



**THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PR ACTIVITIES
BY FEMINIST GROUPS IN GHANA: A CYBERETHNOGRAPHIC
PERSPECTIVE.**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS, AND
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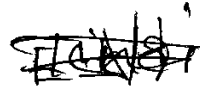
DECEMBER, 2023

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

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

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DECLARATION BY SUPERVISORS

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

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family, who have been a constant source of support and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Almighty God for His eternal blessings, love, and protection throughout my studies at the University of Media and Communication-Institute of Journalism. I offer a sincere gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Mrs. Mavis Essandoh and Dr. Rhodalene Amartey who assisted me in accomplishing this work to this end. Their comments regarding the structure and content of my work are highly appreciated.

ABSTRACT

In recent times, social media has been adopted in diverse facets of life. One of the areas of social media adoption that has received significant attention has been within the domain of Public Relations. Consequently, the adoption of social media into Public Relations, which has been moderated by the relevance of two-way communication, has occasioned the use of these two in different disciplines. This study argues that there has been a rise in the use of social media to facilitate dialogic communication among feminist movements and groups globally. As such, the study was conducted to examine how social media platforms, based on the ideas of Public Relations, have been used to enhance dialogic communication between these women’s groups and their public. This study was guided by four core objectives, which ultimately sought to understand the use of social media by two popular feminist groups in Ghana encompassing Women in Law and Development, Africa (WiLDAF) and Women in Public Relations (WiPR). The study adopted the use of cyber-ethnography and interviews to investigate this while paying close attention to the opportunities and challenges social media presents to feminist groups in Ghana. The study focused on observing the social media interactions of the two feminist groups from November 2020 to November 2023. This was also capped with interview sessions with Public Relations professionals from the sampled women’s groups. The study highlights the importance of considering technical and structural challenges when using social media to advance feminist interests in Ghana. While social media can build virtual communities, enhance advocacy, and amplify feminist voices, it is crucial to consider technical and structural issues. To effectively use social media, feminist groups should use analytical and engagement tools, social listening tools, and collaborative content creation to understand their target audiences and consolidate the relevance of social media for their movements.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Abbreviations</u>	<u>Full Description</u>
PR	Public Relations
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WiPR	Women in Public Relations

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In recent years, the use of social media platforms has become increasingly predominant in the field of Public Relations (PR) (Zhang, 2024). This trend is especially evident among feminist groups in

Ghana, who have harnessed social media as a powerful tool for advocacy and activism. This research explores how these groups utilize social media for their public relations activities from a cyberethnographic perspective. These groups leverage platforms such as *Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram* to amplify their voices, engage with a broader audience, and shape public discourse on gender equality and women's rights. They use new techniques to establish effective campaigns, mobilize supporters, and challenge society conventions.

Cyberethnography is a research method that involves the study of online communities and cultures, using a combination of traditional ethnographic techniques and digital tools (Zhao, 2024). This approach aims to gain a deeper understanding of how feminist groups in Ghana navigate the digital landscape, engage with their audiences, and shape public discourse on gender equality and women's rights.

This study will examine the strategies and tactics employed by feminist groups in Ghana on social media platforms such as *Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram* through a series of interviews, participant observation, and content analysis. The researcher will also explore the challenges and opportunities that arise from using social media for Public Relations activities, and the implications for feminist activism in the digital age.

Generally, this research aims to contribute to the rising body of literature on the intersection of social media, Public Relations, and feminist activism in Ghana. This study, therefore, set out to examine how feminist groups use the power of digital communication, providing insights that may be used to shape future Public Relations and advocacy activities in the region.

1.1 Background of the Study

Social media has evolved into an important instrument in public relations since it allows institutions to directly communicate with the public (Quesenberry, 2020). Sujarittnetikam, (2024)

explains that in Public Relations, employing media to communicate a message will engage people in conversation, foster mutual understanding, and ensure the accomplishment of organizational goals. The Public Relations sector has seen significant change in recent years due to new media, technology, and avenues for communication with customers and companies (Ahmadi, 2022).

In a very broad sense, Public Relations is the management of communication or information flow between organizations and their public to ensure mutually beneficial relationships (Inyang et al., 2022). At the core of the practice of Public Relations is the adoption and strategic use of approaches that aim to have an impact on the development, maintenance, and restoration of reputation through techniques including public affairs and problem management, risk and crisis communication, community building, and corporate social responsibility (McKie & Sriramesh, 2017). The bane of Public Relations is thus hinged greatly on the use of communication to manage relationships (Yeibo & Onyekosor, 2024). Hence, the reason for such reliance on social media tools and platforms is that possess critical tendencies for managing information flow and relationships (Zimal & Aysar, 2021).

Social media are digital platforms that allow users to create and manage virtual communities centered around sharing information, ideas, and other content (Algharabat & Rana, 2021). As social media continues to evolve, Public Relations has also adapted to this change, driven by the need to build communities around shared organizational interests. Scholars such as Nkrumah and Bekoe (2023) and Owusu-Ansah (2016) have emphasized that these platforms have become central to Public Relations practices in Ghana, with social media playing a pivotal role in enhancing organizational visibility and engagement. Social media tools enable Public Relations

practitioners to create and manage online communities, offering boundless opportunities for engagement with diverse publics (Munyua, 2017).

The dynamic capabilities of social media have been identified as crucial in fostering greater involvement and engagement, which are essential for the success of modern Public Relations efforts (Adomako & Osei, 2018). These platforms provide a unique space for dialogue, where organizations can engage in two-way communication with their audiences, building relationships and cultivating trust (Munyua, 2017). In the Ghanaian context, feminist organizations, in particular, have effectively used social media to promote activism, raise awareness, and mobilize support for social causes, demonstrating the power of digital communication in shaping public discourse (Mohammed, 2023).

Several Public Relations researchers, such as Cornelissen (2014) and Macnamara (2017), who were referenced by Tench and Yeomans (2017), have reemphasized the value of social media and the internet in general for furthering an organization's Public Relations efforts. For instance, Mahoney (2024) claims that social media gives organizations the chance to express their own stories to their audiences. This is a departure from the conventional practice of depending on journalists to relay your organization's story. Tench and Yeomans (2017), citing Macnamara (2017), emphasize that organizations have many opportunities to develop relationships with and have a discourse with their audiences online. This is mostly due to social media's participatory features.

There is no doubt the relevance social media as well as other digital technologies facilitated by Web 2.0 has on entrenching communication between organizations and their publics. Some authors have contended that the relationship between social media and Public Relations in recent times has evolved so critically that most Public Relations activities and functions largely rely

heavily on social media and networking sites. For instance, Mzizi (2021) notes that Public Relations have had and will continue to have a significant influence due to the consistent rise of digital media, which has changed our routes of communication and the practice of journalism and other communication-based disciplines. The primary reason for this is the expansion of social media networking, which has made it possible for customers to participate in two-way conversations with businesses swiftly and simply. On the other hand, for companies, this poses a fresh challenge in terms of how to manage the new modes of interaction so that they can now recognize the rising significance of Public Relations as an organizational function. The handling of communications in the public eye and the usage of social media have made Public Relations more dynamic. Businesses must create cutting-edge methods of engaging with customers who are linked to the internet in the present era of democratized material.

One such organizational group that has seen a lot of development in Public Relations and Social media use is feminist groups. In simple terms, feminist groups are organized groups of persons who believe in the ideas of demanding equal rights for men and women in terms of politics, making decisions, career choices, and opportunities as well as reproductive rights. They can be perceived as movements that are built purposely to attempt the achievement of equal rights for men and women in all socio-political dimensions of life (Asnani, 2020).

Since 2010, there has been a significant rise in feminist activism and movements in general, which have occurred or played out primarily on social media and other key digital networking sites. Turley and Fisher (2018) as well as Baer (2016), describe this rise as the digital explosion of feminism and feminist movements to earmark how well social media, has heralded feminist activities within the past few decades. Earl et al. (2022) assert that digital technologies, especially social media have been a major key to the success of many social movements in recent years.

According to Guillard (2016), social media and other digital media spaces have become central to a fourth wave of feminist practice that has facilitated global involvement and engagement.

Significantly, utilizing digital platforms can aid in the expansion of feminist space(s), allowing for a larger audience and more open participation with and promotion of feminism and feminist ideas (Mehan, 2024). Also, as Winstone (2021) advances, social media can foster connections between individuals who might not otherwise be able to interact in person and bring them together. It is however essential to note that while social media has been critical to advancing feminist ideas and activism, it has also been a rife ground for anti-feminist activities (Turley & Fisher, 2018). Women, especially those who openly discuss feminism, are frequently subjected to online attacks (Jane, 2021). These attacks often include rape and death threats, which are used to intimidate and silence women who challenge entrenched patriarchy and male dominance in societies (Jane, 2017; Amnesty International, 2018). In Ghana, studies have shown that women who advocate for gender equality on social media face significant backlash, including cyberbullying and verbal abuse (Amoakohene, 2021; Okyere-Dankwa, 2020). Such hostile environments undermine the potential of social media as a platform for promoting feminist activism and discourse (Lewis et al., 2016). To address these challenges, the adoption of Public Relations (PR) strategies is essential. PR offers a more structured and strategic approach to leveraging social media platforms, enabling feminist groups to counteract issues that diminish their visibility and impact (Ciszek, 2015; Edwards, 2018). This study draws on the critical elements of digital Public Relations practice to examine the dialogic nature of feminist movements in Ghana. The core of this study seeks to understand how Public Relations tools are used to enforce or entrench feminist movements and activities through social media and cyber-interactive spaces in Ghana.

1.2 Problem Statement

The relevance of Public Relations to organizations has been investigated quite extensively by many researchers (Gilaninia, Taleghani, & Mohammadi, 2013; Ahmadi, 2022). For most of these studies that have been conducted globally, Public Relations has been found and touted as a key element in the strategic management of communication with organizational publics (Falkheimer & Heider, 2014; Orakwue, Hammond, & Gyambrah-Adaefie, 2006), risk management and crisis management (Zimal & Aysar, 2021; Grunig, 2022; Al-Akwa'a, 2019) amongst others. The role and relevance of Public Relations in advancing the activities of special organizations such as not-for-profit organizations have also been studied quite extensively (Dulham, 2010; Suh, Hong, & Hijal-Moghrabi, 2022; Stockhausen, 2014). These studies highlight how organizations of such nature leverage the activities of Public Relations to improve their image and relationships with key stakeholders.

On the other hand, some studies have also contributed significantly to understanding how Public Relations plays out in cyberspace and social networking sites (Cheng, 2019; Chile & Chile, 2020; Setyanto & Anggarina, 2020). Thus, there have been significant efforts by researchers to investigate the role of social media within the practice of Public Relations. Similarly, some studies have concerned themselves with understanding the intricate activities of feminist organizations. Most importantly some researchers have looked at the communication tendencies of feminist groups while paying attention to how such groups and organizations leverage social media to organize themselves and engage in other critical activities (Verkuyl, Impact of social media on feminism, 2020; Gu, Jiang, & Ye, 2021; Ma, Zheng, & Zou, 2022).

While the wealth of literature on social media, Public Relations, and feminist groups is outstanding, it is critical to note that not a lot of studies have been keen on understanding the overall nature of digital Public Relations activities. Thus, social media and feminist groups, social

media and Public Relations and Public Relations and feminist group activities have been studied in isolation. Meanwhile, studies need to look critically at how feminist groups and organizations adopt and use social media tools for strategic Public Relations purposes.

Similarly, as observed by Turley and Fisher (2018), social media has become fertile ground for anti-feminist movements as well. Hence, they advise that feminist organizations adopt strategic communication approaches such as Public Relations to remain relevant as well. Besides, some scholars have argued in favor of the use of dialogic communication as a critical element in the management of feminist organizations and communicative activities on social media as opposed to non-dialogic approaches, which are seemingly less effective (Ureta, Terradillos, & Gras, 2021). Public Relations is thus critical for the operations of feminist organizations, especially when considering their activities in online spaces and communities.

It is thus essential that studies pay attention to Public Relations perspectives on the use of social media in managing the communication tendencies of feminist organizations in Ghana. Consequently, this study adopts an ethnographic methodological approach to learn, in a more direct and immersive manner, how digital Public Relations is used by feminist groups and organizations in Ghana.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research seeks to:

- 1 To explore feminist' groups' use of the dialogic nature of social media platforms when communicating with their public
2. To examine the use of social media as a tool for understanding the target audience of feminist groups in Ghana

3. To probe the challenges and opportunities available to feminist movements in Ghana in their use of social media to engage with their public.
4. To provide recommendations to stakeholders on enhancing the effectiveness of feminist movements' use of social media for advocacy and public engagement.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do feminist groups in Ghana exploit the dialogic nature of social media platforms to communicate with their public?
2. How can feminist groups use social media platforms as a tool to understand their target audience in Ghana?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities available to feminist movements in Ghana in their use of social media to engage with their public?
4. What recommendations can be made to stakeholders to improve the use of social media by feminist movements for advocacy and public engagement?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The core of the study is to examine the nature of digital Public Relations in key feminist organizations in Ghana. The study, hence, seeks to understand how social media is used as a functional tool to perform Public Relations functions among feminist organizations in the country. The study draws that digital Public Relations, or social media Public Relations, is essential for dialogic communication in the activities of feminist groups in the country.

The scope of this study is therefore limited, first, to studying social media Public Relations and not the grand nature of general Public Relations activities. Thus, the study limits its study to studying the Facebook social media handles of two selected feminist groups in Ghana including Women in Public Relations and Women in Law and Development in Africa (Wildaf Ghana). The

study's scope is thus centered on collecting and analyzing data from the *Facebook social media* handles of these media organizations as well as key members.

The study, therefore, does not consider the activities of other feminist groups as well as other social media platforms.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The focus of the study is to look at the characteristics of digital Public Relations in significant feminist organizations in Ghana. As a result, the study aims to comprehend how social media is employed by feminist organizations across the nation as practical instruments for carrying out Public Relations tasks. The study argues that social media Public Relations, or digital Public Relations, is crucial for dialogic communication in the endeavors of feminist groups in the nation. The findings of the study will hold some significance in critical areas of practice, scholarship, and policy development and implementation. First, within the area of practice, the findings made in this study will aid feminist groups and organizations across the country and beyond the borders of the country to understand the core relevance of social media to their feminist movements. Thus, the findings made in the study will be crucial to shaping the general practice of digital and social media Public Relations among feminist groups. The study will be essential in informing the selected organizations, as well as organizations of similar ilk, about the current nature of their social media activities (especially on *Facebook*) and how to improve dialogic communication with their stakeholders online.

Secondly, this study's findings will significantly contribute to the literature on digital media Public Relations within feminist groups and organizations. This study will be critical, especially in improving the literature on how social media is used as Public Relations tools by feminist groups, as not too many studies in Ghana have considered paying attention to this. Also, in addition to scholarship, the findings made in this study will be critical to other researchers as they will serve

as a baseline study for further studies. Thus, other researchers can follow the findings made in this study to engage in new empirical studies in the future.

Furthermore, the findings made in this study will provide policy formulators with critical insights into the nature of social media use as a Public Relations tool among feminist groups in Ghana. Policymakers and implementers can use the findings of this study to develop and implement policies that can improve digital Public Relations in the field of feminist activism.

1.8 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

Since social media gives businesses a direct channel to the public, it has developed into a crucial tool in Public Relations. In Public Relations, using the media to spread a message will get people talking, promote comprehension, and guarantee the achievement of organizational objectives. Recent years have witnessed a considerable change in the Public Relations industry because of new media, technology, and channels for communicating with clients and businesses. Feminist organizations are one of these organizational groupings that have experienced significant growth in Public Relations and social media use. Utilizing digital platforms can help feminist spaces grow because it opens involvement in and promotion of feminism and feminist ideas to a wider audience. This study focuses on the fundamental features of digital Public Relations practice to analyze the dialogic character of feminist movements in Ghana. The main goal of this research is to comprehend how feminist movements and activities are enforced or entrenched through social media and online interactive spaces in Ghana. This section of the study highlighted the background of the study while contextualizing the use of Public Relations and social media by feminist groups across the world. Likewise, the chapter also discussed the problem statement as well as the key research objectives and questions that direct the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to reviewing critical and relevant literature related to the study. A literature review involves the process of gathering, organizing, and assessing the writings of other scholars and writers on a particular subject of interest (Karunaratna et al., 2024). Its primary function is to evaluate and synthesize the work of other scholars and researchers regarding the function and applicability of social media in Public Relations. According to Snyder (2019), a literature review is more than just a compilation of academic papers; it employs a methodical strategy to identify connections and deficiencies among various publications and research to derive specific conclusions.

