

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACCESSING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN  
MESSAGES DURING GHANA'S 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: A CASE OF  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA STUDENTS

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**CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research and has not been presented by any one for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been duly acknowledged.

I bear the sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

Samuel Ohemeng

*Ohemeng* .....

Date *3-10-2017* .....

**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby certify that this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with guidelines on preparation and presentation of dissertation laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Dr. Daniel K. Hammond

(Supervisor)

Signature *D. Hammond* .....

Date *03-10-17* .....

## DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for his protection and divine mercy.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of social media for accessing political campaign messages during the 2016 presidential elections with reference to University of Ghana, students. The study also sought to establish why University of Ghana students are moving away from the traditional means of accessing political messages to the use of information on social media. The study specifically aimed to investigate whether University of Ghana students visit social media platforms and sites for the purpose of looking for political messages. The study employed the quantitative research design. In pursuit of this, a set of self-administered questionnaires was used to elicit data from a cross section of students of the University of Ghana. The study revealed that majority of University of Ghana students studied looked for political messages online thereby rationalising the decision of political parties and their candidates to put a lot of focus and attention on campaigning on social media. Thus, the demand for political messages by majority of University of Ghana students justify the decision of politicians and their parties to post political information on social media.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter contains the background of the study, problem statement, general and specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and the organisation of study.

### 1.2 Background of study

Political campaigns seem to be very important in elections. They aid politicians to put their messages across to voters and also help voters to assess politicians and make informed decisions. Surveys show that campaigns influence voters by passing on messages that emphasize party identification and remind voters of present issues concerning presidential performance (McClurg & Holbrook, 2009).

Communication is important in political campaigns because it assists candidates to transmit information about themselves and their policies, convince voters, mobilize them, generate funds and elicit feedback from the audience. Therefore, political campaigns revolve around communication (Sikanku, 2016).

The media are the primary sources and channel of communication in political campaigns (Stromback & Kiouisis, 2014). They inform voters at large about the policy positions and

behaviours of political actors. The media serve as the most significant, if not the only, source of information for citizens in a republic. They are also the main channels of communication between politicians and citizens, as well as among politicians and other players in the political world like party officials, campaign managers and fundraisers (Littlejohn, Foss&Oetzel, 2016). The importance of the role played by the media in elections might have been the reason why Chapter Twelve (Article 163) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana charged all Ghanaian state-owned media Corporations to ensure free, fair and equal coverage to all political parties and candidates.

Television, radio, newspapers, posters are among the different forms of mass media that are mostly used in political campaigns worldwide (Akpor, 2013; Jendele, 2011; Ngugi, 2014). For example, in Ghana, the two main political parties (The New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress) advertised on huge billboards throughout the country during the 2016 presidential campaign season. In Kenya, politicians, advertised on various media platforms including print and electronic media such as television, newspapers, billboards, and posters during their 2013 general election (Yankem, 2015).

In recent times, media campaigns about politics seem to have taken a new dimension. Many politicians around the world are using social media to campaign. Social media as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) refer to a group of internet based applications that are built on the ideological foundations of Web 2.0 (as a set of principles and practices that tie together a wide array of sites that have user-generated content and make emphasis on social connections). They include web-based and mobile based technologies that are used to turn communication into an interactive dialogue among individuals, organisations, and

communities. Social media enable users to participate, create and share content. Typical examples of social media platforms include websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and the interactive options on these websites, such as the re-tweeting option on Twitter.

These instruments are referred to as media because they are tools which can also be used for the storage and dissemination of information. However, unlike the traditional media like Television and Radio, most social media tools allow their users to interact. Notable examples are the re-tweeting functions on Twitter and comment options on Facebook. Another attribute of the social media which distinguishes it from the traditional media is the choices available to their users. These choices enable people to access the information they like to learn about through social media, eliminating the gatekeeper role of traditional media. On one hand, the choices offered by social media reduce the shared experience that viewers of particular traditional media channels usually have and create a network of individuals with like interests and similar preferences. The primary tools that have enabled people to socialise and connect with each other on social media are social networking sites and electronic messaging.

A study of the 2013 global internet, mobile and social engagement, carried out by Wearesquared.com showed the rapid rise in social media users, from 1.47 billion users in 2012 to 1.73 billion in 2013 (Birgisdóttir, 2014). Another study revealed that more than half of America's teens and young adults send electronic messages and use social networking sites, and more than one-third of all internet users engage in these activities (Jones & Fox 2009). And in Ghana, social media has rapidly grown in importance as a forum for many people and institutions. According to Penplus (2016) as of June, 2016, the Electoral

Commission of Ghana had both Facebook and Twitter accounts with 101,255 and 184 followers respectively, the Ghana Police Service had both Facebook and Twitter accounts with 6,616 and 401 followers respectively. The report further indicates that the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) had Facebook and Twitter accounts with 13,328 and 999 followers respectively.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube have opened new opportunities for politicians and citizens to engage in an open, transparent and interactive discussion. In past campaigns, Facebook users expressed themselves politically in many ways, such as making online donations, encouraging friends to vote, or posting status updates. Twitter and blogs have been used by candidates and voters to comment on social and political issues, share information and encourage participation. Additionally, YouTube and CNN partnered to sponsor a debate in which candidates took questions from user-created videos as opposed to a moderator.

The first realisation that the tools of social media can be harnessed for political purposes can be traced to the campaign of United States Democratic presidential contender Howard Dean in 2004. In that campaign, Howard Dean used blogs and emerging social media software like [meetup.com](http://meetup.com) to engage supporters and raise money.

However, the presidential campaigns of former United States president, Barack Obama, during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections of the United States brought the world's attention to the power of social media in mobilising citizens for electoral purposes (Ndavula & Mueni, 2014). The campaign which was run on fifteen social media sites (Effing, et al.,

2011) had 2,000 official videos which were viewed 80 million times on YouTube alone and generated about 244,000 unofficial video responses.

The 2010 elections in the United Kingdom was nicknamed the social media elections (Newman, 2010). According to Newman, political parties in that election were motivated by President Obama's successful use of social media in political campaigns and therefore sent people to the United States to study these techniques. They even hired some of Obama's former campaign advisors to help draw up and implement their social media and digital strategies.

In Turkey, social media have rapidly grown to become an alternative to print media on political issues (Okan, Topeu & Akyoz, 2014). Okan, et al. (2014) also claim that internet technology and social media usage in politics began in Turkey in the year 2002 and was significantly employed by presidential candidates and their political parties in Turkey's 2014 general elections.

In Botswana, leading politicians in the country intensified campaign on social media ahead of their 2014 elections. The ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Botswana Movement for Democratic (BMD) and Botswana Congress Party (BCP) reached out to potential voters online (Wasswa, 2013). Botswana's President Ian Khama used national platforms to respond to posts on the Facebook wall of his party, BDP, which approximately receives 4,000 visits a day. Khama's interaction with people on the social network earned him the title, "man of the people" (Wasswa, 2013).

In Kenya, social media featured prominently in their 2013 elections and even in the previous elections in 2007. In the Kenyan 2013 presidential elections, all the presidential candidates who contested that the election had followers on either Twitter or Facebook (Wasswa, 2013).

The 2011 General Elections in Nigeria marked a historic moment in the use of social media for political communication in Nigeria (Chinedu-Okeke, et. al; 2016) The 2015 Nigerian General Elections that resulted in the election of General Buhari also witnessed massive social media campaign on sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs(Chinedu-Okeke et. al, 2016).

Ghana has also witnessed the use of social media in political campaigns. Active social media use began during the 2008 elections and since then social media have continued to play a major role in electoral campaigns in Ghana. A 17th January 2013 article on modernghana.com by Francis Xavier Tuokuu and Billings Tanaa notes how competing parties in Ghana's 2012 presidential elections used Facebook and Twitter in creative ways for advertising and engaging the public in the elections. In the 2016 presidential elections, many of the political parties employed social media in their political movements.

This study attempts to examine the use of social media in accessing political campaign messages during the 2016 presidential elections in Ghana with reference to a cross of students of the University of Ghana.

### 1.3 Statement of the problem

A number of studies conducted in the West suggest that the use of social media positively affects political mobilization and political campaigns (Williams & Gullati, 2006; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; Valesquez & Rojas, 2017).

A written report by Williams and Gullati (2006) on the use of Facebook by candidates in the 2006 United States congressional elections revealed that candidates with more social media presence have a better probability of winning elections than other nominees.

Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) observed that attention to social media for campaign information was significant during the 2008 United States campaign, particularly among young adults. In the survey, 27% of respondents who were less than 30 years old admitted obtaining campaign information from social network sites compared to 4% of adults aged 30 to 39 and only 1% older than 40. It, therefore, demonstrated that social media is the best path to reach this age group.

Valesquez and Rojas (2017) also claim that use of social media positively affects political behaviour such as political participation including political mobilization and electoral campaigning.

But the effects of social media like all other media must be situated within a context. The use and influence of media cannot be dissociated from the historical, cultural, and political, economic environments in which they function (Steeves & Kellow, 1998).

