

# **Ghana Institute of Journalism**

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHAVIOR OF THE YOUTH: A CASE  
STUDY OF STUDENTS OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA.**

**By**

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**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A  
MASTERS DEGREE IN MEDIA MANAGEMENT.**

**OCTOBER, 2017**

**DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION**

**Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this study is the result of my own original research, except the references which I have duly acknowledged, and that no part of it has been presented for another degree at the Institute or elsewhere.

Signature.....

Date.....27-10-2017

Sandra Frimpong

**Supervisor's Declaration**

I hereby declare that the presentation of this long essay supervised by me is in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Signature.....

Date.....27-10-2017

Mr. Kelvin Mensah

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research to my family through whom God blesses and empowers me. I also dedicate this research to my best friend Benedicta Hockey who motivated and inspired me to pull this work through.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge the Almighty God for the blessing of life, good health and the wealth of knowledge bestowed on all individuals who contributed to the success of this research.

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To my family and friends, I am grateful for the love, care and support.

I appreciate all efforts.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover and Spine.....	i
Title Page .....	ii
Declaration and Certification.....	iii
Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgement .....	v
Table of contents.....	vi
List of tables.....	ix
List of figures .....	x
Abstract.....	xi

## CHAPTER 1

1.1 Background of study.....	1
1.2 Statement of problem.....	2
1.3 Objectives.....	3
1.4 Research questions.....	4
1.5 Scope of the study.....	4
1.6 Significance research.....	4
1.7 Organization of the study .....	5

## **CHAPTER 2**

2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	11
2.3 Social media and the youth .....	25
2.4 Future of social media.....	32
2.5 Chapter summary.....	35

## **CHAPTER 3**

3.1 Introduction.....	35
3.2 Research Method.....	35
3.3 Research design.....	36
3.4 Target population.....	38
3.5 Sample .....	38
3.6 Sampling technique.....	39
3.6 Data collection tools and procedures .....	40
3.7 Data processing and presentation.....	34
3.8 Data analysis and presentation .....	40
3.9 Validity and reliability of research instruments .....	41
3.10 Ethical Issues.....	42

## **CHAPTER 4**

4.1 Introduction.....	43
4.2 Data analysis.....	43

## **CHAPTER 5**

5.1 Introduction.....	72
5.2 Summary.....	72
5.3 Major findings of the study.....	73
5.4 Major recommendations.....	74
5.5 Suggestions for further research.....	75
5.6. Conclusion.....	76
Reference.....	77
Appendix.....	82

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 4.1: courses respondents were taken in the university.....	47
Table 4.2: Most common activity when respondents are using the computer.....	50
Table 4.3: The most common social media site visited.....	51
Table 4.4: Reliability test on objective.....	53
Table 4.5: uses of social media by respondents.....	56
Table 4.6: Benefits of social media .....	60
Table 4.7: effects of social media .....	63
Table 4.8: Other effects of social media.....	65
Table 4.9: Risk involved in using social media .....	67
Table 5.0: Other risk brought by social media .....	70

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Fig 4.1. Distribution of respondents by gender.....	44
Fig 4.2. Level of education.....	45
Fig 4.3. Age bracket of respondents.....	48
Fig 4.4. Hours spent on the computer by respondents.....	49
Fig 4.5. Where respondents access the computer.....	52

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media as a part of new media has become an integral part of the youths' life. As the world migrates into the digital world, the internet or web is becoming part of the general business for communication. It gives the youth some sense of power and also a bit of control on what affects them. With the help of a mobile phone or a computer and an internet, one access a social media platform without any supervision hence chooses what information to access and what not to. The youth now has the power to what social network he involves himself and can deal with strangers at any given time. The socio-cultural, Political or religious beliefs of the strangers the youth engages on social media can have an impact on them.

A reason why this research used both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the impact of social media on behavior change amongst the youth. The research sought to find out why the youth prefers the use of social media to traditional media, the extent to which they use social media and the impact it has on their behavior.

# CHAPTER ONE

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the study**

The speed of internet has changed the way people receive information. Internet combines the immediacy of broadcast with the in-depth coverage of newspapers. This makes the internet a source of news and weather information. Even with the multimedia excitement of the web, electronic mail (email) is the most frequently used application of the internet. Many people use the internet for no other purpose than to send and to receive mails. It's not just friends and co-workers that are receiving email.

Wherever you look, the web is providing email addresses. This has made communication between strangers easier than it ever has been. Chatting is one of the most popular activities on the internet. Introduction of social media networking sites has facilitated communication. There are web-sites where users can create a profile and connect that profile to others to form an explicit personal network. They are web-based services that allow individuals to:

- Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system
- Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection
- View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. Through social media, people can use networks of online friends and group memberships to keep in touch with current friends, reconnect with old friends or create real life friendships through similar interests or groups.

Besides establishing important social relationships, social media members can share their interests with other likeminded members by joining groups and forums. Some

networking can also help members find a job or establish business contacts. Most social media websites also offer additional features. In addition to blogs and forums, members can express themselves by designing their profile page to reflect their personality. The most popular extra features include music and video sections. The video section can include everything from member generated videos from hundreds of subjects to TV clips and movie trailers (YouTube).

It is therefore the aim of this study to establish the impact that these social media platforms have on the young individual's behavioral change.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

This study will try to find out the impact that social media has on the youth's behavior. Technology has many positive aspects but, in the wrong hands, it can become dangerous. For the young people it is experimental to do what they feel is good or exciting to them and at the same time avoid adult supervision.

Livingstone (2008) opines that

For teenagers, the online realm may be adopted enthusiastically because it represents their space, visible to the peer group more than to adult surveillance. An exciting yet relatively safe opportunity to conduct the social psychological task of adolescence to construct, experiment with and present a reflexive project of the self in a social context, as well as, for some, for flouting communicative norms and other risk-taking behaviors.

Technology brought about social media which is a valuable tool but it is somewhat misused by today's youth. The two main forms that the youth use to access social media are cell phones and the internet. This has brought about major changes in their lifestyle. With the current exposure and easy access that the youth are able to get out

of these media, this study will establish the impacts it has had on the youth. Issues that are expected to arise out of this research include exposure to problematic materials, online victimization of youth, exposition to unnecessary online marketing and advertising, exposure to dangerous online behaviors, issues of identity theft, the emergence of digital divide and generation gap between parents and the youth.

The problem is that despite the numerous advantages of social media, the youth have been abusing it hence the researcher seeks to investigate to find out the impact of the use of social media on behaviors of youth in Ghana.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The goal of this research is to investigate the impact and implications of social media on the Ghanaian youth especially those in universities on the way they are using social media and the consequences of that use on their behavior. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- To determine the extent to which the youth in Ghana use social media in their daily lives.
- To determine whether the youth in Ghana prefer the use of social media to traditional methods of communications such as television and radio or vice versa
- To find out the impacts social media has on behavior of Ghanaian youths.
- To suggest ways by which the youth of Ghana can be made to derive maximum benefit from the use of social media.

## **1.4 Research questions**

The following research questions will guide the study:

- Why do the youth in Ghana use social media in their daily lives?
- Do the youth in Ghana prefer social media to traditional methods?
- What are the impacts of social media on the behavior of the youth in Ghana?
- What are the risks that come with use of social media among the youths in Ghana?
- In what ways can social media be used to achieve positive results on the youth?

## **1.5 Scope of the study**

The study seeks to find out the impacts of social media among the youth on behavior change. While the study recognizes that new interactive technologies have impacts on other age groups outside the youth bracket, and as such this study will limit itself only to the youths in Ghana. The study will focus itself only on students selected from some universities in the Greater Accra Region.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

It is hoped that the findings of this study will bridge the gap of lack of sufficient information on the effects of social media on the youth and behavior change. The findings of this study may also be useful to the policy makers in various sectors of the government. In the health ministry, it will help doctors especially those dealing with counseling of the youth to know which tools to use to effectively communicate to the youth. The results of the study are likely to influence further scholarly research by other researchers who may be interested in this field of knowledge and initiate appropriate mitigation.

## **1.7. Organization of the chapter**

Chapter one discusses the introduction of the research, the problem under study, the objective of the research, the research questions, the scope of the research and the significance of the study

Chapter two elaborates on the review of related studies and the theoretical framework.

Chapter three talks about the methodology used to collect data.

Chapter four analyzes data

Chapter five talks about the findings and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Social media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic texts, graphics, moving images and sound into a structured computerized environment that allows people to interact with data for appropriate purposes. The digital environment can include the internet, telecoms and interactive digital television. The web is becoming a part of general business for communication, sales and services. It is changing business practices. Its technical limitations affect the amount of material and speed of access to material. The web primarily depends on phone line connections, so the better these are across a territory, the more reliable the service. The inherent limitations of passing large amounts of digital information down phone lines have affected the type and quality of media that can be used effectively, as well as the nature of the interaction allowed by the web. There are ways to increase the performance by improving the technical limitations which depend on having a readily available infrastructure that can deliver more data faster and reliably. This is called Broadband.

## **2.1.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theories are formulated to explain, predict and understand phenomena and in many cases to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can support or hold a theory of a research study.

This study uses three communication theories: the Magic Bullet Theory, the Uses and Gratification Theory and the Technological Determinism Theory.

### **2.1.1 The Uses and Gratification Theory**

(UGT) is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. The driving question of UGT is: Why do people use media and what do they use them for? UGT discusses how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interactions/companionship, diversion, or escape. It assumes that audience members are not passive consumers of media. Rather, the audience has power over their media consumption and assumes an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, UGT holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. This theory would then imply that the media compete against other information sources for viewers' gratification.

Assumptions of the Theory:

- The audience is active and its media use is goal oriented
- The initiative in linking need gratification to a specific medium choice rests with the audience member
- The media compete with other resources for need satisfaction

- People have enough self-awareness of their media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that use.
- Value judgments of media content can only be assessed by the audience.

### **2.1.1.1 Modern Applications of Uses & Gratifications Research**

#### **Internet Usage**

Modern communication scholars such as Tomas E. Ruggiero, highlight the necessity of UGT in understanding the proliferation and success of computer-mediated communication forms. Ruggiero states that UGT provides a "cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet." Furthermore, Ruggiero argues that new media forms require analysis of potentially 29 new uses and gratifications; for example, interactivity, hypertextuality, asynchronous communication, and demystification.

This explains that the social media has encouraged a two-way interactivity where a receiver of an information can provide feedback promptly.

Scholars like LaRose et al. (2005) utilize UGT to understand internet usage via a socio-cognitive framework to reduce uncertainties that arise from homogenizing an internet audience and explaining media usage in terms of only positive outcomes (gratifications). LaRose et al. (2005) created measures for self-efficacy and self-disparagement and related UGT to negative outcomes of online behavior (like internet addiction) as well.

#### **New Media Examples of UGT:**

The application of New Media to the Uses and Gratifications Theory has been positive. The introduction of the internet, social media and technological advances have provided another outlet for people to use and seek gratification through those

sources. Based on the models developed by Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch and Lasswell, individuals can choose to seek out media in one outlet, all falling within the prescribed categories of need. The only difference now is that the audience do not have to go to multiple media outlets to fulfill each of their needs. The internet has created a digital library, allowing individuals to have access to all content from various mass media outlets.

### **2.1.1.2 Being Immersed in Social Networking Environment: Face book Groups, Uses and Gratification, and Social Outcomes**

In 2007 a study was conducted to examine the Facebook groups 'users' gratifications in relation to their civic participation offline, a set of level of agreement questions to properly gauge their level of life satisfaction. The study ultimately yielded results through principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The results showed that there were four needs for using Facebook groups, "socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information."

