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**DISSERTATION TITLE: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE AND INTERPERSONAL RELATION: A CROSS-SECTIONAL
STUDY OF STUDENTS OF GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

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DECLARATIONS

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION

I, ASIWOME ATIEGAR-NTUMY, the author of this dissertation, do hereby declare that the work presented was done by me at the Ghana institute of Journalism. This work has never been presented either in whole or in part for an award of any other degree in this University or elsewhere.

ASIWOME ATIEGAR-NTUMY DATE.....

SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this project work has been supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines on supervision as laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

DR. ETSE SIKANKU..... DATE:

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God for His direction, love and protection towards the entire Ntummy family. I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents who have been a great influence in my life and for the wonderful support offered to me in my entire education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to God almighty for the wisdom, strength and grace to go through the course and the completion of this study. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Etse Sikanku for patiently guiding me through the process of writing my long essay. I would like to thank my Uncle, Dr. Simon Anku Ntumy and cousins; Gloria and Phidelis for keenly supporting the idea to further my education and providing all my needs to make it a success. My gratitude equally goes to Mr. Manasseh Sugarthan for his guidance throughout this work. Finally, I thank my family and friends for supporting me in every way. To everyone who contributed to making this study a success, I say God richly bless you.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impacts of social media on the academic performance and interpersonal relationships of students in the Ghana Institute of Journalism. The main objective of this study is to explore the link between social media usage, and academic performance and interpersonal relationships and whether the identified link has an effect on same.

Convenience sampling, also known as accidental or haphazard sampling method was the sampling method proposed due to its timelier and less laborious nature. Qualitative research was also proposed for implementation albeit this was impossible due to the ravaging effects of the new coronavirus and attendant restrictions. In light of this, secondary data; journals, books and other relevant printed and online matter were gathered and analysed to help understand the effects of social media on university students' academic performance and social relationships.

The main findings indicated that there is substantial amount of literature on the use of social media by students of tertiary institutions and the wavering impacts it has had on their academic performance. There is however not as much information on the effects of social media on the social or interpersonal relationship of students. The research recommends the need for further research to be conducted to provide a deeper insight into the potential consequences of the excessive use of social media on the academic performance and interpersonal relationships of Ghanaian students.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a summary of the problem under study. It comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study. In addition to these are particular areas or questions the research is to find answers to and how relevant the study is to academia and other fields of study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Advances in Internet technologies have prompted compelling changes in how we interact, communicate, learn, and build knowledge. Easier access to computers, the modernisation of countries globally and an increased utilisation of smartphones has given people the opportunity to use the internet more frequently and with more convenience than before. For much of the connected world, it permeates almost every facet of our existence from shopping and banking, to communication and education among many other pursuits (Tariq, Mehboob, Khan, & Ullah, 2012). In general worldwide Internet users have increased rapidly. According to the Global Digital Reports 2019 collection by We Are Social and Hootsuite, there were 5.11 billion unique mobile users out of which 3.48 billion were social media users in 2019. The Internet and in particular social media applications such as Facebook, YouTube and many others, are obviously “overtaking the world.”

It is not surprising that social media usage is one of the most common activities among today’s youthful generation. It affords them a portal for entertainment and communication and it has become one of the main platforms for accessing information and news. The increasing

popularity of social media platforms have raised several concerns including addiction among students (Zaremohzzabieh et al, 2014) , essentially overindulgence which is counterproductive as it steals away time for active learning or academic work. Another concern also has to do with social media's effect on interpersonal relationships.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the light of this, there is still only limited evidence to judge the influence of social media usage on the attitudes and performance of both undergraduate and graduate students, especially in Ghana, hence this study. This study is aimed at exploring self-perceived impact on respondents' social well-being, apart from academic performance.