The purpose of this chapter of the research is to evaluate pertinent and related material by the main ideas and concepts that have been used in the study. As a result, the chapter examines the use of a thematic method to critically evaluate the fundamental concepts such as social media, Public Relations, and Feminism that have been used in this study. The chapter also looks critically at the appropriate theoretical review that undergirds this study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Social Media

The advancement of digital and mobile technology, together with the internet, has made it easier for media consumers to interact with one another than in the past. Social media's vital interaction and feedback, which were absent from earlier forms of communication, are what have made it important in today's world. Social media is a term used to describe contemporary internet-enabled media that permits interactive involvement (Asomah et al., 2022). Asomah et al. (2022) continues

that social media refers to newer forms of media that are interactive and encourage user participation. According to Nutsugah et al. (2024), the term social media captures a wide variety of different critical media platforms that are hosted on the internet and provide high levels of interactivity for users. The term therefore encompasses a set of interactive internet applications that aid in the facilitation, creation, curation, and sharing of user-generated content. Nutsugah et al. (2024), explanation of the concept of social media projects the idea that social media hinges greatly on shared content creation and consumption. Thus, social media covers newer forms of media that create an internet-based public platform for the co-creating and consumption of content.

According to Rathi et al. (2024), social media refers to electronic communication platforms that allow media users to create and manage online groups dedicated to exchanging ideas, information, and other types of material. Rathi et al. (2024), assert that it is nearly impossible to discuss social media without mentioning social networks. According to Asomah et al. (2022) and Osei & Yeboah (2021), social media and computer-mediated communication are collectively referred to as social networking sites (SNSS).

According to Ennin (2023), social networking sites are web-based applications that let users create profiles, see who else is connected to them, and search and navigate through that list. Unlike other media platforms and even other computer technologies created for communication, SNSs have offered virtual environments that mimic aspects of real communities that already exist. They have the power to bind individuals together and foster sentiments of belonging that mimic those seen in real social groups (Allen et al., 2022). Suti and Sari (2023) claims that because SNSs are so inexpensive to use for collaboration, sharing, and information production, they have become widely accepted in society and are perhaps the most popular way to share information and create communities.

2.1.2 Public Relations

Many sectors employ Public Relations, and among practitioners, a variety of somewhat distinct abilities and competencies have arisen across these areas. Because of this, there isn't a single, widely accepted definition of Public Relations (Cutlip et al., 2019; Grunig & Hunt, 2020; Kent & Taylor, 2021). Instead, it's likely that if you ask three academics and three practitioners to describe Public Relations, each of their six responses would differ in some manner. Harlow (1976) constructed his definitions of Public Relations based on his discovery of 472 distinct meanings of the term that were created between 1900 and 1976. Yoemans, Tench, and (2006:4) taking a different tack from Gruning, and Hunt (1984, p.6) as cited in Grunting and Gruning (2013) described Public Relations as "the management of communication between an organization and its public." Other definitions concentrated on what were the "ideal" methods of communication, such as two-way dialogue and fostering a good rapport between groups and their audiences.

According to the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (2021), Public Relations is defined as "the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action that serve both the organization and the public interest." The Public Relations Society of America (2019, p.13) provides a similarly broad definition, stating that "Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other".

The Institute of Public Relations (IPR) (2022) characterizes Public Relations as an art and social science function that is both distinctive and strategic. It is founded on an understanding of human behavior and involves identifying issues of critical relevance, analyzing trends and predicting their consequences, and establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships based on truth,

full information, responsibility, performance, and the public interest. According to this definition, the concept of public relations extends beyond the commonly held belief that it is merely a method for transferring information from an organization's management to its stakeholders. The concept also emphasizes building long-term relationships and maintaining a positive public perception, including identifying issues that are significant to the organization (Gregory, 2020).

Cutlip et al. (2022, p.8) define public relations as "a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends." This definition updates the traditional concept by incorporating the role of public relations in helping organizations navigate the social and business environment. According to Bussey (2021), public relations is the art of presenting a business or individual to the public, often through the media, to enhance the business's reputation. This, in turn, positively impacts the business's sales, service uptake, and overall reputation. Thus, public relations involves managing the perceptions of various audiences while preserving the organization's reputation (Ferguson, 2020).

Bekoe (2022) suggests that while the basic principles of public relations remain relevant, the field has evolved beyond simply building relationships and managing an organization's image. The practice has become more complex, involving the generation of revenue, marketing, handling special events, and managing crises. Public relations now "manages by objectives, implements programs and evaluates them" and plays a significant role in marketing and crisis management, where it addresses critical situations professionally and efficiently (Bekoe, 2022).

2.1.3 Women in Public Relations

The practice of Public Relations has received a lot of attention dating back to the 20th century. One of the key areas of discussion that has heralded modern-day Public Relations practice has been

issues of gender within the discipline (Tench & Topic, 2017). Issues of women's inclusion in Public Relations positions in organizations across the globe have become rife points of discussion in a business environment that continues to pay keen attention to the roles of women in management positions. Some studies suggest that while the involvement of women in Public Relations across the globe has been quite slow, the turn of the 20th century has seen a lot more women engaging in Public Relations functions in many organizations (Topic & Tench, 2020).

Clayton et al. (2021) for instance notes that women in Public Relations positions in the USA and Canada outnumber the number of males in the sector. This has been confirmed further by numerous other researchers. The consensus within the literature provides evidence that at least, the turn of the 20th century saw a rather large influx of women in Public Relations positions and indeed other communication-based disciplines such as advertising, marketing, and journalism. Crewe and Wang (2018) however describe this trend as a façade as while the numbers keep increasing, male domination in key decision-making processes in Public Relations continues. They argue that even today where there are more females than males in Public Relations positions globally, gender disparities still exist. These are often manifest in pay gaps, sexism and other forms of discrimination against women (Crewwe & Wang, 2018).

Topic et al. (2019) note after studying the trends in women's engagement in Public Relations positions for over 20 years that, since research into females' roles and relevance in Public Relations emerged in the 1980s, very little has changed aside from an influx of women taking up cosmetic positions in Public Relations departments in organizations. Topic et al., (2019) opine that in recent years, one would expect a shattering of the glass ceiling, but women have had very little influence on the development of Public Relations as a practice over the years. These researchers have argued is a result of a plethora of different reasons. These reasons are highly entrenched in patriarchal

tendencies and ultimately affect how they perform their roles and responsibilities as Public Relations professionals (Topic, 2018).

According to Abbasi et al. (2021), women who have taken up Public Relations roles and responsibilities are often faced with different forms of patriarchy-based challenges that affront the dispensation of their roles effectively. Thus, women must merge into male-dominated and controlled business environments despite being in the seeming majority. They are unable to make decisions that affect the organization and often perform ceremonial roles.

A 2013 survey on the membership makeup of Finland's leading Public Relations unions revealed that 89.2% of those working in the field were female (Harangozó & Fakó, 2024). Based on these findings, Finland has the highest proportion of females in the Public Relations industry among the Nordic nations. In Sweden, almost 80% of women are members of their union. In 2013, there were 792 applicants for the media and communication program at the University of Helsinki, with 612 of them being female. Comparably, women's dominance in the US is a noteworthy phenomenon; in 2011, 71% of members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) were female (Reigstad, 2021). Aturu-Aghedo et al. (2024) averse that for Public Relations and organizational systems to thrive, female virtues such as cooperation, care, and pacifism among other womanly virtues must be imbibed in organizational operations. Thus, women's involvement in Public Relations, which is one of the most important sub-systems in organizations must consider a healthy degree of female involvement to realize this.

Similarly, while the global situation of women's inclusion in Public Relations (especially in Western developed countries) seems entrenched, the situation in Ghana paints a somewhat different picture (Baidoo, 2024). That is to say that, while a lot more women have taken up management roles and Public Relations positions in nations with entrenched Public Relations

layouts, the situation in Ghana does not depict this picture. Grant (2023) note that considering the general outlook of the gendered division of labor in the country as well as policy-based opportunities that are afforded Ghanaian women, one would imagine that women would be keen on venturing into Public Relations positions as well as the academic scholarship of it. However, the numbers remain relatively low in the country. Amakye et al. (2022), however, notes that the Ghanaian patriarchal system acts as a critical glass ceiling that impedes the development of women's involvement in Public Relations in the country.

In Ghana, the Women in Public Relations has made significant strides in advocating for both qualitative and quantitative inclusion of women in Public Relations (Asiedu, 2020). Essentially, the organization is an all-female group that is committed to educating, mentoring, and empowering female Public Relations professionals as well as prospects (Asiedu, 2020). Since its emergence in 2017, the organization has been critical in advancing issues concerning the active inclusion and participation of women in Public Relations positions in organizations in Ghana (Asiedu, 2020).

2.1.4 Social Media and Public Relations

The roles and entire discipline of Public Relations have experienced a revolutionary change in recent times owing to the inception of digital media tools. Public Relations has become one of the most affected disciplines by the new digital media largely because the discipline and practice of Public Relations reside largely on using new and updated communication tools to reach intended audiences and the public with messages. The audiences of organizations have evolved into digital beings, constantly communicating via digital channels. As a result, it has become necessary for Public Relations to function more effectively within organizations, it must adopt digital media tools as well (Hofhuis et al., 2024).

The empirical literature suggests that digital media technologies, as well as the internet, have become crucial to every facet of Public Relations. According to Wang et al. (2021), digital media tools and the internet present Public Relations practice with a unique set of tools for collecting and monitoring information and public opinions on matters concerning the organization. Also, the dialogic nature of most digital media tools such as social media has enhanced dialogic communication between organizations and their publics. The inception and adoption of social media tools have become the bane for communication within the enclave of organizational public relations. The fact that social media within itself improves two-way communication enhances organizational interaction with its stakeholders and allows real-time and speedy communication is evidence of the improvements the practice of Public Relations has seen as a result of the digital evolution (Roberts 2018).

Although some authors Goetzen (2019) and Ferguson (2020) note that the constantly changing nature of digital technologies implies that Public Relations professionals have to constantly face the challenge of keeping abreast of the newest forms of technologies, it remains that the Public Relations discipline has seen some significant levels of maturity in adoption and use digital media tools in recent times (Orgi-Egwu, Oyeleke, & Nwakpu, 2019).

The role of social media in public relations (PR) for feminist groups has been extensively explored in recent literature. One study by Chilwa (2024) examines how social media platforms are used by feminist organizations in Ghana for advocacy, awareness creation, and engagement with the public. The purpose of the study was to investigate how these groups have adopted social media to facilitate communication with their target audiences and to enhance the effectiveness of their advocacy campaigns. The methodology employed was a qualitative analysis of social media posts, interviews with PR practitioners, and content analysis of social media interactions. The findings revealed that social media has become a crucial tool for feminist organizations, offering

opportunities to engage with a broader audience and challenge traditional gender norms. The study also highlighted the effectiveness of social media in mobilizing support for feminist causes, especially through platforms like Facebook and Twitter. However, it pointed out challenges related to online harassment and the digital divide, which continue to hinder the full potential of social media for feminist advocacy.

In Ghana, the digital landscape offers both opportunities and barriers to feminist groups, and a study by Asamoah (2020) provides further insight into how social media is used for feminist activism, focusing on the challenges and advantages within the Ghanaian context. The purpose of the study was to analyze the impact of social media on feminist activism in Ghana, especially in light of rising anti-feminist sentiments. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with feminist activists and content analysis of social media interactions. Asamoah (2020) found that while social media serves as a platform for feminist groups to amplify their messages and build solidarity, it also exposes them to online harassment and targeted attacks. The study concluded that social media in Ghana plays a dual role, simultaneously empowering feminist activists while also presenting challenges, such as backlash and exclusion from mainstream digital conversations.

Further research by Odoi and Baidoo (2024) on digital media tools in public relations practices provides a broader perspective on how feminist groups globally, including those in Ghana, engage with social media. The study explored the evolving role of digital media tools in enhancing PR activities and their impact on organizational communication. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of digital media tools in promoting two-way communication between organizations and their publics. The methodology involved a survey of PR practitioners and an analysis of online communication strategies. Odoi and Baidoo (2024) found that digital media tools have become essential for PR practitioners to monitor public opinion and engage in more

transparent, two-way communication. The study's findings were relevant to feminist PR groups in Ghana, as they reflected the growing need for feminist organizations to adopt digital tools for engaging diverse audiences in real-time conversations. The study also underlined the importance of digital media in creating more participatory spaces for feminist activism. Similarly, Tandoh and Tagoe (2021) investigated how Ghanaian public relations practitioners employ social and digital media tools, providing insights into the broader context of digital media usage in public relations within the country. These studies underscore the growing importance of digital media in facilitating two-way communication and fostering participatory spaces for feminist activism in Ghana.

A significant challenge faced by feminist groups in Ghana in utilizing social media for PR activities is the digital divide. Orgi-Egwu, Oyeleke, and Nwakpu (2019) conducted a study on the impact of digital technology access on public relations practice in Ghana, with a focus on social media's role in feminist activism. The study aimed to understand how disparities in digital access affect feminist groups' ability to engage in effective PR practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, including interviews with feminist activists and a survey of internet usage across rural and urban areas, the researchers discovered that limited access to digital tools and the internet significantly impedes the ability of rural women to participate in online feminist movements. The study emphasized that the digital divide limits the reach of social media campaigns and reduces the inclusivity of feminist activism in Ghana. Consequently, feminist groups in urban areas are often able to leverage social media more effectively than their rural counterparts, leading to uneven participation in digital activism.

Finally, the study by Owusu-Ansah (2017) explores the broader implications of social media for gender-based activism in Ghana, with a particular focus on the ways in which social media has become a tool for challenging patriarchal structures. The study's purpose was to investigate how

social media has helped feminist groups in Ghana foster a more inclusive and diverse dialogue on gender issues. Using qualitative interviews with feminist activists and analysis of social media content, Owusu-Ansah (2017) found that social media allows for the creation of virtual communities where feminist ideas can be freely expressed and discussed. The study concluded that social media has become a critical platform for feminist advocacy, enabling participants to engage in dialogue that transcends geographical boundaries. Additionally, it was noted that social media has facilitated the visibility of feminist issues, making it possible for feminist groups in Ghana to gain support for causes such as gender-based violence and political representation.

In conclusion, these studies highlight the growing importance of social media for feminist groups in Ghana, underscoring its role in both facilitating public relations activities and enhancing feminist activism. While social media platforms offer significant advantages, such as increased visibility, direct engagement with audiences, and the ability to challenge societal norms, they also present challenges, including online harassment, the digital divide, and the exclusion of marginalized voices. Moving forward, it is essential for feminist groups in Ghana to explore strategies to overcome these barriers while continuing to harness the power of social media for advocacy and social change.

2.1.5 Feminism and Feminist Movements

Globally, women experience different forms of oppression, abuse, marginalization, and deprivation in different facets of society stretching from the political, and cultural to the economic. While the concept of feminism has existed for centuries now, the concept has become more ubiquitous and popular in recent times (Baer, *Redoing feminism: digital activism, body politics and neoliberalism*, 2016). The term feminism is derived from the Latin word ‘femina’ which means “woman” and was first used to represent the ideas of equality and women’s rights movements. Feminist theory's central tenet is that women have been subordinated to males from the dawn of

human civilization due to the influence of masculine-dominated social discourse and Western philosophical heritage (Banet-Weiser, 2016). Every civilization's history demonstrates that women have always been placed in a subservient position, unable to reclaim their own identity unless they revisit, investigate, and ultimately re-establish it via their own experiences and ideas (Verkuyl & Impact of social media on feminism, 2020).