It is an undeniable fact that more people in the west use social media than those in third world nations. For example, it is estimated that seven out of ten people in the United States use social media (Pew Research Center, 2017), representing about seventy percent of the population, whereas less than five percent of Ghanaians are estimated to be on social media (cliqafrika, 2016).

In spite of this, many African politicians are using social media in their political campaigns. For example, there was an extensive usage of social media during Ghana's 2016 presidential elections. The New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress committed a great deal of resources to campaign on social media (Penplus, 2017).

Previous studies on social media indicate that there is a positive correlation between the use of social media in political campaigns and success in political mobilisation and influencing citizens to vote for such candidates (Gibson & McAllister, 2006; William & Gullati, 2006; Valesquez & Rojas, 2017). This is further strengthened by the findings of Banaji and Buckingham (2010) that young people use social networking sites to find political information, particularly the information they cannot find in the traditional media. But, these observations were made based on studies conducted in the west. There seems to be no study that attempts to find out how many young social media users in an African country like Ghana seek political information on social media. The present study attempts to fill that void.

#### **1.4 Objectives of study**

The general objective of the study is to examine the use of social media in Ghana's 2016 presidential elections with reference to students of the University of Ghana.

### **1.4.1 Specific objectives**

1. To find out whether University of Ghana students actually visit social media sites to get political messages.
2. To discover how University of Ghana students utilise social media for obtaining political messages.
3. To discover how messages on social media influenced the political decisions of University of Ghana students.
4. To find out from University of Ghana Students what they believe could be done to encourage the use of social media for obtaining political messages.

### **1.5 Research questions**

1. What percentage of University of Ghana Students actually visited social media for information on politics during the 2016 presidential campaign season?
2. How do University of Ghana students utilize Social networking sites for political purposes?
3. What was the impact of messages accessed through social media on the political decisions of University of Ghana students during the 2016 elections?
4. In what ways can the use of social media by University of Ghana students be improved to play major roles in elections in Ghana?

## **1.6 Significance of study**

The work will be important in the following ways:

1. It will add to existing literature on social media and politics and contribute to the debate about the role of social media in political campaigns.
2. It may draw the attention of stakeholders like political parties, candidates and even the civil society on how social media can bring about political awareness and campaign opportunities if properly utilized.
3. Furthermore, the information generated in this study is useful to students and scholars, especially those who have expressed interest in new media, political parties, candidates and campaign strategists.

## **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to fifty undergraduate students of the University of Ghana sampled by the researcher and does not include all students of the University of Ghana because of limited time required for the completion of the study as well as limited resources available to the researcher.

## **1.8 Organisation of study**

The research is organised into five chapters:

- Chapter One deals with the introduction and background of the study, a statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and organization of the report of the study

Chapter Two contains a review of the available relevant literature on social media and political campaigns.

Chapter Three consists of a description of the methodology used in the study. The description comprises the research design, research population, sample size and sampling techniques, sources of data and instrument used, data collection procedure, and data presentation and analysis.

The Fourth Chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of primary data collected from respondents and discussion of results.

The Fifth Chapter covers the summary, conclusion of the study and also makes recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to build a solid foundation for the study by reviewing the relevant literature. It also reviews the related theory of the study.

#### 2.2 The Media in Ghana

Ghana's media have played a key role as far as political discourse, national identity and popular culture are concerned. The history of Ghana's media can be traced to the nineteenth century. Upon the attainment of Republican status in July 1960, the media played a key role in the country's history and continues to play that role today.

The first newspaper, the Gold Coast Gazette was published in 1822 by the then Governor of the Gold Coast colony, Sir Charles McCarthy. This paper was to provide information to European merchants and civil servants in the colony. It also aimed at promoting literacy, encouraging rural development, and quelling the political aspirations of educated Africans by securing their loyalty and conformity with the colonial system. As part of activities to mark the silver jubilee of King George V, Governor Sir Arnold Hudson in 1935 brought radio to the Gold Coast (Akrofi-Quarcoo, 2015). The radio, which was known as Zoy, was used to transmit BBC programmes to some three hundred colonial residents and privileged native elites. Subsequently, the radio extended services to Kumasi, Sekondi, Koforidua and Cape Coast. In 1954, the Gold Coast Broadcasting System was established and it later became the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) after independence.

Television was established later in Ghana in 1965 through the collaborative efforts of the government of the Convention Peoples Party and Sanyo of Japan. Sanyo wished to promote television in Ghana to support its own television assembly plant in Tema.

The history and development of the mass media in Ghana are linked to the country's political history. Under colonialism, the newspaper was introduced and used more as a political tool to link the core to the periphery than as a tool for dissemination of information (Ansu – Kyeremanteng & Karikari, 1998).

During the struggle for independence, newspapers were used to organise and galvanise the people to fight and free the country from colonialism. (Ansah, 1991). For instance, J.E. Casely Hayford, an outstanding nationalist of the Gold Coast during the Proto nationalist era took advantage of his role as Editor of the Gold Coast Chronicle newspaper to arouse the political consciousness of Africans and to espouse the ills of colonialism.

The forms and types of media recognised in Ghana and spelt in the national media policy are the print, broadcast and film. The policy also covers mass communication services like wire services, advertising and public relations.

In recognition of the importance of the media in Ghana's stride to achieving the epithet of a true democracy, the framers of the 1992 fourth republican constitution devoted a whole chapter to the media. The constitution guarantees the freedom and independence of the media

mandates all state owned media to provide fair opportunities and platforms to all opinions, creates the national media commission et cetera.

From 1996 till date, Ghana has witnessed the proliferation of media houses which has in a way expanded the Public space. Fair et al (2009) observes that in the year 2008, over 104 radio and television stations were authorized by Ghana's National Communications Authority (NCA) to start operating with five of them being free-to-air independent commercial TV stations.

The story of Ghana's media is not as glorious as it seems. The lack of legal powers by institutions like the National Communication Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commissions set up to regulate the media sector in Ghana has in a way opened the floodgate for a lot of media houses and personnel to engage in acts that denigrate the profession. For example, recently, some television stations in Ghana were broadcasting pornographic films on free to air television channel, but were merely advised by the National Media Commission and the Information Ministry to desist from the act. This happened because the National Media Commission is not clothed with the power to impose sanctions on them.

### **2.3 News coverage of political campaigns**

News coverage of elections helps to enhance the democratic process. Stromback and Kaid (2008) argue that election news coverage is vital for democratic societies since it is a prerequisite for a well-informed voter. In line with the news media's role in ensuring the supply of information in society, Politicians rely on the news media to disseminate information to the electorates.

A high level of media coverage tells people what is important and this may explain why politicians struggle to get the attention of the media. McCombs and Shaw (1972) notes in their work, “the Agenda setting function of Mass Media,” that there is a strong relationship between the emphases placed on issues by the media and voter’s own judgements about the salience and importance of campaign issues (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). When an issue is frequently and prominently covered in the media, the citizens will start perceiving it as more essential than the ones that get lesser coverage (Coleman, et al 2009).

In the mid 1970s and early 1980s, the news media, and television news, in particular, were linked with growing political discontent (Robinson, 1976; Robinson & Sheehan, 1983). Subsequent research on U.S. presidential election campaigns between 1960 and 1992 revealed that campaign news has become more negative, more interpretative rather than descriptive, and more game oriented than policy oriented (Patterson 1980, 1993). Television news in the United States has been singled out for diminishing what politicians have to say to an ever shrinking sound bite (Hallin, 1997), for providing only episodic coverage of political issues without making sense of them in their larger thematic or historical context (Iyengar 1994), and for reporting complex political issues in simple terms.

A survey by the Pew Research Center in the year 2000 on the attitudes of Americans towards the credibility of Newsmakers revealed that 57 percent of respondents believed that news media professionals are influenced by their political preferences in their news reporting while 32 percent believe this happens at times (Wasswa, 2013).

Scholars have considered the effect of media coverage on voters. For instance, Druckman (2005) sought to address the contradictory evidence from works on media and voter learning by comparing television and newspaper coverage of a single campaign in a single market. In line with this, he content analysed how two local newspapers and four local television stations covered the 2000 Minnesota Senate campaign and used an Election Day exit poll to test for the effect of coverage on learning. On the exit poll, he measured voters' knowledge about the relevant information, newspaper reading, and television viewing habits, individual attributes that affect learning, and access to alternative information sources such as interpersonal discussion and the campaigns. The research showed that television news and newspapers differ substantially in the quantity of coverage, but do not drastically differ in terms of content. It further revealed that newspapers, and not television news, play a significant role in informing the electorate.

Franz and Ridout (2007) also investigated the impact of media advertising exposure on voters. They relied on a three-wave panel survey sponsored by the Centre for the Study of Elections and Democracy (CSED) at Brigham Young University and the Centre for the Study of Politics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. They selected samples from the US voting population. Political Advertising Tracking Data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project was used to measure the advertising environment. The unit of analysis used was each airing of all political advertisements; and in this study, they used the 2004 data. The study found ample evidence that exposure to advertising can move vote choice and influence attitudes towards candidates. They further found that advertising's influence is moderated most consistently through political knowledge, with those lower in political information more influenced by advertising messages. Hence, political advertising persuades but it does so dependent on the characteristics of the viewer.

