



INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROJECT A POSITIVE BRAND IMAGE: A CASE STUDY OF
GHANA'S NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I, Evans Bandoh Oppong, do hereby declare that this thesis, except for quotations and references contained in published and unpublished works, all of which have been duly identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and that neither has it been submitted in part or whole for any degree elsewhere.

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Date ...12th December, 2025.....

Supervisor's Declaration

I, the undersigned supervisor, declare that I supervised the preparation and presentation of this work in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of MA Thesis, as laid down by the University of Media, Arts, and Communication (UniMAC).

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Dr. Rebecca Naana Baah-Ofori
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Date12th December, 2025.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my family, who have remained a formidable support system throughout the journey. From the deepest part of my heart, I extend huge appreciation to you all for being a rock.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebtedly grateful to the Almighty God for His grace, protection, and guidance throughout the period. My family has been my backbone and provided various forms of support for which I am appreciative. I seize this opportunity to say a huge thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Rebecca Naana Baah-Ofori, whose guidance and constructive criticism have steered the course and outcome of this study. I am also grateful to the scholars who made their publications available for my use. To my research respondents, I appreciate your participation, and I recognize my friends for their encouragement throughout the period. Thank you all.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges and opportunities associated with the National Commission for Civic Education's (NCCE) social media use for brand image projection and its subsequent impact on civic engagement in Ghana. The research established a significant gap between the NCCE's current digital communication strategy and the expectations of a highly social media-engaged public. Utilizing a quantitative survey methodology with a sample of 384 participants (N=384)—a demographic characterized by near-universal daily social media use—the study was guided by three objectives: (1) to analyze the NCCE's social media strategies, (2) to assess public perception of the NCCE's organizational salience, and (3) to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with NCCE's brand projection on social media. The key findings revealed an over-reliance on a one-way public information model (Objective 1), which directly resulted in the NCCE being perceived as a low-salience organization (Objective 2). The study concludes that the NCCE's challenges are strategic rather than purely resource-based (Objective 3). The organization must execute a strategic digital overhaul, shifting its focus from simple information broadcast to high-quality, two-way engagement designed to build a trusted and positive brand attitude, as this is the most critical and potent driver for fulfilling its civic mandate.

Keywords: Social Media, Brand Image, Civic Engagement, Organizational Salience, Digital Public Relations, Public Information Model, Ghana, NCCE.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The dawn of the 21st century has been immensely marked by the unprecedented rise and prevalent incorporation of social media platforms into the fabric of communication and daily life worldwide (Hang, 2024; Januam, 2025). What began as a tool for personal networking has quickly metamorphosed into a multifaceted ecosystem, transforming the discourse on politics, economic interactions, cultural trends, and even social movements globally (Hang, 2024). According to Hang (2024), this digital disruption has changed traditional one-way communication models, ushering in a new era of symmetrical and multi-way interactions where individuals, businesses, and even government institutions can engage in real-time dialogue.

This changeover has profound impacts for fostering brands and managing reputation. Organisations leverage these platforms to craft compelling narratives, disseminate brand messages, and influence the perceptions of their consumers, with studies consistently alluding to a positive relationship between effective social media strategies and the building of brand and reputation (Pakura & Rudeloff, 2020; Mpuku, 2024).

The responsibility to digitally engage extends critically to the public sector. Governments and public institutions around the world are progressively adopting social media, not just as a supplementary channel to share information, but as a major tool for engaging citizens and earning their trust (Wu et al., 2022). Furthermore, it helps in the fight against misinformation by responding

quickly to public concerns, which enhances two-way communication, a necessity for fostering an informed and participatory society (Wu et al., 2025).

However, the use of social media strategies by public service institutions presents unique complexities and challenges that differ from those in the private sector (Wise, 2024). Public sector social media efforts are criticised for sometimes lacking creativity and failing to consistently maintain a dialogue, leading to a risk of the platforms being perceived as mere broadcast tools rather than engagement platforms (Micoleit, 2014). Building and maintaining a positive brand image is particularly important for public institutions. A strong public image fuels citizen trust, encourages civic participation, and ensures the legitimacy of public initiatives (Dialnet, 2024; KUEY, n.d.). Conversely, a negative public perception can erode trust, lead to reduced public cooperation, and hinder the achievement of core mandates (Wu et al., 2022). This underscores the need for strategic and consistent digital communication that aligns with the institution's core values and public service mission.

This global and sectoral context sets the tone for understanding the important role of social media in public sector branding, particularly in developing nations like Ghana, where digital penetration is rapidly expanding, and an institution such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is central to democratic consolidation and citizen awareness. The analysis of how NCCE navigates these opportunities and challenges in projecting a positive brand image through social media represents a significant area for empirical investigation.

1.2 Problem Statement

The digital era has undeniably changed the nature of public communication, affirming social media as an essential tool for citizen engagement, information dissemination, and, more importantly, the

projection of a positive institutional brand image (Hang, 2024). This global imperative is equally pronounced in Ghana, where the growth of the internet and social media penetration gives unprecedented avenues for public institutions to connect with a diverse and increasingly digitally-native populace (Sasu, 2025). For entities like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), whose core mandate revolves around building civic consciousness, promoting constitutionalism, and encouraging active participation of citizens, a strong and credible public image is not merely desirable but key to its operational effectiveness and the attainment of national democratic goals (Owusu, 2025). A positive brand image instils public trust, enhances the legitimacy of its educational programs, and ensures greater receptivity to its vital messages (Dziewornu-Norvo, 2022).

While many Ghanaian public institutions, including the NCCE, maintain a social media presence, this often translates to a predominantly one-way information dissemination model rather than a dynamic, interactive engagement platform that actively builds public trust and enhances institutional reputation (Dziewornu-Norvo, 2022; Ansah, 2021). Resource limitations, inadequate specialized expertise in digital public relations, and a general cautiousness in fostering two-way dialogue often impede the development of sophisticated online branding strategies (Ansah, 2021). This critique suggests that merely having a social media account does not automatically equate to effective brand image projection or the cultivation of public confidence.

Specifically concerning the NCCE, there is a conspicuous lack of empirical investigation into how its current social media activities translate into, or are perceived as, a positive brand image among the Ghanaian public. It is unclear whether the content, frequency, and interactive nature of the NCCE's social media engagement effectively communicate its mandate, build public trust, and counter potential misinformation that could erode its credibility. Without a clear understanding of

public perceptions of the NCCE's brand image as projected online, and without a systematic analysis of the strategies it employs, there is a risk that the Commission's vital civic education efforts could be undermined by a less-than-optimal digital presence (Wu et al., 2022). This constitutes a significant problem: if a pivotal national institution tasked with civic education struggles to strategically leverage prevalent communication channels to project a positive and trustworthy image, it could inadvertently limit its reach, weaken its influence, and contribute to public apathy or distrust in civic processes. Therefore, this study aims to address this important gap by empirically examining the NCCE's social media utilisation for positive brand image projection and assessing public perceptions in the Ghanaian context.

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the purpose of the study, the following objectives were constituted:

1. To determine the degree of perceived interactivity and engagement of NCCE's social media communication.
2. To assess the Ghanaian public's rating of the core attributes (trustworthiness and transparency) of the NCCE's brand as projected through its social media platforms.
3. To determine the specific public suggestions for enhancing the NCCE's brand image and civic engagement through social media.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were derived from the study's objectives:

1. What is the extent of perceived interactivity and engagement of NCCE's social media communication?

2. What is the public rating of NCCE's trustworthiness and transparency as projected through its social media platforms?
3. What are the specific public suggestions for the NCCE to enhance its brand image and civic engagement through social media?

1.5 Significance of the Study

By enhancing the body of knowledge on digital public relations, public sector communication, and brand management, especially in the understudied context of developing countries like Ghana, this work has significant academic value. The study will directly address an important gap in the literature by carefully examining the extent of perceived interactivity and engagement of NCCE's social media communication. It will go beyond broad global trends to offer empirical insights unique to civic education institutions in developing democracies (Dziewornu-Norvo, 2022).

In addition to its scholarly contributions, the study has significant practical and policy implications, particularly for the NCCE and other Ghanaian public sector organisations. The NCCE will have a comprehensive grasp of its present social media efficacy thanks to the evidence-based insights obtained from this study, which will also highlight particular obstacles and unrealised potential in its digital communication. For other ministries, departments, and agencies of the Ghanaian government, these useful insights are transferable and an essential resource.

In the end, both the Ghanaian people and the larger democratic environment gain from this research. Armed with data-driven tactics, an NCCE that communicates more effectively can better educate the public, promote active engagement in democratic processes, and counteract

disinformation, creating a more informed public and fortifying the fundamental tenets of Ghana's democratic governance and national unity.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

The study is segmented into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which gives a background to the study and provides information on the need to undertake this research. The second chapter, literature review, gives scholarly insights related to and some relevant theories that underpin the study. Chapter three is the methodology, which highlights the research approach and design, as well as emphasises the data collection techniques and analysis. Chapter four discusses the findings of the research, while Chapter five concludes and gives a general summary of the research, including some recommendations for future studies.

1.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter highlights the rising importance of social media for interactive communication and brand building, especially within public institutions. It outlines concerns that the NCCE's largely one-way social media use may limit its ability to project a positive brand image and engage citizens effectively. Included in this chapter are the research objectives and questions serving as a guide. It also stresses the significance of the study to academia, the NCCE, government, and the field of practice.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature pertinent to this investigation is reviewed in this chapter. The chapter examines and discusses the relevant research on social media and its influence on building a positive brand image. The chapter references earlier research and scholarly works as it reviews the relevant literature for this study, and is established on theoretical frameworks.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

This section of the literature review addresses the concepts that support the study and discusses the findings of previous studies in relation to it.