Bennett, Maton and Kervin (2008) are an example of educators that suggested that using media technology can help students enhance their academic performance. Yet, many educators and parents are worried that their children and students are spending too much time using social media networks. Some institutions and instructors ban the use of social media in classrooms believing that it negatively impacts students' attention, engagement, and accordingly their GPA. Rambe (2012) indicated that “the essentialist view that new technological innovations (especially Social Media) disrupt higher education delivery ride on educators' risk averse attitudes toward full scale adoption of unproven technologies. However, this unsubstantiated logic forecloses possibilities for embracing the constructive dimensions of disruptions, and grasping the tremendous academic potential of emerging technologies” (p.132). The results of previous research is not conclusive, with some studies suggesting a negative impact for social media, and others suggesting promising opportunities for engagement. Over generalisations regarding the impact of social media are obviously not warranted. More needs to be discovered

about the variables that influence this relationship and about strategies that help students, faculty, and higher education institutions harness the full potential of these pervasive technologies. The study aims to uncover some of these factors. Context also plays an important role in the adoption and usage of innovation. The study fills yet another gap by shedding the light on the social media effects on the academic performance of university students within the Ghanaian context.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1.To identify the extent to which GIJ students use social media vis-à-vis studying and interpersonal interactions.
- 2.To examine the perception of GIJ students on the effects of social media usage on their academic performance and interpersonal relations.
3. To explore the link between social media usage and academic performance.

1.4 Research Questions

This study will answer the following questions:

- 1.To what extent do students at Ghana Institute of Journalism use social media for academic-related purposes and interpersonal relations?
2. How do students perceive the impact of social media on their academic performance and interpersonal relation?
3. What is the relationship between academic performance and use of social media?
 1. Number of hours (social media)
 - B. Number of study hours

1.5 Significance of the Study

Social media has permeated every facet of our lives pursuant to the advent of the smartphone. Further adding to the inherent feature of its far-reaching connectivity, has been introduction of social media. The effects of social media have received mixed reactions and have also become an issue of grave concern especially for many an educationist. There currently is not enough literature on the effects of social media on the academic performance of tertiary students and also their interpersonal relationships. It is necessary therefore to find out to add to the existing body of knowledge by documenting the responses of students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism. It will also serve as the basis for further research on how to streamline the integration of social media activities into academic curricula. The outcome will advise policy formulation and practice among educationists and disruptive technology manufacturing firms alike, on the way forward in the seemingly unending debate on whether mobile phones should be allowed in Senior High Schools for instance.

1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

Social Media: interactive mobile phone applications or technologies that facilitate the creation and or sharing of information.

Academic Performance: academic achievement within a semester or the continuous assessment of one's academic achievement over the course of two or more semesters

Interpersonal Relationships: ability to establish rapport with individuals having similar interests without the use of a communication device

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study will encompass four chapters; the first chapter which is the introduction of the study entails the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and scope of the study. The second chapter of the study will focus on review of related literature that supports the study. Chapter three will provide the methodology; research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, the instrument for data collection, validity and ethical issues and procedures for administration of instruments. Chapter four of the study will give the summary of the study, conclusion drawn and the provision of some recommendations to address the problem under discussion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section examines and discusses the literature that relates to the study. Included in this chapter are the relevant theories and concepts as well as a review of related empirical studies. In this study, four main themes will be addressed through analysis and research that will help in understanding the effect of social media. The four main themes are: the concept of social media, social media usage in Ghana, the influence of social media usage among university students on their academic performance and personal relations, followed by the theoretical framework.

2.1 The Concept of Social Media

Social media is defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Social media includes a myriad of sources of online information that are created, disseminated and used by consumers to educate one another about products, services, and brands available in the marketplace (Murugesan, 2007). Current examples of social media platforms include social networking sites like Facebook, photo sharing sites like Flickr, video sharing sites like YouTube, business networking sites like LinkedIn, microblogging sites like Twitter, and numerous others. Social media sites are reasonably priced and, more often than not, completely free of charge to use.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) indicate that the first form of social media was first known in 1979 when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created the *Usenet*; a worldwide

discussion system that permitted internet users to post public messages; and also when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded “*Open Diary*” in 1998. *Open Diary* was an early social networking site in which members of a certain community shared their daily diary online and the word “blog” was first used at the same time. During the latter part of the 1990s, prior to the development of the internet ‘Web 2.0’, the main goal for browsing the internet was for informing themselves through reading from several online resources and for watching videos (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Users during this time were considered consumers and not participants.