As Mahajan (2022) notes feminism captures the call for political, cultural, and economic liberation. According to Mohajan (2022), societies have been built such that, very few political and economic opportunities are granted to women. Hence, the concept of feminism captures the need to restructure social systems that inhibit access to political and economic opportunities and rights for women.

The philosophy of feminism calls for men and women to have equal rights in terms of politics, decision-making, careers, and childrearing. Feminism is a women-based socio-political movement and ideology and supports the idea that “women should share equality in society’s opportunities and scarce resources” (Mohajan, 2022, p.18). It is made up of several social, cultural, and political groups that aim to provide men and women equal rights. Hence, the core of the concept of feminism is based on the idea that both women and men must have equal rights, and opportunities in politics, economic, and social spheres of society (Asnani, 2020). It covers the struggle as well as the historical contexts of movements aimed at achieving the same rights, opportunities, and dignity for women within society. At its core are a set of ideologies, belief systems, value sets, and activities that are directed towards eliminating all aspects and manifestations of male dominance and patriarchy within society.

In the same vein, Kuleli (2019) avers that the core responsibility of feminism and feminists is to see a global end to societies where men are seen as dominant members of society to the detriment

of the development of women. Essentially, feminism captures the idea that both men and women are the same and hence both genders must be accorded to same levels of opportunities, rights, and responsibilities in society. It is essential to note that feminism does not include or lay claim to the degradation of masculinity, nor does the original postulations of the concept support any form of violence against men. Instead, it focuses on eradicating social systems and structures that have entrenched male dominance while fighting the basis for the violation of the rights of women in society (Verkuyl, Impact of social media on feminism, 2020).

Agger (1998) points out that while feminism is ultimately a call for gender equality, the history of gender imbalances within society means that men have been favour within society over the years and hence women must be empowered to overcome these forms of para-natural dominance that have been exerted on women by male-dominated social systems.

In contrast, while the earliest forms of feminism and feminist waves were developed in the Western world (particularly the United States of America) the tendencies of globalization as well as other critical factors have ensured that the Western upper-class society has not been left alone in the quest for women rights (Wondimu, 2021).

In recent times a wide range of different women-empowerment-based movements have been sparked across the globe. According to Ferree (2006), feminist movements are essentially, sets of activism sessions or events to reach the purpose of challenging and changing women's subordination to men (Tanimaet al., 2023). In essence, feminist movements are social women's movements that are targeted primarily at marching (physically or virtually) towards the attainment of political and social rights and privileges of women in society. They have existed over a long period and capture the need for society to consider the eradication of gender-based violence, unequal political and economic rights as well as reproductive rights. Women's movements or

feminist movements can be tracked as far back as the 1400s where evidence suggests the struggles of women and men towards achieving social equality. In the late 1790s when the French Revolution had started springing up and washing across parts of Europe, some studies suggest that women played crucial roles in marching against unfavorable laws and practices towards not only women but the entire French society (Verkuyl, Impact of social media on feminism, 2020).

The first activists traveled around North America and fought for the end of both slavery and women's oppression. They organized the 'First Women's Rights Convention' in 1848 and continued to campaign to improve the social position of all women. The movement also began in Europe with the same broad aims thus activists collected signatures demanding that working women should receive their wages and not their husbands', and that women should be able to own a house and have custody of their children (Crewwe & Wang, 2018).

The 19th century through to the 20th century saw perhaps the most organized forms of women's movements across the globe with the birth of the three different waves of feminism. It is critical to note that these waves were highly characterized by different forms of physical social marches across different parts of the world. They were targeted, overall, at achieving varying degrees of political, economic, and reproductive rights for women. The first wave for instance saw different feminist movements demanding political rights including the right to own property, the right to vote, and to be voted for (Katz, 2021).

Recently, advancements in technology have transformed the landscape of feminist movements worldwide. Now movements and activism sessions are not limited by geography. Women do not need to physically join feminist movements to be a part of the feminist community. The occurrence of the "Metoo social media" march in 2017 is a typical indication of the current happenings of social media movements (Alsahi, 2018).

2.1.6 Social Media and Feminist Movements

Authors contend that the role of social media in advancing feminist activism and interest has evolved the entire face of feminism (Verkuyl, Impact of social media on feminism, 2020; Eggerue, 2019). Thus, it remains contended that with the emergence and proliferation of social media and its tendencies, a new wave of feminism would emerge. Some authors have advanced the merger of social media in feminist advocacies or the use of social media platforms to advocate for women's rights and privileges enhancing the creation of some online or internet-based communities that foster discussions of feminism (Miller et al., 2022; Okafor & Nwabueze, 2023).

Significantly, cyberfeminism has been espoused as the possible fourth wave. Regardless of this, there is no doubting the fact that social media use in women's movements and interests has become crucial to the ideas of feminism (Ott, 2018). The study, theory, and application of the internet, cyberspace, and new media technologies in general by feminists is referred to as cyberfeminism (Abdullah & Rasheed, 2024). The idea of cyberfeminism emerged in the aftermath of the third wave of feminism and lays claim to most of the interests that were being fought in that movement (Ott, 2018). However, the basic idea embedded in cyberfeminism suggests the rise and use of internet-enabled platforms to build communities and movements that are focused on advancing women's rights and privileges (Eggerue, 2019; Verkuyl, 2020).

A broader perspective has been adopted by Ott (2018), who argues that the term online feminism captures the phenomenon better. Ott (2018) notes that social media and its involvement in feminism is simply the use of social media platforms and technologies in the creation and management of communities that interact based on shared values and interests in line with women's rights. Social media acts as a platform for participatory communication where interested persons share ideas about women's rights more freely and beyond geographic impediments. Thus,

social media allows for a far more complex and effective creation of online communities, collaborative forms of communication as well as complex networking tendencies(Verkuyi, 2020).

Some authors have advanced that the core of social media which allows community building and sharing as well as participation beyond borders allows for greater benefits far beyond social belonging as is created when feminists develop online communities (Fotopoulou, 2014; Baer, Redoing feminism: digital activism, body politics and neoliberalism, 2016; Crossley, Facebook feminism: Social media, blogs and new technologies of contemporary U.S feminism, 2015). One of the key benefits of social media use in feminist movements is that it allows for a shared voice in the fight against gender-based violence (Verkuyl, 2020). The use of social media allows users to share their stories and effectively call out persons who have molested them with no fear of being found out. The tendency of social media to provide users with significant levels of anonymity encourages the sharing of such stories and consequently helps in reaching this objective (Ott, 2018).

Also, the creation of a public sphere by different social media platforms enables the creation of different movements both online and offline (Verkuyl, Impact of social media on feminism, 2020). The #MeToo movement on social media, for instance, is a typical manifestation of the power of social media in this regard. Beyond this, social media can be used to change the narrative about male dominance and assertion (Eggerue, 2019).

The continued use of social media for feminist interests has the potency of destroying social structures and systems that herald and enforce patriarchy and male dominance. Some authors note that the pervasiveness of social media has given meaning to the ideas of feminist media paradigms (Marwick, 2019; Thorpe et al, 2017). Yin and Sun (2021) also revealed that for women to enjoy political, economic, and cultural equality, women must own and operate their media. Similarly,

another scholar revealed that this essential allows women to control social narratives about the roles of women in society and advance discussions of ending entrenched forms of patriarchy in society (Edström et al., 2024).

2.2 Empirical Review

There is a lack of readily available empirical studies that critically examine the use of social media tools by PR departments within feminist movements and organizations. However, some studies have attempted, in isolated cases, to look at the role of social media in dialogic communication tendencies on issues of feminism and feminist movements (Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018; & Kent, 2017). Other studies have also been critical in understanding the roles of Public Relations in feminist organizations (Anani-Bossman, 2022; Sultana, 2021; Varghese & Kumar, 2022).

Ureta, Orbegozo, and Gras (2021) conducted a case study focusing on 25th November conversations about feminism on Twitter. The primary objective of their research was to explore the dialogic nature of social media conversations and to assess whether Twitter effectively facilitated discussions about feminism as claimed by previous studies (Grosser & Voss, 2019; Munro, 2013). The study employed big data analysis to examine hashtags related to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Among the key findings, it was revealed that Twitter discussions often diverged from traditional feminist ideological positions. Additionally, the study questioned Twitter's effectiveness as a platform for enhancing feminism as a movement for street action and its role in promoting global feminist unity and cohesiveness among supporters (Ureta et al., 2021). This research contributes to a new analytical framework that critically examines "feminist activism," questioning its effectiveness in uniting a new generation of activist women and fostering greater mobilization and awareness in the fight for global equality.

Boateng and Asante (2022) also researched online feminist communities. She established in her study that online feminist communities are essentially communities of validation and support. Thus, their study emphasizes the positive implications of social media on feminist movements. Her study acknowledges further that social media tools were critical for women creating social identities both online and offline.

Similarly, Sener (2021) was interested in understanding feminist discourses on social media in Turkey. The study considered the assumption that social media and other digital technologies were critical in enhancing the visibility of feminist groups, increasing solidarity, and raising awareness about critical issues concerning feminism. The qualitative analysis, which focuses on online observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews with digital media moderators from nine feminist movements, reveals that digital platforms have strengthened women's solidarity and feminist awareness-raising in Turkey, as well as created counter-public spheres and alternative media for feminist movements. The study therefore found, essentially that in advancing these three roles – awareness creation, visibility, and solidarity, feminist groups relied heavily on dialogues within and outside of their groups. However, several global and local factors, including the digital divide that restricts women's participation, political repression and surveillance, the rise of online misogyny, and platform logic that challenges the visibility of social movements (commercialization, temporality, rules of platforms, etc.), limit these affordances (Şener, 2021; Ceia et al, 2021).

Some other studies have posited that the core of social media tools in feminist groups is to create alternative public spheres. Hence, some studies (Karagöz, 2017; Şen & Kök, 2017; Acıyan, 2018; Özkan, 2018; Aliefendioğlu, 2019) have concentrated on the use of social media tools by feminist groups and movements conclude that the digital interactive tools enable the creation of digital public spheres where dialogic communication happen. These studies also assert that social media

tools are also used as agenda-setting tools by women to advance discussions of feminism and women empowerment. Osei and Ampofo (2022) found in her study that different feminist groups use social media differently. Thus, the nature of the feminist group implies how they use social media and interact in digital spaces. This assertion was confirmed by Linabary et al., (2020) who found that feminist groups engage in different communication strategies to communicate with audiences. They further pointed out that while some feminist groups engage in one-way communication strategies such as advertising, others engage more in dialogic two-way communication approaches. Osei and Ampofo's (2022) position on the use of social media in the feminist agenda is that the form of communication strategy adopted is informed by the hierarchical structure of the feminist group. Furthermore, Osei and Ampofo (2022) highlights what she termed the "digital activism gap," highlighting the importance of digital labor, resources, and class concerns in social movements.

According to Aksu (2017, p. 155), who conducted interviews with feminist groups, social media offers women's associations faster, more affordable, and easier ways to communicate, enabling them to reach a broader audience. Meanwhile, Bolliger (2015) found in her study of young female students in Turkey that as a result of the dialogic nature of social media engagements adopted by feminist groups, many young female social media users aspired to be part of such online communities. The study found that communication techniques adopted by feminist groups were perceived as effective to the extent that girls who did not identify themselves as feminists considered engaging in feminist activities (Atkinson et al., 2022).

Some studies have also been keen on understanding some of the pertinent challenges that confront the use of social media as a tool in advancing the goals of feminist groups (Sener, 2021; Morse & Brown, 2022). The socio-technical structure of digital platforms, the political environment in which the social movement functions, sexism on the internet, current social injustices, and affect- and

personalized-based digital action are some of the things limiting digital activism in the modern day (Sener, 2021). Morse and Brown, 2022) found that the commercialization of popular social media platforms often poses challenges to dialogic communication of feminist ideas and interests. They note that often, social media platforms are highly commercialized and developed to make profits through the collection and broadcast of advertisements. Indeed, they found that some feminist-based hashtags were developed simply to curate data for advertising purposes and not to advance feminist interests and ideas as intended. The authors concluded that followers are likely to miss the point of the interactions and get swayed by advertising tendencies (Hudders et al., 2022).

Foyet and Child (2024) further highlight that the use of social media by feminist groups, while advantageous, is fraught with challenges, particularly due to algorithmic disruptions that can hinder effective interactions on these platforms. Their analysis of social media discourses reveals that algorithms often prioritize certain conversations over others, leading to clashes where discussions about feminism may be overshadowed or sidelined. This is compounded by other substantive challenges such as social media restrictions and technical disruptions, which can further limit the reach and impact of feminist discourse online (Foyet & Child, 2024). Also, Duffy and Meisner (2023) supports this view, arguing that the algorithmic nature of social media platforms can significantly shape the visibility and engagement of different conversations, often to the detriment of less popular or algorithmically favored topics such as feminism. They emphasized that these challenges underscore the complexity of using social media as a tool for feminist activism, where the intended message can be diluted or lost amidst a myriad of competing discourses.

Hou's (2020) revealed that the political environment in which the feminist movement functions is another important element. The author added that Feminism remains taboo in several authoritarian-

ruled nations around the world, with the government, the media, and other social actors stigmatizing and criminalizing feminist activists. Hou's (2020) research on feminism in China, mainstream media still harbors "feminist phobia" and the state monitors and muzzles feminist activists in internet forums. Alsahi (2018) highlights the significance of digital feminist activism in Saudi Arabia through her research on the subject. In this country, laws, socio-political attitudes, and a negative public perception of feminism which is seen as a threat to society and a loosening of morals to restrict women's ability to mobilize.

In the same vein, some scholars such as Schradie (2018) and Banet-Weiser (2018) have found that the dialogic nature of social media presents significant challenges to feminist activism. Schradie (2018) observes that social media platforms, while designed for open communication, are frequently co-opted by anti-feminist groups who use these spaces to reinforce male dominance and propagate misogynistic views. This misuse of social media not only undermines feminist efforts but also actively threatens and victimizes women, creating a hostile online environment. Banet-Weiser (2018) further supports this perspective, highlighting that the visibility and accessibility of social media make it easier for anti-feminist activists to target and intimidate feminists, thereby exacerbating the challenges faced by feminist movements. The prevalence of these antagonistic interactions demonstrates how social media can serve as a double-edged sword for feminist activism; while offering a platform for advocacy, it also exposes activists to significant risks and opposition.

Moreover, males may utilize digital technologies as new means of dominance and surveillance to limit and regulate women's access to technology and social interactions, creating new kinds of hegemonic masculinity. Common examples of gendered digital violence include online harassment, stalking, taking over a partner's social media accounts, recording and sharing her voice or images without her consent, manipulating her images, obtaining and publishing her personal

information, pressuring her into having sex, revenge porn, defamation, humiliation, hacking, and hate speech that is misogynistic and homophobic.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Dialogic Theory of Public Relations

One of the earliest ideas of communication to be used in Public Relations is the dialogic theory. A collection of communication principles that were first created to describe interactions between two individuals or small groups of individuals are covered under the theory. As a result, the theory describes or captures two-person communication as well as how the communication between these two parties is facilitated overall (Kent & Taylor, 2002). The theory essentially states that for both parties to engage in fulfilling and significant interactions, discourse and its attendant elements including risks, trust-building, persuasion, and empathy, among others are required (Sener, 2021).

The main goal of the dialogic theory, as articulated by Kent and Taylor (2002), is not merely to facilitate understanding of interpersonal communication but to enhance access to all relevant aspects and elements within these processes. This theory emphasizes the importance of dialogue in creating and sustaining relationships by focusing on mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment. Kent and Taylor (1998) argue that dialogic communication is essential in building and maintaining ethical public relations practices, as it encourages open, two-way communication that respects the input and perspectives of all participants. Organizations may generate more meaningful and productive connections by encouraging true discourse, going beyond transactional exchanges, and into deeper, more trusted relationships with their audiences. The Dialogic theory is said to have received a great deal of attention during World War II, even though it has been utilized rather regularly in several communication fields recently.