### **2.1.1.3 Gratification Received from Use of Facebook Groups**

- **Socializing:** Students interested in talking and meeting with others to achieve a sense of community and peer support on the particular topic of the group
- **Entertainment:** Students engaged with the groups to amuse themselves
- **Self-Seeking:** Students maintain and seek out their personal status, as well as those of their friends, through the online group participation
- **Information:** Students used the group to receive information about related events going on and off campus

#### **2.1.1.4 UGT Analysis of Twitter**

Twitter is an online micro-blogging platform that contains both mass-media functions and interpersonal communication options via sending tweets. Research has found a positive correlation between active times spent on Twitter and the gratification of a need for "an informal sense of camaraderie"—connection—with other users. Furthermore, the frequency of tweets and number of replies and public messages mediated the relationship between Twitter users. This helped increase both use and gratification of the media by satisfying the need for connection.

#### **2.1.1.5 UGT Approach to New Mass Media Technologies**

In 2011, a survey was conducted to investigate the viewing of animated news. The results of hierarchical regression analysis suggest predictive relationships among personality characteristics (sensation seeking and locus of control), the seven motives, the effects of perceived news credibility and newsworthiness, and the intention to share such animated news videos with others.

#### **2.1.2 Hypodermic Needle Model**

The hypodermic needle model (also known as the hypodermic-syringe model, transmission-belt model, or magic bullet theory) suggests that an intended message is directly received and wholly accepted by the receiver. The model is rooted in 1930s behaviorism and is largely considered obsolete today.

##### **2.1.2.1 Concept**

The concept of this model assumes that, the youth are instructively affected by the agenda setting of the media hence a reaction. It denotes that, the media has a great

influence on the behavior of the youth. The "Magic Bullet" or "Hypodermic Needle Theory" was not based on empirical findings from research but rather on assumptions of the time about human nature. People were assumed to be "uniformly controlled by their biologically based 'instincts' and that they react more or less uniformly to whatever 'stimuli' came along" (Lowery & De Fleur: 1995, p. 400).

The "Magic Bullet" theory assumes that the media's message is a bullet fired from the "media gun" into the viewer's "head" (Berger: 1995). Similarly, the "Hypodermic Needle Model" suggests that the media injects its messages straight into the passive audience (Croteau & Hoynes: 1997). This passive audience is immediately affected by these messages. The public essentially cannot escape from the media's influence, and is therefore considered a "sitting duck" (Croteau & Hoynes: 1997). Both models suggest that the public is vulnerable to the messages shot at them because of the limited communication tools and the studies of the media's effects on the masses at the time (Davis & Baron: 1981).

### **Later developments**

The phrasing "hypodermic needle" is meant to give a mental image of the direct, strategic, and planned infusion of a message into an individual. But as research methodology became more highly developed, it became apparent that the media had selective influences on people. Lazarsfeld disproved the "Magic Bullet" theory and "Hypodermic Needle Model Theory", through elections studies in "The People's Choice" (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet 1944/1968).

Lazarsfeld concluded that the effects of the campaign were not all powerful to the point where they completely persuaded "helpless audiences", a claim that the Magic Bullet, Hypodermic Needle Model, and Lasswell asserted. These new findings also suggested that the public can select which messages affect and don't affect them. Lazarsfeld's debunking of these models of communication provided the way for new ideas regarding the media's effects on the public. Lazarsfeld introduced the idea of

the two step flow model of communication in 1944. Elihu Katz contributed to the model in 1955 through studies and publications (Katz, Lazarsfeld 1955). The two step flow model assumes that ideas flow from the mass media to opinion leaders and then to the greater public (Katz, Lazarsfeld 1955). They believed the message of the media to be transferred to the masses via this opinion leadership. Opinion leaders are categorized as individuals with the best understanding of media content and the most accessibility to the media as well. These leaders essentially take in the media's information, and explain and spread the media's messages to others (Katz, 1957). Thus, the two step flow model and other communication theories suggest that the media does not directly have an influence on viewers anymore. Instead, interpersonal connections and even selective exposure play a larger role in influencing the public in the modern age (Severin, Tankard 1979).

This denotes that, though the youth may be affected by whatever is seen or read on social media, the youth has options on their reaction after.

### **2.1.3 Technological Determinism Theory**

Technological Determinism state that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how the society operates as we move from one technological age to another (Tribal- Literate- Print- Electronic- Social media).

#### **Concept**

The theory was developed by Marshall McLuhan in 1962. It explains that individuals learn and feel and think the way we do because of the messages they receive through the current technology that is available. The radio which was the example used required people to listen and develop a sense of hearing. Television engages both hearing and visual senses. We then transfer those developed senses into our everyday lives and we want to use them again. The medium is then our message. Social media

brought about by emerging technology requires people to listen and engaged often. People then interpret the messages sent to them from social media in their everyday life. Humans do not have much free will at all. Whatever society as a whole is using to communicate, they too will use to communicate. Therefore they will adapt to the medium they are using so that they can send and receive messages like everyone else. We know that there is one truth by observing what has happened over time. As the medium changes so does society's way of communicating. People can only use the medium for which it was created (phone for talking over lines or electronic mail for talking via computer). If the medium is impersonal (mobile phone) then the message too is impersonal. This theory is objective in that everyone will act and feel the same no matter what the medium they are using provided that they are using the same medium. Values are not involved because evidence is seen strictly through observation. The theory explains that when new systems of technology are developed, the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology. The theory predicts that with every new system of media technology, society will change and adapt to that technology. It explains that there is a simple cause and effect analysis between the introduction of new technology and the changes in society's way of thinking, feeling, acting, or believing.

It therefore denotes that the behavior change in the youth can be attributed to technological growth as none wants to be left behind whereas the world grows.

#### **2.1.4 Klapper Reinforcement or Limited Effects Theory**

In 1960 Joseph Klapper at Columbia University was concerned that average people exaggerated the power of media. He introduced what he called phenominist theory. With this theory he argued that media rarely have any direct effects and are relatively powerless when compared with other social and psychological factors such as social status, group membership, strongly held attitudes, education and so forth.

## Concept

His theory is often referred to now as 'reinforcement' theory because a key assertion is that the primary influence of media is to reinforce (not change) existing attitudes and behaviors. Instead of disrupting society and creating unexpected social change, media generally serve as agents of the status quo, giving people more reasons to go on believing and acting as they already do.

He argued that there simply are too many barriers to media influence for drastic changes to occur except under very unusual circumstances. Klapper's theory insists that ordinarily media does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences. He also explains that these mediating factors are such that they typically render mass communication a contributory agent, but not as the sole cause in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions. Regardless of the condition in question and regardless of whether the effect in question, be social or individual, the media are more likely to reinforce than to change.

Klapper's theory also assumes that mass communication does function in the service of change; one of the two following conditions is likely to exist. The mediating factors, he says, will be found to be inoperative and the effect of the media will be found to be direct; or the mediating factors, which normally favor reinforcement, will be found to be impelling toward change. Klapper did not exclude that media could have direct effects on audience. There are certain residual situations in which mass communication seems to produce direct effects, or directly and of itself to serve certain psychophysical functions.

## **2.2 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

It is evident that there exists a relationship between social media and their impact on the youth's change in behavior. Tapscott (1998) talks of growing up in a digital environment referring to the youth as the Net Generation (N-Gen). Children are socializing in a hybrid virtual space, learning in innovative ways, creating a new language and practicing multicultural values (Tapscott, 1998). The main characteristics of the 'N-Gen' culture are: independence, emotional and intellectual openness, inclusion, free expression and strong views, innovation, preoccupation with maturity, pleasure by the investigation, immediacy, and sensitivity to corporate interest, authentication, and trust. (Tapscott, 1998 pp. 62-69). Survey results suggest that gaps between parents and children happen in different ways: internet expertise, awareness of risk, acknowledgement of domestic regulations in place, and what parents believe their children are doing but in reality what they are actually doing (Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

Anxieties about the safety, health and balanced use of social media can be classified in three main groups: worries about the exposition to unwanted material, online victimization and the practice of dangerous online behaviors. What activities do young people do online? With whom do young people establish relationships? How much time do young people invest in online activities? What online behaviors do young people demonstrate? What is the impact of online interaction on the development of the youth? Therefore, this study is based on a theoretical

approach that considers young people as active agents who can manipulate, adapt, create, and disseminate ideas and products through communication technologies (Berson and Berson, 2005). According to Tapscott (1998), the digital literacy possessed by youth has given power to children in their relations with adults as well as autonomy in the world. Children are authorities on the internet. (Rettie, 2002). Also, technological modern developments have contributed to the democratization of the family, especially in countries that are pioneers in Information Communication Technologies (ICT.) The domestication of media used by youth can be seen across diverse individuals versus socially stratified culture, and nationally versus global identities and community (Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

More specifically in relation to our aim, the intensive or high levels of online participation or internet use has been associated with online risk. But the simple use of internet cannot predict risk. (*Enhancing Child Safety & Online Technologies*, 2008 for Internet & Society at Harvard University, 2008).

From the development perspective, it can be argued in relation to the use of the internet by youth that 'the multiple sensory inputs are demanding on cognitive resources and can overwhelm children's capacity to engage in thoughtful decision making' (Berson and Berson, 2005). At an early age, children are not aware of the risks, and they require adult supervision. During adolescence, a child's ability to make life choices is still under development (Berson and Berson, 2005). In fact,

adolescents have especially been often considered as vulnerable to risky behaviors like the consumption of drugs or alcohol.

However, some of the online behaviors by children as well as adolescents classified as risky behaviors should be better classified as 'online challenging behaviors'. Since these online behaviors are commonly practiced by youth today and in most cases, these behaviors are not associated with negative consequences. Many of these behaviors are encouraged or reinforced by the very structural characteristics of the virtual space, and sometimes the manifestation of certain behaviors is necessary in order to participate with others in cyberspace and enjoy the full benefits of online applications (i.e., publish photos in social networks, chat, interact or build associations or groups with strangers in video games).

Therefore, social media has an impact on the youth in various ways. For instance, with regard to exposure to problematic material, the internet has changed the way the consumption of pornography takes place. People have greater possibility to access pornographic sites through their own initiative or accidentally. Research has revealed that 57 percent of 9 to 19 year- olds, have come into contact with online pornography. Their encounters with pornography happened in different ways. The most common was in pop-up advert. They open porn site accidentally when looking for something else or in junk mail. Also 22 percent of 9-19 year –olds who are daily and weekly users have accidentally ended up on a site with violent or gruesome

pictures, and 9 percent on a site that is hostile or hateful to a group of people.

(Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

Additionally, a survey of risk, impact and prevention found that using the internet intensively, taking risk online, going to chat rooms, and using the computer in other people's homes are the most predictive behaviors associated with exposure to sexual material on the internet. In addition, exposition to advertising and consumption of virtual items is also on the rise. Thus, the youth are constantly exposed to different types of marketing, not only by visiting web pages, but also through the practice of their favorite hobbies.

Virtual online communities and video games include exposition of real life marketing inside the virtual settings. Some communities transform children's play into a way of gathering information. (Chung and Grimes, 2005). New kinds of games and virtual communities come into the picture when the user spends money to enhance the gaming experience (e.g. subscriptions, purchasing virtual items). Many of these virtual spaces are based on a real economic infrastructure where users Real Trade money (RTM) in order to buy, sell, and exchange virtual items or virtual money. (Ortiz, A, 2007).

In connection with social media marketing, several university students have resorted to online marketing instead of a direct or real market trade.

Social media has also resulted in online sexual victimization among the youth. The Youth Internet Safety Survey, conducted by Crimes Against Children Research

Center at the University of New Hampshire interviewed 1,501 youth ages 10 to 17 years that frequently use the internet found that, the 19 percent of youth (77 percent were 14 years or older) have received an unwanted sexual solicitation via the web; only 24 percent of teens told a parent about the solicitation (29 percent told a peer); and 75 percent of teens were not worried by the sexual online solicitation.