Geer (2012) contributed to the literature on the effects of mass media on voters by seeking answers to the reasons behind the increase in the frequency of attack campaigns. That is campaigning that seeks to denigrate opponents and paint them as bad. He argues that the way the media cover elections is partly to blame for the rise of attack politics in the United States presidential campaigns. In pursuit of this, Mr Geer considers two existing answers that have been often been provided for them either by scholars or politicians and their strategists. The first of such answers is that attack advertisements are more effective than the positive ones. The second has to do with the polarization of the parties. On the issue of the first answer, the author contends that in spite of the absence of scholarly articles that indicate that attack advertisements work better than positive ones, practitioners believe in them. He chronicles several negative advertisements in the United States politics, such as the anti-Christ tag on Thomas Jefferson in 1800, Abraham Lincoln's title as a liar, buffoon, ignoramus, swindler and butcher, Thomas Dewey's comparism to Adolf Hitler et cetera.

He argues that the second reason is the polarization of the parties in the campaign. By this, he meant that, the disagreements between the contesting parties over policies. According to him, candidates in recent times, disagree more about policy, than they did in the past and that these disagreements manifest themselves in the attack media campaigns. He supports this claim with evidence from his publication in 2006 titled, *In Defence of Negativity* where he observed that issue attack rather than personal attack has risen in US politics.

He also blames the news media for the rise in negative campaigns, He claims that the extensive coverage of negative advertisements in the news media has given candidates and their consultant's extra incentives to produce and air negative advertisements. According to

him, journalists prefer news items that generate controversy and conflict and that negative advertisements provide the required controversy and conflict which the media need.

In spite of the strong attack levelled against the media by Geer (2012), television news viewing in the United States, Britain, and a number of other countries has been associated with higher levels of political knowledge, participation, and personal efficacy (Brehm and Rahn 1997; Norris 1996, 2000). The 1997 British election study, for example, revealed a positive association between attention to news and higher levels of political knowledge and civic engagement. Again, a study designed to test the effects of television news in the general election campaigns revealed that exposure to positive news about a party had stronger effects on vote choice than exposure to negative news (Norris, et al., 1999).

Since, the media has the power to determine who is or is the main candidate(s) in an election, favourable media reporting over a period of time can create presidential candidates out of governors, senators and other political figures. The media create name recognition, which is the essential quality of presidential candidate and the first step to a successful election.

The media can set the agenda for a campaign by choosing a candidate that will receive more coverage than another and particular topic to cover (Baran & Dennis 2011). Thus, the moment the media make up its mind about a candidate who will win the election, he receives the majority of the media coverage and all other opponents are sentenced to drop into insignificance. For instance, the Ghanaian media gave more coverage to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) than other political parties. According to the final report by the representatives of the European Union who came to

monitor the 2016 presidential elections, the NDC and NPP received a majority of the prime time election coverage during the 2016 election season.

One common aspect of campaign coverage by the media is that they tend to focus on a horse race; the candidates who appear to have significant support get more coverage than those who seem to be losing. Studies show that presidential campaigns dominate a horse race kind of media coverage (Patterson and McClure 1976; Robinson and Sheehan 1983; Steger 1999). Ghana's 2016 presidential elections were staged as a two horse race between the NDC and NPP by the Ghanaian media. Most radio and television stations continuously discussed the polls of pollsters that suggested that the race was between the presidential candidate of the NDC and the NPP. Panellists on radio and television were made to discuss the report of the polls.

Analysis of the 2015 elections in the United Kingdom revealed that much of the TV coverage focused on "horse-race" aspects of the campaign, with the dominant narrative shaping the election – that it was neck and-neck between Labour and the Conservatives and a coalition deal was the most likely electoral outcome – supported by polling (Jackson & Thorsen, 2015).

The media have a tendency of focusing on campaign controversies which are also referred to as campaign issues. Leighly (2004) posits that the media refers to them as campaign issues since they were formulated in the context of campaigns and lack the backing of public policy. Therefore, when a candidate's speech talks of infrastructure development and economic growth, the media focus on his disagreement with his opponent on land reforms. Patterson (1994) notes that 'the battlefield' is a common metaphor in the media, especially in election

news as they concentrate on controversies. For example, a Joy News report captured by myjoyonline on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 concentrated on the clashes between the two main political parties (The National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party) and ignored the main event – the health walk. According to the report, supporters of the two main political parties had clashed at Asokore in the New Juaben Municipality of the Eastern Region during a health walk led by the Parliamentary candidates of the two parties (EU EOM, 2016).

The media's focus on conflict is attributed to commercial pressures that require news outlets to be sensational in order for them to attract a larger audience. News organizations use this as their bargaining chip as they negotiate advertising charges (Kaniss 1991). For instance, the story of John Kerry lying about his heroism in Vietnam would appeal to a larger audience than his plan to reform the health sector (Ridout & Smith, 2008).

The media have often been the only source that voters receive information about candidates (Day, 2010). Therefore the kind of information that the media put out about candidates is very important. Candidates who are continuously portrayed negatively often do not do well at elections (Day, 2010).

The media is the primary source and channel of communication in political campaigns (Stromback & Kioussis, 2014). According to Dye et.al (1983), the mass media serve four political offices, namely: news making, interpretation, socialization, persuasion and agenda setting. Through these functions, the mass media create political issues they consider of importance to the public, define their meanings and consequences and ultimately cause the shift of attitudes and public opinions.

The mass media influence public opinion by displaying news in a certain manner. The news that is considered to be significantly more important by the media gets a superior placement in the newspaper, is headlined on websites, or receives the cover of a magazine. Nevertheless, news that ends up in the less visible parts of the media or gains less coverage, in general, ends up being regarded as less important by the public (McCombs, 2004).

The interpretation given to news items by the mass media also influences people's perception of issues (Shea, Green and Smith, 2007). A good example is the 2003 Iraq war where the American media reported the attack on Iraq by the United States as a defensive act against terrorism and alleged that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. However, when the weapons were not discovered by the search team, the media shifted its attention to the poor planning of the attack resulting in a decrease in public support of the war (Shea, Green and Smith, 2007).

The media is the most important, if not the only, source of information for citizens in a democracy (Littlejohn, Foss&Oetzel, 2016). They are also the main channels of communication between politicians and citizens, as well as among politicians and other players in the political world like party officials, campaign managers and fundraisers (Littlejohn, Foss&Oetzel, 2016). The importance of the role played by the media in elections might have been the reason why the framers of the 1992 constitution of Ghana gave the state-owned media the responsibility to ensure free, fair and equal coverage to all political parties and candidates especially during election campaigns.

## 2.4 The concept of Social Media

There appear to be different views about the concept of social media. Some scholars look at social media from a technological perspective while others look at the concept in terms of its ability to bring people together to engage in social interaction.

Social media as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) refers to a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 (as a set of principles and practices that tie together a wide array of sites that have user-generated content and make emphasis on social connections. For McIntyre (2014:6) social media is a form of communication mediated by computers. While, Carr and Hayes (2015) see social media as Internet-based channels that permit users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others.

On the side of the coin are scholars such as Picard (2009), Hermida (2010) as well as Taprial and Kanwar (2012) who view social media in terms of its ability to bring people together to share their views on issues.

According to Picard (2009), social media provides easy, affordable ways for members of the public to take part in discussions with larger groups of people and draw attention to issues and topics that traditional news media might have taken for granted. Hermida (2010) claims that social media has created new ways of organising knowledge that rely on large, loosely

organised groups of people working together electronically. Hermida also suggests that social media enables millions of people to communicate instantly, allowing them to share and discuss events that lead to an expression of collective intelligence.

Taprial and Kanwar (2012) see social media as a form of media that allows people to be social or get social online by sharing content such as news and photos with other people.

It is clear from the above that the concept of social media is complex. The complex nature of social media may be because of the fact that the nature of social media is constantly changing. According to Lomborg (2015) new social media platforms, services and applications are emerging at a quick rate. Some fade out while the remaining one's change their interface and terms of service.

## **2.5 Evolution of Social Media**

In view of the complex nature of social media, it is essential to take a step back and provide insight regarding where Social Media came from and what they include.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) trace the history of social media to Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis, who they claim founded Usenet in 1979. However, Gull et al. (2013), traces the beginning of social media to Open Diary.

Mclntyre (2014) traces the evolution of the social media from 1969 to 2013. According to him, the older media had a mentality of the more the better. They sought to compete with one

another for the attention of the public. However, they transformed around the turn of the century to coexisting with each other and began targeting specific groups rather than the mass audience.

In the quest to trace the evolution of social media, Mclntyre collected data from newspapers, magazines, trade journals, online media outlets, and research organisations like the Pew Research Center, professional blogs and websites, as well as scholarly articles and analysed them. The findings revealed that CompuServe, the first major US Internet service provider, which was founded in 1969, introduced programs and services which could be counted as social media. According to the findings, CompuServe in an effort to attract the masses, linked up with Associated Press to make news reports available on home computers. It also created an email and public bulletin board systems that were arguably the origin of modern day social networking. In 1985, CompuServe improved its email system by adding features, which included user-friendly directions and an address book that stored fifty contacts. In 1986, CompuServe merged their email systems with MCI Communications Corporation and subsequently increased their subscriber base from 180,000 to 500,000, which at the time made it the world's largest interconnected network (Mclntyre, 2014).