A plethora of scholars, including Buber (1923), Freire (1970), and Laing (1961), first supported the thesis in many ways. Dialogue is the foundation upon which the theory rests. The theory holds that dialogue, which is founded on humanistic values like trust, empathy, sympathy, and unconditional positive regard for the other person, along with several other relational elements that have been studied by communication experts and psychologists, is an essential type of interpersonal communication. Thus, interactionism serves as the conceptual foundation for the theory. Moreover, the theory's interpretation of conversation's core purpose is to improve relationships via discourse. As a result, the idea emphasizes the need for communication in both establishing and maintaining relationships. According to Taylor and Kent (2014), as relationships are organic, it is essential to maintain interpersonal contact and to realize the cultivation of actual, mutually beneficial connections.

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), as cited in Gruning and Gruning (2013) and Kent and Taylor (2002), the dialogic theory illustrates a significant shift in organizational communication practices, moving away from the traditional mass, one-way communication style toward a more interactive, two-way approach. This shift reflects a broader trend where organizations recognize the importance of engaging in relational, public-centered communication that emphasizes dialogue over monologue. The dialogic philosophy promotes communication that is highly interactive and involves a high degree of participation from both businesses and their clients (Pang, Shin, Lew, & Walther, 2018). Organizations can strengthen and more authentically engage their stakeholders by encouraging open and reciprocal connections. This approach not only enhances mutual understanding and trust but also allows organizations to respond more effectively to the needs and concerns of their clients. Consequently, the dialogic method supports the creation of more dynamic and responsive communication strategies that align with the principles of ethical Public Relations and relationship management.

Kent and Taylor (2002) articulate six fundamental principles that form the core of the Dialogic theory, characterizing how organizations can effectively engage in discourse. These principles are propinquity, risk-taking, mutuality, empathy, and commitment. Propinquity refers to the physical or psychological closeness that fosters immediate and spontaneous communication. Risk-taking involves the willingness of organizations to engage in open dialogue, even if it means facing criticism or uncertainty. Mutuality emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing the interests and perspectives of all parties involved in the communication process. Empathy requires organizations to understand and share the feelings of their stakeholders, thereby creating a more compassionate and responsive communication environment. Finally, commitment denotes a sustained dedication to dialogue, ensuring that communication efforts are consistent and ongoing. This comprehensive framework highlights the dynamic and interactive nature of organizational communication, reinforcing the idea that effective dialogue is essential for building strong, trust-based relationships with stakeholders (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Grunig & Gruning, 2013; Pearson, 1989).

Risk, as conceptualized in communication and organizational theories, encompasses several critical elements that underscore its complexity. According to Kent and Taylor (2002), vulnerability is a fundamental aspect of risk, where parties expose themselves to potential harm or criticism in the pursuit of genuine dialogue. This openness to unforeseen circumstances and results signifies a readiness to engage with uncertainty and the unpredictable nature of interactions. Furthermore, risk involves "an acknowledgment of unusual otherness," a concept highlighted by Pearson (1989), which implies an unconditional acceptance and respect for the individuality of others. This acceptance fosters a more inclusive and empathetic communication environment, as organizations recognize and value the diverse perspectives and experiences of their stakeholders (Grunig & Hunt, 1984 as cited in Gruning & Gruning, 2013). The authors stressed that

organizations that embrace these qualities may develop more honest and successful communication strategies that establish trust and stronger relationships with their target consumers.

A sense of equality between all parties and cooperation with others are components of mutuality (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Mutuality suggests that partnerships must be formed on an equal footing (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Propinquity includes being present or now, understanding the temporal flow of relationships, or acknowledging past, present, and potential future interactions with others, as well as interacting with others who have different opinions and viewpoints (Kent & Taylor, 2002). The affirmation of others, encouragement, and a social perspective that places equal or more importance on the well-being of others than one's own are all components of empathy (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Commitment includes being sincere, maintaining an honest and open dialogue, and interpreting or trying to understand what other people are saying and feeling (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

To assess the worth of dialogic communication, it is essential to consider these dialogic communication components first. Therefore, it is crucial to make sure that these components are strategically incorporated into organizational communication strategies with the public of feminist groups when assessing the dialogic communication methodologies that these groups use (Kent & Taylor, 2002). The model is critical to this study as it situates the entirety of the study on the tenets of two-way dialogic communication. The core objectives of the study seek to understand dialogic communication tendencies that are engaged as digital Public Relations tools for feminist groups. This theory allows the researcher to understand the nature of dialogic communication engaged on social media platforms while focusing on the Public Relations implications of using social media platforms to advance feminist ideologies online (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

The Dialogic Theory of Public Relations (Kent & Taylor, 2002) underscores the importance of mutual engagement, openness, and reciprocity in communication processes. Central to this theory is the idea of fostering dialogue that leads to meaningful and sustainable relationships. However, an essential dimension of this dialogue is the level of symmetry within the communication exchange. This study adopts the dialogic framework to explore whether feminist organizations' social media interactions are symmetrical—in other words, whether communication flows in a balanced, reciprocal way between organizations and their audiences. The focus is on identifying whether communication is top-down, bottom-up, or horizontal, as outlined in Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical communication model.

The motivation for applying this theory stems from its ability to assess the relationship-building capacity of social media interactions within the context of feminist advocacy. Social media platforms are an integral part of digital activism, and understanding how feminist organizations use these platforms to engage with their audiences is crucial for evaluating their advocacy effectiveness. The dialogic theory provides a lens through which to understand the extent to which these organizations are creating spaces for reciprocal communication and building relationships, rather than simply broadcasting messages (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

In the context of feminist organizations' social media communication, a top-down communication structure refers to a hierarchical model in which organizations primarily disseminate information without encouraging two-way engagement or dialogue. This approach typically aligns with asymmetrical communication, where the emphasis is on influencing or persuading the audience rather than creating a mutual exchange of ideas and perspectives (Macnamara, 2016). Such a model may limit the effectiveness of feminist organizations' social media strategies by reducing the level of interaction and connection with their audiences. Conversely, a bottom-up approach involves grassroots activists or followers initiating discussions, shaping advocacy campaigns, and

influencing the organization's messaging. This model aligns more closely with participatory communication, where the voices and perspectives of the audience play a significant role in driving the conversation (Taylor & Kent, 2014).

A horizontal communication structure, on the other hand, embodies the ideals of dialogic engagement. It represents a balanced exchange of ideas and encourages collaborative discussions between the organizations and their audiences. This approach fosters shared decision-making and strengthens the relationship between the two parties (Kent & Lane, 2021).

The significance of this theory in the study lies in its ability to highlight the effectiveness of feminist organizations' digital communication strategies in fostering genuine dialogue and community-building. Understanding the degree of symmetry in communication will shed light on the extent to which these organizations empower their followers to actively participate in conversations and shape their advocacy efforts. A horizontal communication approach, which emphasizes equal participation and collaboration, would signify more authentic, two-way communication and likely lead to stronger relationships with audiences. Therefore, evaluating the balance between top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal approaches in feminist organizations' social media strategies will help assess how effectively they are achieving genuine two-way communication, rather than relying on one-way informational communication. This insight is important for understanding how digital platforms can be optimized for feminist advocacy and for improving future communication strategies.

2.3.2 Technology Acceptance Model

According to Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), three factors encompassing perceived utility (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and attitudes towards usage (ATU) of the system measure user acceptance of a system and determine its success. A system is unlikely to be

considered useful if it is difficult to use. A user's behavioral intention to use or not use a system is determined by their assessment of its usability and simplicity of use, as per the findings (Davis et al. 1989; Nov & Ye, 2008). Previous research on social media has also used this paradigm. The TAM was used in different research that Lane & Coleman (2012) modified. After analyzing how easy and helpful people thought social media was, they concluded that more people would use social networking sites more intensely when they thought they were easier to use.

Research has concentrated on the TAM to comprehend the connection between usage behavior and perceptions (such as perceived ease of use and utility of technology). Technology user acceptability has been a significant area of research. Chuttur (2009) states that the TAM is the sole model that has garnered the greatest interest from the information systems industry, even though other models have been put out to describe and forecast how a system would be used. TAM will be used in this investigation because of these reasons.

The motivation for employing TAM in this study stems from its relevance in understanding social media adoption and usage among feminist organizations in Ghana. Social media platforms serve as crucial tools for feminist advocacy, providing spaces for activism, engagement, and awareness creation (Kapoor et al., 2018). However, the extent to which these organizations effectively use digital platforms is influenced by their perceptions of social media's usefulness and usability. If feminist groups perceive social media as an efficient tool for mobilization, outreach, and engagement, they are more likely to integrate it into their communication strategies (Kakwi et al., 2024). Conversely, if they find social media complex or ineffective, their adoption and usage may be limited.

Applying TAM to this study allows for a systematic analysis of how feminist organizations in Ghana navigate social media spaces, the challenges they encounter, and the extent to which they

embrace these platforms for advocacy and community building. The model helps assess whether the adoption of social media by these groups is primarily driven by its perceived utility in activism or if usability concerns hinder its effectiveness. Additionally, TAM provides insights into how digital literacy, platform accessibility, and algorithmic biases shape feminist organizations' engagement strategies on social media (Gefen & Straub, 2000; Lane & Coleman, 2012).

TAM's significance to this study is rooted in its ability to explain the factors influencing digital advocacy strategies. By understanding how feminist groups evaluate the usefulness and ease of social media, the study can highlight best practices, challenges, and areas requiring policy interventions or capacity building. This will contribute to broader discussions on how digital platforms can be optimized for feminist activism in Ghana, ensuring that feminist organizations harness technology for maximum impact.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study focused on discussing critical literature and empirical studies that have developed in line with key concepts such as Public Relations, social media, and feminism. The study reviewed core empirical studies that have been conducted in line with the core objectives. The chapter further discussed the dialogue theory of Public Relations and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the theoretical foundation for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section of the study is focused on discussing the research methodology and design adopted to collect and analyze data for the study. This chapter highlights the qualitative research approach as the appropriate research approach required to investigate the core objectives of the study. The chapter also discusses critical methodological issues such as the sampling technique, data collection tools, and techniques as well as ethical dimensions relevant to the collection of the required data for this study.

3.1 Research Approach

There are three main strategies in the research enclave. The mixed methods approach, the qualitative approach, and the quantitative approach (Lubbers et al., 2018). The methods encompass an unusual collection of methods that the investigator uses to gather and examine data. The research purpose of the study, the type of study being conducted, and the researcher's paradigm for conducting research all influence the research approach chosen (Rahi, 2017).

Qualitative research strategies focus on collecting and analyzing descriptive, non-numerical data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, meaning that researchers study phenomena in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of, or interpret, these phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Creswell (2013) further explains that qualitative research is often used to explore complex processes, behaviors, and interactions, which are not easily captured through quantitative methods. However, the use of numerical data and analysis is emphasized more in the quantitative research method (Apuke, 2017). The mixed methods approach combines methods for acquiring and

analyzing data that are both quantitative and qualitative. The goal of the mixed methods approach is to draw correlations between variables by using numerical data and verbal descriptions and explanations of events (Doyle et al, 2009).

It became vital to connect with the qualitative technique to achieve the research's objectives. Shank (2002, p. 5) defines qualitative research as a kind of methodical empirical investigation of meaning. By using the term "systematic," he means "planned, organized, and public," following the norms that have been accepted by the community of qualitative researchers. The word "empirical" implies that this type of study is grounded on real-world experience (Shank, 2002, p. 5).

In qualitative research, naturalistic and interpretative methodologies are central, as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000). These methodologies are grounded in the principle that researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, striving to understand or interpret these phenomena based on the meanings that individuals attribute to them. This approach contrasts with quantitative research, which often relies on controlled environments and numerical data. Qualitative researchers seek to capture the variety and diversity of human experiences by immersing themselves in the natural contexts of the persons under investigation. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) emphasize that this method allows for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of social phenomena, as it considers the subjective perspectives and interpretations of the participants. This approach is particularly useful in fields like sociology, anthropology, and education, where understanding the intricacies of human behavior and social interactions is essential.

Moreover, Hancock et al. (2009, p. 7) put it more simply when they state that the goal of qualitative research is to explain social phenomena. In the same vein, it aims to help us understand the social context in which we live and the causes of why things happen the way they do. Thus, qualitative

research offers a systematic approach to understanding a social issue in its entirety. Qualitative studies, unlike quantitative research methods, typically aim to explain and analyze social phenomena by striving to understand their significance and context. This approach endeavors to make sense of occurrences and appreciate their deeper meaning (Hancock et al., 2009).

The qualitative approach was adopted for this study to enable the researcher to delve deeper into issues concerning digital Public Relations within feminist groups in Ghana. Thus, the qualitative research approach was deemed necessary for this study because it enabled the researcher to understand how social media tools were used for dialogic communication for Public Relations engagements by feminist groups in Ghana. The approach, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note, also allows the researcher to include critical contextual issues in the analysis of the phenomena under study. Hence, since the qualitative approach allows for events and issues to be studied in their natural and social context, the researcher adopted the approach to be able to include critical contexts while also presenting findings in a detailed narrative manner.

3.2 Research Design

According to Selltitz et al. (1962, p. 50), a research design is the arrangement of parameters for data gathering and analysis to balance methodological economy with relevance to the research objective. A research design is merely a plan that specifies how the researcher intends to gather and display data to meet the objectives of the study.

The core techniques provided by the qualitative research methodology include inductive theme analysis, case studies, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology (Urcia 2021). These approaches are particular to the subject a researcher wants to study because of the unique data-gathering and interpretation instruments they provide (Rahman, 2017). The case study approach is well suited for investigating complex and context-bound phenomena within their real-life context

(Schoch, 2020). It allows researchers to develop and delve deeply into specific cases, examine them in detail, and capture rich, and detailed data (Tracy, 2019). Focusing on a few examples allows researchers to study subtle linkages, settings, and processes that other qualitative methodologies may not be able to (Nasaji 2020).

Therefore, the choice of the case study approach, allows the researcher to provide a detailed and insightful analysis of the subject matter and enables a thorough exploration of the research objectives. This decision underscores the importance of methodological alignment with the research aims and highlights the flexibility and versatility of qualitative research methodologies in accommodating diverse research needs and contexts.

A case study is a type of research where a limited number of notable occurrences are examined (Gomm et al. 2000) A case study is an examination of a single instance among many that are relevant to the research question. The best approach for gaining in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon or a case (Priya, 2021). The "how" and "why" of the event may be addressed by the researcher by using the case study method (Thomas, 2021) The case study technique enabled the researcher to get a thorough understanding and in-depth knowledge of major topics by going beyond basic explanations for the occurrences.

3.3 Sampling Procedures (Techniques and Size)

The research employed the purposive sampling approach. Etikan et al. (2016, p. 2) describe purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, as the intentional selection of participants based on specific characteristics they possess. With this sampling technique, a sample is purposefully chosen based on their expertise and familiarity with the topic of interest.

Purposive sampling is a common technique used in qualitative research studies (Rai & Thapa, 2015; Tongco, 2007). It is the process of choosing units (people, groups of individuals, or

institutions) with specific goals in mind for resolving research study concerns. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling in which certain locations, persons, or events are chosen on purpose to obtain important information that cannot be obtained from other sources (Obilor, 2023).

The study adopted the purposive sampling approach to sample two feminist groups in Ghana including Women in Public Relations (WiPR) and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF). Based on the advice of Maxwell (1997) which encourages researchers to employ purposive sampling: a deliberate selection process in qualitative research. This approach entails meticulously selecting the settings or events where participants are situated, aligning with the research objectives to gather vital insights that might not be accessible through alternative avenues (Etikan et al., 2016). In the study, the selection of these two women's groups was deliberate, driven by the recognition that these organizations possessed essential traits crucial for comprehending the primary aims of the research. As such, studying their social media platforms as well as Public Relations engagements towards achieving dialogic communication for feminist interests, will be essential in developing a holistic understanding of digital Public Relations' role in advancing feminist ideologies through dialogic communication with the public.

The researcher follows Sener's (2021) adaptation of sampling criteria to develop two-point sampling criteria for the selection of the women's groups sampled for this study. Thus, two key criteria were adopted in selecting the two women's organizations for the analysis. The first criterion that was used for the selection of the women's organizations was that the organization has an active social media presence. Thus, women's organizations that were not active on social media were not considered for this study. The organization must be involved in the prolonged use of *Facebook* and *Instagram* for communication for at least more than four years. This follows directly from Sener's (2021) criterion for selecting women organizations' social media handles for her study.