Consequently, harassment among peers has become unlimited thanks to the youth's access to the modern technologies. Bullying has occurred in a new territory thus online (Li, 2006). Studies suggest that offline bullying usually increases in middle school but online harassment happens later and continues into high school (Wolak et al,2006). This technology has also resulted in the development of dangerous online behavior. Thus, not only the exposition to unwanted material has been considered as a serious risk, but also the participation and the facility to become a member of controversial groups.

Some youth may identify strongly with this sort of material and they may feel validated and encouraged to practice it. (Wolak, et al., 2003). A study by Ybarra et al. (2007) found that engaging in many different kinds of online risky behaviors are more than engaging in specific individual behaviors. Interestingly, according to Ybarra et al., (2007) engaging in online risky behavior takes place while the youth is using the internet with friends or peers. Other forms of dangerous online behavior include bullying. Studies have often found an overlap between cyber bullying offenders and victims. Although, it is recognized that adults bullied minors, it is not

precisely known how common it is. (Wolak et al, 2006). Other studies point out that minors are usually harassed by people of their age. (Hinduja and Patchin, 2009 in *Enhancing Child Safety & Online Technologies*, 2008 for Internet & Society at Harvard University, 2008).

Males are more likely to be bullies and cyber bullies than females are. (Li, 2006). It is also obvious that social media has led to increased online socialization among the youth. An internet connection allows new ways to establish fellowship and support previous 'based in real life relationships. Chats, forums, web pages and the most recent web technologies allow people to interchange information and socialize in very creative ways. Example of social media sites used mostly by university students are whatsapp, Facebook, twitter, Instagram, viber, Imo, Tango, snap chat etc.

A Swedish study revealed that to be a member of one or several virtual communities is common. Approximately 55 percent of the youth 12 to 22 years-old is a member in some virtual community. The 67 percent of the girls and the 42 percent of the boys are member of one of these communities. Anxieties about youth's online relationships tend to be regarding to the contact and socialization with strangers, and also regarding the use of technological tools to harm or molest someone as well as to be bullied. Although, according to Wolak et al (2002) —The majority of Internet-initiated connections involving youth appear to be friendship related, nonsexual, and formed between similar-aged youth and known to parents (Wolak et al. 2002). Thus

in order to outline with satisfaction the impact of social media on the youth, one has to consider the impact of socially interactive technologies (SITs).

SITs, such as instant messaging and text messaging, are beginning to redefine the social networks of today's youth. By offering fast-paced, inexpensive, online communication, SITs allow for new online youth social networks to form and evolve. These online networks, in turn, may affect the offline social and friendship networks in which youth are immersed. Much has been said about the prevalence of technology in the lives of adolescents.

Reports in the press and surveys from parents find points of view that range from exuberant, discussing how socially-interactive technologies can save youth from social isolation and depression, to alarming, focusing on how constant use of these technologies fosters anti-social behavior (Turow, 1999). The reality lies somewhere in-between these two extremes. As with the adoption and use of any other technology, there are a variety of factors that affect how SITs are used on an individual level, as well as group dynamics that come into play. This theoretical content is vital to preliminary understandings of new technology's usage.

However, it does not delve into the heart of some of the more interesting questions, such as what group dynamics influence youth to adopt particular technologies or to use them in a particular manner, or how using these technologies actually affects how children and adolescents communicate with one another. For example, do youth use

these media technologies to obtain emotional, psychological, and other forms of support from their peers?

Do SITs reflect the same friendship networks that already exist? Part of the issue is that although social groupings of adolescents are often mentioned as being an important part of online and offline communication, research looking at social networks is relatively uncommon. Moreover, the few studies that have been conducted on the social networks facilitated by SITs have not collected or analyzed social network data (Kavanaugh, Carroll, Rosson, Zin, & Reese, 2005; Schneider & Hemmer, 2005); nor is there any network data or analysis in research on adolescent use of these technologies.

Network approaches can be used to understand the communication dynamics of an entire network (e.g., a group of friends at school or in a chat room), or subsets of a network (e.g., a clique of "popular" kids at school and how they affect the network as a whole), and of individuals within the networks (e.g., early adopters of instant messaging). For this reason, network analysis is an important perspective to employ. Another area of research that is under-developed concerns the effects of socially interactive technologies on teen and pre-teen individuals (Livingstone & Bober, 2005). The inclusion of pre-adolescents and adolescents is important because they incorporate technology-mediated communication more strongly into their social lives than do adults (Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, & Steinberg, 1993; Madden & Rainie, 2003). Moreover, although there has been considerable research about email

communication and instant messaging, there has been relatively little research on text messaging. This is surprising since the low-cost, mobile nature of text messaging has made it very popular among adolescents in many areas of the world (Eldridge & Grinter, 2001; Grinter & Eldridge, 2001, 2003; Grinter & Palen, 2002). It appears as though the youth may have similar social uses for text messaging as they have for instant messaging (IM), email, and mobile phones; text messaging may often be used in conjunction with these other technologies in multi-tasking (Lenhart, Madden, & Hitlin, 2005).

The Pew Internet & American Life Project identified text messaging as an important future direction for research; the most recent report issued by the Project is the first to include this technology (Lenhart, Madden, & Hitlin, 2005).

### **2.2.1 HISTORY OF NEW MEDIA**

New media refers to on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. Most technologies described as new media are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples may be the internet, websites, computer multimedia, video games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs. Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and analog broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation into media

which are predicated upon the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet and video games. Andrew L. Shapiro (1999) argues that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources" (Shapiro cited in Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 322). W. Russell Neuman (1991) suggests that whilst the new media have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Neuman, "We are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication" (Neuman cited in Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 322).

### **2.2.2 INTERACTIVITY AND THE NEW MEDIA**

The convergence of new methods of communication with new technologies shifts the model of mass communication, and radically reshapes the ways we interact and communicate with one another. Interactivity is present in programming work, such as video games. It's also viable in the operation of traditional media. In the mid-1990s, filmmakers started using inexpensive digital cameras to create films. It was also the time when moving image technology had developed, which was able to be viewed on computer desktops in full motion. This development of new media technology was a new method for artists to share their work and interact with the big world. Other

settings of interactivity include radio and television talk shows, letters to the editor, listener participation in such programs, and computer and technological programming.

Interactivity can be considered a central concept in understanding new media, but different media forms possess different degrees of interactivity and some forms of digitized and converged media are in fact not interactive at all. New media have created virtual realities that are becoming virtual extensions of the world we live in and it changes continuously because it is constantly modified and redefined by the interaction between users, emerging technologies, cultural changes, etc.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_media).)

### **2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE YOUTH**

There has been a virtual explosion of the use of technology in making interpersonal connections. This is particularly the case for young people. As early as elementary school, many students are carrying cell phones. With ready access to the internet and mobile phone technology, social networking has become a phenomenon of unprecedented proportions and is expanding the concept of a social network. As Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood (2006) stressed: Socially interactive technologies (SITs), such as instant messaging and text messaging, are beginning to redefine the social networks of today's youth. By offering fast-paced, inexpensive, online communication, SITs allow for new online youth social networks to form and

evolve. New text-based technologies are picking up where phones left off. Email and text messaging allow for rapid, asynchronous communication within one's peer network: IM allows for synchronous communication among many friends at once. Because so much of the discussion about the use of technology for connecting interpersonally uses the term social networking, we need to begin by looking at the concept of a social network. A social network is a social structure made of individuals (or organizations) called 'nodes', which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network)). Personal and organizational social networks are common among those who have shared interests, attitudes, beliefs, kinships, and needs. Youth subculture groups in neighborhoods and on school campuses provide long-standing examples of social networks. Today, open and restricted access to social sites are burgeoning on the internet.

Sites allow members to design personal profiles, blogs, and forums that reflect direct expression of images and statements they want to convey. As described by Livingstone (2008): Social networking sites enable communication among ever-widening circles of contacts, inviting convergence among the hitherto separate activities of email, messaging, website creation, diaries, photo albums and music or video uploading and downloading. From the user's viewpoint, more than ever before, using media means creating as well as receiving, with user control extending far beyond selecting ready-made, mass-produced content.

As youth culture assimilates communication technology, the rapid pace of change makes it difficult to grasp the nature and scope of what is happening, never mind appreciating all the positive and negative implications. There are suggestions that the changes are fundamentally transforming the concept of community. These and a host of other matters related to youth and social networking through new technologies are topics for ongoing exploration and discussion.

### **2.3.1 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

In 2006, Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood reported that the main findings related to youth use of socially interactive technologies were:

- Youth are using new interactive technologies (SITs) to enhance communication among friends and family, to make plans with one another, and to maintain social contact outside of their day-to-day face-to-face conversations.
- These technologies have been adopted by teens relatively quickly because IM and Text messaging are more convenient, less expensive, and faster than traditional technologies.
- Research in this arena has shown that although preference for using SITs to communicate is definitely on the rise, and the use of SITs has surpassed that of email, youth still tend to hold in-depth, important conversations offline.

### **2.3.2 ABOUT SOCIAL NETWORK SITES**

Social network sites across the world are growing at dizzying rate. For example, during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2016, statistics indicated that Facebook had 1.86 billion worldwide numbers of monthly active users. Available evidence suggests that most internet users probably visit social network sites daily or at least every other day (Ofcom, 2008), and young people lead the pack. As defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007), social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to:

- Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
- Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection.
- View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. These researchers go on to emphasize that while the terms "social network site" and "social networking sites" often are used interchangeably, they differ in emphasis and scope. They stress that: Network emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication. What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and

make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal. On many of the large social network sites, participants are not necessarily 'networking or looking to meet new people'; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network.

### **2.3.4 EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Researchers have emphasized a range of potential psychosocial benefits. Here is a sampling: Livingstone (2009) emphasizes that "at the heart of the explosion in online communication is the desire to construct valued representation of oneself which affirms and is affirmed by one's peers".

Survey data indicates that "48% of youth said that they use the Internet to improve their relationships with friends, and 32% said that they use the Internet to make new friends" (Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, & Smallwood, 2006). Research by Valkenburg and Peter (2007) suggests that: Internet communication is positively related to the time spent with friends and the quality of existing adolescent friendships, and via this route, to their well-being. These positive effects may be attributed to two important structural characteristics of online communication: its controllability and its reduced cues.

These characteristics may encourage intimate self-disclosure, because intimate self-disclosure is an important predictor of reciprocal liking, caring, and trust, Internet-enhanced intimate self-disclosure may be responsible for a potential increase in the quality of adolescent friendships. And Lee (2009) reports that “those who had established strong social relationships at earlier ages were more likely to use online communication, which in turn predicted more cohesive friendships and better connectedness to school”. Notley (2009) stresses that “it is clear from the research that participants online network use provided them with opportunities to participate in society in ways that were social, economic, cultural, civic, and educational”. In this way online network use had supported all of the participants’ social inclusion. Hundley and Shyles (2010) conclude that, In terms of socializing and staying connected with peers with digital devices, particularly social network sites, a large friends list is a pride object with many teenagers the number of people on their friends list equates to popularity and perceptions of likeability.

There are dangers associated with social networking including data theft and viruses, which are on the rise. The most prevalent danger though often involves online predators or individuals who claim to be someone that they are not. (From: What is Social Networking-<http://www.whatissocialnetworking.com>) A range of concerns have been discussed about young people’s use of social network sites and mobile phones (e.g., Erdur-Baker, 2010; Fortunati, 2002; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; HomeOffice, 2008; Madden & Lenhart, 2009; National Cancer Institute, 2010;

Olsen, 2010; O'Sullivan & Flanagin, 2003; Ship, 2010; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). And, of course, concerns are intensified because of the propensities of youth for exploration and risk-taking. The most prominently discussed concerns all revolve around personal risks such as:

- Exposure to and contact with inappropriate content and people(e.g., pornography; violent, racist/hate-filled material; sexual predators; cyber bullies, happy slapping)
- Risky disclosure of personal information(e.g., unguarded sharing of private data with unknown people)
- Negative impact on social and emotional development(e.g., interacting beyond one's level of maturity and ability to be responsible; increased exposure to peer pressure to keep up and conform; use of technological communication to avoid face-to-face interactions; use of mobiles phones as an inappropriate symbol to gain status [Katz & Sugiyama, 2006]; contamination of values)
- Texting while driving increases risk of accidents
- Computer contamination (e.g. virus invasions)
- Cell phone health risks(e.g., a few research studies [National Cancer Society, 2010; Science Daily, 2008] have suggested that heavy cell phone use may increase the risk of cancer)

In addition to the above, teachers are raising concerns about a negative impact on writing skills. Students are integrating texting or instant messaging lingo into school work. More generally, schools are in a dither about how to control use of cell phones and texting during school hours and how to counter their use as a device to aid cheating. 25 Concerns, of course, often are in the eye of the beholder. That is, actor and observer have different perceptions.

## **2.4 THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

As new media become embedded and indispensable throughout society, culture, and the economy, perhaps the biggest challenge to new media studies will be the need to shift away from thinking of ICTs as extraordinary, and to accept and study them as normal or 'banal'. To do so requires a better balance between micro- and macro-level research, in which both individual experience and whole-society/institutional influences are brought together to produce more robust accounts of the role and significance of new media in society. What has made new media 'new'? The ongoing process of technological and cultural adaptation, reinvention, and recombination is still going strong, but user's expectations of stability and reliability are likely to lead in the short term to more regulation, standardization, institutionalization, and centralization of control. As just one example, concerns about digital media as cultural heritage, and the need to keep legal and social records into the future, may compel more scholars to study the collection, preservation, restoration, and access to new media archives, just as we do for books, audio recordings, films, and other documents. These processes involve both individual action and institutional resources, and to study them properly we must expand our theoretical and methodological repertoires. (New Media & Society 6(1))

### **2.4.1 Implications of Socially Interactive Technologies for Schools**

There are real concerns about social network sites. As Tynes (2007) states:

“We may do adolescents a disservice when we curtail their participation in these spaces, because the educational and psychosocial benefits of this type of communication can far outweigh the potential dangers. These benefits include developing cognitive skills that are consistent with those required in educational settings and perspective-taking skills that are necessary for citizenship in an increasingly multiracial society.”

The implications for schools of students using socially interactive technologies are twofold:

- The technologies provide significant opportunities to enhance learning and other positive outcomes, and
- They also present significant challenges as reflected in the concerns discussed above.

### **2.4.2 Use for Enhancing Learning and Psychosocial Development**

Many schools and colleges are embracing social network sites and other internet and computer tools to enhance instruction, collaboration, and professional development (Davis, 2010; Ito, Horst, Bittanti, Boyd, Herr-Stephenson, Lange, Pascow, & Robinson, 2008; Patchin and Hinduja, 2010; SafeTeens.com). Educational institutions are using social network sites (along with Skype) to create chat-room forums and groups to discuss and clarify, provide a range of extra supports for learning, and facilitate communication with families (especially those for whom face-to-face meetings are difficult). Some schools are using smartphones to enable students to instant-message peers and teachers with questions related to homework

and to clarify difficult material. Social interactions through technology also can be an aid for students and families who are shy or overly anxious in social situations (Pierce, 2009). More generally, social site networks may be of use in enhancing relationships between teachers and students (Mazer, Murphy, Simonds, 2007). With respect to psychosocial development, researchers have suggested that participation on social network sites influences such matters as identity formation and social skill development. A recent study suggests such participation may have positive effects with respect to how youth cope with emotional distress such as grieving following someone's death (Williams & Merten, 2009). For older students preparing for the workplace, the sites offer opportunities to enhance technical skills and enable networking with professionals for internship and job opportunities. Moreover, a recent study suggests a relationship between use of Facebook and staying in school (Morris, Reese, Beck, & Mattis, 2010). And school professionals are creating learning communities and communities of practice for sharing and continuing education (e.g. educational blogs, e-portfolios, formal and ad hoc communities, chats, discussion threads, and synchronous forums). For teachers, social network sites are another avenue to open the classroom door and end the traditional isolation (and often alienation) many experience.

### **2.4.3 Challenges for Schools to Meet**

Schools, however, are just beginning to cope with challenges stemming from the concerns that accompany such use. A first impulse for many has been to establish controls against personal use of social communication technologies during the school day. Increasingly, the trend is to focus in on specific areas of concern. Others have raised the concern that overreliance on technological communication can interfere with developing effective face-to-face interactions (Pierce, 2009). For staff who are ready to capitalize on social network technologies, another challenge is the wholesale

internet filtering and blocking that so many schools still do. Models for creating safe social network sites to enhance learning are emerging.

## **2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY / RELEVANCE OF THE THOERIES TO THE STUDY**

The theories describe the framework under which the media is supposed to operate. They explore the similarities between social media and the audience's perception and opinion. The theories study seeks to determine the correlation between the youth and their daily usage of the internet and interactive media, and to bring out the effects experienced. This will determine the suitability of the models to the effects of using social media in campuses. With everyone electronically mailing each other today, there is no longer a need to write a joke down to remember it. You can just forward it to a friend. We also do not communicate with distant friends as over the telephone anymore. We have started to only communicate through the impersonal use of the internet. The theories try to explain how youth have developed and what they have changed. These theories provide a way to see why this has happened. The theories explain the simple cause and effect analysis between the introduction of new technology and the changes in youth's way of thinking, feeling, acting, or believing.

## **CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology refers to the approach by which data is extracted to be clearly understood. Wiersman (1996), states that the development of strategy for conducting research is the third step after identifying a problem and completion of the literature review. This chapter will therefore discuss the following: research design, target population, sampling strategy, data collection instruments and process and analysis of the data. This study will be conducted in five selected universities within Ghana.

### **3.2 Research Method**

There are two general methods in the social sciences: quantitative and qualitative research. Mouton and Marais (1990) define the differences between quantitative and qualitative research on the basis of the operational specificity of concepts, hypotheses and methods of observation. It is, however, important to bear in mind that these approaches to research do not represent mutually distinct components of a typology. It is better to conceive of them as representing relative points on a scale. While a qualitative study may conclude with tentative answers, these answers can form the basis of future quantitative studies (Leedy, 1993).

The qualitative analysis will aim to give a complete, detailed description in the form of words, pictures or objects while the quantitative analysis will classify features, count them and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed (Price, 2001; Hurley et al., 2007; Ton et al., 2008).

In this study there is a blending of both approaches with a greater leaning towards the qualitative method. Qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research. What actually separates qualitative research and gives it its distinctive identity is the fact that it has its own approach to the collection and analysis of data that marks it as quite different from its quantitative counterpart. According to Denscombe (2003), qualitative research is a method of understanding

meaning and patterns of behavior. Leedy (1993) expands on this definition by viewing qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of a smaller number of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Qualitative research then is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena, its various genres are naturalistic and interpretative, and it draws on multiple methods of inquiry.

Within this context, the choice of qualitative research is particularly important for this investigation as it attempts to explore a relatively unknown area of study. This rationale is confirmed by Denscombe (2003), when he states that qualitative research should be favored when a topic of interest has been relatively ignored in the literature or has been given superficial attention. Moreover, the generation of descriptions, generalizations, themes and relationships from the data in the study could possibly contribute towards the policy development in the educational sector especially in the universities where the youth are the majority.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design involves the planning, organization, collection and analysis of data so as to provide answers to questions such as: what techniques will be used to gather data? What sampling strategies and tools will be used? And how will time and cost constraints be dealt with? (Leedy, 1993). The researcher proposes to use the descriptive survey design to gather data relating to the impact of social media among the youth on behavior change, attitude and perception. A descriptive survey aims at describing the distribution of a phenomenon in a population and thereby establishing the facts (percentages and frequencies). According to Saunders et al., (2003) descriptive survey has a broad appeal for planning, monitoring and evaluating policies. Price, (2001) says that any researcher who adopts the descriptive research

design attempts to produce data that is holistic, contextual, descriptive in depth and rich in detail.

The use of the descriptive survey methodology for this study allows the researcher to gather data directly from the youth in their natural environment for the purpose of studying their attitudes, views and comments about their day to day interactions with social media (Leedy, 1993). The researcher is afforded the opportunity to view phenomena through the eyes of their subjects in appropriate social contexts through in-depth questions. The explorative nature of the research necessitates that the participant's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are considered in order to construct situational knowledge of the impacts of social media on behavior change, attitude and perceptions.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population refers to the specific group relevant to a particular study. Mugenda et al (2003) explain that a population is a group of individuals or objects that have the same form of characteristics. They are the totality of cases that conform to certain specifications which define the elements that are included or excluded in the target group. The target population for this study includes 80 university students in 4 selected universities in Ghana namely African University College of Communication, Methodist University, Regent University College and Central University.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

A sample is a smaller number or the population that is used to make conclusions regarding the whole population. Its purpose is to estimate unknown characteristics of the population. Sampling therefore is the systematic process of selecting a number of

individuals for a study to represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay, 2011). The process of sampling takes in to account various issues and will depend on the organization type, purpose, complexity, time constraints and previous research in the area. 80 youth from the African University College of Communications (AUCC), Regent University College, Methodist University and the Central University were sampled. A total of 20 students from each selected university will be issued with a questionnaire to fill in for the study. The sample size is in keeping with the qualitative research which emphasizes on depth of focus instead of quantity of information. Generally, in qualitative research, the sample size for small-scale research should be in the region of about 5 to 8 participants after which the likelihood of repeated findings is increased greatly (Henning, 2004).

### **3.6 Sampling Techniques**

There are two types of sampling techniques employed by researchers - probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling, as the name suggests, is based on the idea that people selected as the sample will be representative of a cross-section the population under study. Non-probability sampling is conducted without such knowledge about whether those included in the sample are representative of the population (Denscombe, 2003). The study proposes to use probability sampling. Probability sampling methods are those in which every item in the entire population has a known chance of being included in the study sample. The selected process is chiefly random and independent of the person doing the research. This method produces unbiased estimates with measurable precision that requires relatively little knowledge about the population. Due to time and cost constraints, the sample will be purposively drawn in the urban areas of Accra. Accra has been preferred because it has the highest number of public and private universities which is estimated to be 60% of the total.

### **3.7 Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

There are numerous ways of collecting data and these depend on the purpose and aims of the research. In this study data is collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. Data collection involves contacting the members of the population that will be sampled in order to collect the required information about the study (Saleemi, 1997). The researcher will employ the services of research assistants who will be given a time frame for collection of the data for analysis. Questionnaires and interviews were chosen because, a large sample of the population can be contacted at relatively low cost. The format is also simple to administer and mostly familiar to respondents. They are relatively easy to analyze and respondents have time to respond without being under pressure.

### **3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data analysis consists of the examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study. The data obtained from the questionnaires are analyzed using a technique called "open coding". This technique involves a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data (Leedy, 1993). Open coding enables the researcher to classify and categorize data so that patterns can be discovered and conclusions drawn. The researcher makes up codes as she progresses through the data. In this way the researcher searches for common dominant themes that appear in the transcripts of the data. Once codes are awarded to different segments, the researcher groups and categorize related codes. The categories are named, using the codes as a guide. The categories begin to show themes that can be used in the discussion of the inquiry (Denscombe, 2003; Leedy, 1993). Once the researcher has saturated themes that have emerged from the analysis, these themes become a basis

for discussion. Descriptive statistics will be used in analysis of the data and this will be presented in frequencies and percentages.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

#### **Validity**

The validity of research instrument is the extent to which such an instrument is able to measure what it is supposed to measure. According to Mugenda *et al* (1999), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. Hence, validity refers to the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables under study. In this research, the instruments used will be validated in terms of content validity. The content related technique will measure the degree to which the question items reflect the specific areas covered.

#### **Reliability**

According to Mugenda *et al* (1999), reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time. Hence, reliability is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To test the reliability of research instruments used, test and re-test techniques will be used. The reliability of the questionnaire will be computed using SPSS to determine Cronbach's reliability coefficient. A correlation coefficient greater or equal to 5 will be treated as being acceptable (Fraser *et al.*, 2012).

### **3.10 Ethical Issues**

The goal of ethics is to ensure that no one is harmed or suffers adverse consequence from the research activities. Given the often sensitive relationships between researcher and respondents, reasonable safeguards will be built in this study based on ethical considerations and requirements. Therefore, the information that the researcher receives during the period of this study will be treated confidentially and used purely for academic purposes. Names of respondents will not be used or mentioned in this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter dealt with data analysis, presentation and its interpretation. The results of the study were presented and discussed in relation to the research questions outlined in chapter one. This study aimed at investigating the impacts of social media among the youth on behavior change. The case study was of university students in selected universities in Ghana. In analysis, data from questionnaires was coded and analyzed into quantitative summary reports using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. Data was keyed into the program under specific category from which analysis was run to obtain descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. SPSS was used to arrive at reliability among multiple measures of variables of the study, by use of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients to establish the nature of relationships between the stated variables. Scatter plots were employed and regressions done to determine the influence relationship between variables under investigation.

#### **4.2.0 Response rate**

Fowler (2004) describes response rate in a research context as the extent to which the collected set of data includes all sample members of the targeted population. It is calculated by the number of questionnaires collected or the number of people with whom interviews are completed divided by the number of the entire sample. In this study, data was collected from four sampled universities in Ghana. A total of 80 questionnaires were distributed and 73 were returned. This represented 91.25% response rate. Babbie (2002) posits that a response rate of above 50% is adequate for analysis and therefore, 91.25% response rate, was considered as being very good for analysis.

### 4.2.1 Respondents and University Profile

Before presenting the analysis of the findings, it was important to analyze the respondents and their organization's profiles in order to establish whether data was obtained from relevant groups.

### 4.2.2 Gender Distribution

The study sought to know the gender distribution of the respondents. From the responses, the majority (53.4%) were male while the female were 46.6% as shown in the Figure 4.1 below. The gender imbalance is not likely to affect the study as the nature of the research and questions asked were not gender sensitive and any unlikely error as a result of the gender imbalance may be tolerated. However given that most of the responses in the research questions relied on opinions and perceptions, the gender distribution is expected to accommodate the perceptions and opinions of either gender.

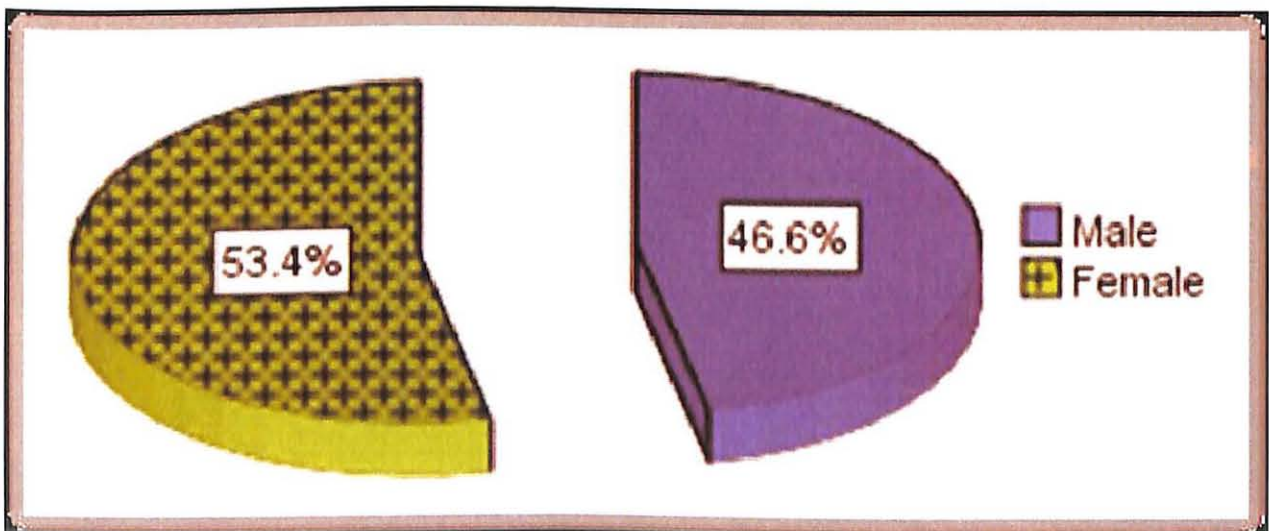


Figure 4.1: Distribution of respondents by gender

### 4.2.3 Level of study of the Respondents

The study sought to find out the level of study of the respondents considering that the level of study was likely to have an influence on their capacity to sufficiently respond to the questions asked. From the responses, the majority (31.5%) were third year students, 30.1% were first year students, 26% were second year students and 12.3% were fourth year students as shown in the Figure 4.2 below. Considering that the respondents were drawn from the four levels of study, it shows that the data collected had adequately varied views and opinions representative of every level.

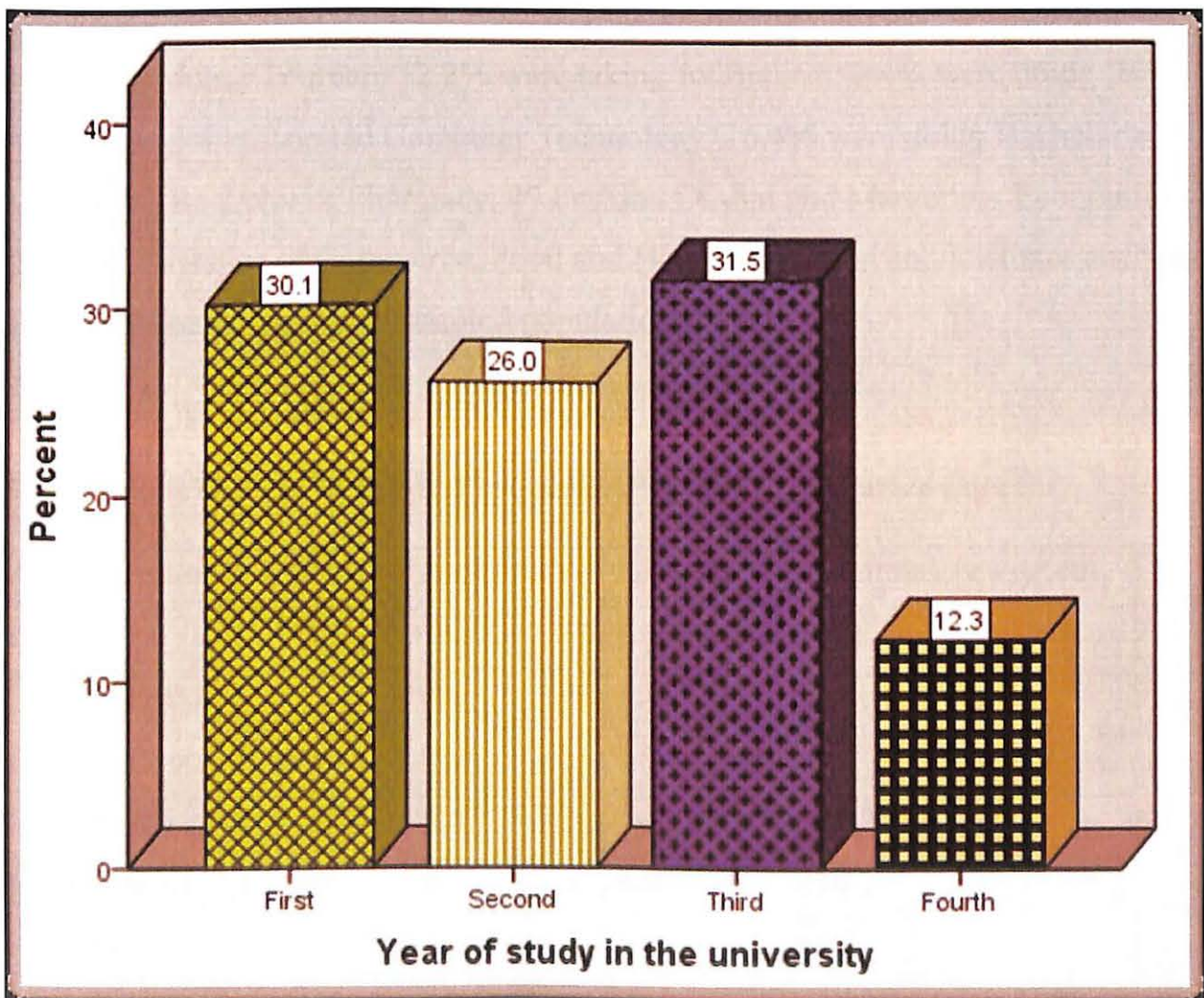


Figure 4.2: Level of Education

#### 4.2.4 Course respondents were taking in the university

The respondents were asked the courses they were taking in the University. Table 4.1 shows the summary of the findings. 4.1% were in Bachelor of Environmental Science, 8.2% were in Psychology, 6.8% were taking MSc Procurement and Logistics, 4.1% were taking BBIT, 2.7% were taking Procurement and Supplies Management, 1.4% were in BSc Actuarial Science, 2.7% were in MSc Project Management, 1.4% were taking BSc in IT, 2.7% were doing MBA, 1.4% were in Civil Engineering, 6.8% were doing B.A, 9.6% were taking International Relations, 2.7% were doing Accounting, 1.4% were taking Information Systems Technology, 1.4% were doing Tourism, 12.3% were taking Journalism, 1.4% were doing IBA, 4.1% were doing Applied Computer Technology, 16.4% were doing Bachelor of Education. Bachelor of Pharmacy, 49 Fashion Design and Marketing, Economics and Finance, Bachelor of Commerce, Food and Health, Nutrition and Dietetics each had 1.4% representation in the sampled population.

#### Respondent Course of Study Frequency Percent Cumulative Percent

Respondent course of study	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelor of Environmental Science	3	4.1	4.1
Psychology	6	8.2	12.3
MSc Procurement and Logistics	5	6.8	19.2
BBIT	3	4.1	23.3
Procurement and Supplies Management	2	2.7	26.0
BSc Actuarial Science	1	1.4	27.4

MSc Project Management	2	2.7	30.1
BSc IT	1	1.4	31.5
MBA	2	2.7	34.2
Civil Engineering	1	1.4	35.6
International Relations	7	9.6	52.1
Accounting	2	2.7	54.8
B.A	5	6.8	42.5
Information Systems Technology	1	1.4	56.2
Tourism	1	1.4	57.5
Journalism	9	12.3	69.9
IBA	1	1.4	71.2
Applied Computer Technology	3	4.1	75.3
Bachelor of Education	12	16.4	91.8
Bachelor of Pharmacy	1	1.4	93.2
Fashion Design and Marketing	1	1.4	94.5
Economics and Finance	1	1.4	95.9
Bachelor of Commerce	1	1.4	97.3
Food and Health	1	1.4	98.6
Nutrition and Dietetics	1	1.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4.1: Course respondents were taking in the university**

### 4.2.5 Age bracket of the respondents

The study wanted to know how old the respondents were. Majority (58.9%) of the respondents were between 18-22 years, which is the appropriate age in Ghanaian universities. 30.1% were 22-26%, 6.9% were between 30-35 years and 4.11% of the respondents were 26-30 years old. The study managed to include respondents that were at different age brackets and therefore are likely to be at different stages of their developments and socializations. These representation may strengthen the study given the findings will reflect the ideas and opinion from different categories of respondents.

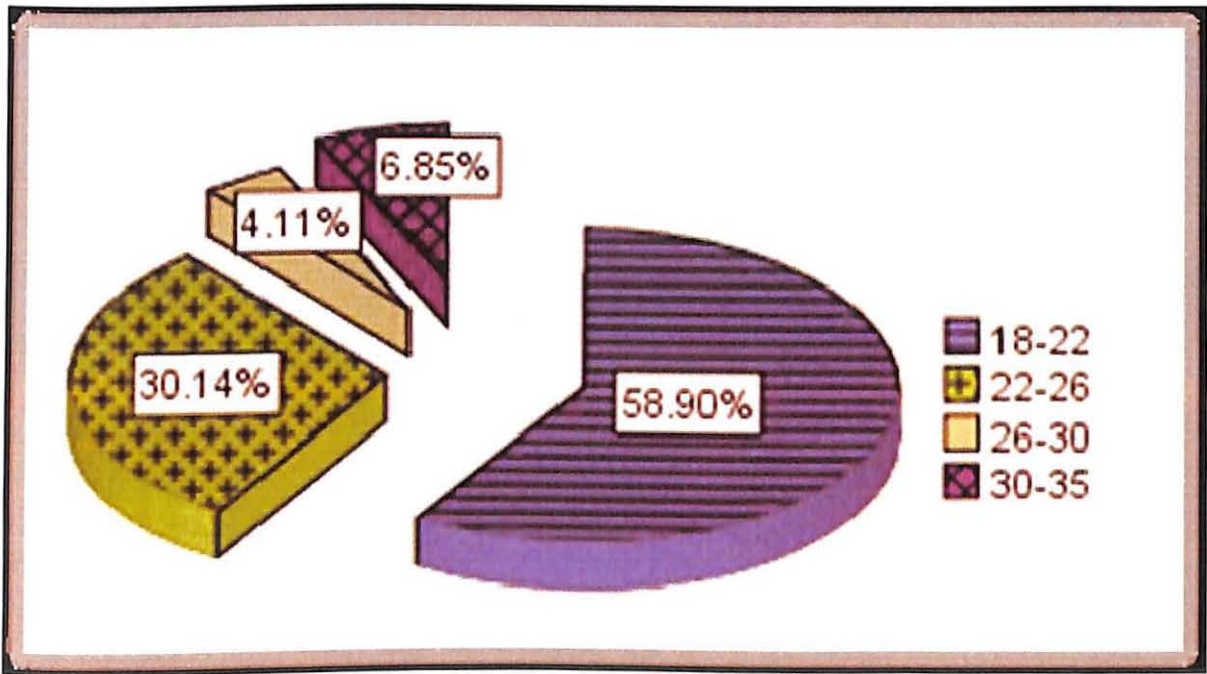


Figure 4.3: Age bracket of respondents

### 4.3.0 How do the youth in Ghana use social media in their daily lives?

The research went to find how the youth in Ghana use social media in their daily lives. The findings are presented in the sections that follow.

### 4.3.1 Hours spent on the computer by the respondents

The respondents were asked how many hours they spent on the computer on every day basis. Figure 4.4 below shows the summary of the findings. 60.3% said they spend 2-5 hours a day on the computer, 20.5% said they spend 5-10 hours, 1.4% said they spend more than 10 hours, 17.8% said they spend only 1 hour on the computer. Available evidence suggests that most internet users probably visit social network sites daily or at least every other day (Ofcom, 2008), and young people lead the pack.

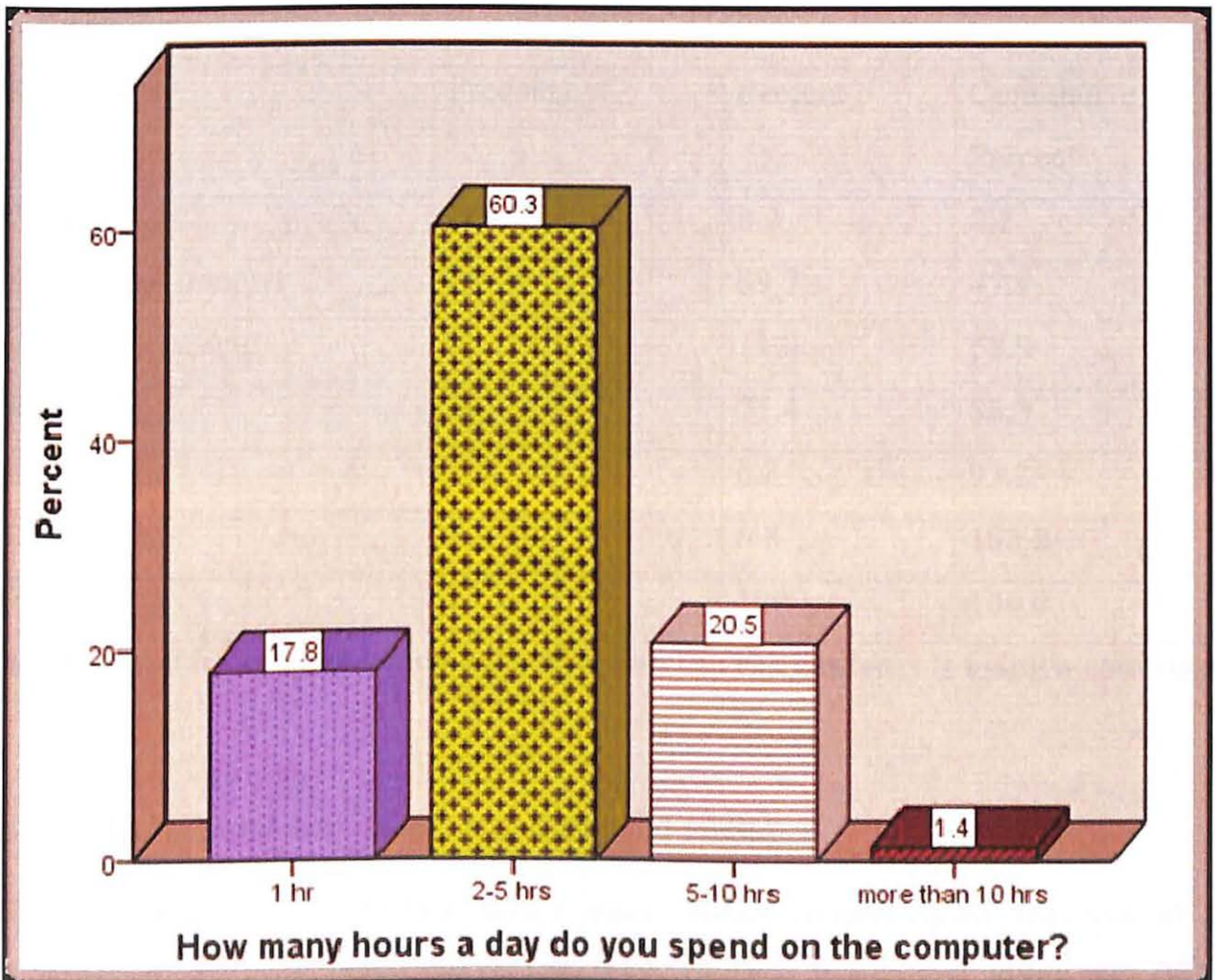


Figure 4.4: Hours spent on the computer by the respondents

**4.3.2 The most common activity when the respondents is using a computer** The respondents were asked the most common activity they were engaged on when they logged into a computer. Table 4.2 shows their responses. 8.2% said they played games on the computer most of the time, 39.7% said they used their computers to surf the internet, 11% said they used it for word processing, 27.4% said they used it for research, 6.8% said they were on e-mails most of the time and another 6.8 said they used their computers for chat rooms.

**Responses Frequency Percent Cumulative Percent**

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Games	6	8.2	<b>8.2</b>
Surfing the internet	29	39.7	<b>47.9</b>
Word processing	8	11.0	<b>58.9</b>
Research	20	27.4	<b>86.3</b>
E-mail	5	6.8	<b>93.2</b>
Chat rooms	5	6.8	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4.2: The most common activity when the respondents is using a computer**

**4.3.3 The respondents' most common social media**

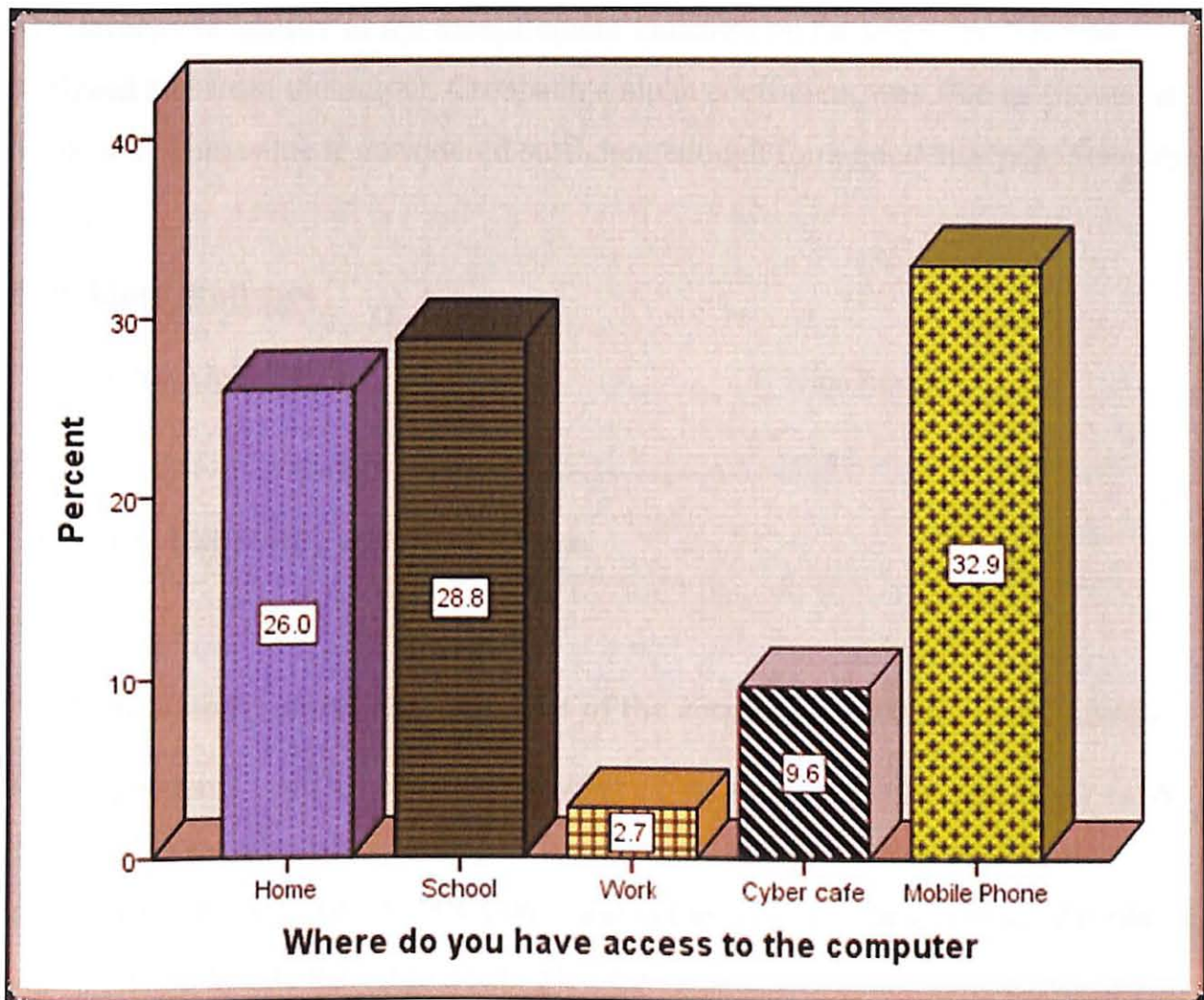
The respondents were asked the most common social networking site they visited. A majority (43.8%) said they were on Facebook, findings that agreed with a July, 2010 report in the *New York Times* that indicated Facebook had surged from 200 million to nearly 500 million users in the last 15 months. 13.7% said they were on Twitter, 9.6% said they were on YouTube, 17.8% said they were on Whatsapp, only 1.4% said they are in LinkedIn, 6.8% said they were on Instagram and another 6.8% said they were on Skype, as is indicated in table 4.3.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Facebook	32	43.8	<b>43.8</b>
Twitter	10	13.7	<b>57.5</b>
YouTube	7	9.6	<b>67.1</b>
Whatsapp	13	17.8	<b>84.9</b>
LinkedIn	1	1.4	<b>86.3</b>
Instagram	5	6.8	<b>93.2</b>
Skype	5	6.8	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4.3: The most common social media site visited**

#### **4.3.4 Place the respondents had computer access**

The respondents were asked the places they had computer access. From figure 4.5 below, 32.7% said used their mobile phones to access the internet, 28.8% said they used their computers at school, 26% said used computers at home, 9.6% used cybercafés to have access to computers and only 2.7% used their work places.



**Figure 4.5 where respondents access the computer**

#### **4.3.5 Reliability analysis on the first objective, how the youth in Ghana use social media in their daily lives**

As discussed in chapter three, reliability is the extent to which an instrument of measurement contains variable errors that vary each time a given unit is measured by the same instrument. According to Bramble and Mason (1997) instruments with a reliability index of 0.5 and above can be used to collect data. Brown (2006) further contends that a reliability index of a minimum of 0.6 is satisfactory for any research instrument. Sekeran (2003) considers Cronbach's alpha type of reliability co-efficient of 0.7 or higher as being adequate.

The level of reliability of the measurement indicator on the objective one was analysed and from the output, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .706 as shown on Table 4.4. This value is considered sufficient enough for a good analysis (Sekearan, 2003).

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items.
706	15

**Table 4.4: Reliability test on objective**

**4.3.6 Statements expressing opinions of the respondents about social media**

The respondents were asked to rate to what extent the listed statements applied to them. Table 4.4 shows the findings. On I love watching videos whenever am connected to the internet, 47.9% either said not at all or to a large extent. On Online games are addictive and I play them whenever I have an opportunity, a majority, 79.4% said not at all or to a little. When asked if they download music videos and movies from the internet a lot, 35.6% said not at all or to a little they do. 47.9% said either to a little extent or to a moderate extent they frequently upload and share videos and photographs in social networks such as, in Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp e.t.c. 80.8% said they always enjoy browsing/surfing the internet. 52.1% agreed either to a moderate extent or to a large extent they love visiting social networks because they get to meet new people, 45.2% agreed either to a large extent or to a very large extent social networks enables them to remain connected with their families and friends. 28.8% said to a moderate extent they are always on the phone/computer chatting with online friends, 27.4% said to a moderate extent they and their friends have forums/groups where they post messages to each other or the whole group, 61.6% said they use their mobile phone for texting and they text a lot,

30.1% agreed that to a moderate extent social networks make it easy for them to talk to a someone they have never met before. 72.6% agreed either to a large extent or to a very large extent they use the internet for doing their assignments and enriching class notes, another 72.6% agreed either to a very large extent or to a large extent they feel they are always looped because they get to know almost everything that happens and almost instantly, thanks to technology. 83.6% agreed to a large extent or to a very large social media have made access to class notes and other relevant information easier because of tools like Dropbox and Google Drive, 46.6% were of the opinion that not at all or to a little extent Skype and other video conferencing tools enable them to have discussion with their lecturers and group members from anywhere in the world.

	Not at all		Little extent		Moderate extent		To a large extent		A very large extent		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	I love watching videos whenever I am Connected to the internet.	22	30.1	13	17.8	21	28.8	7	9.6	10	13.7
Online games are addictive and I play them whenever I have an opportunity.	42	57.5	16	21.9	6	8.2	7	9.6	2	2.7	100.0
I download music videos and movies from the internet a lot.	10	13.7	16	21.9	6	8.2	7	9.6	2	2.7	100.0
I frequently upload and share videos and photographs in social networks such as, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp e.t.c.	12	16.4	15	20.5	20	27.4	9	12.3	17	23.3	100.0
I always enjoy browsing/surfing the Internet.	1	1.4	3	4.1	10	13.7	15	20.5	44	60.3	100.0
I love visiting social networks because I get to meet new people	9	12.3	14	19.2	24	32.9	14	19.2	12	16.4	100.0
Social networks enable me to remain connected with my family and friends.	5	6.8	21	28.8	14	19.2	14	19.2	19	26	100.0
I am always on the phone/computer chatting with online friends.	11	15.1	18	24.7	21	28.8	16	21.9	7	9.6	100.0
My friends and I have forums/groups where we post messages to one another or the whole group.	15	20.5	14	19.2	20	27.4	12	16.4	12	16.4	100.0
I use my mobile phone for texting and I text a lot.	1	1.4	11	15.1	16	21.9	19	26	26	35.6	100.0
Social networks make it easy for me to talk to someone I have never met before.	7	9.6	12	16.4	22	30.1	12	16.4	20	27.4	100.0
I use the internet for doing my assignments and enriching class notes.	1	1.4	12	16.4	7	9.6	21	28.8	32	43.8	100.0
I feel i am always looped because I get to know almost everything that happens and almost instantly, thanks to	3	4.1	2	2.7	15	20.5	23	31.5	30	41.1	100.0

technology.

Social media have made access to class notes and other relevant information easier because of tools like Dropbox and Google Drive.	0	0	3	4.1	9	12.3	23	31.5	38	52.1	100.0
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Skype and other video conferencing tools enable me to have discussion with my lecturers and group members from anywhere in the world.	23	31.5	11	15.1	13	17.8	8	11	18	24.7	100.0
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**Table 4.5: Social media and how the respondents have used it**

#### **4.4: Do the youth in Ghana prefer social media as a means of communication as opposed to traditional methods?**

The research wanted to find out why youth in Ghana prefer social media as a means of communication and not old traditional methods. Sections that follow represents the findings.

##### **4.4.1 Benefits of social media**

Table 4.6 shows that, 61.7% either agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer social media because their message is received in real time, 86.3% either agreed or strongly agreed that sending an

e-mail is a lot faster than writing a letter. Another 86.3% agreed or strongly agreed that in social media a reply is received almost immediately as opposed to old traditional methods; 87.7% agreed or strongly agreed that social media enables individuals to know if their messages have reached their recipient or not; 35.6% strongly disagreed that social media are difficult and time consuming, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that social media are convenient since individuals are always connected thanks to mobile phones. 68.5% agreed or strongly agreed that social media are less expensive as opposed to old traditional methods. 31.5% were neutral on social media are insecure as compared to old traditional methods, 43.8% strongly agreed that with social media they feel independent as they don't need an adult to supervise them when they are using for instance the mobile phone, 35.6%

agreed or strongly agreed that social media elevates their social status and earns them respect among their peer since they had many followers both in Facebook and Twitter, findings confirmed by Livingstone (2009) who emphasizes that at the heart of the explosion in online communication is the desire to construct valued representation of oneself which affirms and is affirmed by one's peers.

38.4% either agreed or strongly agreed that social media helps them relieve stress.

Benefits	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	I prefer social media because my message is received in real time	1	1.4	12	16.4	11	15.1	25	34.2	24	
Sending an e-mail is a lot faster than writing a letter.	1	1.4	0	0	9	12.3	10	13.7	53	72.6	100.0
In social media a reply is received almost immediately as opposed to traditional methods	0	0	7	9.6	3	4.1	16	21.9	47	64.4	100.0
Social enables individuals to know if their messages have reached their recipient or not	1	1.4	3	4.1	5	6.8	30	41.1	34	46.6	100.0
Social media are difficult and time consuming	26	35.6	19	26	19	26	7	9.6	2	2.7	100.0
Social media is convenient since individuals are always connected thanks to mobile phones	4	5.5	9	12.3	3	4.1	25	34.2	32	43.8	100.0
Social media is less expensive as opposed to traditional methods	11	15.1	4	5.5	8	11	30	41.1	20	27.4	100.0
Social media is insecure as compared to old traditional methods.	14	19.2	7	9.6	23	31.5	15	20.5	14	19.2	100.0
With social media I feel independent as in I don't need an	4	5.5	7	9.6	13	17.8	0	0	32	43.8	100.0

adult to supervise me when  
am using my mobile phone

Social media elevates my social status and earns me respect	15	20.5	12	16.4	20	27.4	13	17.8	13	17.8	100.0
Social media helps me relieve stress	11	15.1	25	9	15	20.5	15	20.5	13	17.8	100.0

**Table 4.6 Benefits of social media**

## **4.5 What are the impacts of social media on the behavior change of youths in Ghana?**

The study went out to investigate the impacts social media had on the behavior change of the youths in Ghana. Sections that follow present the findings.

### **4.5.1 Effects of Social media**

Table 4.6 indicated that 63% either agreed to a large extent or to a very large extent that social networks help them to maintain contacts with old friends and create new friends. Livingstone (2008) sums it up when he says that, social networking sites enable communication among ever-widening circles of contacts and invite convergence among the hitherto separate activities of email, messaging, website creation, diaries, photo albums and music or video uploading and downloading. From the user's viewpoint, more than ever before, using social media means creating content as well as receiving, with user control extending far beyond selecting ready-made, mass-produced content.

65.7% either agreed to a large extent to a very large extent that social media have made planning easier. They said they just needed to post in their wall any event and all their friends can view and decide to attend or not to. 28.8% were neutral on social media saves me cost on travelling to see family and friends. 72.2% said that either to a large extent or to a very large extent internet has made things easier for them at school since they get their assignments via SMS and after doing them, they

send via e-mail, 61.6% said that to a large extent or to a very large extent social media has reduced their cost of purchasing stationery.

Effects of Social Media	Not at all		Little Extent		Moderate extent		Large extent		Very large extent		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Social networks help me maintain contacts with old friends and create new friends.	1	1.4	9	12.3	17	23.3	23	31.5	23	31.5	100.0
Social media have made planning easier. I just need to post in my wall any event and all my friends can view and decide to attend or not to.	2	2.7	9	12.3	14	19.2	25	34.2	23	31.5	100.0
Social media saves me cost on travelling to see family and friends.	10	13.7	7	9.6	21	28.8	19	26	16	21.9	100.0
Internet has made things easier for me at school since I get my assignments via SMS and after doing them I send via email.	3	4.1	7	9.6	11	15.1	20	27.4	32	43.8	100.0
Social media has reduced my cost of purchasing stationery	8	11	12	16.4	8	11	25	34.2	20	27.4	100.0

**Table 4.7: Effects of social media**

#### **4.5.2 Other effects social media has had on the respondents' behavior, attitude and perception of things**

11.1% said it leads to wastage of time. Another 11.1% said it makes people lazy, 5.6% said they spend more time chatting that otherwise could be used for doing better things like reading. 11.1% said it exposes all the information to every one including children and those who are not meant to view it. 5.6% said it enables them to keep up with trending issues, 5.6% said it eliminates boredom in individuals, 5.6% said that it is ruining social skills, 5.6% said that it improves on the confidence of an individual, 16.7% said it improves on social skills, 5.6% said that research sites are faster and reliable and 16.7% said that it has increased their knowledge.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Wastage of time	2	11.1	<b>11.1</b>
Makes people lazy	2	11.1	<b>22.2</b>
I spend more time chatting time that would be used for doing better things like reading	1	5.6	<b>27.8</b>
It exposes all the information to every one including the children and those who are not meant to view it	2	11.1	<b>38.9</b>
Enables me to keep up with trending issues	1	5.6	<b>44.4</b>
Eliminates boredom in Individuals	1	5.6	<b>50.0</b>
Ruining of social skills	1	5.6	<b>55.6</b>
Improves on the confidence of an Individual	1	5.6	<b>61.1</b>
Improves on social skills	3	16.7	<b>77.8</b>
Research sites are faster and Reliable	1	5.6	<b>83.3</b>
It has increased my knowledge	3	16.7	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4.8: Other effects of Social Media**

## **4.6 What are the risks that come with use of social media among the youths in Ghana?**

The study wanted further to find out the risks that came with the use of social media among the youths in Ghana. Sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 present the findings of the study.

### **4.6.1 Risks Involved in Social Media**

47.9% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social media have increased cyber bullying. 71.2% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that due to social media, many young people have been accidentally introduced to pornographic web content. 66.4% either agreed or strongly agreed that the social media have made many youth lazier,

65.8% of the youth of now a days are physically antisocial due to social media. 30.1% were neutral that many adolescents are having sex due to early exposure from social media and through peer influence. 58.9% agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of social media many unsuspecting youths and adolescents have fallen for sex predators. 67.1% many young people end up wasting a lot of their time on games and chatting on social networks and 80.9% either agreed or strongly agreed that mobile phones and computers have become very addictive such that it is very hard for people to live without.

<b>Risks of Social Media</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Not sure</b>		<b>Agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>		<b>Total %</b>
	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	
	Social media have increased cyber bullying.	8	11	13	17.8	17	23.3	13	17.8	22	
Due to social media, many young people have been accidentally introduced to pornographic web content.	2	2.7	5	6.8	14	19.2	17	23.3	35	47.9	100.0
Social have made many youth lazier.	9	12.3	4	5.5	13	17.8	19	26	28	38.4	100.0
The youth today are physically antisocial due to social media.	8	11	10	13.7	20	27.4	16	21.9	19	26	100.0
Many adolescents are having sex due to early exposure from social media and through peer influence.	2	2.7	9	12.3	14	19.2	21	28.8	27	37	100.0
As a result of social media many unsuspecting youths and adolescents have fallen for sex predators.	3	4.1	5	6.8	22	30.1	18	24.7	25	34.2	100.0
Many young people end up wasting a lot of their time on games and chatting on social networks.	6	8.2	11	15.1	7	9.6	19	26	30	41.1	100.0
Mobile phones and computers have become very addictive such that it is very hard for	0	0	0	0	11	15.1	22	30.1	40	54.8	100.0

people to live without.

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**Table 4.9: Risks involved in social media**

#### **4.6.2 Other risks that are brought about by social media**

5.9% said that it takes a lot of money buying data bundles and better phones that can browse faster and that have wider screens. Findings that were confirmed by Ortiz A. (2007) who opined that new kinds of games and virtual communities come into the picture when the user spends money to enhance the gaming experience (e.g. subscriptions, purchasing virtual items). Many of these virtual spaces are based on a real economic infrastructure where users Real Trade money (RTM) in order to buy, sell, and exchange virtual items or virtual money.

41.2% said that it results in cybercrimes. Wolak et al. (2006 ), conducting a similar study found out that, harassment among peers has become unlimited thanks to the youth's access to the modern technologies. Bullying has occurred in a new territory, online (Li, 2006). Studies suggest that offline bullying usually increases in middle school but online harassment happens later and continues into high school.

5.9% said it leads to break ups in relationships and marriages, 5.9% said that it leads to brainwashing of individuals, 5.9% said that it leads to diseases such as Tennis elbow, 5.9% said that it has brought high levels of insecurity as it makes it easier for terrorist to communicate through social media, 11.8% said that it leads to time

wastage at the expense of other things, 11.8% said that it has given a viable platform for hate speech and 5.9% said that it has facilitated negative ethnicity.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Takes a lot of money buying data bundles and better phones that can browse faster and that have wider screens.	1	5.9	<b>5.9</b>
Cyber crimes	7	41.2	<b>47.1</b>
Leads to break ups in relationships and Marriages	1	5.9	<b>52.9</b>
Leads to brainwashing of individuals	1	5.9	<b>58.8</b>
Leads to diseases such as Tennis elbow	1	5.9	<b>64.7</b>
Has brought high levels of insecurity as it makes it easier for terrorist to communicate through social media	1	5.9	<b>70.6</b>
Leads to time wastage at the expense of other things	2	11.8	<b>82.4</b>
It has given a viable platform for hate Speech	2	11.8	<b>94.1</b>
Has facilitated negative ethnicity	1	5.9	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.0.: Other risks that are brought about by social media**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study sought to investigate impact of social media among Ghanaian youth on behavior change: a case study of students in selected universities in Ghana. This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study. The chapter further offers a summary on the data collected, analysis of data, discussions of the findings on each research question and the logical interpretation emanating from the findings. Finally the chapter makes recommendations on possible areas for further research

#### **5.2 Summary of the study**

As stated above, the study sought to find out the impact of social media among the youth on behavior change. Study objectives were formulated and research questions were derived from the objectives. Questionnaires were the instruments used in collection of data. Quantitative data collected, was then coded and inputted in statistical package for social science (SPSS). The results were carefully analyzed and presented to represent the actual situation on the ground. Qualitative data was closely analyzed qualitatively and important information extracted from what the respondents said. The data was then presented making relevant citations in comparison with the studies that had been done earlier and that related to the topic of study. Summary and conclusions were derived from the findings of the study.

### **5.3 Major findings of the study**

The study found out that the youth in Ghana use social media a lot and they spend more time on the computer. Figure 4.6 in chapter four indicates that 60.3% of the youth spend 2-5 hours a day on the computers. According to table 4.2, the most common activity they are usually doing is surfing the internet and a majority of 39.7% agreed to be doing so. The study further found out that most of the youth were on social media with Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter topping the list, as is indicated in table 4.3. Most of these respondents used their mobile phones to access the internet especially on Whatsapp- a mobile phone application. The most common activity is chatting or texting on their mobile phones, as is shown in table 4.5, where 28.8% said to a moderate extent they are always on the phone/computer chatting with online friends.

The study wanted to find out if the youth in Ghana prefer social media as a means of communication as opposed to traditional methods. Various reasons were given for the preference of the social media. As is indicated in table 4.5, some of the reasons stated included, they prefer social media because their message is received in real time where 61.7% either agreed or strongly agreed, 86.3% either agreed or strongly agreed that sending an e-mail is a lot faster than writing a letter, another 86.3% agreed or strongly agreed that in social media a reply is received almost immediately as opposed to old traditional methods. Further, 87.7% agreed or strongly agreed that social media enables individuals to know if their messages have reached their recipient or not.

Other reasons given included the feeling of independence that is associated with social media where there is no parental control and also elevation of their social status among the peers, where one has many followers on the social network.

The study further revealed that social media had various effects on the behavior of the respondents. For instance in table 4.6 it is indicated that, 63% either agreed to a large extent or to

a very large extent that social networks help them in maintain contacts with old friends and create new friends. This findings are confirmed by Livingstone (2008) who posited that, Social networking sites enable communication among ever-widening circles of contacts, inviting convergence among the hitherto separate activities of email, messaging, website creation, diaries, photo albums and music or video uploading and downloading. From the user's viewpoint, more than ever before, using media means creating as well as receiving with user control extending far beyond selecting ready-made, mass-produced content.

Social media further makes planning easier as the youth communicate through various platforms provided in it. They can either post messages on each other's walls in Facebook or send direct messages to mobile phones via Whatsapp. However, the findings further showed that it made the youth lazy and most of them admitted to a waste of time that would otherwise have gone to doing other better things like reading as is indicated in table 4.7.

#### **5.4 Major recommendations from the study**

- i. The youths need to be trained on better usage of the social media so as to minimize time wastage on chatting and other irrelevant engagements that are not of major importance on their lives.
- ii. All the stakeholders and especially network providers need to come up with means of filtering information that reaches the young people through social media platforms. This will help minimize exposing them to pornographic and other unwarranted materials.
- iii. Parents and security agencies should monitor activities of the young people on social media in order to protect them from sex pest and pedophiles.

- iv. In order to communicate effectively to the young people schools and government agencies should adopt social media as one of their means of communication.
- v. To avoid having a generation that does not have face to face communication skills, all the stakeholders should consider organizing social events that the youth will use to interact and mingle with each other physically.
- vi. The findings of this study should be used in policy formulation at levels of learning that the youths are inclusive such as high schools and universities and in government agents that deal with the youth.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

- i. Since the study targeted the general social media, a study can be done further on the specific social media platform, such as Facebook or Twitter.
- ii. While the study recognized that social media has impacts on other age groups outside the youth bracket, and as such this study limited itself only to the youths in Ghana. Therefore, a similar study can be done on other age groups outside the youth bracket.
- iii. The study focused itself only on four universities that are based around Accra Central Business District, as opposed to other institutions outside the stated realm of orientation or geographical boundary. Similar studies can be done outside of Accra Central Business District.

## **5.6 Conclusion of the study**

In view of the above summary, it was evident that social media played a major role on behavior change of the respondents. The youths mostly used social media for communicating between their friends and families. The fact that social media is part of them especially having been born in this era of emerging technology, most felt that they could not do without it. They depended on it for various positive things such as research and contacts with old friends and getting on the loop of what was happening either in their circles, nationally or internationally.

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# **Appendix**

## **Questionnaire**

### **GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

#### **SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

#### **STUDENT DISSERTATION FOR THE AWARD OF M.A IN MEDIA MANAGEMENT**

***“THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHAVIOR OF THE YOUTH: A  
CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA”.***

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Dear Participant:**

I am a graduate student of the Ghana Institute of Journalism. For my final thesis, I am examining the impact of social media on behaviour of the youth: a case study of students of selected universities in Ghana. I am inviting you to participate in this study by completing the attached surveys. This questionnaire seeks to assess the impact of the power crisis on audience. Please answer all questions as honestly as possible and kindly return the completed questionnaires promptly. Information collected through this questionnaire is solely for academic purpose. Thank you for taking time to assist me in my educational endeavours. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the number or email listed below.

0244943284

Sandra,frimpong94@gmail.com

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of respondents

1: sex a. MALE ( ) b. Female ( )

Age: .....

University attended.....

Program of study.....

Which level are you.....

Section B.

1. Do you have access to internet? .....
2. How do you access the internet; via phone or computer? .....
3. How many hours do you spend on a computer or phone daily? .....
4. What is the common activity you engage in on the computer/phone? .....
5. Where do you get access to a computer? Home, work, school or others? .....
6. Do you use social media? .....
7. How do you use social media? .....
8. Why do you use social media? .....
9. What social media platform do you use? .....
10. Are you in any social network group? .....
11. Do you prefer social media to traditional media? If Yes why?  
.....

12. Do you download or upload movies and music from the internet and to the social media platforms? .....
13. Do you use text messaging or social media in sending a message? .....
14. What are the benefits of social media to you? .....
15. What are some of the challenges in using social media?  
.....
16. What are some of the risks in using social media?  
.....