A study by Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) as cited in Obar and Wildman (2015), the next phase of the development of the internet was Web 2.0. This was the User Generated Content era – internet users were transformed from being consumers and participants to “prosumers”. In other words, they consume and produce media (as cited in Obar & Wildman, 2015). These new affordances are what made possible the applications and dynamic interaction of social networking. There are many forms of social media, presented in the table below as adapted from Grahl (cited in Alwagait et al., 2015), which allow users to interact with other media users of their choice.

Table 1

Social media forms	Description
---------------------------	--------------------

<p style="text-align: center;">Social networking sites (SNS)</p>	<p>Services in which users set up a profile in order to establish a connection with friends or other users, who have similar backgrounds or interests. The profile contains a users' personal information. SNS provide various ways for users to interact with one another. Examples of SNS include Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+.</p>
	<p>Services that allow users to save search and organize links to various internet resources and websites. Some services will allow the</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Bookmarking sites</p>	<p>tagging of links in order for them to be shared easily as well as being searched for. Examples of booking marking sites include Delicious.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Microblogging sites</p>	<p>Services that combine SNS and blogging but the messages exchanged are limited in terms of size. Users have to subscribe to the services. Examples of micro blogging sites include Twitter.</p>

<p>Media sharing sites</p>	<p>Services that allow users to upload and share media such as videos and photos as well as allowing users to comment and tag media. Examples of media sharing services include YouTube and Flickr.</p>
<p>Social news sites</p>	<p>Services that allows other users to vote on news articles and links to external articles, which are posted by users. The news articles that get the most votes are displayed more prominently on the site. Examples of social news sites include Digg and Reddit.</p>
<p>Blogs and forums</p>	<p>Blogs are like online diaries of thoughts, which give other users the opportunity to post comments on the blog postings. Forums allow registered users to have conversations with other users by post messages. Examples of blogging sites include WordPress and Blogger</p>

There is extensive use of social media among students because of the increased access to the affordable internet at homes and educational institutions.

2.2 Social Media Usage in Ghana

An annual report released by global digital agencies, We Are Social and Hootsuite, revealed

that in excess of 10million Ghanaians are using the internet. This figure shows 35% of the total population then of about 30million and an increase of 2million on the statistics recorded in January 2017.

According to the same report, the country currently has 5.6 million active social media users, 19.53 million mobile phone users and 4.90 million active social media users - an increase of 22% (one million) on the January 2017 figure. It also showed that Ghana has 9.28 million active mobile internet users representing 32% of the total population.

Much of Ghana's surge in internet users was attributed to more inexpensive smartphones and mobile data packages. The survey employing respondents' self-reported activity also discovered that the Ghanaian on the average spent three hours 46 minutes using the internet via any smartphone device and two hours 56 minutes using social media.

2.3 Most popular social media platforms

With 5.60 million active social media users representing (19%) of the total population, the dominant social media platform was found to be WhatsApp with 30% of the population using the popular text messaging application. WhatsApp was closely followed by Facebook, YouTube, Facebook Messenger and Instagram with 28%, 15%, 15% and 12% respectively. The total sum of internet users accessing social media via mobile was found to be 4.90 million.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Just as a ship's anchor gives it support, a theoretical framework offers the basis for predictions about the relationships among the variables of a research work thus, providing a context for

examining a problem. The Uses and Gratification theory and the Academic Self-concept theory, serve as the guiding principle for this study. The choice is based on the topic under study as well as its objectives. The Uses and Gratification theory would be explored to determine the extent of social media use, motivations and gratifications.

2.4.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

In contrast to mass media concepts and theories that underscore the media's influence, the UGT explores how and based on which motives drive people to use which type of media and for what. The theory argues the effects of the media on people or those who use them. It elucidates how people actively seek out specific media among competitors to satisfy specific needs and whether they get satisfied when these needs are met (Lariscy et al., 2011). This theory will be explored with regards to internet and social media usage; what respondents use the internet and particularly social media for and whether the needs for which they use these are met.

The UGT has been adopted is as one of the theoretical frameworks due to the fact that it has previously been used effectively to examine the fundamental reasons for media use to satisfy particular needs and has also been successfully used to understand consumers' motivations and behaviours in the use of traditional media such as TV and radio.

Studies by Kaye and Johnson (2002) have shown that satisfactions or gratifications received are good predictors of media use and repetitive media use.