2.1.1 Social Media Interactivity

Social media interactivity, at its core, transcends the unidirectional information flow characteristic of traditional media, embodying a dynamic, multi-directional exchange between entities (brands, users, and even among users themselves). It refers to the extent to which a user can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time (Stromer-Galley, 2004). In the context of social media, this concept becomes particularly salient due to the inherent design of platforms that facilitate active engagement, dialogue, and co-creation rather than mere consumption of content (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Several key dimensions and types collectively constitute social media interactivity. First of all, user-to-brand interactivity denotes the consumer's ability to directly engage with a brand's presence on social media. This includes actions such as commenting on posts, liking, sharing, participating

in polls or quizzes, and direct messaging queries or feedback (Johansson & Hiltula, 2021). This dimension highlights the consumer's active role in shaping the communication process, moving beyond passive reception to direct involvement (Barreda et al., 2020).

Secondly, brand-to-user interactivity refers to the brand's proactive efforts and responsiveness in initiating and maintaining dialogue with its audience. This encompasses prompt replies to comments and messages, personalised communication, and the implementation of interactive campaigns designed to solicit user participation (Althuwaini, 2022). The efficiency and quality of a brand's responses are critical in demonstrating its attentiveness and customer-centricity, thereby enhancing its perceived image.

Again, user-to-user interactivity (brand-related) acknowledges the conversations and exchanges that occur among consumers about a brand on social media. This can manifest as discussions within comment sections, sharing of brand-related content, and the formation of online brand communities (Paruthi et al., 2023). While not directly controlled by the brand, this form of interactivity is profoundly impactful, as peer-to-peer communication is often perceived as more credible and authentic, indirectly shaping the brand's image through collective sentiment (Soares et al., 2019).

A characteristic of interactivity is customization and personalization. It is the ability of a brand to tailor content and interactions to individual user preferences. This personalised approach can make consumers feel valued and understood, thereby fostering a stronger connection and a more favourable brand image, according to Johansson & Hiltula (2021).

Vividness and Playfulness is also another feature. The use of rich multimedia (e.g., videos, GIFs, interactive graphics) contributes to the vividness of social media content, making it more engaging

and memorable. Similarly, incorporating playful elements or gamification can enhance the enjoyment of the interactive experience, influencing how the brand is perceived (Soares et al., 2019; Althuwaini, 2022).

It is important to note that while high interactivity is generally posited to have a positive impact, the relationship can be nuanced. For instance, some studies indicate that extremely high levels of certain types of interactivities might not always translate linearly into positive engagement metrics such as likes and comments, potentially due to factors including user fatigue or perceived intrusiveness (Soares et al., 2019). This highlights the need for brands to strategically balance the intensity and type of interactivity with user expectations and platform norms to effectively project a positive brand image.

2.1.2 Brand Image

Traditionally, brand image has been understood as the consumer's perception of a brand, a constellation of associations, beliefs, and attitudes held in memory (Keller, 1993). This perception is often shaped through various marketing communications, personal experiences, and word of mouth. However, the advent of the digital age, characterised by pervasive social media usage, has profoundly redefined this concept. In contemporary marketing landscapes, brand image is no longer a static entity primarily controlled by marketer-driven messaging; instead, it is a fluid, dynamically constructed perception influenced significantly by real-time interactions, user-generated content (UGC), and communal discussions (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

To begin with, corporate or institutional image extends beyond a specific product or service to encompass the overall perception of the organisation itself. This includes its reputation, perceived values, and even its commitment to social responsibility. On social media, an organisation's

proactive engagement and transparent communication directly contribute to shaping this broader image (Hassan and Basit, 2020).

Similarly, Amegbe, Owino, and Oeba (2017) demonstrated that social media advertising effectively aided companies in Kenya in building a favourable corporate image, highlighting the positive behavioural responses of consumers to such efforts. This is further underscored by Al-Mansoury and Sandén (2021), whose study on the Swedish Armed Forces revealed how social media is leveraged to project an image of a modern and inclusive organisation, thereby influencing young adults' perceptions of its identity. In the context of higher education, Murtiningsih, Sartana, and Napitupulu (2022) found that social media marketing directly influences institutional image, underscoring its role in shaping public perception of educational entities. Bruce et al. (2025) also corroborated a significant positive impact of social media usage on brand image, which subsequently boosts start-up performance.

Secondly, brand perception refers to consumers' cognitive and affective responses to a brand, encompassing its perceived quality, reliability, and distinctiveness. Social media platforms provide a fertile ground for these perceptions to form and evolve through awareness of and continuous exposure to brand-related content and interactions (Minh and Mai, 2024). This aligns with Bilgin's (2018) finding that social media marketing activities significantly affect brand awareness and brand image, with the most pronounced effect on the former.

Finally, brand image can also manifest as brand personality, where consumers attribute human-like characteristics to a brand. Social media positioning strategies, through consistent tone, visual aesthetics, and interactive elements, play a crucial role in developing and communicating this personality. Hill-Mends (2022), in her study of fast-food brands in Ghana, found that social media

positioning strategies were employed to appeal to consumer emotions and establish a distinct brand personality.

The measurement of brand image in the digital age has accordingly evolved, moving beyond traditional survey methods to embrace more dynamic and unsolicited data sources. The digital landscape enables sophisticated social listening and sentiment analysis, where tools monitor social media conversations, track brand mentions, and analyse the sentiment (positive, negative, neutral) expressed by users in real-time (Zungu, 2022). Furthermore, engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, reach) serve as indirect indicators of how social media content resonates with the audience, influencing brand image (Paruthi et al.,2023; Soares et al.,2019).

2.1.3 Impact of Social Media Activities on Brand Image

Social media activities, in a marketing context, refer to the comprehensive efforts undertaken by brands to leverage social platforms for communication, engagement, and promotional purposes. These activities range from the creation and dissemination of diverse content types to direct consumer interactions, targeted advertising, influencer collaborations, and the cultivation of online communities. Fundamentally, these are not mere operational tasks but strategic endeavours meticulously designed to shape and reinforce a brand's image in the dynamic digital environment, transitioning from largely one-way brand messaging to a multi-directional dialogue (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

The mechanisms through which these activities influence brand image are varied and often interconnected:

Firstly, content creation and dissemination play a foundational role. Informational content, such as product updates, educational resources, or industry insights, fosters an image of expertise,

reliability, and helpfulness, thereby enhancing the brand's cognitive associations (Bilgin, 2018). Conversely, engaging and entertaining content, including multimedia (e.g., videos, GIFs) and interactive elements, cultivates positive affective responses, contributing to a brand image perceived as innovative, relatable, and enjoyable (Althuwaini, 2022; Johansson & Hiltula, 2021). The aesthetic quality and visual consistency of content across platforms are also paramount, conveying professionalism and coherence (Hill-Mends, 2022).

Secondly, customer engagement and interaction are direct conduits for shaping brand image. A brand's responsiveness to consumer comments, inquiries, and feedback humanises its presence, projecting an image of attentiveness and customer-centricity. Studies by Barreda et al. (2020) and Fadillah, Noor, and Kurniawati (2023) directly link aspects of social media interactivity and rewards to a stronger brand image. The cultivation of genuine dialogue fosters trust, which, as Hassan and Basit (2020) demonstrate, significantly mediates the relationship between social media usage and organisational image. Furthermore, actively encouraging and integrating user-generated content (UGC) enhances a brand's perceived authenticity and popularity, solidifying its image as credible and consumer-centric (Paruthi et al., 2023).

Thirdly, advertising and promotional activities on social media platforms also exert a substantial impact on brand image. Targeted advertising ensures that brand messages resonate with specific audience segments, optimising the efficiency of image formation. Promotions and interactive rewards offered through social media can enhance perceptions of brand generosity and value, contributing to a favourable image (Barreda et al., 2020; Althuwaini, 2022). Moreover, collaborations with influencers can strategically transfer positive attributes and trust from the influencer to the brand, particularly among their specific follower demographics, thereby enhancing the brand's image within those crucial segments.

However, a critical analytical perspective necessitates acknowledging nuances in this relationship. As Soares et al. (2019) pointed out, the impact of interactivity on engagement metrics – likes and comments can be unexpectedly complex, with high interactivity sometimes yielding inverse effects. This suggests that the mere *presence* or *volume* of social media activity does not automatically guarantee a positive impact on brand image. Instead, the *quality*, *relevance*, and *appropriateness* of these activities, including the nature of interactivity, are paramount.

2.1.4 Challenges in Leveraging Interactivity for Brand Image

One significant challenge lies in navigating the contextual nuances that govern social media engagement. A "one-size-fits-all" interactive strategy is demonstrably ineffective due to inherent differences across industries and geocultural landscapes. For instance, the consumer's expectation for interactivity and its impact on brand perception can vary dramatically between a highly regulated sector like banking, where reliability and trust are paramount (Althuwaini, 2022), and a lifestyle-driven industry such as sportswear, which thrives on community and aspiration (Johansson & Hiltula, 2021). Furthermore, cross-cultural studies explicitly reveal that social media marketing efforts, including interactive elements, yield divergent outcomes across distinct geographies, influenced by varying communication norms, media consumption habits, and fundamental cultural values (Godey et al., 2016; Hudson et al., 2015). This contextual variability necessitates a highly tailored approach, yet developing and implementing such nuanced strategies can be resource-intensive and complex.