Secondly, the organization has an active stand-alone and well-recognized Public Relations department. The researcher sought to select only organizations that had a well-developed Public Relations unit that was considered by the entire group as part of the dominant coalition of management of the group. Also, the Public Relations unit must be managed by recognized Public Relations professionals who have occupied the position (either in the selected group or in other organizations) for not less than two years.

The above-listed sampling criteria in line with the purposive sampling strategy were adopted to select Women in Public Relations (WiPR) and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) and their *Facebook* pages as well as heads of Public Relations for the analysis. It is essential to note that the study was interested in conducting a cyber-ethnography of the content posted on the *Facebook* platforms of the sampled organizations to understand the research objectives. The study was interested in engaging cyber-ethnography to investigate engagements on social media from November 2020 through to November 2023. Besides, two Public Relations personnel from the sampled women's groups were selected based on the principles of the purposive sampling approach.

3.4 Data Sources

In this research, primary and secondary materials were consulted. The research participants who were specifically sampled and interviewed comprised the primary source. The information from official Facebook accounts of the various women's groups that were studied encompassed the secondary data. Each data set was collected using different data collection techniques and approaches. It is essential to note that since the study followed the qualitative tradition, the data sources accessed for this study also followed the qualitative approach.

The chosen data collection methods data collection methods and sources are in alignment with the principles and practices of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research focuses on understanding phenomena in context, exploring meanings, and interpreting experiences from participants' perspectives (Cypress, 2015). Therefore, by following the qualitative approach, the study aimed to uncover detailed insights and interpretations rather than quantifiable measures or generalizable trends. Overall, the data collection method reflects a methodologically rigorous approach within the qualitative research paradigm. It underscores the intentional selection of diverse data collection techniques to gather comprehensive data and emphasizes the consistent application of qualitative principles in accessing and interpreting the data as emphasized by Javed (2023).

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

3.5.1 Cyber-ethnography

Cyber-ethnography is considered a critical tool in collecting data in line with understanding key issues within virtual communities, (Hampton, 2018). Ward (1999) notes that virtual communities are increasingly becoming popular because of the prevalence of digital and internet-enabled devices. Likewise, these communities that are created online develop their own cultures, systems, and structures that have become one of the focal points of study for most researchers in media and communications, (Thornton, 2024). Sade-Beck (2004) explains cyberethnography involves a thorough analysis of text, language, interactions, comments, and people's general actions and inactions in an online setting. In this form of research procedure, the researcher is interested in engaging in immersive observation to collect objective information about key issues within the online community (Tauguchi, 2021). The approach allows the researcher to engage in interactions and to conclude how members of the community construct and interpret realities about a phenomenon. It was for these reasons that the approach was used to collect data for the study.

To collect data for the study, the researcher initially began by monitoring the Facebook pages of the selected women's organizations. This approach involved a systematic process akin to the one employed in Sener's (2020) research, which focused on tracking content and compiling it for subsequent analysis. The researcher was able to witness and document the numerous postings, comments, and interactions taking place in these digital places by following the *Facebook* pages. This method facilitated the systematic gathering of relevant data, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the communication strategies and themes employed by women's organizations on social media platforms such as *Facebook*.

The study paid critical attention to comments and other forms of engagement that the *Facebook* pages had accumulated over the data collection period. Most importantly, the study paid a lot of attention to hashtag conversations on the platforms to access data for the study. This was largely because hashtags are a key means of community engagement in virtual communities and a more accurate means of accessing data on virtual interactions about events, issues, and persons (Akturan, 2018).

Thematic analysis was also employed alongside content analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the data. This approach helped to identify and explore recurring themes across the social media content of the feminist organizations. The analysis began with the identification of key themes such as “engagement strategies,” “activism,” and “community-building” based on the content of the posts. These themes were further refined and grouped based on patterns and significant trends observed in the data.

The sampling unit for both content and thematic analysis consisted of social media posts made by WiLDAF and WiPR on platforms like Facebook and Twitter over a specified time frame. To organize the data, posts were first coded based on their core elements, such as text, hashtags,

images, and videos. For example, posts that invited interaction, or encouraged discussions and debates, were classified under themes related to “dialogic communication” and “audience participation.” Hashtags and multimedia content that called attention to specific feminist causes were analyzed to explore their role in online activism and visibility.

The coding process was done iteratively, allowing new themes to emerge as the analysis progressed. The thematic analysis helped to identify not just the frequency of particular strategies, but also the meaning and significance behind those strategies. This method allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of how feminist groups in Ghana use social media to engage their audiences, and it complemented the findings of the content analysis by providing a more holistic view of the organizational practices and challenges. Integrating both content and thematic analysis allowed for an enriched interpretation of the data, offering deeper insights into the ways feminist groups utilize social media for advocacy and community building.

Content analysis was employed as a key research method to systematically examine the social media content of the feminist organizations under study. This method enabled the identification of patterns, trends, and communication strategies used by WiLDAF and WiPR on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The analysis involved coding the sampling unit, which consisted of individual social media posts, based on various elements including text, hashtags, images, videos, and engagement metrics. Posts that contained direct calls to action, advocacy messages, or community engagement efforts were categorized accordingly to assess the extent of dialogic communication and audience interaction (Krippendorff, 2018).

The coding process followed a structured approach where social media content was first categorized into broad thematic areas. These included "engagement strategies," "activism," and "community-building," reflecting the core objectives of the feminist organizations' online

presence. Each category was further refined based on recurring patterns, enabling a deeper exploration of how these groups use social media for advocacy and mobilization (Mayring, 2014).

To strengthen the analysis, thematic analysis was also employed alongside content analysis. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of the meanings, narratives, and discourse embedded within the social media content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hashtags were analyzed to determine their role in amplifying feminist causes and facilitating online activism, while multimedia content was examined to understand how visual elements contributed to audience engagement (Nowell et al., 2017). The iterative nature of the coding process ensured that emerging themes were incorporated into the analysis, offering a more comprehensive interpretation of the data.

3.5.2 Interviews

Data for the study was gathered through interviews. Interviews were conducted with the Public Relations personnel selected from the two women's groups included in this study, namely WiPR and WiLDAF. Interviewing is a conversational method of data collection wherein participants respond to questions posed by the researcher, as outlined by Warren (2011). Warren (2011) acknowledges that the primary objective of this discourse is to get information to have a deeper understanding of the subject under study.

Warren (2011 p.33) argues that respondents in research interviews function as "meaning producers" and assist the researcher in fully explaining the phenomenon under inquiry, in contrast to standard conversational interviews. The interview was done in person once the respondents and the researcher decided on a certain day and time. When respondents were not accessible, the researcher used telephone interviews to get information from the people in the sample.

The interview questions were semi-structured. They provided the framework for the interviewer to cover specific topics and gather relevant information, but they also allowed flexibility for the interviewee to elaborate on their responses and provide insights beyond the predetermined questions. The duration of the interviews was between 30 to 45 minutes. A member from each group.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

To facilitate comprehensive data collection, the researcher utilized an interview guide, which consisted of a set of structured questions designed to elicit detailed information from the participants regarding their experiences and viewpoints related to the research questions of the study. The guide comprised a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow the answer to provide more details about the topic, (Ballou,2011).

Lavrakas (2011) explains that closed-ended questions offer respondents a predetermined set of options to choose from, consisting of a question stem and multiple possible answers. These questions facilitate a structured approach to data collection by guiding participants toward specific responses. However, to achieve a balanced interview and delve deeper into the phenomenon under study, the interview guide also included open-ended questions. This combination of question types allowed the researcher to capture both quantitative data and rich, qualitative insights, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' experiences and perspectives. The researcher was able to delve deeper and more successfully into the study topics by using both closed and open-ended questions.

To access data using cyber-ethnography, the researcher adopted the use of observations. It became necessary to ensure objectivity, the researcher did not engage in participant observation but naturalistic observations (Bradley, 2019). This allowed the researcher to collect objective

information from the *Facebook* pages while studying members of the cyber community in their natural cyber environment.

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

The data gathered from both interviews and cyber-ethnography were analyzed using the thematic data analysis approach. The most popular qualitative data analysis technique used in the social, behavioral, and health sciences is most likely thematic analysis, (Guest et al. 2012). The procedure, as described by the scholars, is going over textual material, looking for themes, coding those themes, and then analyzing the themes' organization and substance.

In addition, Braun & Clarke (2013) describe theme analysis as “a method of identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data”. They emphasize that thematic analysis involves systematically organizing and interpreting qualitative data to identify reoccurring patterns or themes that capture the essence of the data and address the research questions or objectives. It is applied to categorization analysis and displays themes (patterns) associated with the data. It uses interpretation to deal with a variety of themes while providing a detailed illustration of the facts (Braun & Clarke,2006).

The data gathered from the interview sessions were transcribed which involves converting spoken words into written text. This transcribed data was then organized according to themes and sub-themes. Themes are reoccurring topics or patterns found within the data, while sub themes are smaller, more specific categories that contribute to the overarching themes, (Trigeorgis & Tsekrekos, 2018).

Following the approach suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999), theme analysis was chosen as an analytical method to comprehend the main objectives of the research. The thematic analysis involves identifying and interpreting recurring patterns or themes within qualitative data to gain

insights into the research into research questions or objectives (Peel, 2020). It allows researchers to explore the underlying meanings and implications of the data (Roberts, 2020)

Similarly, data collected from cyber-ethnography which involves studying online communities, behaviors, and interactions were also subjected to coding and theme development (Borkovich, 2022). This process involved categorizing the information obtained from the cyber-ethnography into themes to facilitate data presentation and analysis. The researcher was able to systematically analyze the data and develop relevant findings about the research objectives by identifying and organizing themes coming from both interviews and cyber-ethnography.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical problems arise from the kinds of issues social scientists investigate and the methods they use to get reliable and accurate data (Kelleher, 2020). Ethical research requires balancing the need to progress knowledge with the need to have no negative impact on other people's lives (Wiles, 2013). Thus, the ethical requirements of the study were duly adhered to. Participants were assured of strict anonymity during the data collection phases of the research, and no participant was coerced into giving out information they did not want to give (Kelleher, 2020).

The researcher ensured that all ethical requirements illustrated and emphasized by the university as related to data collection were fulfilled (Israel & Hay, 2006). The supervising researcher also ensured that the principal researcher followed all ethical recommendations concerning cyber-ethnography and interviewing were followed to the latter to ensure the safety of the cyber community as well as the research participants sampled for the interviewing sessions (Kozinets, 2010). Additionally, the ethical principle of informed consent was strictly adhered to, ensuring that participants were fully aware of the research purpose and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

The derived data was only utilized for the intended academic purpose (Wiles, 2013). The researcher made sure that all university-developed ethical guidelines for data management, collection, and analysis were properly followed (Israel & Hay, 2006). Moreover, the principle of beneficence was upheld by minimizing any potential harm to participants and maximizing the potential benefits of the research (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, ensuring that all personal information was securely stored and only accessible to the research team (Kozinets, 2010).

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study focused on the methodological issues of this study. The chapter therefore discussed the qualitative research and the case study approach as the research approach and design for the study respectively. The Purposive sampling approach was also adopted to sample content from the *Facebook* pages of two selected women's groups in Ghana actively involved in using social media to showcase digital feminism. The chapter also discussed the Cyber-ethnographic approach and interview sessions which were adopted to collect data for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.0 Introduction

The core of this study was to investigate the use of social media as dialogic tools for communication between feminist organizations and their online public. The study adopted the use of two methodological approaches – cyber-ethnography and interviewing to understand how two feminist organizations (Women in PR and Women in Law and Development in Africa) engaged in dialogic communication with their public on social media platforms. The study was guided by four key objectives which hinged essentially on understanding the use of social media by these organizations.

The researcher engaged in cyber-ethnography to understand, in a more direct manner, how social media platforms used by these organizations were used to facilitate dialogic communication toward the sharing of feminist ideas on social media platforms. The researcher also adopted the use of interview sessions with key Public Relations practitioners of these women’s organizations to understand key challenges and opportunities social media presents to such organizations as those being studied in this research.

This chapter of the study focuses on presenting and discussing the key findings made from the cyber-ethnography and interview sessions. The chapter discusses the findings in line with the core research questions that guided this investigation.

4.1 RQ1: How Do Feminist Groups in Ghana Exploit the Dialogic Nature of Social Media Platforms for Communication with their Publics?

The first objective of the study was to understand how the selected feminist groups in Ghana use social media platforms for dialogic communication with their public. The study was more interested in how the selected feminist groups had adopted and used social media tools to engage in dialogic communication with their respective publics. The study found, through cyber-ethnography of Facebook and Instagram that while one-way communication approaches tended to dominate the communication tendencies of the two feminist groups, dialogic communication was also adopted and used more strategically.

The findings indicate the dialogic communication strategies adopted and used on the social media platforms of the two feminist groups were expressed in three main dimensions including engagement and interactivity, the use of hashtags, and storytelling through the use of multimedia content. The identification of this dimensional approach to the use of social media by the feminist movement group presents some points of disagreement with the findings of Ureta, Orbegozo, and Gras (2021) who found that *Twitter*, a popular social media did not provide feminists the right platforms to engage dialogic communication with their target audiences. However, it must be noted that there may exist differences in the findings because both studies looked at different social media platforms with different online community dynamics.

4.1.1 Engagement and Interactivity

Lineberry et al., (2020) as well as Schradie (2014) argue that a common nature of social media among feminist movements and groups across the world is rooted in the ideas of engagement and interactivity. The scholars note that feminist groups have leveraged the tendency of social media platforms to grow more interactive and become more engaging with their audience in a manner that did not exist previously. The data gathered from the cyber-ethnography indicate that one of

the key ways through which the feminist groups in Ghana engage in the dialogic nature of social media platforms to communicate with their public is through engagement and interactivity. The study found that the two feminist groups had often been engaged in different communication approaches to ensure engagement and interactivity with their respective audiences.

The data gathered from careful observations of the social media platforms of the two women's groups showed that a significant number of the social media posts on the platforms were directed at improving engagement and interactivity with the public. The study found that there was an intentional use of two-way dialogic communication approaches to engage and interact with social media followers. This strategy as was observed was used for a variety of different reasons. One of the core reasons for the use of dialogic communication to engage the public through social media was to create an engaging community. Hence, the findings suggest that while engaging and interacting using social media platforms, the feminist groups were keen on developing and managing virtual communities of interest. Thus, the tendency or nature of social media to ensure dialogic communication was leveraged by feminist groups to create and maintain engaging and interactive virtual communities.

In one of the Facebook posts published by WiPR, critical evidence of the use of dialogic tendencies on Facebook is presented. In the extract presented below, the official handle of the organization responds to a comment posted by a social media follower under an initial post from the organization. The social media user heartily makes a request, and the official page responds in a similar spirit. The study notes that engaging and interactive activities of this nature have key implications for the creation of some form of virtual community on the Facebook page.



Figure 1: Picture of a conversation between WiPR Official Facebook Page and Facebook User.
(Source: Field Data, 2023)

The creation and maintenance of a virtual community is further actuated after the researcher follows the engaging content over some time. The study observed that there were a lot of similar responses under the comment section of the same post. The generation of this level of engagement and interaction was found to aid in the creation of a community that had gathered to discuss some issues of interest. It was observed that the *Facebook* handler had responded to almost all the messages that had been posted under the initial *Facebook*. This, essentially, goes to show the levels of engagement and interactivity that had been engaged by the organization on its Facebook page.

The study further observed that community building and maintenance as a result of the use of engagement and interactivity on social media was also expressed differently. The study found that community building was also expressed between social media followers of the different feminist

groups. The study found that the use of dialogic tendencies of social media platforms allowed different followers to converge and share ideas related to the core ideas of the feminist organization. Thus, the findings indicate that the posts published by the feminist groups allowed the convergence of like-minded social media followers who discussed issues, and events among others. It is critical to note that this form of community building was expressed differently as the main organizations were not involved. Instead, the social media followers, on the back of the social media posts published by the feminist organization engage in their forms of conversations.