The UGT can also be very applicable in helping to expound social media uses albeit widely used in other disciplines. UGT is relevant to social media because of its origins in the communications literature. Among the uses and gratifications frameworks available in the literature, this study focused on four: Palmgreen and Rayburn's (1979), Korgaonkar and Wolin's (1999), Papacharissi and Rubin's (2000) and Ko et al. (2005). The Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) scale was selected because it was the first to look at both uses and gratifications simultaneously and because it looked at television viewing which is somewhat similar in nature to social media. The Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) scale was also selected because many previous studies have used this scale (Barton, 2009; Leung, 2007). The Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999), the Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) and the Ko et al. (2005) frameworks were selected because they looked at uses and gratifications with respect to the internet. Review of the four previously mentioned frameworks and scales revealed some common themes.

- (1) Social interaction;
- (2) Information seeking;
- (3) Pass time;
- (4) Entertainment;
- (5) Relaxation;
- (6) Communicatory utility; and
- (7) Convenience utility.

Social Interaction

Relying on uses and gratifications literature, this usage theme is defined as using social media to communicate and interact with others. The title of this theme comes from Ko et al.'s (2005)

research on social interaction motivation and web site duration. Their scale items included “meet people with my interests” and “keep up with what is going on”. Other uses and gratifications researchers have also had a category similar to social interaction. Similar constructs in the literature are social motivation (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999), interpersonal utility (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), and companionship (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). After reviewing the literature, we preferred the term social interaction because it was narrower than interpersonal utility but broader than companionship.

Information seeking

This theme implies seeking out information or to self-educate. The title of this theme is derived from a research on information and internet usage by Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) research on information seeking and internet usage. Similarly, Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) also had an analogous concept christened information motivation which they defined as how consumers use the web for self-education and information. This study’s categorisation of this theme encapsulates both information seeking and self- education.

Pass time

This uses and gratifications theme is defined as using social media to occupy time and relieve boredom. The title of this theme comes from Palmgreen and Rayburn’s (1979) research on uses and gratifications for television viewing. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) also had a construct called pass time which they used when investigating internet motives. Items in their scale included statements such as “use the internet when I have nothing better to do” and “to occupy my time”.

Entertainment

This category of social media usage is described as using social media to provide enjoyment or entertainment. Both Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) and Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) had an entertainment dimension in their scales. Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) also had a related factor for internet use which they called escapism. They defined escapism as pleasurable, fun, and enjoyable.

Relaxation

This social media usage category is defined as using social media to relieve day-to-day stress. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) included this dimension in their uses and gratifications of television viewing. Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) also included relaxation in their dimension of entertainment. Based on the uses and gratifications scale development of Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) we believe that entertainment and relaxation are two separate constructs. Relaxation provides relief from stress while entertainment focuses on enjoyment.

Communicatory utility

This category of social media use is defined as communication facilitation and providing information to share with others. This form of usage was investigated by Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) with television viewing. Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) also had a similar construct labeled socialization motivation for using the internet. They describe their construct as a facilitator of interpersonal communication and actions and its usefulness in terms of conversational value. This construct is different from the previously discussed social interaction

construct. Communicatory utility helps facilitate communication instead of providing social interaction.

Convenience utility

This category of social media usage is defined as providing convenience or usefulness to individuals. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) had a construct called convenience for internet uses and Ko et al. (2005) had a convenience motivation factor for interactive advertising. Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) also had the word convenience in some of their scale items such as “enjoy the convenience of shopping on the web”

2.4.2 Academic Self-Concept

Academic Self Concept (ASC) refers to the personal beliefs an individual develops about their academic abilities or skills and the way they regard their academic achievement. Cokley (2000) has defined Academic Self Concept as a student’s view of his or her academic ability when compared with other students. According to Byrne (1996), Hattie (1992) and Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson (1988) Academic Self-concept involves a description and an evaluation of one’s perceived academic abilities. Lent et al. (1997) have explained Academic Self-concept as specific attitudes, feelings and perceptions about one’s intellectual or academic skills, representing a person’s self-beliefs and self-feelings regarding the academic setting.