A second critical challenge is the inherent risk associated with managing negative interactivity and potential brand crises. While social media fosters direct dialogue, it also opens brands to immediate public criticism, negative commentary, and rapid dissemination of unfavourable user-generated content. Mishandling negative interactions can swiftly erode brand trust and damage brand image,

making effective crisis communication and empathetic responsiveness crucial (Hassan & Basit, 2020). The constant need for vigilance and real-time intervention demands significant organisational agility and dedicated resources.

Also, brands face difficulties concerning resource intensiveness and the precise measurement of interactivity's impact. Designing and executing engaging interactive content, responding to inquiries, and managing online communities require substantial investments in terms of skilled personnel, time, and creative resources. Beyond resource allocation, accurately quantifying the return on investment (ROI) for specific interactive elements and isolating their precise influence on brand image remains a complex analytical task, often requiring sophisticated data analytics capabilities (Upadhyay, Paul, & Baber, 2022).

Finally, maintaining brand consistency and authenticity amidst diverse interactive activities across multiple social media platforms presents a significant hurdle. Brands must ensure that all interactive engagements, whether a poll, a customer service reply, or an influencer collaboration, align seamlessly with the core brand identity and voice. A lack of consistency can dilute the brand's image, while overly scripted or inauthentic interactions can undermine consumer trust (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework introduces and explains the theories that describe the existence of the research problem under study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The study was therefore guided by the Brand Equity Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

By focusing on what people do with media rather than what media does to them, the Uses and Gratifications Theory fundamentally marks a turning point in the study of media effects (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). According to this audience-centric viewpoint, people are active, purposeful, and goal-directed media consumers rather than passive consumers of media messages (McQuail, 2010). UGT's main contention is that people intentionally choose particular media or content to fulfil these specific wants or "gratifications" because media use is motivated by a variety of psychological and social demands (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

From the need for entertainment and knowledge to social contact, the reinforcement of one's own identity, or even escape, these sought-after pleasures can take many different forms (Rubin, 1994). To clarify why different people prefer different media and the advantages they obtain from their choices, UGT seeks to explain and forecast patterns of media selection and consumption based on these personal motives. The theory's origins date back to the 1940s, but in the 1970s, influential theorists including Michael Gurevitch, Jay G. Blumler, and Elihu Katz greatly expanded and popularised it (Katz et al., 1974). Because of its adaptability, UGT can be used in a variety of media formats, including both established ones, such as television and newspapers, and the fast-changing new media environment, which includes social media and streaming services (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

UGT has drawbacks despite its wide range of applications. Since it primarily focuses on user motivations and occasionally overlooks larger socioeconomic, cultural, or structural factors that influence media consumption and its effects, a key objection highlights its inherent individualism (Severin & Tankard, 2010). Additionally, studies using UGT frequently rely on self-reported information about user motivations, which is prone to biases such as social desirability or recall

errors, where respondents may not be fully aware of or honestly express their true motivations for media use (Rubin, 1994).

UGT nonetheless relies on the implicit assumption that people are generally aware of their needs and can articulate them, regardless of the complexity of human cognition and social influence. Hence, this assumption remains controversial in empirical application (Rubin, 1994).

2.2.2 Relevance of Uses and Gratification Theory

UGT acknowledges that satisfaction may originate from the message, the properties of the medium, or the social context in which media is utilised. Still, it presumes that gratifications can be obtained from the media content itself or from the act of consumption itself (McQuail, 2010). The current research environment, which seeks to understand the Ghanaian public's active participation on the NCCE's social media platforms, is remarkably compatible with these assumptions. By presuming an engaged audience, UGT offers the required perspective to examine why citizens engage with the NCCE online, including the information they are looking for and the advantages they anticipate, thus directly assisting in the investigation of elements that contribute to the development of a favourable institutional brand image.

More precisely, UGT has been crucial in comprehending how citizens interact with e-programmes and official social media in the context of public service and government communication. According to Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes (2010), research has examined gratifications including expressing ideas, accessing political and civic information, engaging in civic debate, and cultivating a sense of community with public bodies. By utilising these insights, the NCCE can better grasp the particular satisfactions that the Ghanaian public looks for in civic education

materials. This knowledge can then be used to develop focused communication tactics that will improve the NCCE's reputation and encourage active citizen involvement.

UGT provides communicators with actionable insights by pinpointing the precise satisfactions that the audience seeks. This allows organisations such as the NCCE to customise their messaging and platform engagement to truly satisfy user demands, which in turn promotes engagement and enhances brand perception.

As an important theoretical pillar, the Uses and Gratifications Theory will significantly direct this study's exploration of how Ghanaians view the NCCE's brand image and interact with its social media channels (Bruce et al., 2025). The study questions were directly informed by the theory, especially when it comes to determining the public rating of the institution's attributes, as expected to be amplified in the NCCE's social media. This knowledge was essential for evaluating how well the NCCE's present social media activities satisfy these demands and, in turn, affect how its brand is viewed (e.g., relevance, trustworthiness).

Decades of research in a variety of media and cultural situations have provided substantial empirical evidence for the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Research shows that people use media for various purposes, from pleasure and information seeking to social engagement, identity enhancement, and environmental monitoring (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). The core idea of UGT—that audience action drives media use—has been repeatedly confirmed, despite ongoing criticisms about the accuracy of measuring conscious motivations (Rubin, 1994). UGT has been extensively used in the social media space to shed light on the reasons behind user engagement with sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It frequently identifies motivations of self-expression, social connection, information acquisition, and leisure (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

UGT's strength is its audience-centric approach. This is essential for undertaking communication activities that are both successful and sensitive to the needs of the audience (McQuail, 2010).

2.2.3 Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer's Model)

In essence, Jean-Noël Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (BIP) is a conceptual and visual tool intended to convey the intricate, comprehensive character of a brand's identity (Kapferer, 1995). It suggests that a company's identity is made up of six interconnected components, three of which reflect the "sender" (the brand's internal perspective) and three of which represent the "receiver" (how the brand is viewed by its audience), moving beyond the oversimplified idea of branding as being a logo or slogan. The model's central ideas are:

1. **Physique:** This refers to the tangible, objective characteristics of the brand – its physical qualities, product attributes, or, in the case of an institution, its visible outputs and services (Kapferer, 1995). For the NCCE, this could encompass its reports, publications, social media visuals, or public education/campaigns.
2. **Personality:** This facet embodies the brand's character and traits, often expressed through its communication style, tone of voice, or visual identity (Kapferer, 1995). It is how the brand speaks and behaves. For the NCCE, this might be a tone of authority, impartiality, accessibility, or encouragement in its social media interactions.
3. **Culture:** Representing the set of values, principles, and beliefs that underpin the brand, culture is often rooted in the organisation's history, country of origin, or founding mission (Kapferer, 1995). The NCCE's culture is inherently tied to democratic values, civic responsibility, education, and national cohesion.

4. **Relationship:** This dimension defines the nature of the bond between the brand and its target audience, often expressed through the brand's actions and communication style (Kapferer, 1995). For the NCCE, this might involve fostering a relationship of trust, guidance, partnership, or active dialogue with citizens.
5. **Reflection:** This refers to the stereotypical user or target audience of the brand, reflecting how the brand aims to portray its ideal customer or citizen (Kapferer, 1995). It is the image of the recipient that the brand projects. The NCCE might reflect an image of an engaged, informed, and responsible Ghanaian citizen.
6. **Self-Image:** This is the internal mirror image that the target audience holds of themselves when they use or identify with the brand (Kapferer, 1995). It is how the public perceives itself through its interactions with the brand. An engaged citizen interacting with NCCE might see themselves as patriotic or civic conscious.

Explaining and managing how a brand's internal essence (identity) transfers into exterior perception (image) and how to maintain consistency and uniqueness across all brand touchpoints are the main goals of the Brand Identity Prism. In order to create strong, enduring brand equity, it aims to make clear what a brand stands for, how it communicates, and how it wants to be viewed (Kapferer, 1995).

This model's main drawback is that, although brand identity ought to remain constant, audience perceptions and the surrounding environment are ever-changing. The process of changing one's identity in reaction to outside changes is not specifically covered in the model.

BIP defines identity; however, it makes no mention of how communications take place or how audiences interpret communications. It does not, for example, explain the subtleties of user

interaction patterns, social media algorithms, or the particular psychological processes involved in message interpretation (these would require other theories like UGT). Additionally, it does not specifically address crisis management or unfavourable brand views, even if a strong identity can serve as a basis for handling them.

2.2.4 Relevance of Brand Identity Prism Theory

The NCCE, as a public institution, benefits immensely from having a clear and positive brand identity to foster public trust and participation. The assumption that identity influences perception is central to this study's goal of understanding how the NCCE projects its image.

Furthermore, acknowledging the symbolic value of the NCCE aligns with the model's comprehensive approach to brand meaning. The BIP provides a systematic way to dissect *what* the NCCE's brand should embody, making it an ideal tool for assessing its attributes.

2.3 Chapter Summary

The chapter highlights the effects of social media interactivity on a brand's image, emphasising that contextual nuances and the ability to navigate public criticism, negative commentary, and unfavourable user-generated content are pivotal in a brand's social media activities. The chapter further outlines the underpinning theories for the study: the Uses and Gratification Theory, and Brand Identity Prism, as well as their relevance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research techniques employed to delve deeper into the study questions. It includes the research approach, research design, research paradigm, study population, sample, sampling techniques, data collection methods and tools, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

For this study, a positivist research paradigm was deemed appropriate. This paradigm provides a robust philosophical foundation for a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014), enabling the systematic measurement of phenomena. Its suitability is particularly evident when considering both its ontological and epistemological standpoints, which align seamlessly with the study's objectives to explain and predict the impact of digital interactions on brand perceptions.