The next social media site was Usenet. Usenet is a network that connects computers from around the world and has discussion groups, which allow users to carry out live conversations. Like CompuServe, Usenet was also concerned with interconnection and interaction among users (Mclntyre, 2014).

Another media in the history of social media is Social Networking Sites. The first Social Networking Site, SixDegrees.com was set up in 1997. Six Degrees shut down three years after its launch. Other social networking sites came after SixDegrees.com. Ryze.com, for example, was started in 2001 primarily to help connect business professionals. Apart from these, there exist social networking sites like LinkedIn, Friendster, Match.com, Monster.com, Myspace, and Facebook (Mclyntyre, 2014).

## **2.6 Use of Social Media**

From all these examples, we can define social media as an internet based media built on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) that allows interconnectedness of users by allowing them to share ideas with each other (Mclyntyre, 2014).

Social media includes web and mobile based technologies that are used to turn communication into an interactive dialogue among people, organisations, and communities. Social media enable users to participate, create and share content. Typical examples of social media platforms include websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and the interactive options on these websites, such as the re-tweeting option on Twitter.

According to Barberá (2015), social media reduces the costs of interpersonal communication. She argues that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have the potential to increase the importance of peer effects in political behaviour. In particular, social media introduces two key changes to how individuals communicate: first, it increases the amount of

information to which individuals are exposed; and second, it affects the volume and diversity of their personal communication networks (Barberá, 2015).

A large percentage of those who are classified as internet users actually use social media. According to Forrester Research, 75% of Internet surfers used Social Media in the second quarter of 2008 by joining social networks, reading blogs, or contributing reviews to shopping sites; this represents a significant rise from 56% in 2007 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

It is estimated that as of January 2009, the online social networking application Facebook registered more than 175 million active users. To place that number in perspective, this is slightly less than the population of Brazil (190 million) and over twice the population of Germany (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social networking sites (SNS) are often used interchangeably with the term social media. Social networking sites are the interface between people and social media (Muntean, 2015) and for many, the internet is synonymous with social networking sites (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013).

Social networking sites and electronic messaging are two principal tools that have enabled people to socialise and connect with each other online. According to a study on the use of social networking sites by Americans, more than half of American teens and young adults send electronic messages and use social networking sites, and more than one third of all users engage in this activity (Jones and Fox, 2009). Since social media is internet based, most users of social media access the media through computers and mobile phones. Scholars have

predicted that majority of phone purchases in the future will be more for using online networking rather than making phone calls (Baekdal, 2008).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) tried to classify social media into six distinct categories: collaborative projects (such as Wikipedia), blogs and micro blogs (like twitter), content communities (example YouTube), social networking sites (like Facebook), virtual game worlds (World of Warcraft) and virtual social world (example second Life).

Collaborative projects allow the joint and simultaneous creation of content by many end-users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The main idea behind collaborative projects is that the joint efforts of many actors lead to a better outcome. Though not all information provided on collaborative projects is true, they have been known to be good for providing information that is useful especially for firms. For example, the Finnish handset manufacturer, Nokia uses internal wikis to update employees on project status and to trade ideas which are used by about 20 percent of its 68000 staff members (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Blogs are equivalent to personal web pages and come in different variations, from personal diaries describing the author's life to summaries of all relevant information. Blogs are usually managed by one person, but provide the possibility of interaction with others through the comment option. They are usually text based but these days blogs have begun to take different features such as incorporating audio and video features. Thereby allowing blog owners to post audio and video contents (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social networking sites are application platforms that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages to each other. These personal profiles can include any type of information, including photos, video, audio files, and blog (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)

Virtual worlds are platforms that replicate a three dimensional environment in which users can appear in the form of personalized avatars and interact with each other as they would in real life. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the virtual world comes in two forms. The first requires their users to behave according to strict rules in the context of a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG). Such as the Microsoft x-box and sonny play station. They can also be used in traditional communication campaigns. For example, the Japanese automotive giant Toyota used pictures and mechanics of the world of Warcraft application in its latest Tundra commercial to reach 2.5 million users in the United States alone.

The second group of virtual worlds often referred to as virtual social worlds, allows inhabitants to choose their behaviour more freely and essentially live a virtual life similar to their real life. As in virtual game worlds, virtual social world users appear in the form of avatars and interact in a three-dimensional virtual environment; however, in this realm, there are no rules restricting the range of possible interactions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Out of these six categories of social media tools, the most relevant categories to electoral process are blogs and micro blogs (Twitter), content communities (YouTube) and social networking sites (Facebook).

It is estimated that nearly 25% of the population today uses some sort of social media sites (Birgisdottir, 2014). A study of the 2013 global internet, mobile and social engagement, carried out by Wearesquared.com showed the rapid increase in social media users from 1.47 billion users in 2012 to 1.73 billion in 2013. This is an 18% increase in one year only and it has even been predicted that the number of social networking audience will reach 2.55 billion by this year, 2017 (Ahmad, 2013).

## **2.7 Social media and politics**

Social media appears to be playing a prominent role in political campaigns in recent times. Social media enable candidates to employ several 'creative and innovative ways' to 'reach their audience'. It permits the audience to, among other things, create and share content as well (Sikanku, 2016:114).

Barberá (2015) delivered a paper on "How Social Media Reduces Mass Political Polarization: Evidence from Germany, Spain, and the U.S" and concluded that Social media is changing the way in which citizens ingest political information. She argues that people now have access to a wider span of viewpoints about news, events, and most of this information is not coming through the traditional channels, but either directly from political actors or through their friends and relatives. Also, the interactive nature of social media creates opportunities for individuals to discuss political events with their peers, including those with whom they have weak social ties (Barberá, 2015)

During elections, social media plays a key role in influencing voting behaviour because of its ability to provide direct and cheap access to the production and consumption of current information without editorial influence. Social media do not just provide information about political parties, candidates, and party manifestoes, but it also offers the avenue for voters and interested individuals across geographical divides to interact (Governance Social Media Index Report, 2016:2).

A research conducted by the Pew Research Center in the United States revealed that social media use influences political decisions of voters. The study sought to examine SNS by exploring people's overall use of social networks, and how the use of these technologies, relates to trust, tolerance, social support, as well as community and political engagement. According to the study, a Facebook user, who uses the site multiple times per day was an additional two and half times more likely to attend a political rally or meeting, 57% more likely to persuade someone on their vote, and an additional 43% more likely to have said they would vote (Hampton, et.al, 2011).

The 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama popularised the use of social media in political campaigns. According to Qualman (2009), Obama was faced with the difficulty of raising funds for his campaign. He also realised that he did not stand a chance against Hillary Clinton if he depended on the traditional media; he, therefore, decided to use social media. Obama successfully managed to use social media to raise funds for his campaign and attract many supporters to his fold.

In Indonesia for instance, numerous research conducted on the role of social media (such as Ediraras, Rahayu, Natalina & Widya, 2013: 584-588) has revealed that social media has been widely used by politicians and political parties for their political campaigns.

According to a study by Strandberg (2013), the use of Facebook and Twitter influences people to engage in politics. Social media makes those with little or no interest in politics to consciously access political content on social media platform. In the context of general elections, social media use for political activities is one of the predictors of political participation, mainly for turnout and voting (Strandberg, 2013).

Vitak, et al. (2011) claim that there is a positive relationship between the intensity of use of Facebook for political purposes and political participation among college students. Facebook aids college students to gain greater political knowledge and improve their political effectiveness. Vitak, et al. (2011) mention several political activities that exist through standard features of Facebook. These comprise: posting status updates about politics; posting political messages on friends' walls; writing and sharing political notes within their networks; giving comments on their friends' posts; sharing political opinions; joining political groups; becoming a fan of candidates, and downloading political applications. According to them, these political activities appear in users' news feed and can be seen by their friends. Facebook users can also view their friend's political activities by scrolling through the News Feed on their homepage (Vitak, et al., 2011).

Twitter also assists their users to perform several political activities, such as posting tweets about politics, retweeting or quoting tweets about politics, following political parties and politicians, mentioning politicians or political parties, and replying tweets about politics from

their friends, politicians, and political parties. This may explain why social media platforms are increasingly being used as a tool for gathering information about what is going on in society (Lazer et al., 2009). Through the facilitation of interpersonal communication, social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook can increase the importance of peer effects in political behaviour.

A number of studies and political discussions on social media have revealed that interactions take place principally among individuals with similar ideological positions, and that most political information shared through social media is generated by partisan individuals with extreme ideological positions (Barberá and Rivero, 2014; Colleoni, Rozza & Arvidsson, 2014; Conover et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2014). These patterns are often thought to suggest that social media platforms create environments where individuals are primarily exposed to like-minded political views, which should exacerbate political polarization.