There are a myriad social factors that contribute to the advancement of an academic self-concept and developing a positive academic self-concept has been related to people’s behaviour and emotions in other domains of their life, influencing happiness, self-esteem, and anxiety levels to name a few. Academic self-concept positively predicts both general achievement as well as

a good predictor of general performance of students.

2.5 Related Studies

2.4.1 Positive Impacts of Social Media and Academic Success

Since the advent of social media, students' academic life has progressed to a different facet. Numerous studies have supported the essential role social media plays on the academic lives of students in higher education. Studies by Wheeler, Yeomans and Wheeler,(2008) and (Rifkin, Longnecker, Leach & Ortia, 2009) acknowledged four (4) key advantages students in higher education derive from social media usage; improving learning enthusiasm, enhancing social relationships, offering tailored course materials, and developing collaborative abilities. Undeniably, social media has contributed immensely to simplifying learning in the 21st century. It is shown that a better percentage of students including those at the PhD level generally use social media to enhance their studies (Khan, 2010).

When used shrewdly, the answers to the bases of flexible studies today worldwide might not be incredible from the abundant contribution that social media platforms are providing. Despite the aforementioned, other studies like Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) have referred to social media as a bother to students' academic life. They contended in their study that social networks distracts the attention and concentration of students toward learning and translates it towards non-educational activities such as useless and needless chatting, there have been numerous studies conducted subsequently whose conclusions are divergent to this claim. For instance, a 2012 study by Jain, Verma and Tiwari titled "The Impact of Social Networking in Promoting Education" discovered that students benefit from chatting with other students, teachers and

external sources to obtain knowledge. Also, Yunus and Salehi (2012), argued in the same direction that students gained more vocabulary, better their writing skills and limited their spelling mistakes via social media usage.

As an educational tool, social media improves learning by providing both students and teachers the opportunity to connect in new and very exciting ways thereby boosting flexible mode of learning. Flexible learning increases the option on what, when and how people learn. It backs different styles of learning including e-learning which is highly utilised across the globe (Pappas, 2013). Other scholars like O'keeffe and Clake-pearson (2011), in their study also showed that social media benefits students by linking them to one another on assignments and class projects. Heiberger's (2007) research adds commentary on Facebook and student involvement. Approximately 92%, who used Facebook more than one hour per day graded their connection with friends as high or very high. Of these students, 63.4% self-identified as either highly or very highly connected to their institution. By comparison, only 43.4% of students felt connected with their institution when they used Facebook less than one hour per day. Heiberger's statistics suggest that students who are engaged in social media are also more engaged overall in their academics.

This is further supported in the study by Arquero and Esteban, (2013) and Selwyn, (2007) whose conclusions were that social media certainly generate new opportunities to engage students in higher education as they are extraordinarily effective at connecting people and simplifying the exchange of information. It is clear and incontrovertible from these studies that social media usage in the educational sector cannot be underrated. Through social media, students are now able to supplement their in-class lectures and gain a deeper, richer understanding of course

material (Lin & Yang, 2011). This can further be seen in technological collaborative learning.

Technological collaborative learning occurs in two ways, asynchronous and synchronous learning. First, asynchronous learning via technology includes blogs (Hanson, 2011; Olofsson, Lindberg & Hauge, 2011; Wolf, 2010), wiki (Crossman & Bordia, 2011; Lin & Yang, 2011), and social network-based learning (Wodzicki, Scwammlein & Maskaliuk, 2012) where instruction and interaction occur as students post information. This occurs in real-time, yet does not require everyone to connect to the social media platform simultaneously.

Second, synchronous learning via technology includes video conferencing (Scott, Castaneda, Quick & Linney, 2009), live classes, and e-office hours for student/faculty interaction (Nian-Shing, Hsiu-Chia, Kinshu & Taiyu, 2006). Synchronous learning requires all participants connect through the technology at the same time. Blogs, wikis, and social networks dominate the literature on academic success and its intersection with asynchronous online learning.

A wiki platform for asynchronous education had similar implications for student learning. Students using a wiki platform found they were academically successful, and that the wiki platform aided them in building relationships with one another (Lin & Yang, 2011). This helped to increase students' cultural understanding of one another (Crossman & Bordia, 2011). Generally, wikis allowed for co-constructed learning experiences while promoting student engagement.