From an ontological standpoint, positivism adheres to the belief in a single, objective reality that exists independently of human consciousness and interpretation (Park et al., 2020). This implies that social phenomena, such as brand image, consumer trust, emotional attachment, and social media interactivity, can be observed, measured, and understood as distinct, quantifiable entities. For this study, adopting a positivist ontology means assuming that the various dimensions of social media interactivity (e.g., customisation, entertainment, promotions, vividness) have objectively measurable effects on brand image and that these effects can be consistently identified and verified across different contexts (Ali, 2024). The study aims to uncover generalizable patterns and

relationships between these variables, which aligns with the positivist view that social reality, much like natural phenomena, operates under discoverable laws and principles. Therefore, constructs such as "trust" or "emotional attachment," though seemingly subjective, are treated as measurable variables whose objective impact on brand image can be determined (Hassan & Basit, 2020; Fadillah et al., 2023).

Complementing this ontological stance, the epistemological standpoint of positivism dictates that knowledge is acquired through empirical observation, sensory experience, and logical reasoning, with a strong emphasis on scientific methods (Bryman, 2016). This translates into a research approach that prioritises quantitative data collection techniques, such as surveys with structured questionnaires, to measure variables precisely and objectively. The researcher is expected to maintain a detached and objective stance, minimising bias and ensuring that findings are verifiable and replicable. For this study, the positivist epistemology necessitates the collection of numerical data from a sufficiently large sample to allow for statistical analysis, which is critical for testing the proposed hypotheses regarding direct, mediating, and moderating effects (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Methods like structural equation modelling (SEM), utilised by studies such as Althuwaini (2022), Fadillah et al. (2023), and Paruthi et al. (2023), exemplify this epistemological commitment to establishing statistical relationships and validating the conceptual framework. This approach enables the study to explain how and why social media interactivity influences brand image, and under what conditions (industry and geographical contexts) these relationships hold, thereby contributing to a body of generalizable knowledge.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a strategy for utilising empirical data to address a research issue (Coe et al., 2021). The use of the proper analysis methods and the employment of procedures that are in line

with the goals and objectives of the research are both ensured by a carefully thought-through research design. For this study, the explanatory research design was employed. This design is distinct from exploratory or descriptive methodologies in its ambition to uncover and explain the causal relationships between variables, thereby contributing to the development and validation of theoretical propositions.

An explanatory research design is characterised by its primary objective: to establish cause-and-effect relationships between phenomena (Saunders et al., 2019; Mohd et al., 2022). The advantages of employing an explanatory research design for this study are manifold.

Firstly, it directly facilitates the testing of hypothesised relationships that form the core of the conceptual framework. The study's aim to determine the "impact" of social media interactivity on brand image, and the mediating roles of constructs like trust, transparency, and customer engagement, inherently requires an explanatory approach (Barreda et al., 2020; Fadillah, Noor, and Kurniawati, 2023). Secondly, this design enables the inference of causality, albeit with careful consideration given the challenges of social science research. While true experimentation is often impractical, quantitative explanatory studies, particularly those employing statistical techniques like Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as seen in Althuwaini (2022), Hassan and Basit (2020), and Paruthi et al. (2023), can provide strong statistical evidence for causal links between variables. This allows the study to move beyond simply describing that interactivity and brand image co-exist, to explaining that one influences the other. Also, given its quantitative nature, explanatory research typically strives for generalizability of findings, allowing the insights gained from the sample to be extended to broader populations or contexts (Bryman, 2016).

An explanatory research design is unequivocally appropriate for the current study. Its fit is perfectly aligned with the positivist research paradigm adopted, which seeks to identify objective, verifiable relationships between measurable variables. The conceptual framework, with its clearly defined independent (social media interactivity), dependent (brand image), mediating (trust, transparency, customer engagement), and moderating (industry and geographical contexts) variables, demands a design capable of testing these intricate influences (Johansson and Hiltula, 2021; Bruce et al., 2025).

3.3 Research Approach

Studies by Creswell (2014) and Choy (2014) identified two main types of research approaches: the qualitative and the quantitative research methods. This study employed the quantitative method approach to research to examine how the NCCE can use social media interactivity on various social media platforms to project a positive brand image.

This approach is fundamentally concerned with the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. It seeks to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables, and generalise results from a larger sample population (Creswell, 2014). Because this study aims to uncover the causal links between social media interactivity and brand image, while accounting for mediating and moderating factors, the quantitative approach presents itself as a perfect fit.

At its core, quantitative research is about measurement and numerical analysis. Its nature is characterised by a deductive reasoning process, where theoretical constructs are operationalised into measurable variables, and hypotheses derived from existing theories are tested (Bryman,

2016). The primary goal is often to generalise findings from a representative sample to a larger population, thereby providing empirically supported insights into the workings of social reality.

The advantages of adopting a quantitative research approach are particularly pertinent to this study. Firstly, it offers statistical power and precision, enabling the researcher to test complex models involving direct relationships, mediation, and moderation with a high degree of confidence. This precision allows for the quantification of the strength and direction of the relationships between social media interactivity, brand image, and the roles of trust, emotional attachment, and customer engagement (Bruce et al., 2025). Moreover, the quantitative approach enhances objectivity and replicability due to its standardised data collection instruments and statistical analysis methods, minimising researcher bias and allowing for verification by other researchers (Bryman, 2016). Finally, it can be efficient for collecting data from large samples, providing a broad overview of consumer perceptions and behaviours towards social media and brands.

The quantitative research approach is exceptionally appropriate for this study. Its alignment with the positivist paradigm dictates a search for measurable realities and generalizable laws concerning social phenomena (Johansson & Hiltula, 2021).

3.4 Research Site

According to George (2022), a research site is defined as the place where data collection will take place. This study was conducted in the Accra Metropolis in the heart of the capital of Ghana.

Located in the central part of the region, the Metropolis is one of the densest jurisdictions in the country (Ghana Statistical Service 2021). The Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) is the administrative governing body for the city of Accra, Ghana. It's one of 268 Metropolitan,

Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana and part of the Greater Accra Region. The AMA has a population of 284,124 as of the 2021 census.

Accra, as the capital city of Ghana, is a vibrant and rapidly evolving urban hub with a high penetration of internet and social media usage. This robust digital landscape provides an ideal ecosystem for observing and collecting data on consumer engagement with brands on social media platforms. The widespread adoption of social media by individuals and businesses alike ensures a rich and accessible pool of respondents and brand activities to analyse, making it a fertile ground for studying social media interactivity in a real-world setting.

Additionally, Accra represents a distinct geographical and cultural context within West Africa. The conceptual framework explicitly identifies geographical/cultural context as a moderator, acknowledging that social and cultural norms can significantly influence consumer behaviour and brand perceptions (Godey et al., 2016; Hudson et al., 2015; Minh & Mai, 2024). Conducting the study in Accra allows for the exploration of how unique Ghanaian cultural elements, communication styles, and local market dynamics shape the effectiveness of social media interactivity in projecting brand image.

3.5 Population

Castillo (2009) defines the target population as the total set of people or things that the researcher is interested in for the purposes of generalising the findings. Social media users are individuals who regularly engage with social networking platforms and applications for various purposes, including communication, information sharing, entertainment, and connecting with brands and communities. Hence, the population would comprise Accra Metropolitan consumers of brands

who actively use social media platforms, especially Facebook, TikTok, X, and Instagram, since these are the most used social media platforms in Ghana.

3.6 Sampling Strategy

McCombes (2022) posited that sampling is an important part of all studies. This is because, regardless of the instrument and method used for data collection, a required approach must be used to choose which units should be studied and included in the study, and which ones should be discarded. Despite this, Tannor (2014) states that the sample must represent the population from which it was obtained. This implies that the inclusion criteria must reflect reasonable judgment.

Due to the nature of the study, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to recruit a sample from the population. Stratified random sampling involves dividing the target population into homogeneous, non-overlapping subgroups, or "strata," based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2016). Once these strata are defined, a random sample is drawn from each stratum, ensuring that each member within the stratum has an equal chance of selection. For the study's population, highly pertinent stratification variables could include demographic factors such as age groups, gender, and possibly socio-economic status, as well as behavioral characteristics like the frequency of social media engagement. This methodical approach ensures that the diversity inherent in a metropolitan population is adequately captured, providing a robust foundation for a quantitative study seeking to generalise its findings.

Furthermore, it significantly enhances the representativeness of the sample by guaranteeing that specific subgroups, which might otherwise be under- or over-represented in a convenience sample, are included in proportions reflective of the target population (Saunders et al., 2019). This is vital

for a study seeking to understand complex social phenomena like brand image formation, where perceptions can vary across different demographics or behavioural segments.

Stratified random sampling also supports the examination of the study's moderating variables: Industry Context and Geographical/Cultural Context. By ensuring proportional representation of diverse consumer segments within Accra, the sampling strategy allows for a nuanced analysis of how these inherent differences within the Accra context might influence the relationships between social media interactivity, brand image, and mediating factors. For instance, varying age groups might exhibit different patterns of social media interactivity or respond to brand messages in culturally specific ways, which can be uncovered through robust stratification (Creswell, 2014).