Apart from election campaigns, social media has also been employed in other forms of political campaigns such as organising people to force out perceived autocratic regimes from office. The first social media demonstration to force out a leader occurred on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2001 (Shirky, 2011:1).

In this instance, the forces of social media were employed to prevent loyalists of the then President of the Philippines, Joseph Estrada from blocking key evidence against his impeachment trial. Less than two hours after the decision became public, over a million Filipino's converged on Epifanio de Los Santos Avenue to protest against the move. The protest was arranged in part by text messages reading "Go 2 EDSA wear black" This action forced Mr Estrada's allies in the country's legislature abandon their intended move resulting

in the tendering of the evidence and subsequent impeachment of the Filipino president (Shirky, 2011:1).

A study by Williams and Gullati (2006) on the use of Facebook by candidates in the 2006 United States congressional elections revealed that candidates with more social media presence have a better chance of winning elections than other candidates. This observation is strengthened by Valesquez and Rojas (2017) who claim that use of social media positively affects political behaviours such as political participation including political mobilisation and electoral campaigning.

## **2.8 Social media and African politics**

In Africa, social media has become popular has become popular for its use in regime change. In this instance, mention can be made of the demonstrations in Egypt that eventually led to the by force resignation of Hosni Mubarak. According to Eltantawy & Wiest (2011). Mohamed ElBaradei, winner of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize and former chief of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) took advantage of his social media skills to communicate with his followers and broadcast information about the revolution against the then Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The National Association for change and other like-minded groups, which created Facebook groups, personal blogs, and Twitter accounts to engage supporters and followers in discussions on conditions in Egypt, aided him in this fight. Social media enabled domestic and international Egyptian activists to follow events in Egypt, join social-networking groups, and engage in discussions about events in Egypt.

In the area of presidential campaigns, social media seems to have become popular in the campaigns of candidates in Africa. In 2010, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan announced his bid for the presidency on Facebook.

In the area of African elections, social media has been utilised.

In Botswana, there was an intensive campaign on social media by leading politicians ahead of their 2014 presidential elections. Indeed the use of Facebook as a tool for political campaigning changed the nature of political campaigns in that country (Masilo & Seabo, n.d).

Social media played an important role in Kenya's 2013 presidential elections. The 2013 Kenyan Presidential elections had eight presidential candidates, namely Peter Kenneth, Martha Karua, Musalia Mudavadi, Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta, Aduba Dida, Paul Muite, and James Ole Kiyiapi. However, out of the eight candidates, Martha Karua had the largest following on Twitter (@MarthaKarua) with 63,000 followers on Twitter whereas the Eagle Alliance candidate, Peter Kenneth had the most following on Facebook with 165,000 likes on his page. Uhuru Kenyatta who eventually won the elections equally had a significant following on both Facebook and Twitter. These three candidates carried intensive campaigns on these two social networks in a bid to reinforce their support base and create new constituents of followers (Daily Nation, 2012).

According to a 2010 article on the CNN website, written by George Webster, president Jonathan's Facebook status update on September 15 read "*I Goodluck Ebele Jonathan by the grace of God hereby offer myself and my services to the Nigerian people as a candidate for the office of President*". During his presidential campaign, he was able to establish a unique

rapport between politicians and their supporters as he personally responded to comments made by his followers. For instance, a youth, Toyin Dawodu indicated that he had an idea for a project that could deliver 4,000 MWs of electricity. Dr Jonathan responded and told him that he had directed someone from his office to contact him and explore his idea. He also apologised for not being able to personally deal with the matter and told him that he reads all his posts, but that time constraint has prevented him from commenting on every post. He also assured him that all his posts certainly count as far as his political actions were concerned.

The Governance, Social Media Index Report-Ghana (2016) conducted a research on the use of social media by politicians during the 2016 election campaign season in Ghana. Though it does not indicate when the study was conducted, only spell out the last date for the collection of data, which is 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the facts provided by the report will be used. Since it appears to be the only social media report index in Ghana that relates to this present study. Of course, apart from this report, there was also the Ghana Social Media Rankings 2015. The report only concentrated on celebrities and prominent personalities but did not have any category for politicians.

The Governance, Social Media Index Report-Ghana (2016) indicates that, as of 8th June 2016, the NDC Presidential candidate had the highest social media followers with 223,834 followers on twitter and 880,620 likes on Facebook. He was followed by the opposition leader, Nana Akufo Addo with 94,034 followers on twitter and 715,761 likes on Facebook. The report further reveals that out the 25 registered political parties in the Electoral commission of Ghana's database at the time, only eleven (11) were on Facebook and four (4) on twitter. The four political parties with a twitter handle were the National Democratic

Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP) and All People's Congress (APC).

## **2.9 Social Media and Political Campaigns**

In recent times, social media have been integrated into political campaigns. Many political leaders now use social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to reach and interact with their supporters and constituents (Smith, 2011). According to Birgisdottir (2014), politicians use social media since it helps them to control the news. He argues that since politicians cannot regulate the coverage that they get in the traditional media they resort to the use of social media sites to improve their image. By using social media, politicians are able to control how quickly and efficiently the news reaches the public and at the same time promote a positive publicity about their campaigns. Social media has also enabled politicians to interact directly with the public (Birgisdottir, 2014).

During the 2008 United States elections, then candidate Barack Obama, who won the elections had a large social media presence. In subsequent elections, many other politicians have launched a social media presence (Smith, 2011). In Ghana, the use of social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter has seen a phenomenal increase in recent times (Penplus, 2016).

In view of the rise in the use of social media in political campaigns, there is the need to understand the concept of social media, in order to fully comprehend the secret behind the rise in the use of social media in political campaigns.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology that was adopted in the study. It includes research design, research population, sample and sampling techniques used, sources of data, data collection instruments, pilot testing, data collection procedure, ethical consideration and problem encountered during data collection.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Research design used in this study is the plan, structure or the framework that guided the collection, collation and analysis of data. The quantitative research design was used for the study. The choice and use of the research design employed in this study were grounded on an idea in positivism that the methods of the natural sciences can be used to investigate social phenomena.

It allowed the researcher to distance himself from the object of study and ensured an objective study of the phenomena. Consequently, the researcher was neutral towards the data gathered leading to a certain degree of objectivity, reliability and validity of the research.

#### **3.3 Research population**

The population of the study was made up of University of Ghana students at the undergraduate level. The research population was found to be appropriate because they

possessed the characteristics that the study seeks to examine. According to Pennington et al. (2015), majority of social media users are aged between 18 and 29 years. Therefore, all undergraduate students aged between 18 and 29 on the University of Ghana campus constituted the target population for this study. According to Jones (2002) university students are among the most internet-connected subgroups of the population and are also regular users of the internet and by extension social media.

The University of Ghana had an estimated population of twenty nine thousand, seven hundred and fifty-four (29,754) students at various levels with a male to female ratio of 2:1 (University of Ghana, 2016). The university has students from all the regions of Ghana and can, therefore, be regarded as a fair representation of the young voters in Ghana. It also has a good number of students who fall within the age range of 18 and 29 which is the focus of the study.

### **3.4 Sample and sampling techniques/method**

Sampling in this study refers to use of a set of techniques by a researcher to select a portion or sub-group out of the research population to study it with the intention to generalise the results over the entire population. A sample of 50 students from the University of Ghana was selected for the study. Although the sample size was small, it was used due the limited time available for the completion of the study as well as limited resources available to the researcher.

The stratified sampling method was used in the study. The goal of the stratified sampling was to achieve desired representation from various subgroups in the population. In stratified sampling, subjects are selected in such a way that existing subgroups in the population are

more or less reproduced in the sample. Given that the university students had different social characteristics, the researcher divided the sample into two subgroups based on this criterion. The subjects were then selected randomly from each subgroup/ stratum proportionately.

### **3.5 Sources of data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data were consulted for the study. Primary data are unique first hand fresh data collected for the first time by the researcher. The primary data for this study were gathered from 50 respondents selected from the University of Ghana. The secondary data were gathered from journals, books, dissertations, internet materials and other relevant sources.

### **3.6 Data collection instruments**

Data collection is gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. In this study, the researcher used self-administered questionnaires with both closed ended and open-ended questions. The closed ended questions were used to promote uniformity and ease the coding process. The open ended questions were included so as allow the respondents to express their feelings on certain issues.

The use of self-administered questionnaires contributed to cost effectiveness of the study. It helped in reducing expenses and time involved in the data gathering process as compared to what would have been incurred in training people to administer the questionnaire on behalf of the researcher. The respondents were able to complete the questionnaire by themselves since they were all undergraduate students of the University of Ghana, who could read and write.

However, the use of a self-administered questionnaire was not free from problems such as delays in retrieving completed questionnaires from a few of the respondents. Since the questionnaires were serially numbered, it was very easy to track the questionnaire and retrieve them.

### **3.7 Pilot testing and amendment of questionnaire**

Ten of the self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 10 people chosen from the sample members. This is in line with the view expressed by Boynton (2004) that pilot testing is necessary for quantitative research so as to refine them for easy completion and recording of data.

In this study, pilot testing was used to determine how long it was going to take for respondents to complete the questionnaire and find out if any significant topic had been omitted. This was done within three days.

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

The process began with the distribution of the amended questionnaires to collect data from the selected students of the University of Ghana. The researcher agreed with respondents to give them two days to complete and return the questionnaires. In some instances, the respondents completed the questionnaires and left them at the Porter's lounge of their halls for collection by the researcher.

Although the distribution was quite easy, the collection of the completed questionnaires was a bit problematic as some of the respondents did not complete the questionnaires on time.

However, the researcher was able to retrieve all the completed questionnaires. In line with the position of Mangione (1995) the response rate can be classified as valid and excellent.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical consideration constitutes an important aspect of a research, the consent, confidentiality and consequences for the participants should be of great concern to a researcher (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). In view of this, respondents were assured of the confidentiality of both general and personal information that the research sought to elicit from them. Permission and approval were sought from participants involved. Respondents were assured that the study was solely for academic purposes and that the outcome of the study would be exclusively based on the analysis of data collected from participants. It is worthy to note that, all participants voluntarily agreed to participate in this study.

### **3.10 Problems encountered**

A few problems were encountered during the study. They include the following:

- 1) The data collection was done at a time when the semester had ended, therefore the collection of data became difficult.
- 2) The period for the preparation and presentation of the dissertation was quite short.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data gathered from respondents through a quantitative survey on the use of social media in assessing political campaign messages during Ghana's 2016 presidential elections with particular reference to University of Ghana students.

Data from questionnaires were organised, coded, analysed and converted into quantitative summary reports for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 19.

The chapter contains frequency distribution tables and bar graphs with percentages and absolute figures used for the analysis of the data.

The presentation, description and interpretation of the data are as follows:

## 4.2 Presentation and analysis of quantitative data

Table 1: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	22	44.0	44.0	44.0
Male	28	56.0	56.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The study sought to establish the gender distribution of the respondents. From the responses, the majority (56%) were male, while the females were 44 % as shown in Table 1 above. This is consistent with the findings of Akrofi-Quarcoo and Mahama (2015) that more males use social media in Ghana than females. The gender imbalance is not likely to affect the study as the nature of the research and questions asked were not gender sensitive and any unlikely error as a result of the gender imbalance may be tolerated.

Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents

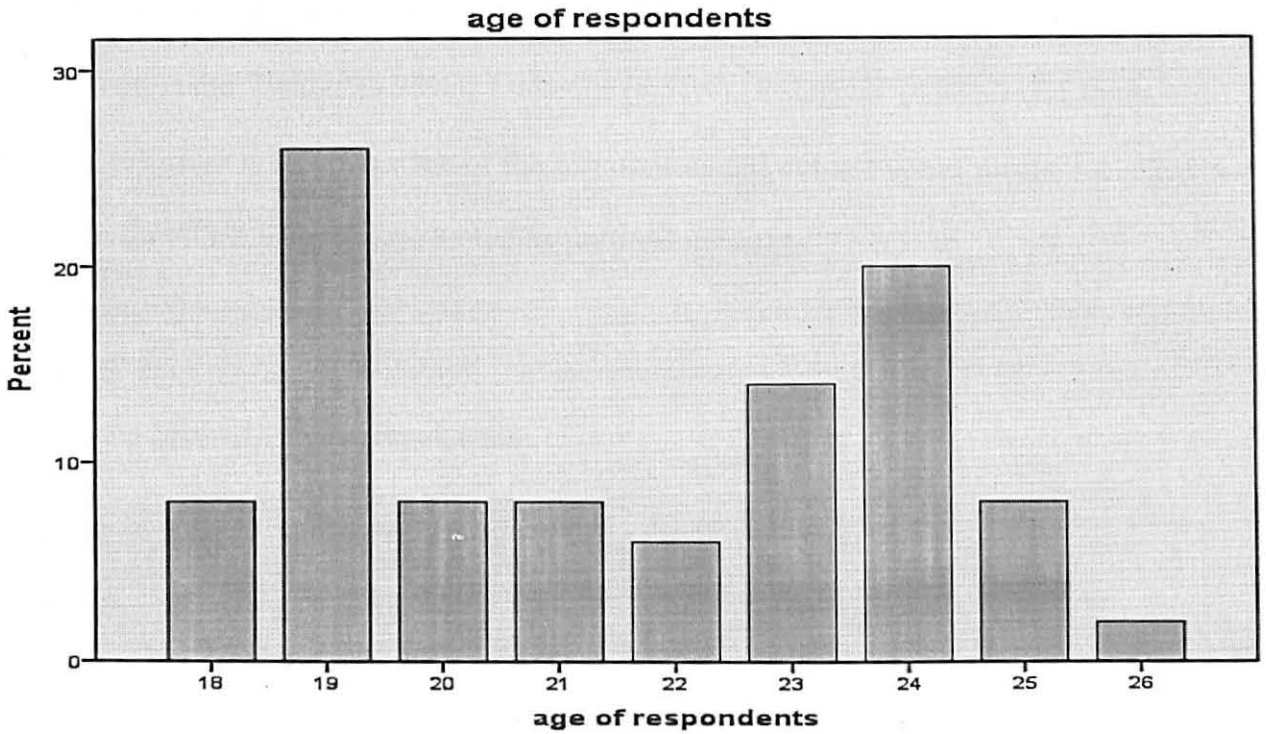


Figure 1 above indicates that respondents were aged 18 to 26 years. This implies that the respondents fell within the age group deemed globally to use social media the most. According to a study by the Pew Research Center edited by Perrin (2015), the most likely social media users are aged 18-29. This is also in line with the observations by Panagopoulos (2009) that approximately one in three young voters under the age of thirty-six rely on the Internet as their main source of political information. Figure 1 shows that majority of the respondents representing 26 % percent were 19 years old while the least age of respondents representing 2 % was 26 years.

The study sought to find out the kind of social media used by respondents. Respondents were to indicate all the social media sites they used. The responses were coded and analysed with SPSS. As can be seen in Table 2 below, the most utilized social media site was WhatsApp

since 46 out of 50 respondents representing 32.62% of the cumulative frequency of social media used WhatsApp. It was followed by Facebook which was used by 43 respondents (30.49 %). The third highest social media used by respondents was YouTube, which had 11.35 %. Then came Twitter (9.93%), LinkedIn (8.51%), Instagram (4.96%) and users of other social media sites (1.42%). One of the respondents did not use social media but relies on television for all media messages including political messages.

Table 2: Social Media Used by respondents

Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	43	30.49
YouTube	16	11.35
LinkedIn	12	8.51
Twitter	14	9.93
WhatsApp	46	32.62
Instagram	7	4.96
Other Social Media	2	1.42
None Social Media User	1	0.71

Source: Survey Data, 2017

Respondents were asked how often they used social networking sites. Table 3 below shows the summary of the analysis of the responses. WhatsApp was the most used social media with a total of 32.86 % and as many as 39 of the respondents said they used it daily. This was followed by Facebook with as many as 32 of facebook users indicating that they used it daily.

This confirms the findings in table 2 above. Twitter had the next highest daily usage. Followed by YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social media users.

Table 3: Frequency of social media used

Social media	Daily	Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice a week	Once a month	Total	
	Frequency					Frequency	%
Facebook	32	6	1	2	1	43	30.71
YouTube	4	6	2	1	3	16	11.43
LinkedIn	2	3	-	2	5	12	8.57
WhatsApp	39	4	1	2	-	46	32.86
Twitter	5	1	-	3	5	14	10.00
Instagram	2	3	-	1	1	7	5.00
Others	-	1	-	-	1	2	1.43

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4: Hourly use of social media in a typical day

Social Media	Frequency				
	0-1 hour	2 – 3 hours	More than 4 hours	Total	%
Facebook	30	9	4	43	30.71
YouTube	11	3	2	16	11.43
LinkedIn	11	1	-	12	8.57
Twitter	5	1	8	14	10.00
WhatsApp	20	8	18	46	32.86
Instagram	4	3	-	7	5.00
Others	1	1	-	2	1.43

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents were asked the number of hours they spend on social networking hours in a typical day. Table 4 above summarises their responses. From the table, we realise that the respondents spend more hours on WhatsApp than on any other network. This was followed by facebook and Twitter. As can be observed in table 4 above, none of the respondents spend more than four hours on LinkedIn, Instagram and other social network sites.

**Table 5: Reliance on social media for political information**

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	43	86.0	86.0	86.0
	No	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As can be observed from table 5 above, the study revealed that majority of the respondents representing 86 % claimed to use social media for the purpose of looking for information between October and December 2016 while the remaining 14 % did not rely on social media for information on politics. 71.43 % of this 14 % acknowledged they relied on television for political information. The remaining 28.57 % relied on radio for information on politics during the 2016 elections.

Respondents were also asked to indicate one main reason why they used social media to look for political information between October and December 2016. The responses were coded, counted and analysed with SPSS. The summary of the responses is presented in Table 6 above. Majority of the respondents revealed that the main reason why they visited social networking sites was to look for information on the manifesto of political parties. This view constituted 28% of the total responses. The study also showed that 22% of the respondents visited social media sites to find out about the profile of the candidates. 16% of them looked for promises made by the candidates and their political parties as to what they would do when voted into office. 10% of them were interested in party rally scenes while 14 % of the

respondents were stated that they did not use social media for the purpose of looking for political information during the period under study.