2.5.2 Social Media and Academic Distraction

In a study by (Ericson, 2011; Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010), Students spent an average of 7-8 hours each day using social media but only 11% of students indicated they use social networking sites for academic purposes (Wodzicki, Schwammlein & Maskaliuk, 2012). Another study that gives credence to social media being a detractor to academic achievement is one by Scott, Castaneda, Quick and Linney (2009). In their findings, 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that online peer-to-peer videoconferencing allowed students to ramble inappropriately.

The interruptions presented by social media extend beyond the ramblings of other students during video-conferencing calls. In reaction to an open-ended question in the Ericson (2011) study, 29 students stated that socially interactive technology distracts them from studying. In furtherance, nine students stated that other students' use of technology and social media in class was a distraction. Many students are quick to cite strongly developed multi-tasking capabilities as a defence to their use of social media, but a study by (Ophir, Nass & Wagner, 2009) revealed that students who frequently switched their attention back and forth – from listening to a lecture or answering questions to activities such as texting or updating social networking sites, for instance – may actually be less able to filter out irrelevant distractions from relevant information – even when they are not texting or social networking.

Junco (2014) found that Facebook use negatively affects the level of engagement displayed by students. Junco (2014) also found that Facebook negatively affects academic performance, a claim buttressed by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), who note that increased time spent using Facebook directly leads to a lower grade point average (GPA). Jacobsen and Forste (2011) apply this idea more broadly to electronic media, defined as text messaging, email, social networking

sites, cell phone communication, video or movie viewing, and video or online gaming. The study relied on respondents self-reported GPA's and time spent utilising social media. Results showed that spending more time on social media culminated in lower academic performance. The authors explicitly noted that electronic media is used to while away time, and that students who spent time using instant messaging services and thus social media were more distracted and took longer to read articles online.

Another study by Obi, Bulus, Adamu and Sala'at (2012), titled "The Need for Safety Consciousness among Youths on Social Networking Sites" concluded that social media affects students use of English. This study revealed that students use short-handwriting when chatting with friends and unconsciously get used to it and thus reproducing the same blunders during examinations. Even though one may argue that these are minor challenges, it is important to recognise the accumulative rate at which these inaccuracies are replicated in the educational sector and if care is not taken future generation may perceive it as a norm. Truly, several studies including but not limited to the study by Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010), Osharive (2015), Maya (2015), among others have revealed indisputably that social media can be problematic to students' academic life if care is not taken in its usage.

2.5.3 Influence of Social Media on Student's Interpersonal Relationships

According to The Social Media Examiner (2010), there are four chief ways that social media usage can possibly alter relationships by placing the emphasis on building and preserving warm virtual relationships. Virtual relationships simply refers to relationships that exists on the internet or online, and are rarely or never shared with face-to-face communications and thus

devoid of non-verbal communication cues (Froding & Peterson, 2012). The initial way social media usage has transformed the style of relationships people engage in is by permitting people to connect with a greater base of people more rapidly. Again, social media users also tend to overemphasise their degree of intimacy and obligation in maintaining these computer-generated relationships (Jain, 2010). Virtual relationships are also vulnerable to the social media contagion effect where users assume behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of other users as their own truth. Lastly, social media users may liken their relationships and accomplishments in life to other users' lives, and this has the tendency of a positive or negative influence on their psyche (Jain, 2010).

The impact of social media on interpersonal relationships of tertiary students is a mixed one. In a study by Subramanian (2017) because of the need for people to be socially associated and social interactions are needed; but due to paucity of time in the educational environment social media has taken the centre stage.

Social networks have removed all the communication and interaction barriers, and now one can communicate his/her perception and thoughts over a variety of topics. Subsequently, students are able to share and communicate with like-minded people and can ask for the input and opinion on a particular topic.

However, in a cross-sectional study by Lahiry, Choudhury, Chatterjee, and Hazra (2018) to assess the impact of social media on academic performance and interpersonal relation among paramedical and nursing students at a tertiary medical centre in East India, the perceived impact on interpersonal relations was inconclusive; the positive and negative response was nearly equal

in measure recording 45% appease.

2.5.4 Ghana's Education and Social Media

Ghana's education has had its share of social media since its inception. Like many other African countries, social media in Ghana began slowly but has progressed steadily over the past decade. Mobile for Development (2020) reports that Ghana has the highest mobile penetration in West Africa and already outperforms many of its regional peers. By the end of 2019, mobile adoption stood at 55 per cent, higher than the regional average which is at 44.8 per cent. This means a huge number of people can be served through digital services, positively impacting the growth of the digital economy.

According to the National Communications Authority (NCA), the sector's regulator, the number of mobile data subscriptions in Ghana summed up to 23.5m as of September 2018. This suggested a penetration rate of 80.3%, while 58.8% of mobile subscriptions were data subscriptions. This incidentally means that a good number of the population are connected or have access to the internet which includes SNSs. It is of no wonder therefore that a study by Owusu and Agatha (2015), titled "Use of Social Media and its Impacts on Academic Performance of Tertiary Students", revealed that a great number of students in Ghana were immersed in SNSs.

Finding from the study suggested that most users utilised these sites for chit-chat and downloading purposes only which affected their academic performance undesirably. This finding corroborates the revelation of Mingle and Musah (2015), that most respondents in their

study experienced negative effects such as poor grammar spelling, late submission of assignments, less study time, and low academic performance. Although portions of the study acknowledged some benefits of social media usage on students' academic life, the negative effects of social media generally seem to outweigh the benefits with respect to Ghanaian education.

2.6 Summary and Gaps Identified

Apparently, there is considerable amount of literature on the use of social media by students of higher learning institutions and the varying effects it has had on their academic performance. There is however not as much information on the effects of social media on the social or interpersonal relationship of students. In addition, majority of the studies are not Ghanaian.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the type of study, the study location, variables that were measured as well as the sampling procedure. It also presents the instrument used to collect data from participants, and the tools that were used to analyse the data. It further presents other methodological issues and the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Research Design for the Study

The study uses the quantitative approach. This is to enable the researcher cover a relatively large number of people for the sake of generalisation and to reduce subjectivity in the interpretation of data. Again, the choice is to also ensure easy classification of data and uniformity (UK Essays, 2013).

3.2 Study Setting and Population

The research will be conducted at Ghana Institute of Journalism; a public university in Osu in the Korlewe Municipality in the Greater Accra Region. The population from the aforementioned setting will comprise undergraduate and graduate students. A research population refers to a collection of people who are the concentration of a research study and to which the outcomes would refer (Hassan, 2017). It is for the benefit of the population that research is conducted. On the basis of this, the study population comprises undergraduate students and those pursuing their second degree in GIJ.

This cohort of students was chosen to ascertain their usage of social media and its effects on their academic performance because the aforementioned groups are largely very youthful and make up the majority of internet and thus social media. In addition, these students are mostly adolescents and young adults filled with high level youthful exuberance and very adventurous. Again, studies the use of social media and its effects on academic performance have focused essentially on university students pursuing specific programmes of study such as medicine.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling is basically conducted in order to permit the detailed study of part, rather than whole, of the population. It is mostly not practicable to include all the units of the population and for this study, money and time constraints. In line with the definition by Dhivyadeepa (2015), a sample is a subdivision of the population to which the researcher intends to generalise the results. The requisite sample for a study is reliant on at least one or more of the following dynamics: project type, project purpose, project complexity, amount of error tolerated, time constraints, financial constraints and previous research in that area (Wimmer and Dominick, 2010). Respondents for the study were sampled based on one of the factors; project purpose. Convenience sampling, also known as accidental or haphazard sampling method was employed. This non-probability sampling technique is based on the judgement of the researcher and ease of availability and proximity to respondents as well as willingness to respond (Gravetter & Fazarno, 2010). Again, this sampling technique is timelier and less laborious as compared to the other probability sampling techniques. The respondents thus would be accessed by their availability in their various classrooms and or campus at the time of this research.

3.4 Sources of Data and Data Collection Method

There are essentially two categories of data. These are primary data and secondary data. The former basically refers to data collected by the researcher mostly from the subjects of study. Secondary data on the hand refers to data collected by someone apart from the researcher undertaking the study and includes books, newspapers, journals, magazines etc. The researcher employs just the former. Consequently, data would be obtained from respondents through administering questionnaires. The choice of a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection is based on the fact that it ensures the reduction of bias apart from the fact that the researcher is able to collect data from a relatively large number of respondents while the researcher is detached from influencing the outcome of data collected as it is self-administered (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p.117).

Again, the questionnaire also provides structured quantitative data which is largely direct and thus can be used for the purposes of comparison with similar studies. In addition, data collected using the questionnaire can easily be converted into charts, tables and other statistical presentations to be analysed (ibid). Questions therein are based on the objectives of the study; thus questions are grouped into themes according to the objectives. In addition, questions will cover the demographic background of respondents, knowledge and usage of social media, effects of social media on their academic performance and interpersonal relationships.

To ensure the credibility and trust in the researcher by the respondents, the researcher will serve the university authority with an official letter informing it about the topic and the clear objective of the researcher to collect data for the singular aim of use for academic purpose. After this

information is effectively communicated, the day for administering questionnaires would be set based on an agreed upon date. In the light of the above, each class representative would be given the required number of questionnaires commensurate to the number of respondents recruited in each of the participating class. Since the questionnaire would be in simple English language and relatively short, a maximum of thirty minutes would be set for questionnaires to be filled and returned to the respective class representatives who the researcher will give big brown envelopes for filled questionnaires to be put. All 200 questionnaires distributed would be filled and returned after two hours.

3.5 Mode and Instrument for Analysis

Data would be coded and entered into PSPP Data Editor (a free alternative for IBM SPSS Statistics). Coding, which involves assigning numbers to labels with regards to the variables would be done while cleaning up to ensure that no response was entered incorrectly on the computer would also done. Data presentation would be done pictorially using frequency tables, graphs and charts. This is to ensure simple and clear presentation of data.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at the study design the researcher used as well as types of data and how data was collected from respondents. It also detailed where the sample would be drawn from and how it would be carried out. In addition to the above, this chapter also gave an idea of how data collected would be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

There is no gainsaying that social media has become and is an integral part of contemporary communication. Today mankind is harvesting tremendously from its existence not only in mere communication point of view but also in most scholarly activities. Diverse forms of education including distance education has been extensively patronised and expedited to some degree via these social media networks. Acquiring information both locally and internationally from friends, lecturers or instructors is no longer arduous as compared to the days prior to the advent of the internet.

From the foregoing studies, despite the advantages that come with social media with regards to its usage by tertiary students such as information sharing, building relationship, participating in group discussions from far and near, there is some degree of addiction and distraction of attention which have telling effects on students' academic life as caused by the use of social media which could have serious consequences on the academic life of students as cited by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), who note that increased time spent using Facebook directly culminates in lower grade point average (GPA).

Although there are not as much studies on the effects of social media usage on students' interpersonal relationships, the effects of same on interpersonal relationships among family members and teenagers abound (Ngonidzashe, 2016). The outcome of this study thus would have provide an insight into the Ghanaian situation; tertiary students. Again, it would also give educationists and policy makers in the education sector align their policies especially in this time of virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the heavy reliance on digital gadgets

like smartphones and laptops for studies.

Recommendations

Subsequent to the findings, a lot more studies should be conducted to provide a deeper insight into the potential consequences of the excessive use of social media on tertiary students' academic performance. In furtherance of the aforementioned, the following recommendations are made;

- Although university students are adults, they can still be sensitised and enlightened on the implications of social media bingeing on their academic performance. This could be executed by the Guidance and Counselling Unit during orientation of freshmen and through sensitisation workshops for continuing students.
- Teachers/lecturers can adopt new strategies by migrating assignments or discussions on social media platforms to help instil the habit of using these sites for academic work and thus reducing their use for irrelevant things that do not inure to their academic performance.
- Universities with free campus-wide Wi-Fi connectivity should hamper access to certain social media sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter that may be predisposed to distracting students' attention during school hours as a means of curtailing their use. Again, lecturers should also rigorously enforce a no-fidgeting-of-electronic-gadgets policy during lectures.
- Students' Representative Council executives should do more in organising events that encourage socialisation among students. This will whip up interest in face-to-face communication and meetings.

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