3.6.1 Inclusion Criteria

Participants must meet all of the following conditions to be included in the study:

1. **Geographical Residence:** Must reside within the Accra Metropolitan Area at the time of the study. This ensures the study's focus on the specified local context.
2. **Active Social Media User:** Must actively use at least one social media platform (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok) regularly. This is crucial as the study investigates social media interactivity.
3. **Consumer of Brands:** Must engage with or follow brands on social media platforms, influenced by their social media presence. This criterion directly links to the study's focus on brand image.
4. **Age Requirement:** Must be 18 years of age or older to ensure legal capacity to consent and a mature understanding of the research questions.

5. **Language Proficiency:** Must be proficient in English, as the research instrument (questionnaire) was administered in English.
6. **Willingness to Participate:** Participants must provide informed consent to participate in the study, indicating their understanding of the research purpose and procedures.

3.6.2 Sample Size

The Cochran's formula was used because the exact number of social media users in the Accra Metropolis is unknown (infinite population); therefore, an estimation of the sample size was based on statistical probability.

The standard Cochran's formula for an unknown population is:

$$n = (z^2 \times p(1-p))/e^2$$

Where:

n = The required sample size.

Z = The Z-score (confidence level). For a 95% confidence level, the standard score is 1.96.

p = The estimated proportion of the population that has the attribute. Since the exact proportion is unknown, researchers use 0.5 (50%), as this provides the maximum sample size (most conservative estimate).

e = The margin of error (level of precision). The researcher chose 0.05 (5%), which is the standard for academic studies.

Substituting these values into the formula gives:

$$n = ([1,96] ^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5))/0.05^2$$

$$n = 0.9604/0.0025$$

$$n = 384.16$$

Since one cannot interview 0.16 of a person, the number is rounded to the nearest whole number, resulting in a sample size (n) of 384 participants.

While the 2021 Population and Housing Census places the total population of the Accra Metropolis at approximately 284,124, with an adult population (18+ years) estimated at 185,000, there are no official statistics detailing the exact number of active social media users within this specific jurisdiction. Because the exact proportion of the population possessing the attribute of interest (active social media usage) is unknown, the population is treated as infinite for statistical purposes. Consequently, Cochran's formula was deemed the most appropriate method for determining a representative sample size.

To ensure the study's findings were statistically robust and generalizable, standard parameters for social science research were applied to Cochran's equation. A confidence level of 95% was selected, corresponding to a Z-score of 1.96, which is the standard for quantitative explanatory research. Additionally, a margin of error (e) of 0.05 (5%) was established to ensure high precision in the results. Critically, because the prevalence of social media usage is variable, the degree of variability (p) was set at 0.5 (50%). This is the maximum variability assumption, which yields the largest and therefore most conservative sample size required to represent the population adequately.

Applying these parameters to the formula, the calculation yielded a raw sample size of 384.16. To maintain statistical rigor and account for potential non-response, this figure was rounded to the nearest whole number. Thus, a final sample size of 384 participants was recruited for the study.

This sample size allows for the generalization of findings to the broader Accra Metropolitan population with a 95% confidence level, consistent with the requirements of a positivist research paradigm.

3.7 Data Collection Technique

David, Hitchcock, Ragan, Brooks, and Starkey (2018) posited that the data collection instrument gives a solution to the question of how to collect data. For this study, a structured questionnaire will serve as the primary data collection instrument, administered predominantly through online channels. This was considered to enable the respondents to complete the questionnaires at their own pace and preferred location, mitigating dropout (Wright, 2005). According to Kuphanga (2024), the online channel also ensures rapid data collection and real-time monitoring of responses, allowing the researcher to quickly analyse the results since data is already in a digital format. This methodological choice ensures standardisation, facilitates quantitative analysis, and aligns with the study's objective of generating generalizable insights.

The structured questionnaire is meticulously designed to capture precise, quantifiable data from a large sample. Its nature involves a series of predefined questions, predominantly closed-ended, employing a 5-point Likert scale to measure attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours across various constructs (Creswell, 2014). This approach gives several advantages, including standardisation, which minimises interviewer bias and ensures consistency across all responses. It significantly simplifies data entry and analysis, enabling the application of advanced statistical techniques necessary for an explanatory design. The questionnaire was systematically organised into sections, each addressing specific aspects of the conceptual framework. These sections will include:

1. **Demographic Information:** To capture respondent characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education, income) essential for understanding the population and for potential moderation analysis related to industry or geographical context.
2. **Social Media Interactivity:** Questions operationalising its dimensions (e.g., customisation, vividness, entertainment, informativeness) as perceived by users.
3. **Brand Image:** Measures of consumers' perceptions of brand attributes, reputation, and overall image.
4. **Mediating Variables:** Scales to assess trust, emotional attachment, and customer engagement in relation to brands on social media.
5. **Moderating Variables:** While industry and geographical contexts are primarily addressed through sample selection, specific questions might explore the types of industries respondents engage with or their duration of social media use in the Ghanaian context.

3.8 Data Collection Process

The data will primarily be gathered through online administration, leveraging the widespread internet and social media penetration within the Accra Metropolitan Area. This process is highly efficient for reaching a large and geographically dispersed population of social media users. Online survey platforms (e.g., Google Forms, Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey) were utilised for their ease of distribution, data capture, and preliminary analysis capabilities. The distribution strategy was multifaceted to effectively implement the stratified random sampling technique:

1. **Social Media Platforms:** Links to the survey were disseminated through relevant social media groups and communities frequented by consumers in Accra. This direct channel is congruent with the study's focus on social media.

2. **Targeted Online Communities:** Collaborations with administrators of large online forums or community groups in Accra could facilitate broader reach.
3. **Email Distribution:** Relevant organisational or consumer group email lists could also be used.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Before commencing the survey, all participants were presented with a clear informed consent statement, outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality protocols, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity was ensured by not collecting any personally identifiable information, thereby encouraging honest responses. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to any data collection. Upon completion of data gathering, the raw data will undergo thorough cleaning, coding, and preliminary screening for outliers and missing values in preparation for advanced statistical analysis.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Creswell (2014) posited that validity is the degree to which an empirical measure accurately captures the notion it was designed to measure. Plano, Clark, and Creswell (2011) noted that the importance of validity is to ensure that the instrument accurately and successfully measures the concepts in question.

Reliability, according to Fetters (2016), determines whether or not the data is trustworthy, dependable, plausible, and able to withstand scrutiny. Pre-testing was used to address each of them while creating the observational guide and questionnaires. Pre-testing of the data collection instrument was done using respondents from the Kumasi Metropolitan Area. Kumasi Metropolitan

was chosen because the respondents had similar demographic characteristics to those in the Accra Metropolitan. Based on the results of the pilot testing, adjustments were made to the questionnaire.

3.11 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis, according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), is the process of giving the collected data structure, meaning, and order. In order to convey findings, the researcher must report on how the data was handled, arranged, and analysed, according to Bloomberg (2008) and Chavan (2016). Since this study used a quantitative methodology, it was necessary to analyse the data independently. Data analysis should take place within quantitative approaches.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrated the positivist paradigm, the philosophical assumptions, and their application to the study. The research was approached quantitatively, while the explanatory design was deemed appropriate. Data were collected from a stratified sample of respondents, and a survey questionnaire was adopted as the data collection instrument. A high level of ethics was considered, and varying strategies to ensure validity and reliability were employed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter three presented the methodology used to recruit study participants, collect data, and analyze the gathered data. This was approached quantitatively, as data was collected through the use of questionnaire from a sample selected by means of a stratified random sampling method. In this chapter, the findings are presented and discussed by comparing them with the general literature, highlighting similarities and differences. Also, the chapter captured the demographics of the study participants.

4.1 Study Demographics

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Study Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	189	49.2
	Female	195	50.8
	Total	384	100.0
Age Group	18 – 25 years	127	33.1
	26 – 35 years	166	43.2
	36 – 45 years	32	8.3
	46 – 55 years	35	9.1
	56+ years	24	6.3
	Total	384	100.0
Educational Level	No formal education	0	0
	Primary	18	4.7

	JHS	30	7.8
	SHS	70	18.2
	Tertiary	266	69.3
	Total	384	100.0
Occupation	Student	41	10.7
	Unemployed	40	10.4
	Government Employee	96	25.0
	Private Sector Employee	107	27.9
	Self-employed	100	26.0
	Total	384	100.0

The study sample exhibits a highly equitable gender distribution, with 50.8% female and 49.2% male participants. This is almost perfectly aligned with the national figures from the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC), which recorded females at 50.7% and males at 49.3% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). This close balance suggests the sample avoids systemic bias attributable to gender over-representation, which enhances the reliability of gender-based findings within the study.

The study's sample is heavily concentrated in the younger adult categories, with 76.3% of respondents falling into the 18-35 years age group. This demographic skew is highly advantageous for a study on social media, as it aligns directly with established trends in Ghana and globally.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2021), national demographic data confirms Ghana's population is transitioning to one dominated by young people, with the age group 15-35 years accounting for 38.2% of the population in 2021. The youth-centric nature of the sample directly reflects the profile of internet and social media users in the country. General literature suggests

that social media growth in Ghana is driven by mobile usage, with 62% of users aged 18-24. The study's concentration of participants under 35 years thus positions the findings as highly relevant to the most engaged digital-consumer segment in the country, but it means the results may be less generalizable to older age groups.

The sample's educational profile is the most striking deviation from national averages, with 69.3% of participants reporting Tertiary education. While the Greater Accra Region itself boasts the highest literacy rate in Ghana at 87.9%, the tertiary attainment rate in the study far exceeds the national average. The 2021 PHC noted that only 13.0% of the population aged 18 years and older who have attended school in the past have a tertiary education as their highest level attained.