In an observation made on some of the *Facebook* posts of one of the women's groups, the study observed that different social media followers had converged to share congratulatory messages on the appointment of a feminist who was one of the organizations. The extract below shows how different users had gathered to share congratulatory messages to this effect. This is consistent with the findings of Lineberry et al. (2020) and Schradie (2014) argue that social media among feminist movements globally is fundamentally about engagement and interactivity. They note that feminist groups have effectively leveraged the interactive nature of social media to engage with their audiences in unprecedented ways. However, Marwick (2013) counters that while social media has the potential for engagement, it also exposes feminist movements to backlash and harassment, which can undermine their efforts. Similarly, Fuchs (2014) highlights that the commercial and algorithmic nature of social media platforms can limit genuine engagement and interactivity, as these platforms often prioritize content that maximizes profit over meaningful discourse.



Figure 2: Facebook followers of WiPR congratulating a member of the community as a show of community building (Source: Field Data, 2023)

4.1.2 ‘Hashtavism’

According to scholars such as Ott (2018) and Eggerue (2019), there exists a popular culture on social media that entails the use of hashtags to track and manage conversations. This culture has become well-adopted within the feminist domain to track and manage conversations about feminism globally. The study further found a constant use of hashtags in social media publications of both feminist organizations. The research observed that hashtags were often used as a means of initiating discussions and raising awareness about critical issues concerning different organizations. Hashtags are, in simple terms, keywords, numbers, and characters that are often preceded by the hash symbol and are often used on social media platforms (Ott, 2018). They are a

popular culture approach to indicating to social media users and algorithms that a particular post on social media relates to some specific topic or category. Hashtags are a dominant feature in social media, and they aid users in identifying and joining in on conversations more quickly and more easily (Verkuyl, 2020).

This study found after observing activities on the social media platforms of both WiPR and WiLDAF that there existed some form of hashtag culture that was a dominant aspect of social media activities across both organizations. The study found that almost all the social media posts on Facebook and Instagram included the use of hashtags.

The study found the consistent use of some specific hashtags which were included as part of social media posts of both feminist groups. The core reason for the use of these hashtags, ultimately, was to indicate to social media users that the posts were in reference or related to some already existing topic or issue that had been or was under discussion. The study also found as well that the use of these hashtags enabled social media users to identify and interact with social media posts more easily and more quickly.

To this effect, the study found that lighter hashtags that characterized generic social media cultures were adopted and used very often. Hence, the study found the consistent use of hashtags such as “#MondayMotivation, #ThrowBackThursday, #GlamGala, #EndOfYearEvent, and #NewWeek” in almost all of the social media posts of the two organizations. The key implications behind this were to improve the visibility of the social media posts and also improve the interactivity of the social media posts as well. The study, after careful observation of the *Facebook* platform of WiPR in particular, that there had been an institutionalized culture of using three hashtags weekly - #MondayMotivation, #NewWeek, and #ThrowBackThursday to accompany Facebook posts of the organization. The observation proved that #MondayMotivation accompanied almost all social

media posts that were published on Mondays while #ThrowBackThursday accompanied Thursday social media posts. These hashtags were found to accompany peculiar forms of distinct social media posts. For instance, “#MondayMotivation” was found to accompany only feminist-ideologically inclined motivational quotes which were shared on the social media platforms only on Mondays. On the other hand, “#ThrowBackThursday” also accompanied posts that concerned issues, discussions, quotations, events, etc. that the organization had been involved in in the past. The purpose of this was to excite some forms of nostalgic feelings from social media users who met such posts.

The findings made from the observations of the social media platforms of the two organizations showed that the use of hashtags was intended to achieve even deeper objectives other than increasing the reach of the posts and improving interactivity. The study found that the use of hashtags was intended as an element of virtual activism. Thus, the findings made from the observation of the social media platforms indicate that hashtags were used to engage in online or virtual activism. The study found that all dialogic communication that occurred on social media platforms and intended to push the feminist activism agenda was always backed by different forms of hashtags.

In one of the posts published by WiLDAF which was directed at advocating for legal aid services for women across Africa for instance, the study found consistent use of the hashtag #16DaysOfActivism. The study observed that for advocacy-based publications that were published on the platform for some time, the hashtag was featured very prominently. While this apportioned the advocacy agenda some forms of visibility on the social media platforms, it also fostered a sense of community-building for members and followers of the organization.



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December 6 at 5:43 PM · 🌐

HIV/AIDS remains a significant issue in Ghana. Although 87% of individuals living with HIV in Ghana are aware of their status, there still exists a significant gap in removing the stigma. [#fightthegoodfight](#) [#16DaysOfActivism](#) [#wildafghana](#) [#EndGenderBasedViolence](#)



Figure 3: Facebook Post showing the use of Hashtags to Accompany the Advocacy Agenda of the Feminist Organization (Source: Field Data, 2023)

The findings made in this study concerning the use of hashtags agree with the consensus within the literature regarding the phenomenon. Authors such as Verkuyl (2020), Fotopolou (2014), and Baer (2016) have all shown the relevance of the use of hashtags as critical elements of the use of hashtags in feminist movement groups' social media use.

4.1.3 Storytelling through Multimedia Use

The study also found that as a means of fostering dialogic communication with the public on social media platforms, the two feminist organizations had engaged in the use of different forms of media. Hence, the study notes that there was the use of different forms of media including textual, audio, graphic, and video forms of media. Thus, the tendency of social media platforms to carry multiple

media formats was leveraged effectively by the two women's groups to ensure dialogic communications with stakeholders. The study found that the use of these multimedia contents had critical storytelling implications that advanced discussions of feminism relative to the interests of the selected feminist organizations. The study found that info-graphic media contents were used more often. However, these were often accompanied by textual descriptions and captions that sought to either inform the public or engage them on different issues. The use of videos was also found to hold some prominence in the social media publications studied for this study. The study observed that there was a frequent use of video content to engage the public in the activities that the various organizations had been engaged in.

The study found that one key that multimedia use fostered online conversations and expressed the use of dialogic communication was evidenced in the use of live video feeds on social media platforms. Although these were few, the study found that live video feeds on the social media platforms of the women's groups generate a lot of real-time conversations among feminist followers. Thus, the study found that while engaged in live feeds of events, the social media pages generated a lot of conversations that expressed dialogic communication. This aligns with the findings of This aligns with the findings of Gubrium and Harper (2013), who argue that multimedia storytelling can enhance engagement and interaction by making content more accessible and appealing. They note that the use of diverse media formats allows for richer, more nuanced storytelling, which can effectively communicate complex issues and foster deeper connections with audiences.

However, some scholars like Dean (2015) critique this approach, arguing that the emphasis on multimedia content can sometimes detract from substantive dialogue. Dean points out that the

rapid consumption of multimedia can lead to a superficial understanding of issues, as audiences might prioritize visually appealing content over in-depth discussions. This perspective suggests that while multimedia use can enhance engagement, it may also risk oversimplifying important conversations.



Figure 4: Picture of A live feed video of an event undertaken by WiLDAF. (Source: Field Data, 2023)

4.2 RQ2: How can Feminist Groups Use Social Media Platforms as a tool to understand their target audience in Ghana?

The second objective of this study was to understand how the two feminist organizations in Ghana adopted and used social media platforms to understand their target audiences. Thus, the study was also interested in understanding how social media tools were being used to understand the target audience of the two feminist groups including WiLDAF and WiPR. The findings made from the data gathered from the interview sessions with the Public Relations professionals sampled from the two organizations showed that the organizations used social media platforms to understand their target audience and related dynamics from three perspectives. This included collaborative content creation, the use of engagement metrics, and social listening strategies.

4.2.1 Collaborative Content Creation

The findings made in the study suggest that one of the key approaches that the selected women's organizations had adopted over the years to understand their audiences related to collaborative content that was published and used in social media strategies. The study found that when audiences become engaged on social media platforms and contribute critically to key issues being discussed on these platforms, the women's groups can gather essential data that form a body of knowledge toward understanding these audiences.

The study found that by collaborating with users online to create content for social media platforms, the organizations were able to collect key information on their audiences concerning their experiences and perceptions of related feminist issues. The study found that the organization, on some occasions, published issues directly related to the lives and experiences of their audiences.

The respondents averred that the tendency of social media to primarily hold and enforce user-generated content and collaborative content creation had critical implications for gathering data on

audiences. This enabled the collection of key data on audiences concerning their views on feminist issues and their experiences. One of the respondents notes that by having access to content sent to their organizations and in some instances posting such content on social media, they can gather key information concerning how their audiences behave, think, and respond to issues regarding feminism.

“ . you can have access to key information about respondents when you pay attention to the content they generate for you. Like a mention on social media about an issue or something. So, for instance, someone does a video and tags you. Then you can repost it on your platform. It does not end there. If you follow the things, they are saying you can know who they are, the issues they are facing, and what they think about feminist issues” (RR01).

The extract above proves that content developed and co-published on social media platforms of feminist organizations was used to collect important data about audiences. The speaker in the above extract notes that their organization considered the use of collaborative content to mean far more beyond visibility and interactivity. Beyond interactivity and engagement, the respondent notes that such content developed and shared by audiences has critical implications for telling the organizations about who the audiences are and how they understand and relate to issues.

The study further found that collaborative content generation was perceived as the bane of social media interactions and engagement by organizations. The findings suggest that to have key insights into their audiences, constant interaction based on audience-generated content was perceived as essential. This was because such content allowed respondents to share experiences that were critical in the formulation of overall organizational goals. Thus, as the audience shared their experiences and perceptions, the organizations were able to use this as data to develop organizational objectives. One of the respondents noted that a critical aspect of yearly

organizational objectives was the use of data. Essentially, collaborative content generation was hence seen as a keyway to reaching such data.

“You know you cannot just wake up and for your annual objectives, you decide that this year let's focus on teenage pregnancy or gender-based violence. You have to develop these things out of available data... out of what you have gathered about the people you are doing these projects for. So, these contents are very important. They tell you the areas to focus on. So those little stories they tell you, how old the storytellers are, the jobs they do. You can get all of these things from the content they are co-generating with you...” (RR02).

Some of the respondents further noted that the use of collaborative content also gives the organizations key information on detailed information such as the social media and communication channels that audiences access the most to receive and interact with feminist-based information. The findings suggest that such contents allow organizations to have access to communication-needs-based information that is often factored into communication strategies when communicating certain information with audiences.

“So, for instance, there was this lady who reached out to us on an issue. I won't say which issue but the point is she said she has been following our Facebook posts and how we have been posting about women being empowered and all of that. So that should tell you that one of the platforms that have a significant impact is Facebook. And it's not only her, but a lot of people also reach us through Facebook and they share their experiences. So, if we want to do a campaign, the first channel we are looking at is Facebook...because that is where the community is.” (RR02).

The extract indicates that as a result of the reliance on audience-generated content, the organization was able to understand key dynamics such as communication channels to use when developing a strategy or a campaign. Furthermore, the extract shows the extent to which the communication channels fit the different needs and interests of both the organization and the audience. The speaker opines that several audiences had reached Facebook with content because of the empowerment-

based content that was being published on the platforms. This, consequently, aids in using objective-specific communication channels to optimize the organization's chances of reaching the right audience with the right forms of information.

The findings suggest that collaborative content creation plays a crucial role in helping feminist organizations understand their audiences by engaging them in content generation. This aligns with the views of Bruns and Burgess (2015), who highlight that participatory culture in social media allows organizations to gather significant insights into audience behaviors and preferences. They argue that user-generated content is instrumental in shaping organizational strategies and goals based on real-time feedback and audience interaction. Conversely, critics like Fuchs (2017) argue that while collaborative content creation offers valuable data, it can also lead to issues of data privacy and exploitation. Fuchs points out that organizations must navigate the ethical implications of using user-generated content, particularly in ensuring that audience contributions are not misused or commodified without proper consent.

4.2.2 Engagement Metrics

The study also found that one key way of understanding audience dynamics of feminist groups' online audiences is hinged on critical analyses of engagement metrics available on social media platforms. The study found that by carefully analyzing engagement metrics such as shares, likes, comments, and link clicks available on social media platforms, feminist organizations can develop a better understanding of their audiences' social media behaviors especially regarding feminist-based content that is shared on these social media platforms.

The study found that basic engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and link clicks provide key data and information on how online audiences react to communication elements posted on the social media platforms of the various feminist groups. These basic metric indicators

aid collect key information that can be used to develop communication strategies towards enforcing discussions of feminism online. Furthermore, the findings note that the engagement metrics have critical implications on how audiences react and interact with media information as well as media contents and formats as well. Thus, the study found that the engagement levels can be used as critical data points to understand which type of content and media formats (either textual, infographic, or video) the respondents react and interact with better.

One of the respondents opines that by simply paying attention to which information receives the most likes, and the most shares and by paying attention to the trajectory of comments available under a particular social media post, feminist organizations can gather information on which information needs to be highlighted more, which resonates more with audiences and which information did not sit well with them. The respondent opines, as presented in the extract below that, they gather intelligence on how the audience reacts to social media posts through the number of likes the post receives. This tells the organization how many people agree with a stance, a decision, an event, or a feminism-based occurrence that the organization is involved in.

“I mean in generic terms when you post something on social media and people like it, it tells you the level of likability of that post. It means it resonates well with the people. It’s the same for us. But this time, we consider it as data to understand that oh no this type of information... they like it or they do not like, that is when the like is low over an extended period. So even the likes alone will tell you what messages they are interested in” (RR01).

The study found as well that comments by audiences were also key pointers for understanding the online behaviors of audiences concerning feminism-related posts shared by the organizations. The data points that by following and tracking the trajectory of comments, the organizations were able to understand key issues that form a general basis for the development of some strategy. The

respondents note that since comments were more text-based and descriptive, they provided more detailed information that was highly considered by the organizations.

“When it comes to comment...I mean I do not know any person who is serious about social media and does not pay attention to comments about their posts. You just cannot... so when we post something today, sometimes it even tells us what to post or to not post tomorrow. When you post something and in the general interactions are massive, then you know that yeah... what we have posted is generating the impact or engagement we are looking for. People also share their views there. They describe what they are experiencing. I mean they tell you things there. So, you can use that as data to understand the kind of people you are dealing with.” (RR01).

“Sometimes you already have in mind what you are trying to do. But one post and the comments tell you that oh how we were even thinking our audiences thought about this issue kwraaa it’s not like that. You get it. You may think that these people are young so let us do this, meanwhile you post, check the comment section and things they are telling you; it changes your whole idea of their demographic dynamics.” (RR02).

The findings of the study highlight the importance of engagement metrics, such as likes, shares, comments, and link clicks, in understanding the audience dynamics of feminist groups on social media. This aligns with the views of authors like Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), who argue that analyzing engagement metrics can provide valuable insights into how audiences interact with social media content and help organizations tailor their communication strategies accordingly. On the other hand, scholars like Vaast and Kaganer (2013) caution that while engagement metrics offer useful data, they can sometimes be misleading or overly simplistic. They argue that metrics like likes and shares do not always reflect genuine engagement or understanding of the content, and organizations should be wary of relying solely on these metrics without deeper qualitative analysis.

4.2.3 Social Listening Tools

This study further found that the use of social listening tools was essential in understanding the target audiences of the feminist groups and the critical dynamics regarding them. The study found that through the use of social listening tools which are provided through different mechanisms and strategies on social media, the feminist groups can gather critical insights that inform them of who their target audiences are.

The study notes that the use of virtual social listening tools and strategies such as social media mentions, tags, and discussions related to issues of feminism are critical to understanding target audiences. These social listening tools aid organizations in identifying key trends of interest, sentiments, and emerging topics of interest.

Some of the respondents identified that social media mentions and tags in particular tended to wane the feminist organizations into conversations that may be happening off their social media platforms. Hence, through these social media mentions and tags, the feminist organizations were able to track which feminist issues and events their targets were paying attention to, which ones they considered topical, and how they perceived these issues.

“To a large extent that is where you can gather information on what is going on. You sometimes may not know what they want because doing a poll or something is some way but on their own, they bring these data on what they want indirectly by tagging and mentioning you in some of these posts outside your page or even on your pages” (RR02).

In the extract above the speaker notes the relevance of social listening tools as tools that enable feminist groups to know what target audiences are talking about on other social media platforms and pages. Furthermore, it can be noted that the speaker tries to draw a comparison between social listening tools and other forms of knowledge generation strategies such as polls and surveys. While

comparing these two, the speaker shows they favor the use of social listening tools to understand the conversation preferences of their audiences rather than surveys and polls.

Additionally, by referring to the phrase ‘what they want’ the speaker seems to suggest that the social listening tools have elements of accuracy within them as they allow the organizations to see what their targets want to play out in real-time in the natural settings and contexts of their targets.

The study found that these tools were particularly useful as they widened the organization's scope when it came to considering different elements to understand their targets. Thus, aside from giving a detailed understanding of the forms of conversations or issues that targets are interested in, the study’s findings suggest that the use of social listening tools allowed the organizations to collect data from their targets from a rather larger and diverse social media pool.

“For me, it is very important. So, for instance, someone tags you in a video from another person or group. If there is a trending issue that you have not yet considered then someone mentions you in the comments. It helps you to keep track of these things. Mind you, social media is a big world. Even though you have an active page...it does not mean or guarantee that you will see everything your targets are doing. It is not always that you are the one who leads the conversations too. So, these things widen your scope and pay attention to different issues...in a broader sense of things”. (RR01).

This perspective is supported by scholars like Goh, Heng, and Lin (2013), who argue that social listening tools provide invaluable insights into audience sentiments, emerging topics, and trends by monitoring social media mentions, tags, and discussions. These tools help organizations stay attuned to their audience’s interests and concerns in real time, enabling more responsive and relevant engagement. Conversely, researchers like Poch and Martin (2014) caution that while social listening tools offer significant advantages, they can sometimes yield incomplete or biased data. They argue that relying solely on social media metrics without integrating other methods

such as direct surveys or focus groups might lead to skewed understandings of audience preferences and behaviors.

4.3 RQ3: What are the challenges and opportunities available to feminist movements in Ghana in their use of social media to engage with their public?

This section explores the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of social media by feminist movements in Ghana for public engagement. While social media provides a dynamic platform for feminist organizations like WiLDAF and WiPR to amplify their voices, mobilize support, and foster dialogue, its effective utilization is constrained by several challenges. The findings reveal three major obstacles: persistent online harassment and trolling, the short lifespan of attention on social media, and technical limitations related to digital infrastructure in Ghana. These challenges hinder sustained engagement and affect the overall impact of feminist advocacy online. However, the study also identifies key opportunities, including the ability to reach wider audiences beyond traditional media, real-time and interactive communication, and the potential to build strong online communities that support feminist causes. Recognizing these challenges and opportunities is essential for feminist organizations to refine their digital strategies and maximize the effectiveness of social media in advancing their advocacy efforts.

4.3.1 Online Harassment and Trolling

The findings made from suggest that one of the key challenges that inhibited the effective use of social media tools and platforms for online engagement with targets of the two organizations was the persistent occurrences of online harassment and trolling on social media. The study found that although the organizations under study were developed and tasked with fighting online harassment and trolling on social media through different mechanisms, they ended up becoming subjects of social media trolls in some instances. Thus, while social media was perceived as an effective tool

in ending harassment of different forms in cyberspace against women, these same social media platforms were adopted by online trolls to bully and harass members of the organization.

The findings made from findings indicate several different occasions where some social media users had taken the opportunity to troll members of the organization for expressing strong feminist stances on some issues. The data gathered from the interview sessions with the sampled respondents showed that feminist social media users often experienced different forms of online harassment and trolling because of expressing their ideas. These online harassments are often expressed in hate speeches, personal attacks, sexual objectification of women feminists, and threats against people who openly make their feminist ideas known on social media platforms.

“This is one of the most common challenges we face. The abuse on social media. It is always there. Your intention might be that you are empowering people so it is for a good course. Someone has a different opinion and they will come and comment with insults, and personal attacks. Some people will go as far as digging things from your past just to disgrace you. All of these things are happening. We get calls of people being threatened, physically...physical... like I will beat you up type of things... Death threats and all of those things (RR01, RR02)

The findings also suggest that in the long run, such experiences meted out to social media users who share their experiences and pro-feminist perceptions lead to determent from the use of social media to share such ideas. Thus, as a result of the abuse suffered by feminist groups and personalities, most of them disengage from using the platforms to share their experiences and perceptions.

“...if I post something and I keep getting insulted by people I do not know, why should I keep posting them? That is what happens. For us, we are an organization so the effect is quite minimal. But when we post some people also want to share. When they do that there are people who will come and dish out insults left, right center. Then by the time you realize over time the engagement levels are even dropping.” (RR02).

The respondents sampled for this study noted that such cyberbullying activities that had occurred on social media platforms had dire consequences on the grand objective of advocating for women's rights and freedom. The respondents noted that social media platforms were often adopted to facilitate the creation of an environment that promoted the sharing of experiences, perceptions, and views of women empowerment, gender-based violence, and inclusivity. However, the platforms were also used by some people to defeat these ideas. Hou (2020) and Alsahi (2018) found that often these attacks are launched by persons in society who harbor feminist phobia attitudes and may engage in some of these activities intentionally or unintentionally.

In the extract below for instance, the respondent notes that the intention of using social media is to create an atmosphere where women feel safe to talk about gender-based issues. Thus, the social media platforms of the organization were intended to provide free space to promote positivity concerning gender issues. However, the nature of social media allowed other anti-feminist users to also enforce their agenda. This ultimately affected the atmosphere and limited the effectiveness of social media as a tool for reaching these intended objectives.

“The aim of using Facebook for instance is to make people feel free so they can share their experiences. But on this same platform where people are sharing positive ideas and experiences. On this same social media, some people are also pushing anti-feminist ideas. So, when someone goes there the ideas become two. And unfortunately, society is highly patriarchal already so you can imagine the results” (RR01).

This finding sits in tandem directly with the findings of Schradie (2018) and Banet-Weiser (2018) who have found that the very dialogic nature of social media itself may pose an affront to feminist activism and agenda. They note as this study has found that the free nature of social media coupled with elements of anonymity may provide the impetus for some people to use social media to spread hate and exert male dominance even within space where feminism is expected to fester.

4.3.2 Short Attention Spans

The study found further that, social media tended to be characterized by fleeting and transient forms of information. Thus, the study found that by their very nature, issues presented on social media platforms especially those concerning feminism in a highly patriarchal social system often do not last. Hence, the nature of feminist issues to be accorded very little or short spans of attention tended to be a key challenge that feminist groups dealt with on social media platforms.

The study found that more often than not, issues concerning feminism do not get discussed well enough and not for long enough. Thus, the life span of feminism-based issues is short-lived on social media. This is often because, by nature and as a result of the structures of algorithms, issues trend for a short while and are often replaced by the next trending issues. The respondents noted that this posed a critical challenge for feminist groups who were interested in using social media to engage with the target audiences.

The implication of this is that social media activism of feminist issues which are often expressed through social media trends, and the use of hashtags become highly transient and do not last on social media spheres before they are replaced by newer hashtags and trending issues. The respondents noted that the short span of attention accorded to discussions of feminist-based issues affected the effectiveness of social media use in feminism in general.

“The other challenge is that social media behaves like the hyper format of the traditional media in terms of transience. So, when the issues come up within a few hours it is all over the place. But after a day or two, if another issue from somewhere comes up the discussions will switch. So, one time an advocacy on feminism is trending, then by the time you realize some political issues or entertainment issues overshadow it and that kills the whole social media trend of the issue. Once, the trend ends, a significant degree of the conversation is also lost.” (RR02).

Uldam and Vestergaard (2015) as well as Poell and Dijck (2015) note that some challenges such as the very nature of social media to drown some online topics or discussions may cloud the effectiveness of social media use in feminist movements. Uldam and Vestergaard (2015) in particular found that the algorithms of social media platforms are designed such that after a while they drown old topics of discussion and highlight newer ones. The study concurs with the ideas of Vestergaard (2015) that the nature of social media and the structure of algorithms on these platforms pose challenges for feminist groups and movements.

4.3.3 Technical Challenges

This study found that one of the pertinent challenges that affronted the effective use of social media for effective engagements with target audiences of the selected feminist organizations regarded technical issues involved with the use of social media. The study found that the nature of social media which required some levels of technical viability, support, and expertise ensured that social media platforms were not leveraged to their full potential.

The findings indicate that such technical issues as the poor quality and coverage of internet services in the country did not allow for the smooth use of social media platforms for dialogic communication with targets of the respective feminist organizations. Thus, the low quality of internet access coupled with the fact that internet coverage across the country is relatively poor means that social media posts regarding feminism may not reach some people. Essentially, this presents an issue of limited reach of targets. This limitation restricts organizations from actively using social media platforms to their full potential. Furthermore, the study found that in areas where there was internet access the quality of access was often quite limited. This also restricted the levels of engagement and interactions with social media posts engaged by the organizations.

The challenge of internet access and quality was hence perceived as a critical challenge as it tended to defeat the entire purpose of the use of social media. At its core, the essence of social media is ensuring wider reach and improving the quality of communication. However, as a result of poor internet connectivity and quality, the use of social media has become problematic to a certain extent.

Some of the respondents noted that the low quality of internet service as well as the lack of connectivity in certain areas limited the degree of reach and virtual community building for the feminist organizations. One of the respondents refers to how the lack of quality internet connectivity does not allow video updates of events in remote areas in the country.

In Ghana, the internet is always problematic. So, one of the challenges we face when using social media is connectivity. We are not able to reach people in remote areas. And even in places that we do, the connection is not always good. So, when we need to do live video feeds and updates from villages it is so difficult.”
(RR01).

This finding was noted to be consistent with the findings of Sener (2021) who found after studying social media use by feminist groups in Turkey that the lack of technological infrastructure and the existence of a wide gap in social media use had critical implications for the use of social media as tools for dialogic communication among feminist groups and their publics.

4.3.4 Community Building

The data gathered from the interview sessions with the sampled respondents showed that feminist movements in Ghana can engage in the use of social media platforms to build and maintain stronger and larger communities online. The study found that the current nature of digital technology has now facilitated the creation of communities of interest beyond geographic boundaries. Social media tools are essential in building virtual communities where information,

ideas, experiences, and perceptions relating to feminism can be shared in real time, with speed and without the bother of geographic boundaries.

The study found that through the characteristic tendencies of social media platforms to impact engagement and interactivity, feminist groups can maintain online communities that can be managed with very little resources and effort. Through the use of social media platforms, feminists from different parts of the world can interact with feminist groups in Ghana and share new ideas and experiences to foster a sense of community among members.

Some of the respondents noted while envisioning that social media platforms can be used as modern-day public spheres where issues of feminism are discussed in great detail. Thus, feminist movements and groups in Ghana can adopt the use of social media to facilitate public discussions on matters of feminism. One of the respondents avers while affirming the relevance of social media within the broader scope of contemporary feminism that feminist movements are a series of discussions on feminism that are aimed at improving the standards of living of women. In doing this, contemporary forms of communication that act as prime information carriers and public spheres cannot be ignored.

“Today if we talk about feminism and we do not include social media then that to me is fallacious. These platforms have the power to create public spheres for discussing issues freely. No boundaries, no financial resources, almost nothing...just use the platform. When we talk about feminism, we are trying to improve women in general. This includes the social context we find ourselves current so social media is indispensable. And the thing is feminism is community building and right now there is no media tool that has the power to build stronger communities faster than social media tools” (RR02).

Authors such as Karagoz (2017) Sen and Kok (2017) as well as Ozkan (2018) have all found that the core of social media within the field of feminism is essential create online public spheres. Sener

(2016) further notes that these online communities and spheres have critical implications for advancing feelings of belonging and solidarity among women social media users.

4.3.5 Amplification of Feminist Voices

Bolliger (2015) noted that one of the key aspects of the dominant use of social media in the broader scope of feminism and feminist movements concerns how the platform allows for the amplification of female voices across the globe. Bolliger (2015) found in her study that social media has instilled in women and young girls a sense of bravery and an urgent sense to communicate their experiences to the world now more than ever. The findings made in this study suggest a similar situation as proposed by Bolliger (2015).

This study found further that social media can be used as a means of amplifying feminist voices and interests in the country. The study found that social media platforms can enable feminist movements in Ghana to amplify the voices of marginalized women and female communities in the country. The study found that respondents believed social media could be used as a space for marginalized women to speak up and share their experiences and perceptions.

The respondents perceived that the characteristic of social media to hide the identity of users and keep them anonymous poses a critical advantage to marginalized women in society who have not been given the chance to speak up on challenges they are facing as a result of male dominance. Thus, the anonymity tendency of social media platforms can be used effectively to aid marginalized women and female communities share their experiences and opinions about critical issues.

“Also, I think that if social media is adopted into feminist activities, then there will be a bigger voice for our interests. Right now, all though we are using social media, I will say there is still much to be done. But the truth is social media has a lot of potential for keeping our interests out there and making feminist ideals and activities known. When the issue of social media comes in marginalized people do not even need

organizations like us before they are heard. You just log onto social media and share your experience or challenge and everyone sees it.” (RR01, RR02)

Furthermore, the tendency of social media to improve inclusivity and reach out to a global audience beyond geographic boundaries means that the views and opinions of the marginalized in society are heard across the whole world and are directed towards a larger feminist community worldwide.

“The thing about social media is essentially the global reach. I am here and I can say one thing that can move the entire world because of social media. So, I think that if there is ever going to be an opportunity for a global rise in feminist voices, especially for marginalized, poor women and girls then it is through social media.” (RR01).

4.3.6 Online Activism (Hashtivism)

The study found that feminist groups can engage the use of different social media platforms to engage their audience through interactive online campaigns. These may include the use of polls, challenges, as well as storytelling initiatives that are directed in the long run at advancing discussions of feminism on online platforms. The study found that respondents believed that the use of social media platforms had key consequences on advancing feminist campaigns from traditional formats to virtual online formats where there is a larger and more engaging community to leverage.

The study found that respondents believed in the use of different strategies available on social media such as hashtags to facilitate more effective campaigns and advocacy activities. One of the respondents opined in the interview sessions that the use of social media for activism purposes has crucial implications for the mobilization of feminists. The respondent notes, as presented in the extract that social media platforms can form the basis of larger feminist campaigns and advocacy activities as they possess the tendencies of mobilizing a large number of people within a very short time.

“Social media can help out a lot with mobilizing people. Because... that is where all the people are now. The active demography who can champion the cause is where they are now. So even before you do like a traditional march against gender-based violence or whatever you want to start getting the people from the platforms. That is the most effective way. You use hashtags, videos, anything that social media allows you to use then you move one from there” (RR01).

4.4 RQ4: What Recommendations Can Be Made to Stakeholders to Improve the Use of Social Media by Feminist Movements for Advocacy and Public Engagement?

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to various stakeholders, including feminist organizations, policymakers, social media platforms, and the general public, to enhance the effectiveness of social media in feminist advocacy. Addressing challenges such as online harassment, fleeting attention spans, and technical barriers while leveraging opportunities like real-time interaction and broad audience reach requires a multi-stakeholder approach. The recommendations presented in this section focus on practical strategies that feminist movements in Ghana can adopt to strengthen their digital advocacy.

4.4.1 Strengthening Digital Security and Countering Online Harassment

One of the most pressing challenges feminist organizations face in using social media is persistent online harassment and trolling. Participants in this study reported frequent cyber-attacks, intimidation, and misogynistic abuse, which discourage engagement and limit the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts. One participant emphasized that "The level of hostility we face online is alarming. Sometimes, we are forced to take breaks or deactivate accounts because of the sheer volume of harassment." To counter this, feminist organizations should implement stronger digital security measures, such as content moderation strategies, privacy settings, and reporting mechanisms. Training sessions on cyber hygiene and digital self-defense can also empower

activists to navigate online threats safely (Agarwal, Lim, & Wigand, 2018). Social media platforms must also take responsibility by improving content moderation and ensuring swift responses to reports of abuse (Lewis et al., 2020).

4.4.2 Enhancing Content Strategy to Sustain Public Attention

The study found that social media activism often struggles with short attention spans, as trending issues quickly fade from public discourse. To address this, feminist organizations should adopt a strategic approach to content creation, ensuring that their messages remain relevant and engaging over time. A participant noted "We see a lot of engagement when an issue first emerges, but after a few days, people move on, and it's hard to sustain interest." A solution to this challenge is the adoption of long-term content planning that includes regular updates, storytelling techniques, and interactive formats such as live sessions, infographics, and videos (Chiluwa & Ifukor, 2015). Additionally, collaborations with influencers and media houses can help keep feminist issues in the public eye for extended periods (Andoh-Quainoo & Annor-Antwi, 2015).

4.4.3 Improving Access to Digital Resources and Training

Limited digital literacy and access to resources present another barrier to effective social media use for advocacy. Many feminist organizations, particularly grassroots movements, lack the necessary technical skills and financial resources to maximize social media's potential. One interviewee remarked "Most of our team members are volunteers with limited social media training. We do what we can, but professional skills in digital advocacy would really help." To bridge this gap, stakeholders such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and technology firms should provide funding and training programs tailored to feminist advocacy groups. These programs should cover areas such as social media analytics, targeted

advertising, and digital storytelling (Ansah, 2020). Furthermore, mobile service providers and policymakers should work towards reducing the cost of internet access to make digital advocacy more inclusive (Osei-Afful & Osei, 2021).

4.4.4 Encouraging Policy Reforms to Support Digital Feminism

Policymakers play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for feminist activism online. The study found that legal protections against online gender-based violence remain inadequate, leaving activists vulnerable to harassment without legal recourse. A participant expressed frustration, stating "There's no real protection for women facing cyber harassment in Ghana. Even when we report cases, they are often dismissed or not taken seriously." To address this, feminist organizations should advocate for stronger cyber laws that specifically address online harassment, digital violence, and gendered disinformation (Owusu-Ansah & Manteaw, 2022). Additionally, engaging with policymakers to incorporate digital rights and gender equality in national policies can create a safer and more inclusive digital space for feminist activism.

To improve the use of social media by feminist movements in Ghana, a holistic approach involving multiple stakeholders is essential. Strengthening digital security, refining content strategies, increasing access to digital resources, and advocating for policy reforms are critical steps in enhancing feminist advocacy online.

4.5 Implication of the Results

The findings of this study carry significant implications for feminist organizations, policymakers, social media platforms, and the broader feminist discourse in Ghana. The research has highlighted that while social media offers important opportunities for feminist advocacy, it also presents challenges that need to be addressed in order to maximize its potential. For feminist organizations

in Ghana, the results suggest a need for more strategic and nuanced approaches to digital activism. While social media platforms facilitate outreach and engagement, issues such as online harassment, digital security, and the transient nature of online discourse complicate efforts to sustain long-term movements. In light of these challenges, it is clear that feminist organizations must prioritize the safety of activists by strengthening their digital security measures. This could involve investing in privacy tools, enhancing content moderation, and training members on strategies to protect themselves from online harassment. Additionally, the fleeting nature of trends and hashtags on social media calls for greater effort in creating content that resonates beyond temporary online cycles, encouraging long-term engagement through different digital formats like videos, blogs, and podcasts.

On a theoretical level, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on feminist digital activism. It reinforces the idea that social media is a contested space where feminist voices, while able to flourish, must also contend with counter-discourses. These findings support the notion that digital activism is dialogic and that while it can facilitate dialogue and mobilization, it also invites opposition. This aspect of the findings aligns with existing scholarship, such as the works of Schradie (2018) and Banet-Weiser (2018), who assert that digital platforms, while democratizing access to activism, also allow for the amplification of counter-narratives that undermine feminist movements. Furthermore, the study highlights the limitations of hashtag activism, affirming that while hashtags can mobilize people quickly and effectively, their short-lived nature often renders them ineffective in sustaining long-term change. This challenge requires feminist movements to consider how to transition from online mobilization to more permanent forms of engagement that bridge the digital and offline worlds.

The implications of this study also extend to policy discussions in Ghana, especially regarding online safety, digital access, and gender-sensitive policies. The persistence of online harassment faced by feminist activists underscores the need for legal reforms that specifically address cyber harassment and gender-based violence in digital spaces. The Ghanaian government, in partnership with civil society organizations, should focus on creating robust laws that protect online users, particularly women and feminist groups, from digital abuse. Moreover, the study revealed that poor internet infrastructure and high data costs continue to be barriers for many people in Ghana, limiting the reach of digital activism. This finding suggests a pressing need for policies that improve digital access, especially in rural and underserved areas, as well as initiatives aimed at reducing the cost of data. Without these improvements, many voices remain excluded from important digital conversations, leaving certain demographics, particularly low-income women, at a disadvantage when it comes to engaging in social media activism.

For social media platforms, the study's findings call for more accountability in addressing online harassment and creating safer spaces for feminist activism. Social media companies must implement stronger content moderation policies to ensure that harmful content, such as misogynistic attacks or hate speech, is swiftly removed. Additionally, these platforms should make the reporting process more accessible and effective for those facing abuse. Enhanced algorithms that prevent the amplification of harmful content would be beneficial, as would the introduction of more supportive tools to help feminist activists manage online harassment. Without these measures, social media platforms will continue to be spaces where feminist activists are vulnerable to digital violence, undermining the potential of these platforms as tools for social change.

The implications of this research also suggest the need for future studies to explore the intersections of online and offline feminist activism. While this study focused on social media as

a tool for mobilization, future research could investigate how feminist groups in Ghana can better integrate digital strategies with their offline efforts to create a more holistic and impactful movement. Further exploration is needed into how these hybrid forms of activism can be sustained and expanded to reach wider audiences. Additionally, the psychological and social effects of online harassment on activists require deeper investigation, as understanding the impact of digital violence on the well-being and participation of activists could inform better support mechanisms.

The findings of this study underline the need for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to feminist digital activism in Ghana. While social media offers significant opportunities for visibility and mobilization, it also presents distinct challenges that require innovative solutions. Feminist organizations must be proactive in developing strategies that address the safety, engagement, and sustainability of their digital efforts. Policymakers and social media platforms, on the other hand, must work together to create a regulatory and technological environment that supports the safe and inclusive participation of feminist activists.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The primary goal of this research was to examine how feminist organizations and their online audiences communicate via the use of social media as dialogic instruments. To comprehend how the two feminist organizations participated in dialogic engagement with their public on social media platforms, the study employed the use of two methodological approaches: cyber-ethnography and interviewing. Four main goals drove the research, all of which hinged on how well these organizations understood how to use social media.

This chapter of the study presents the findings made after careful analysis of the data gathered. The findings show, through the use of cyber-ethnography how dialogic communication had been engaged by the two organizations with their respective publics. Furthermore, the chapter presents critical insights into the challenges as well as the opportunities available to feminist movements in Ghana on the use of social media platforms.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study's main objective was to investigate how feminist groups and their online audiences interact through the use of social media as dialogic tools. The research was driven by four key aims, all of which depended on how successfully these organizations used social media. The first

objective of the study was to understand how feminist groups in Ghana exploit the dialogic nature of social media to their communication advantage. The study was also interested in understanding how social media tools were used by these movements to understand target audiences. The third objective of the study was focused on understanding the key challenges associated with the use of social media for dialogic communication and engagement with the public while the fourth objective focused on identifying the opportunities available to feminist groups in their use of social media platforms.

This chapter of the study seeks to present a summary of the key findings made from the study. Furthermore, the chapter discusses conclusions to critical arguments and assumptions raised in this study. The chapter also makes some recommendations for practice on the use of social media by feminist movements as well as for future studies based on the key findings made in the study.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study's primary goal was to ascertain how selected feminist organizations in Ghana interact with their audiences through dialogic communication on social media platforms. The study focused more on the ways feminist organizations adapted and used social media to interact with their particular audiences in a dialogic manner. Although the two feminist groups' communication tendencies were dominated by one-way communication techniques, the study also revealed that dialogic communication was embraced and applied more strategically.

According to the findings, the two feminist groups' dialogic communication techniques were implemented and articulated in three key ways on their social media platforms: through engagement and interactivity, hashtag use, and multimedia storytelling. The data collected from the cyber-ethnography shows that engagement and interaction are two important ways feminist groups in Ghana use the dialogic aspect of social media platforms to connect with their audiences.

According to the study, the two feminist groups frequently used varied communication strategies to guarantee interaction and engagement with their target audiences. As observed, this tactic was employed for several purposes. Creating an active community was one of the main goals of using dialogic communication to engage the public on social media. Therefore, the results imply that the feminist organizations were interested in setting up and managing virtual communities of interest in addition to communicating and participating through the usage of social media platforms.

The study also discovered that both feminist organizations' social media posts consistently utilized hashtags. The study found that hashtags were frequently used to start conversations and spread awareness of important topics about various organizations. The research discovered that practically all of the social media posts consistently included hashtags like #MondayMotivation, #ThrowBackThursday, #GlamGala, and others. Two important effects of this were that the posts on social media were more visible and more interactive. According to the study, using hashtags was meant to be a part of online activism. The results also show that hashtags were utilized for virtual or online activism.

The propensity of social media platforms to accommodate various media types was skillfully utilized by feminist organizations to facilitate dialogic communication. The study discovered that, concerning the goals of feminist organizations, the usage of these multimedia elements had important narrative implications that enhanced feminist conversations. The usage of infographics in media material increased. However, written captions and descriptions that aimed to either educate or engage the audience on various subjects were frequently included with these. Videos were also discovered to be quite common in the social media outlets that this study looked into. The investigation found that video footage was frequently used to include the public in the various organizations' operations.

This study's second goal was to determine how feminist groups in Ghana used social media platforms to identify and connect with their target audiences. The research was also interested in discovering how social media platforms were being utilized to identify the target audience for WiLDAF and WiPR, two feminist organizations. The organizations employed social media platforms to understand their target audience and associated dynamics from three angles, according to the conclusions drawn from the data acquired from the interview sessions with the PR professionals sampled from the two organizations. Using social listening techniques, engagement analytics, and collaborative content creation were all part of this.

This study's third goal was to pinpoint and comprehend the difficulties associated with using social media platforms to interact with feminist groups' target audiences. Therefore, the study also aimed to determine what obstacles stood in the way of using social media as an instrument for online engagement with WiLDAF and WiPR target audiences. According to the findings, the organizations encountered several difficulties that were mostly related to technical and structural problems with using social media platforms. According to the study, there are three main obstacles preventing people from using social media sites effectively. These included key technical concerns with social media use in Ghana, challenges with social media attention spans, and continuous online abuse and trolling.

The final objective of the research was to determine and comprehend the opportunities that Ghanaian feminist movements have for using social media to interact with their target audiences. Therefore, the study's goal was to determine how social media platforms may be used to increase the proclivity toward involvement between feminist organizations or groups and their audiences. According to the findings, these feminist groups have access to three main types of possibilities. Put alternatively, the study's conclusions suggest that social media involvement in Ghanaian

feminist groups has three main benefits. According to the research, they included online advocacy, building virtual communities, and amplifying female viewpoints and interests.

5.2 Conclusions

The study aimed to understand how feminist organizations in Ghana use social media tools to engage with their target audiences. It focused on how these organizations used social media to engage with their audiences through dialogic communication, revealing that dialogic communication was strategically used. The study also examined how feminist groups like WiLDAF and WiPR used social media platforms to identify and connect with their target audiences.

The findings made in the study point to some different conclusions. Chiefly among these is that while social media portends different opportunities for feminist groups in Ghana, it is essential that in the adoption and use of these social media platforms, keen attention is paid to the challenges they may also present to the organization and the overall cause of feminism in the country. The study concludes that despite having relevance in building strong virtual communities beyond geographic borders, enhancing advocacy and activism, and amplifying feminist voices and interests, it is essential that feminist movements consider technical and structural challenges that may be detrimental to the use of social media in advancing feminist interests.

Furthermore, the study concludes that in consolidating the overall relevance of social media to feminist movements and groups in Ghana it is essential that key strategies that allow feminist groups to understand their target audiences. The study concludes that social media analytical and engagement tools, social listening tools, and collaborative content creation are key in aiding feminist movements in Ghana to understand their target audiences.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations in line with the key findings made in this study.

- The researcher recommends that the two feminist groups that were studied in this investigation invest more in the use of social media for dialogic communication. For WiLDAF in particular, the study found that more one-way communication strategies had been adopted to communicate with target audiences. The study found that although there was evidence of the use of two-way dialogic communication, there seemed to be more focus on one-way communication approaches to inform and educate the public about feminist activities. This was found to affect engagements and interactions on social media platforms. The researcher hence recommends that to improve social media engagements and interaction there should be a shift from one—way communication to two-way dialogic communication.
- Furthermore, the researcher recommends that strategies be developed to use social media as tools for mobilization rather than the more passive information-sharing tools. Thus, the researcher recommends that social media holds key significance in mobilizing members of the feminist community. As such, feminist movements must advance the use of social media even beyond dialogic communication and interactivity to using the platforms as mobilization tools.
- The researcher also recommends that feminist movements and organizations in Ghana pay critical attention to the challenge of cyberbullying and abuse on social media platforms. It is advised that as part of social media activism strategies that are designed in line with feminist ideologies, there is special attention paid to gender-based abuse that occurs on social media platforms.

- It is also suggested that policymakers also pay critical attention to cyberbullying directed against women. Policies and regulatory laws must be implemented to safeguard the security of women and other feminists online to minimize the occurrence of gender-based cyberbullying and harassment on social media platforms in Ghana
- It is also recommended that feminist organizations in Ghana pay attention to different engagement-based social media interaction metrics. It is recommended that organizations identify which metric enables them to understand their audiences better to be able to develop audience-specific communication strategies that have critical impacts on audiences.

5.3.1 Suggestions for Further Studies

- Other studies can adopt a cross-media approach to investigate how feminist movements use different media platforms to advance discussions of feminism in Ghana. Other studies therefore do a comparative analysis of how traditional media platforms are used as compared to the use and effectiveness of social media platforms by feminist media organizations.
- Other studies can also adopt a cross-national approach to understanding social media use by feminist movements to understand the inter-cultural dynamics that may come into play in the use of social media by different feminist groups in different African nations.
- Other studies can also adopt the use of quantitative surveys to understand social media use by feminists for feminist gratification purposes. Thus, it is suggested that other researchers look at how feminists in Ghana use social media to access feminist-specific information, the source of information, and how they use this information.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PR PRACTITIONERS

1. What is your perception of the current nature of social media use in feminist activities in your organization?
2. What is the nature of social media use as a tool for dialogic communication on issues regarding feminism in your organization?
3. Do you believe that feminist groups effectively utilize the dialogic nature of social media platforms when communicating with the public?
 Yes No
4. In your experience or observation, have you noticed instances where feminist groups actively engage in two-way communication on social media, fostering a dialogue with their audience?
 Yes No
5. How do you integrate social media tools and strategies in feminist activities in your organization?
6. How do you engage in the use of social media tools and techniques in understanding audience dynamics?
 - a. How does social media aid in understanding communication needs?
 - b. How do social media tools aid in understanding dialogic communication needs toward feminist topics?
 - c. Generally, how do you use social media to ascertain the demography and dynamics of your target audiences?
7. How would you describe the challenges of social media use by feminist movements in Ghana?

8. What would you consider the key challenges that limit dialogic communication as a result of the adoption and use of social media?
- a. How does social media restrict engagements with target groups?
 - b. How does social media restrict dialogue online with audiences?
9. In your opinion how would you describe the general use of social media in advancing feminism issues in Ghana?
10. What are the core opportunities that are available to feminist movements in their use of social media as tools for audience engagement?
11. From your perspective, do you see social media as a valuable platform for feminist movements in Ghana to identify and seize opportunities for engaging with the public?
- Yes No
12. Have you observed or been involved in instances where feminist movements in Ghana have successfully utilized social media to create opportunities for meaningful engagement with their audience or the public?
- Yes No