Table 6: Reasons for social media use as source for political information

Reason	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not Applicable	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Candidate profile	11	22.0	22.0	36.0
Political party's Manifesto	14	28.0	28.0	64.0
Profile of party Executives	1	2.0	2.0	66.0
Party rally scenes	5	10.0	10.0	76.0
Party resource and funding	2	4.0	4.0	80.0
Status of candidates	1	2.0	2.0	82.0
Campaign promises	8	16.0	16.0	98.0
Party activities	1	2.0	2.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

**Table 7: Number of days per week respondents utilised political information through social media**

Social media	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	
	Frequency								Frequency	%
Facebook	2	11	8	4	5	1	1	8	40	31.0
YouTube	5	4	3	3	2	1	1	-	19	14.7
LinkedIn	9	2	2	-	1	-	1	-	15	11.6
WhatsApp	3	7	2	6	6	4	-	13	41	31.8
Twitter	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	5.4
Instagram	3	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	5	3.9
Others	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.6

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The study sought to find out the number of days per week that respondents utilised political information through social media. Respondents were to indicate the number of times per week that they accessed political information through each of the applicable social media platforms. The responses can be found in table 7 above. From the responses, the majority of them (10.1%) indicated that they obtained political information through WhatsApp groups seven days a week. This was followed by facebook users. As many as 6.2% of the respondents also claimed that they visited facebook seven days a week during the period under study. Apart from these two social media networking sites, none of the other sites were visited seven days a week. LinkedIn and YouTube which came close in terms of usage were used six days a week (0.8% each).

This shows that the respondents were actively involved in politics when they were on SNS. It also shows that although users engage in political activities when they are offline, they carry on with the same when they go online. Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) notes that social media allow users to not only search for information but also interact with others through online expression such as posting political commentaries on blogs and social network sites and sharing multimedia commentary.

Table 8: Whether Social media sites were beneficial to respondents' political affiliation and orientation

	Response	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	31	62.0
	No	4	8.0
	Uncertain	8	16.0
	Not Applicable	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The study sought to find out the usefulness of the political campaign information that was accessed by respondents through social media. In line with this objective, respondents were asked if the political campaign information they accessed through social media was useful

regarding their political affiliation and orientation. As many as 31 out of the 50 respondents answered Yes to this question; this represented 62 % of the responses to this question. Then came those who answered Uncertain (16%), and those who indicated that the question was not applicable to them (14%). Those who indicated that the question was not applicable to them were those who did not use social media as a source for obtaining political information. Those who answered No were only 4, representing 8% of the percentage sum of responses to this question.

The study also sought to find out from the respondents who answered Yes to the question of whether the information they accessed between October and December 2016 through social media was useful regarding their political affiliation and orientation. As can be seen from table 9 below, the majority of those respondents representing 20.00 % claimed they obtained detailed information about the manifestoes of the various political parties. This was followed by those who claimed they obtained detailed information about the activities of the political parties 18.0%). Those who claimed they had detailed campaign messages as well as those who stated that they had detailed information about the philosophical position of the candidates constituted formed 10% each of the respondents. Those who claimed it strengthened their political orientation (4%) had the least percentage.

Table 9: Why information accessed via social media was beneficial to political affiliation and orientation

Reason		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Detailed information about a party	9	18.00
	Detailed information about party manifesto	10	20.00
	Strengthened political orientation	2	4.00
	Detail information about the philosophical position of the candidates	5	10.00
	Detail campaign messages	5	10.00
	Not Applicable	19	38.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The study also sought to find out one main reason why some of the respondents answered No to the question of whether the information they accessed between October and December 2016 through social media was useful regarding their political affiliation and orientation. As can be seen from table 10 below, majority of those such respondents claimed they were misinformed by the information they obtained through social media. Those who said they did not get relevant information about the candidates and those who claimed that the political parties failed to explain their philosophies were the least.

Table 10: Reasons for failure of social media to influence political affiliation and orientation

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Misinformation	2	4.00
Lack of relevant information about candidate	1	2.00
Failure of party's to explain their philosophies	1	2.00
Not Applicable	46	92.00
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 11: Whether the information accessed via social media caused respondents to make major political decisions

Response		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	28	56.0
	No	6	12.0
	Uncertain	9	18
	Not Applicable	7	14
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 11 above reveals that 56% of the respondents answered Yes to the question of whether they felt that the political messages they assessed through social media caused them to make major political decisions. This was followed by those who said they were Uncertain (18%) and those who indicated that the question was not applicable to them (14%). The latter represents those who do not use social media for political campaign information. Those who answered No were only 6 out the total number of respondents and in terms of percentage had 12 %.

From Table 12 below, majority of the 28 respondents who ticked answered yes to the question of whether the information they accessed through social media caused them to make major political decisions claimed that it helped them to compare the manifestoes of political parties. This was followed by those who felt that it helped to determine the party and candidates that protects their interests. Those who felt that it helped them to identify the candidate with the interest of the nation at heart, as well as those whose support for their party was heightened or re-affirmed, were the least. This confirms the claim by Valesquez and Rojas (2017) as well as Leonardi (2013) that social media users are rational and determine what to use social media for.

Table 12: How social media use influenced major political decision

Influence	Frequency	Percent
Valid Helped to determine party that protect my interest	5	10.00
Revealed candidate who will protect my interest	5	10.00
Helped to know the party that protects the interest of the nation	4	8.00
Revealed candidate who will protect the interest of the nation	3	6.00
Helped to compare party manifestos	8	16.00
Re-affirmed support for my party	3	6.00
Not Applicable	22	44.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The 6 out of the 50 respondents who answered that social media failed to convince them to make major political decisions as evident in table 11 above gave the following reasons. The majority of them, indicated that the messages they got through social media were not enough. This was followed by those who felt that the information they obtained through social media failed to satisfy their interests. One of those respondents felt that his concerns were not addressed. This also affirms the views of Valesquez and Rojas as well those of Leonardi stated above. The details can be found in table 13 below.

**Table 13: Why social media use failed to cause major political decisions**

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
None of the messages addressed my needs	2	4.00
None of the candidates gave adequate information	3	6.00
My concerns were not addressed	1	2.00
Not Applicable	44	88.00
Total	50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

**Table 14: Whether party members should access campaign messages through social media?**

	Response	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	31	62.0
	No	4	8.0
	Uncertain	15	30.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents were asked whether they thought that party members should make efforts to always access political campaign information through social media. Table 14 above summarises the responses provided by respondents. As can be seen from the above table, 62% of them answered Yes, 30% said they were not certain while 8 % of them answered No.

Majority of those who answered Yes either said social media provides detailed information about candidates and their activities, information on social media is not controlled or social media is in vogue. Then came those who felt social media would help political party members to know what is expected of their political party. Those who saw social media as an authentic source of political education as well as those who thought social media provides up to date information about party activities.

Table 15: Why party members should access campaign information via social media

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Authentic source of political education	4	8.0
Up to date information about party activities	4	8.00
Detail information about candidates and their activities	6	12.00
Information is not controlled or influenced	6	12.00
Know what is expected of their party	5	10.00
In vogue and hence efficiency is guaranteed	6	12.00
Not Applicable	19	38.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents were asked why party members should make efforts to always access needed political campaign information through social media. As can be observed in table 14 above, this question applied to only four of the respondents. Table 16 below summarises the responses of the respondents. From the table, respondents provided four main reasons. The reasons as can be seen in table 16 below are as follows: messages obtained through social media are full of propaganda, not everyone can use social media, social media is not suitable for politics and information cannot be trusted.

Table 16: Why party members should not access campaign messages via social media

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Messages are full of propaganda	1	2.00
Not everyone can use social media	1	2.00
Social media is not suitable for politics	1	2.00
Information cannot be trusted	1	2.00
Non Applicable	46	92.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Respondents were asked if they would access political information through social media in future. 33% of them answered Yes, 14% were not certain of the answer while 3% of them responded No to the question. This indicates that majority of the respondents find political information obtained through social media as a great source of information. What is revealing as far as this response is concerned is that even those who said they did not obtain political information through social media want to find political information through social media.

Table 17: Whether respondents will access political information via social media in future

	Response	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	33	66.0
	No	3	6.0
	Uncertain	14	28.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2017

Respondents were asked if they would access political information through social media in future. As can be seen from table 17 above, 33% of them answered Yes, 14% were not certain of the answer while 3% of them responded No to the question. What is worthy to note about the responses to this question is that some of the respondents representing 13.33% of those who said they were not certain on the question of whether party members should access campaign information through social media (as can be seen in Table 14 above), this time around answered Yes. While one of the respondents who answered No said they were not certain regarding the question of whether or not to access political information through social media in future. This indicates that majority of the respondents will most likely access political information through social media in future.

The study sought to find out from those who answered Yes to the question of whether they will access political campaign information through social media in future. Out of the 33 respondents who answered Yes, majority claimed that social media provides up to information. This was followed by those who indicated that they will do so because social media is in vogue, this was followed by those who viewed social media as a source of authentic information. 8% of the respondents indicated that social media would allow users to compare campaign messages. 6% felt that the information on social media can be easily accessed while 4% felt that the information on social media is convenient and hence can be accessed at one's own convenience. 2% of the respondents indicated that the information on social media can be easily understood.

Table 18: Why respondents access political information via social media in future

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Information is easily accessible	3	6.00
Very convenient	2	4.00
Information is authentic	5	10.00
In vogue	8	16.00
Up to date message	10	20.00
Information can be easily understood	1	2.00
Compare campaign messages	4	8.00
Not Applicable	17	34.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The reasons why 3 out of the 50 respondents indicated that they would not access political campaign information through social media in future (as can be observed in table 17 above ) can be found in table 19 below. Out of the 3 respondents who claimed they would not access political campaign information in future, 2 of them indicated that they did not trust information obtained through social media while one of them felt that social media was not supposed to be used for politics.

Table 19: Why respondents would not access campaign information via social media in future

	Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Information cannot be trusted	2	4.00
	Social media is not good for politics	1	2.00
	Not Applicable	47	94.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The study also sought to understand the benefits of improved use of social media for political campaign information. From the responses 34% of them thought that it would aid in the fast dissemination of information, 32% felt it would help clarify issues that the electorate might not understand. 12% felt it would involve the populace in governance and the same percentage of people also indicated that they had no idea. 6% felt it would the populace to easily compare campaign information, 4% felt it would reduce the cost of looking for information of campaign information.

Table 20: Benefits of improved use of social media for political campaign information

Benefits	Frequency	Percent
Fast dissemination of information	17	34.0
Clarity of issues	16	32.0
Involve the populace in governance	6	12.0
Help the populace to compare campaign information	3	6.0
Reduce cost	2	4.0
No idea	6	12.0
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with discussion of findings obtained from the analysis of data. It also presents the conclusion drawn on the findings of the study as well as the recommendations for future research.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Results

The main objective of the research was to analyse the use of social media in accessing political campaign messages during Ghana's 2016 presidential elections with particular reference to University of Ghana students.

The topic was chosen because of the recent rise in the use of social media for political campaigns in Ghana and other parts of the world. Many political parties are putting a lot of efforts on campaigning in social media platforms. The research was therefore aimed at understanding how many social media users in Ghana actually source political information through social media. The respondents selected for the study were 50 undergraduate students from the University of Ghana.

The main instrument used for the collection of data was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section one looked at the demographic details of respondents,

section two was concerned with the pattern of general social media usage, section three looked at the use and pattern of social media for accessing campaign information, the fourth section was concerned with the usefulness of political campaign information accessed through social media while section five, looked at the future use of social media to access political campaign information. The data collected was coded and keyed in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The results were then carefully analysed and presented.

The study looked at the gender and age of the respondents. The analysis revealed that 56% were males while 44% were females. Respondents were also found to be aged 18 to 26 years and therefore deemed to be within the age group that is globally seen as the age group that uses social media the most. It also revealed that more males use social media than females.

It was also realised that majority of the respondents use WhatsApp and this was followed by facebook users. In fact, only one of the respondents was not on social media indicating that many people are using social media and the situation might increase in future.

### **5.3 Discussion**

The study revealed that majority of the respondents rely on social media for political information. Out of the 50 respondents, as many as 86% of them answered Yes to the question of they relied on social media for political campaign information between October and December 2016. This justifies why a lot of Ghanaian politicians are putting a lot of focus on social media campaigns. The demand for political information in social media necessitates the provision of the information that many users are in need of.

It was also realised from the study that social media users actually visit the sites as far political information is concerned with the purpose of looking for specific information. This, therefore, means that politicians ought to be strategic with the kind of information they put on social media. There is the need for them to package their campaign messages in a way that can attract people.

The study showed that as far as social media campaign information was concerned, many of the respondents were satisfied. 31 of the respondents were satisfied while only four said they were not satisfied with the information they received on social media.

The study also revealed that social media had a significant impact in relation to politics. For example, 66% said they would access political campaign information in future. This finding is in line with an earlier finding by Chen (2009) and Kushin and Kitchener (2009) who claimed that young people developed an interest in politics after coming across such discussions on social networking platforms.

The study showed that a lot more people may access political campaign information through social media in future. 28 out of the 50 respondents who indicated earlier that the information they accessed through social media caused them to make major political decisions. The number of respondents who claimed they would access political information through social media in future was 33 out of the 50 respondents. Meaning that some of the who had earlier answered No, uncertain or Non applicable to the question of whether they accessed political

campaign information through social media have intentions of accessing political information through social media in future.

An application of the adaptive theory structuration theory to this information will help politicians to understand the nature of social media users and the kind of information they should put on social media. The theory tells us that people unconsciously create certain rules and cultures that guide their social relationships and interactions. The information that a lot more social media users access political campaign information. We also learn that these users do not just visit social media for the sake of it but rather visit the sites with the view to looking for solutions to certain issues. The essence of this information to politicians is that they must not just upload any information on social media but research about the needs of social media users since the users are active and rational when it comes to the information they source on social media.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The study revealed that a significant proportion of social media users actually source political information online. Out of the forty nine respondents who had earlier reported that they were social media users, 43 of them claimed that they assessed political information through social media between October and December 2016.

The study revealed that there is a positive correlation between the use of social media and political involvement. From the study, a greater percentage of those who admitted that they used social media have reported that it influenced their political decisions. Again all those

whose political decisions were positively influenced as a result of the information they accessed through social media intend to use social media to source political campaign information in future.

The study also shows that a lot more people may probably use social media in future as evidenced by the fact that some of those who did not use social media to access political campaign information intend to use it in future.

Thirdly, the study revealed that users do not just visit social media for the sake of it. But do so with the view to looking for answers to certain issues. This may include comparing campaign information, activities of political parties et cetera. This shows that social media users are active and rational in their use of social media as a source for political campaign information. This implies that politicians and political parties must be rational when uploading information on social media.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

This study looked at the use of social media for accessing political campaign information from the perspective of the voters. Another study can also look at the same issue from the perspective of politicians to determine their reason for advertising on social media.

Secondly, the sample size used for the study could be increased to get a clearer appreciation of issues. Such a study could compare two cases such as University of Ghana students and Ghana institute of Journalism students.

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**APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**This is a questionnaire for a research on the use of social media in accessing political campaign messages during Ghana’s 2016 presidential elections: A case of University of Ghana students. Kindly answer the questions in it to enable me to obtain the needed data. The responses you will provide will be held in utmost confidentiality and used for the purposes of this study. Please make a tick in the box or fill in your response where applicable.**

**SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Age.....

**SECTION 2: PATTERN OF GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

3. Which of the following social media are you on? ( Please tick where applicable)

Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	YouTube	<input type="checkbox"/>	LinkedIn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	WhatsApp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you ticked other, please

specify.....

If you ticked none, which of the following forms of media do you rely on for political campaign information? (Please tick the appropriate media).

Newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email updates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other (please specify)

.....

4. How often do you use the following social media networking sites?

Social media	Daily	Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice a week	Fortnightly (Every two weeks)	Once a month	Other
Facebook							
YouTube							
LinkedIn							
WhatsApp							
Other							

If you ticked other please specify

.....

5. How many hours do you spend online on social media networking sites in a typical day?

SNS	0-1 hour	2-3 hours	More than 4 hours	Never
Facebook				
YouTube				
LinkedIn				
WhatsApp				
Other				

**SECTION 3: PATTERN OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE RELATING TO ACCESS TO CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

6. Did you use social media to source political campaign information between October and December 2016?

Yes

No

7. Which one of the following best fits the reason why you accessed social media for campaign information between October and December 2016?

Presidential candidate profiles	
Political party's manifesto	
Campaign promises	
Profile of party executive	
Profile of candidates	
Party rally scenes	
Party resources and funding	
Other	

If you ticked other please specify

.....

8. Please choose the number of days per week, ranging from 0-7, that you utilised each of the following social media networking sites for political campaign information between October and December 2016.

SNS	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Facebook								
YouTube								
LinkedIn								
WhatsApp								
Other								

If you ticked other please specify

.....

**SECTION 4: USEFULNESS OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN INFORMATION  
ACCESSED THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

9. Would you say that the information you accessed between October and December 2016 through social media was useful regarding your political affiliation and orientation?

Yes

No

Uncertain

If yes in what way? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If No, why? (Please provide only one answer)

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Do you think the political campaign information accessed by you caused you to make major political decisions?

Yes

No

Uncertain

If yes in what way? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If No, why? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....

11. Do you think political party members should make efforts to always access needed political campaign information through social media?

Yes

No

Uncertain

If yes in what way? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If No, why? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION 5: FUTURE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ACCESS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

12. Would you use social media to access political campaign information in future?

Yes

No

Uncertain

If yes, why? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If No, why? (Please provide only one reason)

.....  
.....  
.....

13. What do you think will be the benefit of improved use of social media for political campaign information? (Please provide one benefit)

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