This high educational attainment is a characteristic of many non-probability samples in digital studies. However, it is also consistent with the literature indicating that students and highly educated individuals, particularly those in tertiary institutions, are among the most prolific and advanced users of social media in Ghana for purposes ranging from entertainment to academic work (GSS, 2021). Therefore, while this sample is not representative of the general Ghanaian population's educational background, it is highly representative of the digitally engaged, tertiary-educated segment whose opinions on digital branding are most pertinent.

The occupational distribution is broad, with 78.9% actively engaged in the workforce (Private Sector, Self-Employed, and Government Employees). The concentration of the sample in the capital's metropolitan area and among working adults thus ensures the study captures the perspectives of the country's most economically active and urbanized social media users.

The decision to focus on the Accra Metropolis was a pragmatic choice that leverages the region's high connectivity and digital engagement, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the social media-related findings.

4.2 Findings for Research Questions

4.2.1 Research Question 1

Research question 1 of the study sought to determine the degree of perceived interactivity and engagement of NCCE’s social media communication. The data points to a One-Way information dissemination by the NCCE on social media, suggesting that the organization exhibits an over-reliance on a public information model. When asked about NCCE’s responsiveness to questions and comments, only 139 of the 384 participants agreed that the organisation is responsive. For a public institution with the mandate of civic engagement with the public, the NCCE ought to be concerned that a minute segment of the respondents appreciates its level of responsiveness to questions and comments on social media.

Figure 1: NCCE’s Responsiveness to Questions and Comments

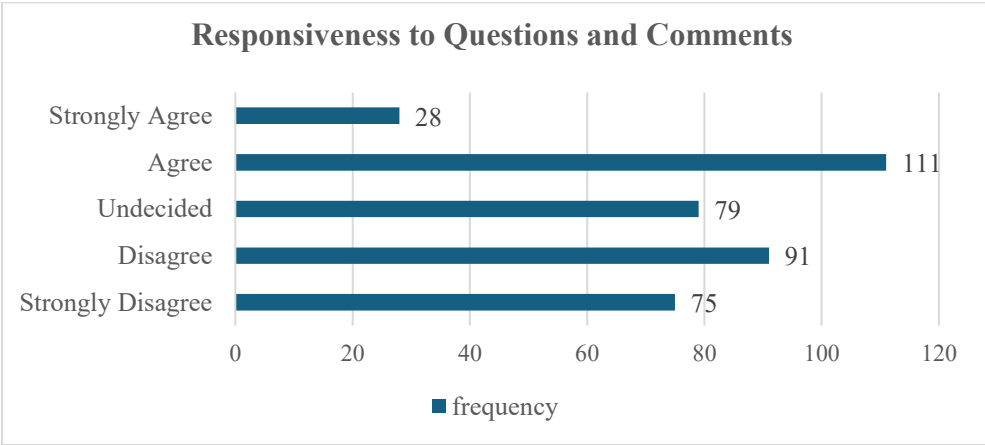


Table 2: Perceived Interactivity of Social Media Posts

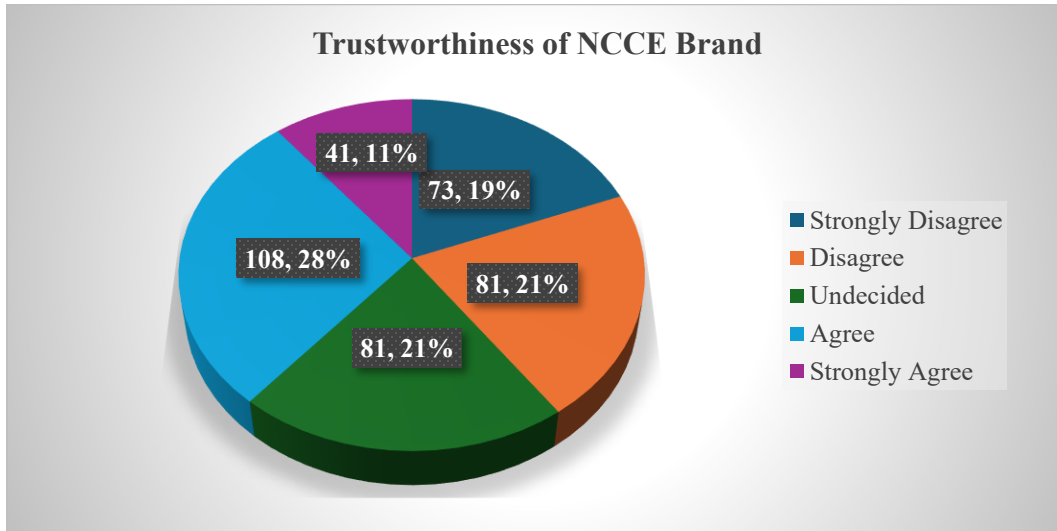
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	12	3.1
Disagree	62	16.1
Undecided	184	47.8
Agree	112	29.5
Strongly Agree	14	3.6
Total	384	100.0

The table above displays the level of interactivity of NCCE’s social media posts. Gauging against the data collected, only 126 of 384 agreed that the NCCE’s social media posts are interactive. The rest outrightly disagreed or were unsure. This should be a cause to worry for an institution whose mandate revolves around building civic consciousness and encouraging active civic participation.

4.2.2 Research Question 2

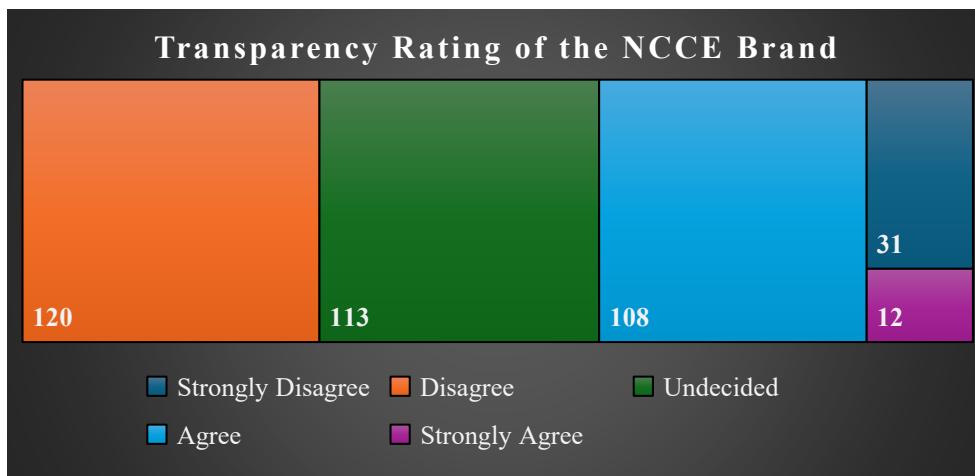
Research Question 2 aimed to assess the public rating of the core NCCE brand attributes as projected on social media. The data further emphasized that a state institution whose mission is centered on the public good must be assessed against public-centric ethical attributes – trustworthiness and transparency – as proffered by Owusu (2025). The findings revealed that 40% (19 + 21%) of the respondents 'Strongly Disagree' or 'Disagree' with the brand's trustworthiness. Conversely, 39% (28% + 11%) express agreement. The 'Undecided' category stands at 21%. This finding represents a close division, where skepticism and affirmation of trustworthiness are nearly balanced, highlighting a polarized viewpoint.

Figure 2: Trustworthiness of NCCE Brand



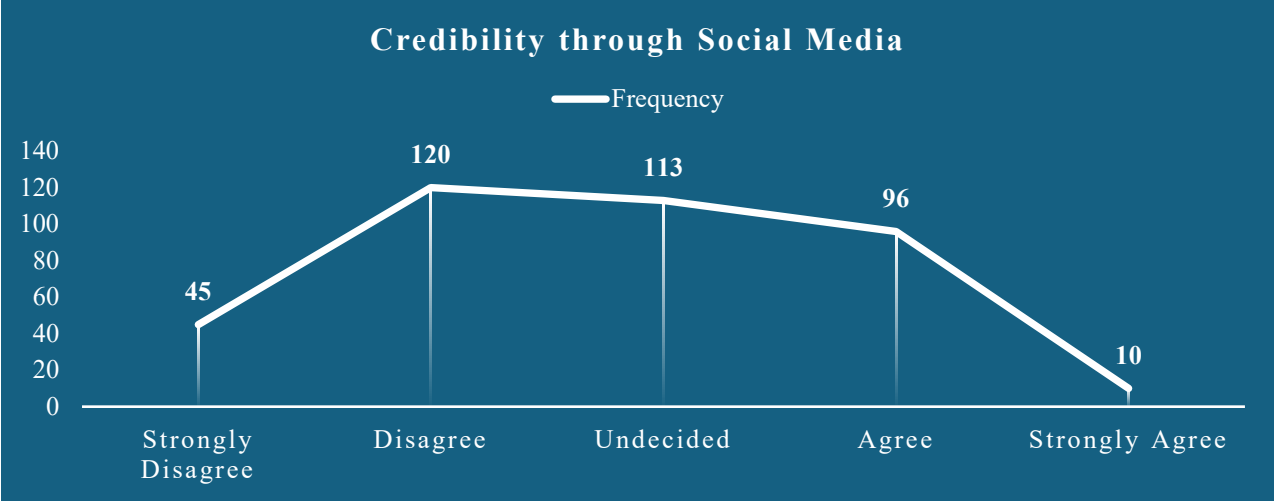
The perceived Transparency of NCCE Brand is detailed in the third figure. A combined 151 of the respondents (31+120) 'Strongly Disagree' or 'Disagree' regarding the NCCE's transparency. While 113 are undecided, only a significant handful of 12 respondents agreed that the NCCE can be rated as transparent. The low agreement on transparency indicates that the respondents perceive a significant gap in the openness and clarity of the information provided by the Commission.

