critical societal issues in Ghana. YAG aims to bridge the gap between young people and decision-makers, ensuring that the voices of the youth are heard and considered in shaping policies and initiatives that affect their lives (YAG, 2023). This mission is rooted in the belief that active youth participation is crucial for sustainable development and societal progress.

YAG focuses on several key areas to achieve its mission. Education is a primary focus, with the organization working to improve access to quality education and educational resources for young people across Ghana. Health is another critical area, as YAG implements programs to address health challenges faced by youth, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and general well-being. Sustainable development also features prominently in YAG's agenda, as the organization supports initiatives that promote environmental sustainability, economic empowerment, and community development (YAG, 2023). By targeting these areas, YAG aims to foster a holistic approach to youth development and contribute to broader societal goals.

Central to YAG's approach is the promotion of active engagement and advocacy among young people. The organization provides various platforms and opportunities for youth to express their views, participate in community activities, and contribute to societal changes. This includes organizing youth forums, advocacy campaigns, and capacity-building workshops designed to enhance leadership skills and civic responsibility. By involving young people in decision-making processes and empowering them to take ownership of their communities, YAG plays a vital role in shaping the future of Ghanaian youth and driving positive change in the country (YAG, 2023). This approach aligns with YAG's commitment to fostering a participatory culture and ensuring

that young people are not merely passive recipients but active contributors to their development and that of their communities.

Role and Activities of YAG

- ❖ Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) undertakes a diverse range of activities aimed at fostering youth involvement and addressing critical social issues. One of the key strategies employed by YAG is organizing advocacy campaigns that tackle pressing issues such as climate change, gender equality, and poverty. These campaigns are designed to raise awareness, influence public opinion, and drive policy changes by mobilizing community support and engaging stakeholders at various levels. By addressing these key issues, YAG aligns its efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contributing to global initiatives aimed at promoting social equity and environmental sustainability (YAG, 2023).
- ❖ Educational workshops are another vital component of YAG's approach. These workshops provide young people with essential knowledge and skills in areas such as leadership, civic engagement, and sustainable practices. By equipping youth with the tools necessary for effective advocacy and community participation, YAG helps build a knowledgeable and active generation capable of driving positive change. These educational initiatives also foster a deeper understanding of the SDGs and how young people can contribute to achieving these goals through their actions and involvement (YAG, 2023).
- ❖ Community engagement events are crucial to YAG's mission, as they provide platforms for youth to participate in hands-on activities and collaborate with others. These events range from local clean-up drives and tree-planting campaigns to workshops and public forums addressing social issues. By leveraging various platforms, including social media, YAG amplifies its reach and mobilizes support for its initiatives. Social media plays a

significant role in these efforts by enabling real-time communication, broadening the organization's audience, and encouraging active participation from young people. Through these diverse activities, YAG effectively fosters a culture of engagement and empowerment among the youth, reinforcing its commitment to societal progress and the achievement of the SDGs (YAG, 2023).

2.9.1 Justification for Choosing YAG

Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) was selected for this study because of its innovative approach to leveraging social media as a tool for advocacy and its strong alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). YAG stands out for its strategic use of digital platforms to not only disseminate information but also to actively involve young people in the advocacy process. This participatory approach ensures that youth are not passive recipients of information but are engaged as co-creators and active participants in driving social change. By integrating social media into its advocacy efforts, YAG exemplifies a modern, dynamic model of engagement that aligns well with the objectives of this study (YAG, 2023).

The organization's commitment to involving youth in decision-making processes and its focus on critical areas such as climate change, gender equality, and poverty make it an exemplary case for examining the role of social media in modern advocacy efforts. YAG's participatory model, which encourages young people to contribute their ideas and collaborate on campaigns, provides a compelling example of how social media can be used effectively to foster meaningful engagement and drive social change. This model not only enhances the relevance and impact of YAG's initiatives but also offers valuable insights into best practices for using digital platforms to engage stakeholders and achieve developmental goals (YAG, 2023).

Furthermore, YAG's dynamic approach to utilizing social media offers significant insights into the effectiveness of these platforms in promoting advocacy and mobilizing support. The

organization's innovative use of features such as interactive posts, real-time updates, and collaborative campaigns demonstrates the potential of social media to transform traditional advocacy methods. By focusing on YAG's strategies and outcomes, this study aims to explore how social media can be harnessed to enhance engagement, build communities, and achieve the SDGs, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of digital advocacy practices in contemporary settings (YAG, 2023).

2.10 Conclusion

Although, the available literature has shown that social media has been leveraged as an effective tool for stakeholders' engagement in many spheres, including business, education and activism, however, it is not yet clear how the engagement power of social media is being leveraged to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs. In addition within the Ghanaian context little research is done. This knowledge gap underscores the need for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework for the study. I also discuss the methodology used to conduct this study. It focuses on unpacking the research design, research method, target population, sampling design and procedure, sampling techniques and sample size, administration of data instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability of the study as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study and by extension the use of social media in engaging and mobilizing young people to support a development course is underpinned by several theories of development and communication. For the purposes of this study, three such models have been reviewed to provide a foundation based on which social media can be used as an engagement tool for the attainment of the SDGs. These theories are the modernization theory, dialogic theory and participatory paradigm.

3.1.1 Social Media Engagement Theory

Social Media Engagement Theory was developed by Ashley and Tuten (2015), who explored how social media platforms facilitate dynamic interactions between organizations and their audiences. This theory underscores the shift from traditional, one-way communication models to interactive, two-way dialogues facilitated by social media. Unlike conventional media, which often presents information in a unidirectional flow, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram enable a reciprocal exchange where feedback and dialogue are integral components (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This interaction is vital for understanding how organizations like

Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) engage with youth on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to Ashley and Tuten (2015), the theory highlights the interactive nature of social media, which allows for real-time communication and feedback. This capability is crucial for organizations aiming to build and maintain relationships with their audiences. For YAG, this means using social media not just to disseminate information but to actively engage young people in conversations about the SDGs. This engagement fosters a sense of community and shared purpose, essential for mobilizing youth support for development goals (Qualman, 2018).

Furthermore, Social Media Engagement Theory emphasises the role of transparency and accountability. Social media platforms provide a space where organizations can address concerns and adapt strategies based on user input (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This real-time feedback loop enhances the trust between YAG and its stakeholders, making the communication process more responsive and inclusive. As such, social media becomes a tool for not only broadcasting messages but also for fostering a collaborative environment where stakeholder voices are heard and valued.

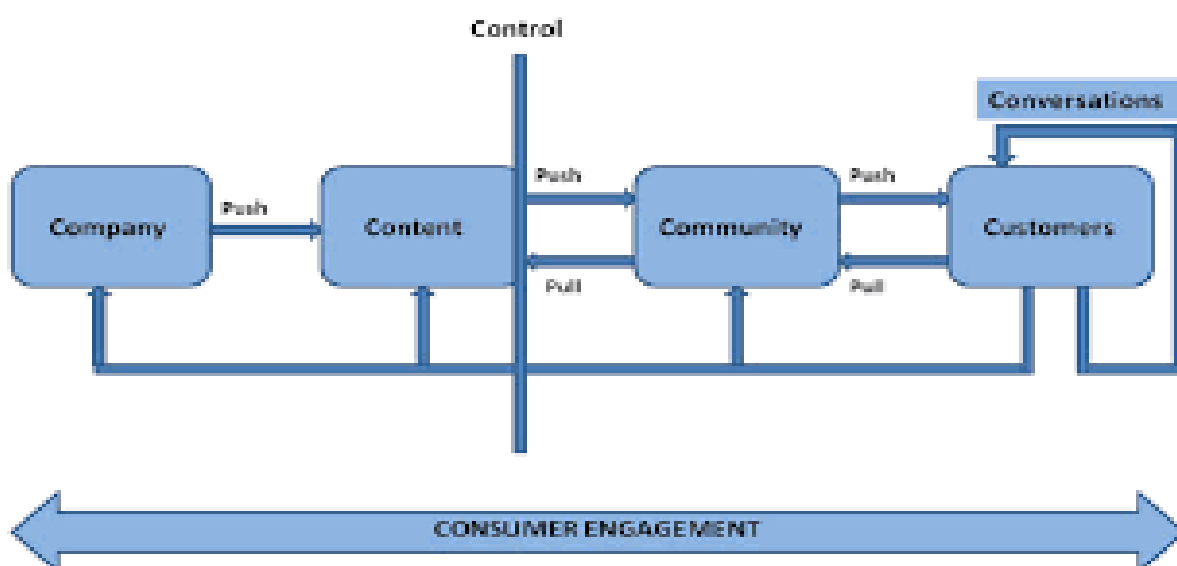


Figure 2: Social media engagement theory

Source: Ashley and Tuten (2015)

3.2 Review of Empirical Studies

The world is racing against time to meet the 2030 deadline for the achievement of the SDGs. The successful implementation and attainment of the targets of the SDGs require a collaborative and participatory approach across the globe. Scholars have long identified communications platforms, especially social media as critical for the engagement of others to join in support of a mission. Whilst highlighting the role of social media in business, Tsiotsou (2020) posited that social media have become enormously popular among businesses around the world because they facilitate customer engagement, enhance satisfaction, and increase customer loyalty.

The study showed that 76% of U.S. customers have purchased a product they saw in a brand's social media post, whereas 50% said that user-generated content (e.g. pictures, comments from other users) would make them more likely to buy products through a brand's social media channel (Tsiotsou, 2020). Furthermore, H&M leveraged social media to engage and raise awareness for the brand's sustainability and reduce its environmental footprint. The company started #WorldRecycleWeek on Twitter and succeeded in getting customers to recycle unwanted clothes (Sutton, 2018). Effective communication is the principal vehicle on which sustainable development can be achieved. It is no wonder that it has been called the 'lifeblood' of a strategy. Indeed, without clear two-way communication, and engaging all key stakeholders, a strategy will not succeed because cooperation and collaboration – which depend on it – are compromised (GTZ Rioplus, 2006).

Given that the SDGs are built on the agenda to leave no one behind, engagement with stakeholders provides partnership data for SDGs which hopes to bring greater transparency, coherence, impact,

and comparability to the work carried out by multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary initiatives in their support of the SDGs (United Nations, 2016).

In addition, whilst investigating the role of social media in promoting sustainable development, Balaswamy and Palvai (2017) conclude that social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are critical in addressing sustainable development issues such as environmental protection, health promotion and poverty alleviation. This conclusion is also corroborated by Kumar and Aggarwal (2018) when they posited that social media is helping to achieve sustainable development goals using its real-time engagement feature to mobilise people to the needed action in support of a specific development goal. It is therefore not surprising that in their cross-country study analysis of social media as an engagement tool for the SDGs, De Luca et al. (2022) concluded that not only are institutions leveraging Twitter to engage on the SDGs, but also the SDG 17, which is on building partnerships for goals is one of the most popular SDGs on Twitter.

Furthermore, engagement on social media platforms like Twitter using a hashtag is helping governments and policymakers to tap into the ideas of the masses in the formulation of sustainable development policies. This assertion is confirmed in a study on Social Media Analysis for Policy-Making Decision by Marzouki, et al. (2021). In Ghana, social media is being used by many industries including the traditional media landscape using social media to engage key stakeholders. Mainstream media outlets hitherto relied on their traditional platforms for the dissemination of content. However, the evolution of social media has led these outlets to shift their attention towards content distribution via social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. With media organisations now able to broadcast or share their content online, social media has revolutionised how even traditional media content is shared and accessed due to its ability to foster engagement and real-time interaction with the audience (Amegatcher, 2014).

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Case Study

Case study research seeks to investigate and describe a particular context or setting to enhance understanding (Cousin., 2015, Cresswell & Poth., 2018). This research method is suitable for this research and has been used by researchers Yang (2023) and Malik and Imdad, (2024) to conduct similar studies on the influence of social media usage. Moreover, Dasgupta and Sarkar (2023) used this approach to explore the role of social media in Promoting SDGs by two NGOs in India. The case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of YAG's strategies, the role of social media in these efforts, and the effectiveness of various platforms in mobilizing youth support for the SDGs.

3.3.2 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data—such as text, video, or audio—to gain deeper insight into ideas, opinions, or experiences. This approach can reveal complex details about a situation and inspire new research directions (Ugwu, Chinyere, N; Eze Val, 2017). This study used a qualitative method (case study approach) to explore the use of social media by Youth Advocates Ghana to promote SDGS through youth engagement.

The choice of a qualitative research method is premised on the fact that the research objectives require young people at YAG to share their lived experiences and perspectives on the usage of social media to accelerate efforts towards attaining the SDGs. Obtaining these kinds of data required a flexible interrogative approach to data collection. With this approach, the researcher got objective views from staff and other young people on how social media has supported YAG's contribution to the efforts of the global community.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The study employed a non- probability sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select individuals at YAG who are directly involved in communication and advocacy. The purposive sampling approach allowed for the inclusion of relevant participants, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the research topic. Purposeful sampling was used since those cases most likely to be information-rich on the point of interest are selected in order to effectively use limited resources (Patton, 2002).

3.4.1 Sampling Size

For this study, the researcher identified and interviewed staff of YAG and youth advocate (volunteer) people closely in advocacy and communication. The selected participants provided expert information and data for this research. In all Five participants were engaged consisting of four staff of YAG, and one volunteer. The participants sampled were the Communication Officer, Policy and advocacy officer, and monitoring and evaluation officer. Youth engagement officer and a volunteer. Participants for the interview were selected based on competencies and their knowledge about YAG, its activities, roles and efforts put in place for social media advocacy. The individuals selected have played instrumental roles in the organisation's day-to-day activities. They have also worked with partners globally and are the most appropriate candidates to provide information for the researcher to gather enough data for this dissertation. Two volunteers were also selected, as their effort also contributes to the overall goal of contributing to attaining the goals using social media. The volunteers selected have been working with the organization for a couple of years hence their input is crucial to this research. The selected participants are all young people and fall between the ages of 18 to 35. In total, there were three females and two males.

3.5 Data Collection Method

3.5.1 Individual in-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key members of YAG, including social media and communication managers, and youth advocates (volunteers) actively involved in SDG-related initiatives. An interview guide was developed with open-ended questions focusing on; The role of social media in YAG's SDG advocacy, Strategies employed to engage youth and the broader community, Challenges encountered in using social media for advocacy, and perceived successes and areas for improvement. These interviews gathered insights into YAG's strategies, the social media platforms used, and perceived challenges and successes. Interviews were conducted via video Zoom due to participants' availability and preferences. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy in data collection.

3.6 Data Analysis

To ensure accuracy, audios from in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim and reviewed for accuracy. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and unique insights. Coding was performed and data analysed based on the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) for qualitative data analysis; Familiarization, Coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, Defining and naming themes and writing up. This systematic approach allows for a logical organization of data into themes that align with the research objectives.

3.7 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytical approach which entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006). It is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes. A distinguishing feature of thematic analysis is its flexibility to be used

within a wide range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks, and to be applied to a wide range of study questions, designs, and sample sizes.

While some scholars have described thematic analysis as falling within the realm of ethnography (Aronson 1995) or as particularly suited to phenomenology (Joffe 2011), Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis can stand alone as an analytic method and be seen as foundational for other qualitative research methods. Indeed, the principles of thematic analysis of how to code data, to search for and refine themes, and to report findings are applicable to several other qualitative methods such as grounded theory (Watling and Lingard 2012) and discourse analysis (Taylor et al. 2012). Because of this flexibility, Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to thematic analysis as a method, as opposed to a more tightly prescribed methodology.

Thematic analysis in different research paradigms entails harnessing this method to distinct purposes and outputs. Post-positivists can use thematic analysis to focus on individuals' meanings and experiences to gain insights into the external reality, thereby supporting the development of conjectural knowledge about reality. Hence, the data analysis employed in this research was the use of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). This study used a thematic analysis procedure by Braun and Clarke, (2006). This required the transcription of interview recordings and followed coding stages. Initially, the authors read and re-read transcripts to identify potential themes, which they then forwarded to the lead author. The second level of analysis involved both the first and last authors reviewing these initial codes. They considered particularly how to retain the diversity of the initial codes, while producing overarching elements, higher level sub-themes.

There are two types of thematic analysis: Open and Axial coding. Open coding involves techniques to describe and conceptualize the data at a very basic level, on small parts of the data, often a line-by-line basis. It is kind of like breaking down the data into the smallest components, so that they can later be brought back together in a greater conceptual level in axial coding. Axial

coding is where connections between the open codes are examined and used to create larger codes or eventually themes (in the selective coding step).

This research employed the use of axial coding. With axial coding, the researcher focused on identifying the “Categories” which are derived from the relationships between the codes developed in open coding. To help with this, Corbin and Strauss (1999) developed a Coding Paradigm that defined six subcategories. These subcategories, which are phenomenon, causal causation, strategies, consequences, context, and intervening condition. After we are done with the axial coding process, we will have a handful of categories, supported by the 6 subcategories, each of which have emerged from the codes we developed in open coding.

The Six-Phase Approach to Thematic Analysis.

Step 1: Become familiar with the data.

In undertaking thematic analysis, it is crucial to first familiarize with the data. The process involves skimming through and reviewing textual data (transcribed interviews) and listening to audio recordings while taking notes. Taking notes to highlight items of potential interest can be done either by annotating transcripts or writing comments in a notebook. This step aimed to become familiar with the data and find out what is relevant to the aim of the study.

Step 2 Generating Initial Codes

Next is using open coding to generate initial codes. Codes are the building blocks of analysis because they identify and provide a label for a feature of the data that is potentially relevant to the research question. The data was organized in a systematic way through open coding. This was done to reduce the data into small chunks and to address specific research aims. However, there was no pre-set coding rather developed and modified throughout the process. For instance, the

issue of culture kept coming up during the interview process and thus became relevant to the research.

Step 3: Searching for Themes

As defined earlier, a theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question. As Braun & Clarke (2006) explain, there are no hard and fast rules about what make a theme. This phase involved reviewing the coded data to identify areas of similarity and overlap between codes. Firstly, the codes were examined, and some fitted together into a theme.

Step 4: Reviewing Potential Themes

This involves one final reread of all data to determine whether your themes meaningfully capture the entire data set or an aspect thereof. (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This phase involves a recursive process whereby the developing themes are reviewed to the coded data and the entire data set. During this stage, the preliminary themes developed in Stage 3 are reviewed, modified, and developed. The next step is to think about whether the themes work in the context of the entire data set. The themes within both a single interview and across all interviews must be considered and coherent. Some questions to ask are as follows: Is this a theme (it could be just a code)? If it is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research question)? Is there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme (is the theme thin or thick)? The phase is essentially quality checking.

Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

This is the final refinement of the themes, and the aim is to 'identify the 'essence' of what each theme is about.'. (Braun and Clarke, 2006). What is the theme saying? If there are subthemes, how do they interact and relate to the main theme? How do the themes relate to each other?, these

are all questions to be considered when naming the themes. The themes need to be stated and unique to the research questions and aims as well. Relevant themes identified include Social media usage, content strategy and engagement, advocacy focus, engagement tactics, content types, challenges, and future opportunities for social media advocacy. These themes emphasize the effectiveness of various social media platforms and strategies used by YAG, their influence on stakeholder engagement, and the challenges and opportunities social media presents for future SDG advocacy.

Step 6. Producing the report

Writing and analysis are thoroughly interwoven in qualitative research—from the informal writing of notes and memos to the more formal processes of analysis and report writing. The purpose of the report is to provide a compelling story about the data gathered based on the analysis. The story should be convincing and clear yet complex and embedded in a scholarly field. Even for descriptive TA, it needs to go beyond description to make an argument that answers your research question. In this section, the language needs to be concise and precise and avoid the use of paraphrasing. In general, qualitative research is best reported using a first-person active tense but check the requirements for your report. The order in which you present your themes is important: Themes should connect logically and meaningfully and, if relevant, should build on previous themes to tell a coherent story about the data.

3.8 Ethical consideration and Limitations

In any social research, considerations such as confidentiality and avoidance of deception are important. Best practice demands to always avoid breach of confidentiality. In-depth interviews can reveal sensitive personal information about individuals, and this may include the respondent's perception about others. Undesirable social characteristics or behaviour may be revealed and

when this information is not well managed and kept confidential, reputations and relationships may be damaged. Some opinions about a social or official setting may be variants to the status quo. The handling and management of such information may create ethical problems for the researcher. In the case of this study, the researcher does not intend to do anything to breach confidentiality.

Given that the interviews will be conducted online, there will not be any face-to-face interaction with participants. Although convenient, this is a limitation because the researcher will only be able to obtain the answers to the questions asked but could not obtain additional data from the body language of the interviewee.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses in relation to relevant literature. This will be presented based on the objectives of the study and the themes identified.

4.1 Presentation of Results and Discussions

Objective one: The first objective was to assess the role of social media in advancing awareness and understanding of the SDGs among young people in Ghana. The findings are presented based on the various themes identified.

4.1.1 Social Media Usage for Advocacy.

The Social Media Engagement Theory posits that social media platforms can serve as powerful tools for engaging and mobilising communities toward specific goals (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). YAG as a youth led organisation has leveraged on the power of social media to empower, educate and mobilise youth for SDG advocacy. *“As a youth-led organization, social media is the bedrock of our work as we seek to mobilise, engage and empower young people”*. As expressed by Interviewee 4. As noted by Dolan et al, (2019) Individuals, communities, and organisations can use social platforms to advocate for social change, hold leaders accountable, and promote inclusivity.

The findings further show that, YAG's social media presence has substantially fostered awareness and understanding of the SDGs among Ghanaian youth. YAG leverages popular platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to engage young people and advocate for the SDGs. Interviewee 3 notes *“In terms of social media platforms that we use for our engagement, I will mention we are on Twitter/ X, Facebook, Instagram, and then we are on*

LinkedIn". This multi-platform approach highlights the value of multimedia in enhancing message accessibility and appeal and conforms with research by Fuchs, (2020). The organisation's use of these platforms allows it to connect with audiences on both local and global levels. Conversely, while Instagram and LinkedIn serve targeted purposes, they have smaller followings, with Instagram being effective for visual content and LinkedIn offering professional networking opportunities. Interviewee 3 noted, *"We have 10k followers on Facebook, 4.5k on Twitter/X, 292 on Instagram, and 1.1k+ on LinkedIn"* highlighting differences in audience reach across platforms. This higher following on X is leveraged by the organisation as noted by interviewee 2 *"It's (X) also one of our strengths for some time now because that is when most of policymakers, government officials and you know people within our space, that is the platform that they use"*. social media as an engagement tool was further highlighted by the organisation, as social media serves as a potent tool for organisations seeking to connect with and involve their stakeholders.

Lovejoy and Saxton, (2012) assert that, platforms like Twitter incorporate various interactive features such as retweets, likes, direct messages, hashtags, and public messages, which collectively enhance user engagement. This was corroborated by interviewee 4, saying *"Those platforms allow us to reach our target audience quickly with our messages. The platforms promote interactivity. As we seek to have engagements and interact with our audiences, interactive feature of these social media platforms allow us to have two-way communication with our audience and enable them to contribute directly to our discussions and interventions"*. This finding further aligns with the social media engagement theory which underscores the shift from traditional, one-way communication models to interactive, two-way dialogues facilitated by social media.

Objective Two: The second objective examined the strategies employed by Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) in using social media to promote the SDGs and engage stakeholders. The findings indicate that, YAG employs several strategic approaches to enhance SDG promotion and

stakeholder engagement on social media. YAG's social media strategy involves a mix of informational content, interactive posts, and multimedia elements aimed at educating and engaging youth.

4.1.2 Content Strategy and Engagement

The second element of the conceptual framework (audience engagement strategies) proposed that unique engagement strategies such as interactive campaigns, live discussions, and user-generated content allow for greater interaction and co-creation of advocacy messages. YAG's content strategy demonstrates an understanding of audience-specific messaging, sharing informational, educational, and interactive content to empower young people to engage with the SDGs actively. For instance, YAG simplifies complex SDG concepts and issues into easily understandable formats. Contents shared by YAG are context specific aiming at a particular advocacy issue or SDG as noted by Interviewee 2 *"as a leading agency driving campaign to mobilise SDG action on sustainable development goals. Our primary focus and our content are tailored to specific SDGs and indicators and even specific to the target that we want to ensure that those targets have been achieved"*. This finding conforms with Kamal et al. (2020) categorisation of social media content including informational content, entertaining content, remunerative content, and relational content.

YAG further empowers youth by hosting social media "storms" and "chats" to spotlight specific issues of concern like child marriage, gender-based violence, youth civic participation among others, these informational contents are aimed at educating young people and the general public about the SDGs Interviewee 5 explained that, *" Like I already mentioned earlier about the types of content we share on social media, these contents and programs are aimed at providing the knowledge, platform for youth networking engagement fostering empowerment"*. Corroborating findings by Balaswamy & Palvai, (2017) who argued that, social media has allowed sustainable development concepts to spread more effectively through peer learning and shared experiences.

Additionally, YAG employs socially interactive content to build community engagement and encourage dialogue, showing that peer interactions strengthen the visibility and legitimacy of advocacy messages (Chan & Karikari, 2022).

Another core component of YAG's strategy is its focus on diverse and youth-centric content, ranging from informational posts to socially interactive media like the YAG TV series. Interviewee 2 stated, *"we have something called the YAG TV series. YAG TV is more of a digital platform that we use to bring young people on board to talk about issues that affect them"* This approach aligns with Campos and Vieira (2021), who underscore that relatable, lived-experience content encourages active youth participation and strengthens message relatability. YAG's strategy also involves sharing content from different points of view or issues of national interest, information on opportunities and resources for youth empowerment as highlighted by interviewee 4 *"Beyond the education, we also on regular basis provide information about opportunities and resources available to young people to enable them to take the concrete action toward the attainment of the SDGs"*. All these contents are channelled through a mix of text, audiovisuals including *"videos, text, social media cards and photos to convey different messages, be it to inform, educate or call for action"*. As noted by Interviewee 4. The use of innovative engagement formats like "X chat," "X storm," and Facebook live sessions reflects existing research that identifies multimedia elements as central to effective digital advocacy (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). By integrating such tools, YAG creates dynamic spaces for youth to discuss policies and contribute to dialogues on sustainable development. Content consistency, specifically YAG's routine posting schedule of at least three times per week, emphasises content regularity as crucial for engagement and visibility in digital campaigns. This practice demonstrates YAG's proactive approach to sustaining digital presence and relevance, aligning with previous findings on the importance of steady communication in building credibility and trust among followers (Seo et al.,

2020). This finding corroborates the social media engagement theory which underscores the role of content in consumer engagement.

4.1.3 YAG Advocacy Focus

The organisation to a large extent advocates for all the SDGs through its regional and local reach especially through the African Youth SDGs Summit hosted yearly as noted by interviewee 2 “ *we are the champions of the SDGs at YAG because we, one, advocate for the entire SDGs and then project specific we look at some individualized SDGs*”. However, due to financial and logistical constraints and the projects implemented, the organisation’s primary advocacy areas over the years have centered on reproductive health (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), Decent work and Economic growth (SDG 8) and Peace Justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) climate action (SDG 13), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). “*We advocate for maternal health issues relating to women, we advocate for a lot when it comes to health SDG (3) and we also focus on how to influence policies that create that meaningful space for not just young people, but within the society at large*”. interviewee 2 Asserted . Dasgupta & Sarkar, (2022) opines that SDG priorities through social media promote advocacy effectiveness and the need for an effective relationship with social media advocacy.

YAG’s focus on youth empowerment and gender inclusion is evident, as the organisation actively trains youth to utilise social media for advocacy: “*We train young people to be able to use social media and make their voices heard*” as noted by Interviewee 3. The emphasis on gender balance and inclusive participation, where males and females are actively engaged, underscores YAG’s commitment to addressing gender disparity in SDG advocacy this is corroborated by interviewee 2 saying “*gender has become a very core part and a very central to almost all the SDGs. And so we ensure that there is that gender balance. We involve both women and boys*”.

Objective three: Finally, the study assessed the effectiveness of the various social media channels used by YAG while identifying challenges and opportunities.

4.1.4 Success Factors in Campaigns

The findings indicate that YAG's effectiveness across different social media platforms varies, influenced by platform-specific audience, demographics and engagement features. Facebook emerged as one of the organisation's strongest channels for stakeholder engagement, particularly for broader community involvement. Interviewee 2 emphasised, *"Facebook has become our strength for engaging our stakeholders... for communicating and advocating for the cause that we do"*. Behavioural Indicators of engagement, such as likes, shares, and comments, provide valuable metrics for assessing the effectiveness of social media strategies. (Saxton & Waters, 2014). YAG uses engagement metrics, such as post reach, comments, and likes, to evaluate the success of social media campaigns. Positive responses from stakeholders further serve as indicators of effective outreach, reflecting the "return-on-engagement" approach identified by Chan and Karikari (2022) as an essential metric for advocacy effectiveness. The organisation also recognises that trending topics signal successful awareness campaigns. *"Once you have interesting and engaging content, it attracts people to the message easily. This leads to a better understanding of messages and actions"*. Interviewee 4 noted. This finding aligns with research by Zeng et al, (2010) where they argued that organisations can track the success of their social media campaigns in real-time, making adjustments as needed to improve their effectiveness.

YAG's campaigns are strengthened by factors such as interactivity, content quality, and success determined by partnerships with high-level organisations as expressed by Interviewee 3. *"Social media has helped YAG holistically...granted the organisation so many partnership opportunities with UN entities, high-level international organizations"*. Campaign tracking via hashtags allows YAG to monitor engagement levels, with trending hashtags serving as indicators of success as explained by Interviewee 2 *"If we run...a campaign on social media and our hashtag is trending,*

it means a lot of people are talking about it, and we have achieved a set objective" Moreover, YAG's focus on accountability through event participation reflects an approach where youth advocates are encouraged to hold leaders accountable. Platforms like Twitter incorporate various interactive features such as retweets, likes, direct messages, hashtags, and public messages, which collectively enhance user engagement (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

4.1.5 Challenges with Social Media For Advocacy.

Despite the successes YAG faces challenges that impact social media effectiveness, particularly related to accessibility and resource limitations. Constraints such as information overload, internet accessibility, and misinformation reduce overall engagement quality. Frequent interruptions due to poor connectivity compromise engagement during live sessions, reducing the effectiveness of online interactions. Interviewee 2 mentioned, *"Internet accessibility is also a limit. When it rains, internet becomes poor, and affects our programs especially the live sessions, Like YAG TV series, for instance, and the internet is not so stable that people are able to watch the video to engage, to interact and all that"*. socioeconomic barriers also limit social media's inclusivity *"Social media is very limited to a particular group of people...what happens to people who are not also on social media?"* Interviewee 2 mentioned.

Moreover, YAG is confronted with issues of information overload, internet accessibility, and the spread of fake news. The rise of social media has also contributed to the spread of misinformation, leading to significant challenges in maintaining the quality and reliability of information. The viral nature of false content can undermine trust in media and institutions, a key issue for effective communication (Hameleers et al., 2020). This was elaborated by Interviewee 4 saying *"The spread of fake news and disinformation is one of the major challenges... it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to believe things on social media"*. These challenges are compounded by cyberbullying, which discourages some youth from online engagement *"Usually when people suffer bullying, they shy away from engaging or even coming online. This affects our*

ability to them to take the needed action to promote the SDGs". As indicated by interviewee 4. This conforms with findings by Hameleers et al, (2020) reiterating that, the rise of social media has also contributed to the spread of misinformation, leading to significant challenges in maintaining the quality and reliability of information. The viral nature of false content can undermine trust in media and institutions, a key issue for effective communication.

In Ghana, limited internet access and the high cost of connectivity hinder the organization's outreach to marginalised and disadvantaged youth. This finding underscores the digital disparity emphasised in literature, where youth from underserved communities are disproportionately affected by infrastructural limitations in online participation (Campos & Vieira, 2021). Moreover, YAG faces challenges such as limited data allowances for youth participation, restrictions from platform versions (e.g., X's free version limiting posts), and restricted tagging options. Interviewee 3 noted, "*Sometimes, we can't even tag important stakeholders,*" which impacts visibility and connectivity—common issues noted by Hootsuite's (2021) work on constraints in non-profit social media use.

4.1.6 Future Opportunities for SDG Advocacy

YAG envisions expanding its social media strategy by utilising data analytics and engaging with evolving social media features for more tailored and impactful advocacy. "*As data analytics capabilities grow, social media can provide real-time insights into public sentiment, needs, and areas where SDG efforts are most needed*" Interviewee 5 noted. The literature indicates that data-driven insights enable organizations to adapt their strategies to emerging trends and audiences, supporting more impactful and targeted advocacy (Kavanaugh et al., 2021). Additionally, YAG recognizes the potential of cross-border collaborations and personalised engagement to broaden their advocacy efforts

Looking forward, YAG identifies potential for greater SDG impact through emerging social media features, such as interactive content, live discussions, and community-based challenges. Interviewee 5 explains that, “*social media’s global reach and ability to connect diverse groups offers unique opportunities for cross-border collaboration. Partnerships between local organizations, global institutions, and grassroots movements can amplify SDG messages, encouraging a shared commitment to sustainability and mobilizing action across different regions and demographics*”. This is consistent with Quigley and Roy’s (2023) work on how social media platforms can strengthen international partnerships for sustainability.

Moreover, the value of platform verification and the need for expanded research into advanced social media tools was highlighted. Verification, particularly on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), was highlighted as a significant way to increase both credibility and visibility. This aligns with findings from Gonzales et al. (2019), who observed that verified accounts tend to garner more trust and can lead to broader engagement, as users are more likely to engage with content they perceive as credible. Verified status can also improve an organization’s reach by enhancing its visibility in algorithm-driven feeds, which prioritize recognized accounts, thereby amplifying the organization’s message to a larger audience.

Finally, there is considerable potential for leveraging emerging social media tools, including data analytics, targeted ads, and platform-specific features like TikTok’s video engagement strategies. The adaptation to these tools reflects the broader necessity for digital flexibility in an environment that is rapidly evolving, where organizations must continuously innovate to maintain effectiveness and relevance in the digital space.

Generally, the findings conform with the conceptual framework proposed for the study which emphasised the societal impacts of social media advocacy involves the interconnectedness of social media platforms, social media content, engagement strategies, advocacy focus, collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, draws conclusions, discusses limitations, and offers recommendations based on the research conducted.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined explore how Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) uses social media to engage and mobilise actions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically the role and the effectiveness of its digital platforms for youth engagement in Ghana. The findings reveal that:

Social media serves as an SDG Awareness Tool for YAG. Thus, YAG effectively uses social media to promote SDG knowledge and engagement among Ghanaian youth. Platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn are employed to share diverse, accessible content related to SDG goals. Moreover, to ensure effectiveness, YAG employed Strategic content Engagement Methods for advocacy campaigning. YAG utilises multimedia content, hashtag campaigns, interactive posts, and personal stories to create an inclusive and engaging environment. These strategies align with best practices for youth engagement, prioritising two-way communication and community-building.

Additionally, the study revealed the effectiveness and Platform-Specific Impact, for instance Facebook stands out as the most effective channel, while LinkedIn and Instagram cater to more specific audiences. However, challenges like limited audience reach, information overload, internet accessibility issues, and misinformation impact engagement. Finally, accessibility constraints, high data costs, and cyberbullying present ongoing challenges. Despite these, YAG

sees future opportunities in data analytics and evolving social media tools to improve targeting, engagement, and personalised messaging.

5.2 Conclusion

This study aimed to assess how social media supports Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) in advancing awareness and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among young people in Ghana. Specifically, the objectives focused on examining the strategies employed by YAG in promoting the SDGs, understanding how effectively YAG engages stakeholders, and assessing the effectiveness of various social media platforms used by the organization. The study used a qualitative (case study) applied a qualitative approach to uncover the nuances of social media's role in advocacy, five interviews were conducted with YAG staff and volunteers. Content analysis of interview transcripts were conducted, identifying relevant themes relevant to the study's objectives. By employing the Social Media Engagement Theory the study conceptualised that the intersection of social media, youth-led advocacy, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will inform effective SDG communication and engagement. Building on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks the study shows that social media platforms can serve as powerful tools for engaging and mobilising young people toward specific goals (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

The analysis revealed that YAG strategically utilises platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn for diverse purposes, including engaging young people in SDG-related discussions and promoting awareness. The findings indicate that social media facilitates two-way communication, allowing YAG to foster interactivity and inclusivity, a critical aspect of SDG advocacy supporting the Social Media Engagement Theory's emphasis on social media platforms as spaces for dialogue and engagement(Ashley & Tuten, 2015). These tools enable two-way communication where audiences actively participate in advocacy initiatives.YAG's use of multimedia formats—combining videos, graphics, and live sessions—enhances accessibility and inclusivity, creating a space where young people can share experiences and perspectives, this

directly answers Objective one of the study which sought to assess the role of social media in advancing awareness and understanding of the SDGs among young people in Ghana. This supports research by Dolan et al (2019), Kietzmann et al (2011) and Balaswamy & Palvai (2017) which underscored the role social media in development communication emphasising that social media has allowed sustainable development concepts to spread more effectively through peer learning and shared experiences.

The Social Media Engagement Theory's emphasis on engaging audiences in meaningful dialogue is reflected in YAG's strategies, such as using live streams and interactive campaigns. To answer objective two which sought to examine the strategies employed by Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) in using social media to promote the SDGs and engage stakeholders. The study found that YAG employs specific tools like hashtags and feedback mechanisms to create measurable and interactive campaigns. For instance, events like Twitter storms, chat and live Facebook sessions (YAG TV) not only increase visibility but also promote dialogue, empowering young people to advocate and hold leaders accountable. This approach aligns with existing literature that supports the use of interactivity as a strategy for advocacy (Jones & Smith, 2020). Moreover, Campos and Vieira (2021) underscores relatable, lived-experience content encourages active youth participation and strengthen message relatability. Thoughtfully curated content can influence or affirm users' opinions on various issues (Kamal et al., 2020; Laryea, 2021).

Lastly, the study examined the effectiveness social media platforms for SDG promotion (Objective 3). Findings indicated that while platforms like Facebook are widely effective due to their broad reach, emerging platforms such as TikTok are increasingly valuable for reaching younger demographics. Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments are critical for evaluating the success of campaigns, providing measurable insights into their impact. Positive stakeholder responses and real-time tracking of trending topics further enhance campaign evaluation and effectiveness. Social Media Engagement Theory emphasises the role of

transparency and accountability and Social media platforms provide a space where organisations can address concerns and adapt strategies based on user input (This real-time feedback loop enhances the trust between YAG and its stakeholders, making the communication process more responsive and inclusive. The findings indicate platforms like Twitter, with features such as retweets, direct messages, and hashtags, amplify interactivity and user engagement, aligning with the organization's goal of holding leaders accountable and fostering dialogue.

However, YAG also faces challenges such as limited internet access, information overload, and risks of disinformation, which can limit the impact of their campaigns. In summary, the study showed YAG's strategic and adaptive use of social media channels for effective advocacy on the SDGs among young people in Ghana, Highlighting the potential for continued growth as new technologies and platforms are integrated into their strategy. Participation: Focuses on youth empowerment through active participation in decision-making processes. The study further highlights how social media enables collective action and amplifies youth voices to influence policies and drive social change. The study validates the Social Media Engagement Theory by showcasing its application in real-world advocacy efforts.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the research proposes the following recommendations.

1. Given social media's global nature, studying cross-border advocacy facilitated by digital platforms would reveal opportunities for international partnerships. This research could help NGOs like YAG leverage social media to mobilise support and foster global networks focused on shared SDG goals. Di & Giorgio, (2022) emphasizes the need for appropriate social media strategies and cross boarder collaborations for awareness creation on sustainability and to reach the SDG goals by 2030.

2. Investigating engagement patterns across emerging platforms like TikTok would offer valuable insights for NGOs aiming to diversify their audience reach. Further studies could consider other NGOs for validity.
3. Future research could focus on social media analytics to measure the impact of digital campaigns accurately. Sorce, (2021) opines that using only interviews will not be able to effectively analyse an organisation's online presence and impact.
4. Further studies in social media and development communication could employ a longitudinal research approach to explore the long-term impact of social media advocacy on youth perceptions and actions regarding the SDGs. A longer range of time could produce different results (Silva et al., 2020).

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APPENDIX I

Appendix 1: Interview guide

INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The researcher is a final year Development Communication student at the University of Media, Art, and Communication- Institute of Journalism Campus (UniMac-IJ), conducting a study on “Accelerating the Attainment of The SDGs Through Social Media: The Case of Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG).” This research is for academic purposes and not for profit. I would appreciate a minute of your time to answer questions from this guide. Please rest assured that your identity will be anonymized. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Social media for engagement.

1. Can you tell me about your organisation and Which social media platform/s are used for engagement and why?
2. What type of content do you share on your
3. Can you tell us about your Social Media statistics and level of engagement?

Social Media for Youth SDGs Advocacy and Empowerment

4. Which SDG/s is the primary focus of your organisation?
5. How does YAG use social media to empower young people to take action on the SDGs?

Effectiveness and impact of social media.

6. In your opinion, what are the key factors that determine the success of a social media campaign in advancing the SDGs?

7. Do you believe that Social media has helped your organisation holistically? (If Yes, How?)

Challenges and Opportunities

8. What are some of the main challenges YAG faces in using social media to promote the SDGs?

9. What opportunities do you see in the future for using social media more effectively to accelerate the SDG s?

APPENDIX II

Thematic analysis

Theme	Code	Illustrative Quote
Organisational background	Youth-led, Ghana-based, reproductive health	<p>"Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) is a youth-led organization... contributing to building the capacity of young people to lead discussions on issues regarding their reproductive health." (interviewee 3)</p> <p>"YAG is a youth-led civil society organization... interventions aimed at improving the lives of young people in Ghana and Africa." (interviewee 4)</p>
	Diverse thematic areas	<p>"Subsequently, the organization has grown to include climate change, youth civic participation, and entrepreneurship." (interviewee 5)</p>
	Regional and global recognition	<p>"We house the secretariat for the African Youth SDGs Summit... recognized regionally." (interviewee 5)</p>
Social Media Usage	Platforms for Engagement	<p>"We are on Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, and then we are on LinkedIn." (Interviewee 2)</p> <p>"YAG has been actively using Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, and most recently LinkedIn." (Interviewee 3)</p>

	<p>Two-way communication, multimedia</p>	<p>"The interactive feature of these social media platforms allows us to have two-way communication... social media allow us to communicate in multimedia format, which promotes inclusivity." (Interviewee 4)</p> <p>Those platforms allow us to reach our target audience quickly with our messages. The platforms promotes interactivity. As we seek to have engagements and interact with our audiences, interactive feature of these social media platforms allow us to have two-way communication with our audience and enable them to contribute directly to our discussions and interventions (interviewee 4)</p>
	<p>Popular Platforms</p>	<p>"Facebook has become our strength for engaging our stakeholders or for communicating and advocating for the cause that we do." (Interviewee 2)</p> <p>As a youth-led organization, social media is the bedrock of our work as we seek to mobilise, engage and empower young people (interviewee 4).</p> <p>It's (X) also one of our strengths for some time now because that is when most of policymakers, government officials and you know people within</p>

		our space, that is the platform that they use (interviewee)
	Followers and engagement per platform	"We have 10k followers on Facebook, 4.5k on Twitter/X, 292 on Instagram, and 1.1k+ on LinkedIn." (interviewee3)
Content and Engagement	Youth engagement, SDG advocacy	"The organization mainly talks about how young people can participate in national, regional (Africa), and global issues... reproductive health rights education." (interviewee3)
	Informational and educational content	"We post informational content... includes posts that educate, inform, and raise awareness." (interviewee5)
	Interactive content for community engagement	"We also use socially interactive content that builds community among users, encouraging dialogue, partnerships, and collaboration." (interviewee5)
	Education, Africa Youth SDGs Summit	"Through our social media, we have been doing campaigns to educate young people about the SDGs... Africa Youth SDGs Summit, where we bring about 2,000 youth, policymakers, and stakeholders together." (interviewee4)

	Types of shared content	<p>"We would normally share videos, text, social media cards, and photos to convey different messages... to inform, educate, or call for action." (interviewee4)</p> <p>as a leading agency driving campaign to mobilize SDG action on sustainable development goals. Our primary focus and our content are tailored to specific SDGs and indicators and even specific to the target that we want to ensure that those targets have been achieved (interviewee 2)</p> <p>Like I already mentioned earlier about the types of content we share on social media, these contents and programs are aimed at providing the knowledge, platform for youth networking engagement fostering empowerment (interviewee 5)</p>
Advocacy Focus	SDG Focus Areas	<p>"SDG3, SDG4, SDG5, SDG8, SDG10, SDG16, and SDG17 are really central to what we do, but they are all interconnected." (interviewee 2)</p> <p>"Our primary focus are SDG 3, 4, 5, 13, and 17... we ensure the youth contribution of these goals are vibrant and reach the areas and people that matter."(interviewee3)</p>

	<p>Youth Empowerment</p>	<p>"We have created a space for young people, and they are there sharing their point of view and even telling us the lived experiences that they've had." (interviewee2)</p> <p>"We train young people to be able to use social media and make their voices heard... we engage young people globally, nationally, and regionally in activities to contribute towards achieving the SDGs." (interviewee3)</p> <p>Beyond the education, we also on regular basis provide information about opportunities and resources available to young people to enable them to take the concrete action toward the attainment of the SDGs". All these contents are challenged through a mix text, audiovisuals including "videos, text, social media cards and photos to convey different messages, be it to inform, educate or call for action (interviewee 4)</p>
	<p>Gender Inclusion</p>	<p>"We ensure that there is that gender balance. We involve both women and boys ... so that we know where exactly the problem is coming from and how to tackle the problem in that holistic approach."(interviewee2)</p>

Social Media Engagement	Interactive Strategies	<p>"We have something called the YAG TV series ... young people are also engaging and sharing their lived experiences on those platforms."(interviewee2)</p> <p>integrating such tools ("X chat," "X storm), YAG creates dynamic spaces for youth to discuss policies and contribute to dialogues on sustainable development interviewee 4</p>
	Hashtag Tracking	"Every campaign comes with a unique hashtag that we use to track the progress of that particular campaign." (interviewee2)
	Feedback Mechanism	"People share their opinions on SDGs, saying some of us have been left out of the conversation." (interviewee2)
Challenges with Social Media	Limited Audience Reach	"Social media is very limited to a particular group of people ... what happens to people who are not also on social media?" (interviewee2)
	Funding, platform limitations	"Some challenges YAG faces... the organization is not always able to support young people with data allowance... we use a free X version which limits word counts when making a post." (interviewee3)
	Information Overload	"We tend to write more, we tend to talk plenty and that information becomes flooded." (interviewee2)

	Internet Accessibility	"Internet accessibility is also a limit. When it rains, internet becomes poor."(interviewee2)
	Spread of fake news	"The spread of fake news and disinformation is one of the major challenges... it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to believe things on social media." (interviewee4)
	Bullying impacts engagement	"Cyberbullying has also affected us... when people suffer bullying, they shy away from engaging or even coming online." (interviewee4)
	Cost of Internet	"From an institutional point of view, it's expensive to be on the internet." (interviewee2)
Success Factors in Campaigns	Campaign Tracking	"If we run ... a campaign on social media and our hashtag is trending, it means a lot of people are talking about it, and we have achieved a set objective."
	Goal achievement	"Our main goal was to ensure the reports from the [African Youth SDGs Summit] fed into the global report and was read at the summit of the future and the UN Conference in New York." (interviewee3)
	Partnerships, global exposure	"Social media has helped YAG holistically... granted the organization so many partnership opportunities

		with UN entities, high-level international organizations." (interviewee3)
	Interactivity, multimedia, content quality	"Social media promotes interactivity... multimedia format promotes inclusivity... quality of content attracts people and leads to better understanding of messages." (interviewee4)
	Event participation, accountability	"Many participants in our events... are mobilized through social media... it has empowered young people to do their part and demand accountability from leaders." (interviewee4)
	Data Analytics	"You can generate data analysis that justifies the number of people you have reached, the number of impressions that you have gotten from your post."(interviewee2)
Future Opportunities for SDG Advocacy	Expanded reach, verification	"The organization can increase their reach... get verified... do more research on how to utilize these unique platforms, tools, and resources to improve their organization." (interviewee3)
	Data analytics for targeted impact	"As data analytics capabilities grow, social media can provide real-time insights into public sentiment, needs, and areas where SDG efforts are most needed." (interviewee 5)

	Enhanced engagement with evolving social platforms	"As social media platforms evolve to prioritize authenticity and community engagement, they provide ideal spaces for SDG education." (interviewee 5)
	Cross-border collaboration	"Social media's global reach and ability to connect diverse groups offers unique opportunities for cross-border collaboration." (interviewee 5)
	Personalized engagement, reach	"There will be opportunities in the near future to do active personalized engagements... the number of social media users is increasing by the day." Interviewee 4)