Figure 3: Transparency Rating of the NCCE Brand



This raised questions about the Commission's credibility. Only 106, representing 27.7% of the respondents, expressed belief in the credibility of the organisation. The remaining begged to differ or were undecided.

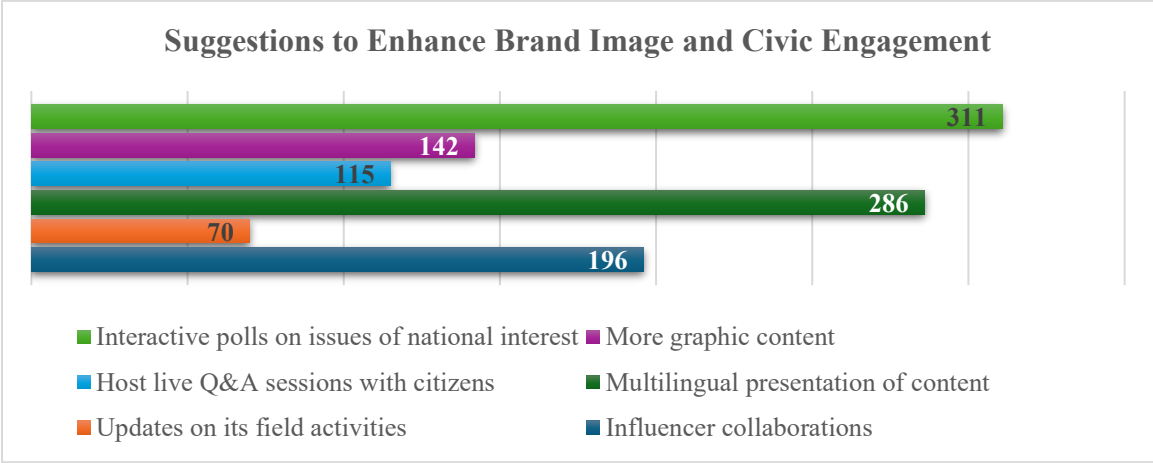
Figure 4: Credibility Garnered through Social Media



4.2.3 Research Question 3

The third research question inquired about the specific public suggestions for the NCCE to enhance its brand image and civic engagement through social media. Three specific suggestions stood out among the alternatives: Influencer collaborations, Multilingual presentation of content, and Interactive polls on issues of national interest. While 196 opined that the institution should leverage influencer collaborations, 286 were of the view that adopting a multilingual presentation of its social media content was the most appropriate direction to take. Notwithstanding, 311 respondents believed that the ability of the NCCE to provide interactive polls on issues of national interest would reflect an institution that is keen on enhancing its brand image and civic engagement. The data thus reveals critical tactics the organisation can employ to promote civic consciousness among the citizenry and make progress that aligns with achieving its civic mandate.

Figure 4: Specific Public Suggestions to Enhance Brand Image and Civic Engagement through Social Media



4.3 Discussion of Findings

4.3.1 Objective 1

The first objective of the study was to determine the degree of perceived interactivity and engagement of NCCE’s social media communication. Findings reveal that the NCCE’s social media barely considers interactive dialogue and engagement, which is fundamentally at odds with the modern digital communication paradigm and has critical implications for the organization's brand image. This also directly contradicts the nature of contemporary digital communication. The literature confirms that the rise of social media platforms has caused a "digital disruption" that moved communication away from "traditional one-way communication models," ushering in a new era of "symmetrical and multi-way interactions" (Hang, 2024).

By adhering to a one-way, public information model, the NCCE is not leveraging the core interactive potential of its platforms. In a digital environment where the public is accustomed to

instant feedback and dialogue, a non-responsive, information-only approach can make an organization appear out of touch or uninterested in public engagement (Januam, 2025).

This outcome is consistent with research on effective social media strategies. Modern organizations, particularly in the public sector, are expected to use social media for "audience engagement" and "community building" (Jeswani, 2023). By limiting interaction, the NCCE is missing the unparalleled opportunities social media offers for "brand awareness" and "targeted marketing" (Jeswani, 2023). The over-reliance on a static communication model undermines the strong, positive relationship consistently observed between effective social media strategies and the successful building of brand and reputation (Pakura & Rudeloff, 2020; Mpuku, 2024).

In the commercial sector, where digital branding is essential, studies (such as the one focused on Netflix Turkey) demonstrate that perceived social media performance positively affects brand image (Ok & Baş, 2021). The NCCE's social media platforms, characterized by low engagement and one-way flow, represents an underperformance from a branding perspective.

The Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 1995) posits that Relationship is one of the six key interconnected components of a brand's identity. The NCCE is thus expected to incorporate social media interactivity to build trust and credibility among the citizenry. BIP argues that perceptions are formed about a brand beyond its logos and slogans, but in its ability to connect with the target audience. This aligns with the Reflection component of a brand identity. Because the NCCE is mandated to deepen civic consciousness among the masses, the latter, through their interactions with the organisation, will reflect an image of an engaged, patriotic, and responsible citizenry.

4.3.2 Objective 2

The study additionally aimed to assess the public rating of the core NCCE brand attributes as projected across its social media platforms. The assessment of the National Commission for Civic Education's (NCCE) brand attributes on social media reveals critical insights into public perceptions of trustworthiness and transparency. These attributes are foundational to the legitimacy of state institutions whose mandate is centered on the public good (Owusu, 2025).

The findings indicate that 40% of respondents either Strongly Disagree or Disagree with the assertion that the NCCE brand is trustworthy, while 39% express agreement, and 21% remain undecided. This near balance between skepticism and affirmation underscores a polarized public perception. According to Ok & Baş (2021), trustworthiness in institutions is built upon ability and integrity. The division observed suggests that while a segment of the public acknowledges the Commission's integrity and civic role, another segment questions its ability to consistently deliver on its mandate.

Polarization in trust ratings is not uncommon in public institutions. Declining trust in public institutions often reflects broader societal skepticism about governance and accountability (Minh & Mai, 2024). The undecided group (21%) further highlights uncertainty, suggesting that the NCCE's social media communications may not be sufficiently persuasive or clear to influence public opinion decisively.

Transparency ratings present a more concerning picture. The overwhelming perception of non-transparency suggests a significant gap in the Commission's ability to project openness and clarity in its social media communications. Transparency is widely recognized as a cornerstone of institutional legitimacy (Jeswani, 2023). When citizens perceive a lack of transparency, they are

more likely to disengage with the institution. As Mpuku (2024) notes, transparency is not merely about information disclosure but also about ensuring that information is understandable and usable by the public. The high undecided rate (113 respondents) reinforces the notion that the NCCE's communication may lack clarity, leaving citizens uncertain about its openness.

Viewing from the lenses of the Uses and Gratification theory, the public is an active evaluator of NCCE's social media outputs. Citizens assess whether the Commission's content satisfies their need for trustworthy and transparent civic information. The levels of disagreement on transparency suggest that the audience's informational needs are not being adequately met.

The findings collectively highlight that while trustworthiness is contested, transparency is overwhelmingly perceived as deficient. This aligns with the argument by Pakura & Rudeloff (2020) that transparency and accountability are interdependent; without transparency, trust cannot be sustained. For the NCCE, the polarized trust ratings and low transparency agreement suggest an urgent need to reconsider openness, clarity, and consistent engagement.

4.3.3 Objective 3

The third objective of the study was to determine the specific public suggestions for the NCCE to enhance its brand image and civic engagement through social media. The findings highlighted influencer collaborations, multilingual presentation of content, and interactive polls on issues of national interest. These suggestions reflect contemporary approaches to digital civic engagement and underscore the importance of aligning institutional communication with public expectations.

A total of 196 respondents emphasized the need for the NCCE to leverage influencer collaborations. This finding resonates with the growing recognition of influencers as key actors in shaping public opinion and mobilizing civic participation. Wise (2024) asserts that influencers

serve as cultural intermediaries who bridge institutions and audiences by creating relatable and persuasive content. For the NCCE, collaborating with credible influencers could enhance visibility, foster trust, and make civic education messages more appealing to younger demographics who dominate social media spaces.

286 respondents advocated for the adoption of multilingual content presentation. This reflects the linguistic diversity of Ghana and the need for inclusivity in civic communication. According to Mickoleit (2014), language choice in public communication is a critical determinant of participation and identity. By presenting content in multiple local languages, the NCCE can reduce barriers to understanding, foster inclusivity, and strengthen its legitimacy as a national institution. Multilingual strategies also align with the principle of accessibility in civic education, ensuring that messages resonate across ethnic and linguistic groups (Smart Insights, 2025).

The most popular suggestion, supported by 311 respondents, was the use of interactive polls on issues of national interest. This finding underscores the public's desire for participatory engagement mechanisms. Digital platforms thrive when they enable collective participation and feedback (Sasu, 2025). Interactive polls not only provide citizens with a voice but also signal institutional responsiveness, thereby enhancing perceptions of transparency and accountability. For the NCCE, adopting such tools could foster dialogue, strengthen civic consciousness, and project an image of an institution that values citizen input. This aligns with the broader discourse on digital governance, where institutions are expected to adopt innovative communication practices that enhance legitimacy and civic trust (McQuail, 2010).

The three dominant suggestions map onto different facets of the Brand Identity Prism. Influencer collaborations enhance personality by making the brand relatable and dynamic. Multilingual

content strengthens culture and reflection, ensuring inclusivity and mirroring Ghana's diverse citizenry. Interactive polls reinforce relationship by fostering two-way communication and participatory engagement.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the study's findings. Data collected from a youthful, highly educated, and digitally active sample (reflective of Ghana's online population) revealed that the NCCE relied on a one-way asymmetrical communication approach that limits engagements and weakens its brand online presence. The Commission's communication approach appears outdated, resulting in low levels of transparency rating and public trust. The findings underscored the need for a more interactive, participatory approach on social media to enhance the NCCE's brand image and civic engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings from the data collection and a discussion of the findings in relation to general literature. In this chapter, a summary of the entire thesis will be presented. Also, the conclusion is presented in this chapter, and lastly, recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and opportunities associated with using social media to project a positive brand image for the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in Ghana, with the ultimate aim of developing evidence-based recommendations to enhance its digital communication strategies and strengthen its public image.

The major findings of this study are presented below based on the analysis of the data collected:

1. **The Degree of Perceived Interactivity and Engagement of Social Media Communication:** The findings showed that the Commission primarily uses platforms for broadcasting information, such as posting announcements and civic education content, without engaging in the symmetrical, two-way dialogue characteristic of modern digital communication. This strategic approach constrains the adaptation to the highly interactive nature of social media platforms.
2. **The public rating of the Core Brand Attributes (Trustworthiness and Transparency) of the NCCE as projected on Social Media:** The study observed a polarized outcome pertaining to the trustworthiness of the NCCE brand. This suggests that while a chunk of the public affirms the institution's trustworthiness, another chunk

expresses skepticism. The high rate of undecided respondents on the issue of NCCE's transparency reinforces the notion that the NCCE's communication may lack clarity, leaving citizens uncertain about its openness.

- 3. Specific Public Suggestions to Enhance NCCE's Brand Image and Civic Engagement through Social Media:** The three notable suggestions – influencer collaborations, multilingual presentation of content, and interactive polls on issues of national interest – emphasize the importance of aligning institutional communication with public expectations. Social media activities must therefore be relatable and offer citizens a voice. Such posturing also signal institutional responsiveness and concern for the public's take.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings on the perceived interactivity and engagement of the NCCE's social media communication, public rating of its core attributes, and the specific public suggestions, the study concludes the following:

1. Strategic Communication Barrier

A fundamental strategic communication challenge characterizes the NCCE's social media communications. The organization is overly reliant on a public information model that is obsolete in the modern digital landscape. This one-way approach ignores the symmetrical and multi-way interaction expected by a highly engaged, social media-savvy Ghanaian public.

2. Low ratings of Organisational Transparency and Trustworthiness

The institution's inability to adopt open and clear social media activities has taken a toll on its transparency ratings. Similarly, the near-balanced viewpoints on its trustworthiness is an indication

that the NCCE is yet to establish itself as an institution built on integrity and the ability to consistently deliver on its civic mandate.

3. Brand Image is the Primary Mechanism for Civic Success

The study conclusively establishes that Brand Perception is the most critical and potent driver of desired Civic Outcomes. The statistical evidence demonstrates that the public's positive attitude towards the NCCE acts as a powerful mediating variable. Therefore, the NCCE's primary goal on social media should not be to simply disseminate information, but to deliberately cultivate a positive, trusted, and engaging brand image to achieve its mandate.

4. Need for a Strategic Digital Overhaul

The findings reveal that the NCCE ought to focus on high-quality, engaging content that builds trust, rather than simply increasing the frequency of posts or follower count. Additionally, it is essential for the institution to shift from one-way broadcast to active, two-way dialogue and community building.

5.3 Limitations

Geographical Scope and Generalizability: The study utilized a sample drawn primarily from the Greater Accra Region. While this region is the economic and administrative hub and a major driver of social media activity in Ghana, the findings may not be directly generalizable to the entire Ghanaian population. Specifically, differences in media consumption habits, digital literacy, and organizational awareness in less urbanized or geographically distant regions were not captured, potentially leading to a regional bias in the perceived brand image.

Cross-Sectional Research Design: The use of a quantitative survey established a cross-sectional view of public perceptions and attitudes towards the NCCE and civic engagement at a single point in time. According to Bruce et al. (2025), this design allows for the examination of patterns and correlations. Yet, it does not establish a definitive cause-and-effect relationship, since it does not track changes in public perception over time.

Methodological Depth: As a purely quantitative study, the research was designed to measure and quantify attitudes and statistical relationships. Consequently, it was unable to deeply explore the underlying, complex reasons for the observed patterns of skepticism or low core attribute ratings. (Fauser, 2018). Future qualitative or mixed-methods studies would be required to provide a rich, narrative understanding of the public's motivations and challenges. Future studies can content analyse the NCCE's social media platforms to draw comparisons with public perceptions and better appreciate the issues.

Reliance on Self-Reported Data: The primary data source was self-reported surveys, which are inherently susceptible to Social Desirability Bias (Fadillah & Kurniawati, 2023). Participants may have provided responses that they deemed socially acceptable or ideal regarding their civic engagement intentions or their assessment of a public institution, rather than reflecting their true behavior or sentiments. Similarly, responses concerning social media usage are subject to recall bias.

5.4 Recommendations

1. **Shift Communication Model to Dialogue (Two-Way):** Move immediately from the passive "public information model" to an interactive, symmetrical communication strategy focused on dialogue and feedback.

2. **Prioritize Brand Image as the Core Goal:** Make the cultivation of a positive, reliable, and trustworthy brand image the primary Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for all social media activities.
3. **Develop a Social Media Responsiveness Policy:** Institute a mandatory policy to ensure timely and relevant responses to public comments and inquiries to address the low-salience perception.
4. **Conduct Perception-Focused Monitoring:** Move beyond tracking simple metrics (likes, shares) to regularly monitoring public sentiment and Brand Perception scores to track strategic success.
5. **Align Social Media communication and activities with Civic Outcome:** Ensure every social media campaign is explicitly designed to reinforce a specific aspect of the NCCE's positive brand attributes (e.g., trustworthy, transparent, etc.) as a direct path to achieving the desired civic behavior or knowledge.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The NCCE's over-reliance on a one-way asymmetrical communication approach on social media resulted in low public trust and salience. However, the deep-rooted reason(s) for this brand perception among the public were not explored in-depth. While future studies can look into it qualitatively, the NCCE can enhance its brand image and reputation by considering a symmetrical communication approach online to leverage its digitally active audience on high-engagement social media platforms.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND BRAND IMAGE OF NCCE

I am a postgraduate student of UniMAC-IJ conducting academic research aimed at exploring how social media can be leveraged to project a positive brand image among public sector institutions, precisely, Ghana's National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE).

The survey is likely to take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You are invited to participate in this survey, being assured that your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Kindly answer in honesty, as information provided will only be used for academic purposes, and no individual response will be identified. Thank you so much for your time and assistance.

Section A: Social Media Usage

1. Which social media platforms do you actively use? (Select all that apply)
 Facebook Instagram TikTok X (formerly Twitter) YouTube WhatsApp
 Others (Kindly indicate):
2. How often do you use social media?
 Daily Weekly Monthly Rarely
3. Do you follow or engage with any public institutions on social media?
 Yes No
4. Are you aware of the NCCE's presence on social media?
 Yes No
5. Which of NCCE's platforms do you follow? (Select all that apply)
 Facebook Instagram TikTok X (formerly Twitter) YouTube WhatsApp
6. How often do you see a post from NCCE through its social media platforms?
 Daily Weekly Monthly Rarely

Section B: Perceptions of NCCE’s Social Media

7. What is the level of effectiveness of NCCE’s social media in communicating its mandate? Tick (✓) only one.

- Very Effective Effective Neutral Not Effective Not Effective at all

8. The content shared by NCCE on social media is:

- Very Informative Informative Neutral Poor Very Poor

9. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree) to what extent do you agree with the following statements about NCCE’s social media?

- NCCE’s social media helps me better understand my civic responsibilities.....
- The content reflects professionalism and credibility.....
- NCCE’s content is relevant in promoting its mandate.....
- NCCE is responsive to questions and comments online.....
- The tone and style of communication are appealing.....
- The social media posts are usually interactive and engaging.....
- Social media posts strengthen my trust in the NCCE.....
- The social media experience with NCCE makes me feel connected to the institution.....

10. Do you consider NCCE’s social media as interactive (two-way) or just informative (one-way)? Tick (✓) only one.

- Mostly Interactive Mostly Informative Unsure

Section C: Brand Image of NCCE

11. What comes to mind when you think about NCCE as seen through its social media?

.....
.....

12. On a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is worst and 5 is best), rate the following aspects of NCCE’s image as projected on social media:

- Trustworthiness.....
- Transparency.....
- Relevance of content.....
- National unity promotion.....

13. Has the following NCCE’s social media influenced your perception of the institution?

- Yes, positively Yes, negatively No change

Section D: Specific Suggestions for Brand Image Enhancement

14. What do you suggest the NCCE can do to enhance its image and civic engagements on social media? Tick as many as apply.

- Influencer collaborations
- Regular updates on field activities
- Multilingual presentation of content
- Host live Q&A sessions with citizens
- More graphic content
- Interactive polls on issues of national interest

15. What improvements aside from the above would you recommend for NCCE to enhance its brand image through social media?

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Section E: Demographic Information

16. Gender:

- Male Female

17. Age:

- 18–25 26–35 36–45 46–55 56 and above

18. Educational level:

- No Formal Education Primary JHS SHS Tertiary

19. Occupation:

- Student Public Servant Private Sector Worker Self-employed Unemployed

20. Region of residence: