

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**GUIDANCE SERVICES IN VIRTUAL SPACES: AN ONLINE
ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FACEBOOK GROUPS.**



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**GUIDANCE SERVICES IN VIRTUAL SPACES: AN ONLINE
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**A thesis in the Department of Counselling Psychology,
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Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of philosophy
(Guidance And Counselling)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

MARCH, 2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Sarah Oforiwaa Darkwah, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which, have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisors Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Patricia Mawusi Amos (Principal Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

Dr. Richardson Addai-Mununkum (Co- Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father, Mr. Emmanuel Opoku Darkwah of blessed memory, who would have been proud to see this work of his ‘darling’ girl.



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Without the modifications, guidelines, recommendations, and prompt response of my supervisors, Dr. Patricia Mawusi Amos (HOD for Counselling Psychology Department) and Dr. Richardson Addai-Mununkum (HOD for Educational Studies) of the University of Education, Winneba, I would not have been able to complete this study. I also want to express my gratitude to Professor Owusu Mensah (Former Principal of Distance Education) at the University of Education in Winneba for his constant supervision, motivation, and guidance throughout the dissertation process. Also, to Dr. Hannah E. Acquaye, Professor Yayra Dzakadzie and Mr. Theophilus Adjei who provided me with valuable feedback and guidance. And to my Mum and siblings, Madam Juliana Somuah, Isaac Darkwah, Agnes Beatrice, Josephine, and Lydia, thank you for the motivation and assistance provided during the challenging times of my M.Phil. journey. Finally, to all my Supporters, Mr. Buckman Ohene Asare Bediako, Gifty Bediako and colleagues who kept me going when it seemed incredibly difficult to finish, I am grateful for the assistance and encouragement.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A D H D-attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ADD-attention deficit disorder

AS D-autism spectrum disorder

FTF-Face to Face

PM- Private Message

PSCs-Professional Student Counsellors



ABSTRACT

On Facebook, online social media groups make it possible to find and share health, educational, economic, and social-related information, as well as to discover social help by communicating with those that are dealing with the same problem or condition. Little is known about Guidance services provided with Facebook for emotional contact. The goal of this qualitative ethnographic study was to explore how guidance services are delivered in the virtual space via Facebook groups. The research questions focused on how people access guidance services on Facebook groups, why people access guidance services from Facebook groups, what forms of guidance services are accessed on Facebook groups and how effective are these services rendered on Facebook groups? A quota sampling technique was used, a semi-structured online interview with four Popular Facebook groups named, Tell it All, Tell it Mum, Trotro Diaries and Abena Manokekame was used for the study, using 20 participants for the interview and 4 extracts from Facebook platforms, the data from the interviews were coded and categorized in inductive thematic analysis. The findings shows that all guidance services such as appraisals, consultations, information, placement, follow-up, orientation and referrals are provided on the various Facebook platforms. Also due to the number of comical postings and entertaining comments, virtual groups on Facebook use that as avenues to de-stress themselves when they are stressed out. Since majority of people who get access to these platforms were invited by friends and are also ready to recommend their platforms to others, then it means online guidance has come to stay, so, the researcher recommend that Ghana Psychological Association encourage its members to create such platforms using their members to assist people, Conveniently, people prefer seeking help from Facebook groups and due to that , The researcher recommend that , online and Face-to-face guidance services should go far to assist people irrespective of where they stay, in terms of providing assistance, professional counsellors should not narrow themselves to institutions such as churches and schools but should instead focus their efforts on the virtual community, as most people are now attached to social media.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study and research questions. It also looked at the definition of terms and organization of the study.

1.0 Background to the study

Guidance is assisting people in adjusting, solving problems and maturing, Guidance can also be seen as a form of advice, assistance, tips and help give to someone (Grant, Demos & Edwards, 2012). Everyone, from cradle to tomb, requires guidance and counselling (Bedu-Addo, 2014). There is also evidence that some of the strategies and talents used by today's guidance counsellors were used by Catholic priests in the Middle Ages, as evidenced by the devotion to the concept of guidance (Garzoni, 2015).

In the United States, the causes that led to the creation of guidance and counselling began in the 1890s with the social reform movement. Many individuals were outraged by the hardships of those living in urban slums and the frequent exploitation of child labour. Frank Parsons, a social and political reformer, is often acknowledged as the founder of the vocational coaching movement (Namale, 2012). The bureau's work had an impact on the need for, and usage of, vocational assistance in the United States and other nations (Wanjohi, 2010). In Africa, guidance is divided into two categories: informal or traditional guidance and official or organized guidance. Traditional African practitioners served primarily as consultants long before formal, organized, and scientific assistance in our schools. In several African countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria, Botswana, Tanzania, and Kenya, there have been reports of informal guidance from low beginnings (Buku, 2016).

According to Adeniran (1995) and Omoniyi (2016), prepared and recognized guidance and therapy services in Nigeria instigated in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ade, Ibadan, by a group of dedicated religious reverend sisters who saw the need for proper guidance in job selection for their secondary school leavers. They enlisted the help of twenty outsiders to help them place sixty of their final-year female students in suitable jobs (Banke & Iyabo, 2016). Guidance and remedy are perceptions that have been in Ghanaian culture for an elongated time. People have sought self-knowledge and other individuals' understanding in a variety of ways since time immemorial. In other words, the elderly folks guide or counsel the younger generations in some way so that they can continue to live meaningful and fulfilling lives (Buku, 2016).

Guidance has always been strongly established in Ghanaian culture, to the point where it has become a part of people's daily lives. The majority of what a normal Ghanaian youngster does is because of some type of guidance and counselling obtained from his or her nuclear and extended family, as well as society at large. Everyone, from cradle to tomb, requires guidance and counselling (Bedu-Addo, 2014). In Ghanaian civilizations, there is and has always been a strongly ingrained belief that, given the right circumstances, people can assist others in solving their difficulties. Some people assist others in identifying, resolving, or transcending issues (Affumi, Kuranchie & Mensah, 2016). They used their experiences as adults and major members of society to help people who were dealing with troubles or difficulties in their lives. The support they received was in the form of counsel and wisdom sharing (Alhadi, Supriyanto & Ayu, 2016). However, these forms of assistance were insufficient to enable individuals and the nation to fulfil their objectives (Alhadi, Supriyanto & Ayu, 2016). Priests and pastors, as well as Sunday

school instructors, were important pastoral figures in churches. They also practiced peer therapy, which was done among students and classmates of the same age (Dankwa,1981). Orientation or adaptation services, appraisal services, information services, placement services, consultation services, follow-up services, evaluation services, and counselling services are the most common types of guidance services found in schools (Bedu-Addo,2016). All these forms of Guidance services are rendered Face-to-Face in most of our institutions like schools and church (Amos, Antwi, & Amoako,2019). All forms of guidance services done face-to-face can now be done digitally (Hall,2021).

Cyberspace and the net have been verified to be the utmost positive wide-reaching enterprises in current eras, transmuting the economy and culture through original systems of communiqué and alliance, enactment of modernisations, and original means of work within foundation and acquaintance. Automatic education and its possessions are becoming a crucial facet of life for anyone tangled in education (Mossberger,2012). Students' use of social media has increased, and Facebook is widely recognized as a social network, it also facilitates group interaction with the goal of forming communities and creating and distributing information (Taylor,2016).

Facebook has also established itself as a unique learning tool for educational purposes (Snejana,2018). One of the most popular internet activities is using social media, Globally, nearly 3.6 billion individuals will be utilizing social media (Clement,2020). The data show how popular social networking services are among teenagers. According to the study, social networking is the most popular internet activity among students aged 8 to 18 Junco (2013). For example, 40% of 8 to 18-year-olds spend about one hour per day on social networking sites like Myspace or Facebook. There are 14.78 million internet users in Ghana, and 54.26 percent of them use Facebook

(Kemp,2020). Facebook is a social networking service that allows people to interact and share online with their family, co-workers, friends, and groups of people that have a common interest (Kemp, 2020). With over one billion members as of 2012, Facebook has surpassed Twitter as the most popular social media platform on the planet (Hall, 2021).

Facebook's appeal originates in part from cofounder Mark Zuckerberg's determination from the start that members be honest about who they are; users are not allowed to create false identities (Hall,2021). It also stated that Facebook users' bottom-up, peer-to-peer networking makes it easier for them to talk with their pals (Hall,2021). Technology is transforming conventional ways of doing things, and it appears that socio-cultural societies are being impacted as well. It is not commonplace for physically close neighbours to interact via social media rather than paying a visit to the other's home. New kinds of society are emerging in digital environments because of the growth of Facebook groups (Hall,2021).

1.1 Theoretical Foundation

These theories served as the foundation for the research and these theories are: Social Learning Theory and Social Network Theory.

1.1.1 Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977)

The importance of witnessing and modelling other people's behaviours, attitudes, and emotional responses is emphasized in Bandura's social learning theory (Abdullah,Madi &Koreen, 2008). If humans had to rely solely on the consequences of their actions to tell them what to do, (Bandura,1977) argues, "learning would be extraordinarily difficult, not to mention deadly. Fortunately, most of the human behaviour can be learned by watching others. One gets an understanding of how new behaviours are executed through seeing others, and this coded information eventually

acts as a guide for action (Daniels & Billingsley, 2014). Given that Facebook provides a forum for individuals to learn, copy directly and indirectly from other members of the network, the study embraced this notion. Social networking on the internet Facebook and other online social networking sites provides a new platform for people to learn from one another. On such webpages, humans have an incredible capacity to express themselves, form multiple relationships, and communicate with people at any time and place, allowing them to meet their identity, connectivity, and informational needs. Individuals' online social networking, such as on Facebook, usually follows a conceptual framework: they form a wide range of ties with a huge number of participants while cultivating closer relationships with core friends through frequent interactions. According to vintage social media network research, having a large-ranged network of non-redundant weak relationships can help individuals to attain mission achievements (Bandura, 1977). The theory explains individual interactions as a constant dynamic interplay of cognitive, behavioural, and physiological factors. Modelled events (distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence, and functional value), as well as assessor awareness, Sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, and past reinforcement are tendencies that undergird behaviourism. Symbolic coding, cognitive organization, symbolic guided practice, and muscle training session are all examples of absorption. Incentive, that further extension projects, self-gratification, and inner affirmation, and Motor Reproduction, which includes physical capabilities, personality of transmission, and constructive criticism precision. Attention, memory, and motivation are all part of social learning theory, which encompasses both psychological -behavioural foundation sessions.

Bandura's approach improves on strictly behavioural understanding of modelling (Miller & Dollard, 1941). Bandura's approach is like Vygotsky and Lave's theories, which both emphasize the central significance of social interaction. These elements are critical for people to develop as a "complete person," with skills and psychological well-being that support lifelong learning. Individuals who create satisfactory interactions with others in the same group or platform and become integrated are said to be socially accepted (Yu, Tian, Vogel & Kwok, 2010). Peer connection that is meaningful takes occur in a small, dense network of strong ties that provide social support and a sense of belonging (Yu, Tian, Vogel & Kwok, 2010). Individuals in a close-knit network are more likely to provide reliable and consistent information and social cues with one another, allowing them to comprehend their peers' interests, skills, and the creation of commonality. Individuals can learn more about their peers, other people, and acquire social acceptance by being part of a network that fosters intimate peer connections. Individuals prefer to build deep ties with a very small set of people while online social networking, even though their friendship scope has greatly enlarged. Online social networking is supposed to increase the socialization of social media groups, according to the logic of a tight social network view (Yu, Tian, Vogel & Kwok, 2010).

1.2.2 Moreno's Social Network Theory (the 1930s)

The study of how people, organizations, or groups interact with others within their network is known as social network theory. Examining the component pieces, starting with the greatest aspect, networks, and working down, makes understanding the theory easier. It entails the conversion of one emotion to another. Ego-centric networks, socio-centric networks, and open-system networks are the three forms of social networks studied by social scientists. Ego-centric networks are made up of a

single node or person. On the Facebook group page, for example, you, the node (individual), are connected to all your ties (close friends). Socio-centric networks are closed networks. Children in a school or employees in a company are two common instances of this type of network. The boundaries of open-system networks are not explicitly defined. This type of network is regarded the most challenging to research due to the lack of clearly defined boundaries. There would be no networks if they were merely a list of your close friends or co-workers. There will be nothing to learn. Individuals, companies, and nations all use consultation, information and resource sharing, suggestion, support, and nagging from others to alter their daily existence (White et al, 1976).

Beliefs and attitudes, as well as behaviour, action, and consequences, are influenced by network relationships. Individuals create bonds and interact based on their social, psychological, and neurological capabilities. As a result, social networks occur in a multilevel setting. Some of these layers (for example, Facebook group page organizations) can be thought of as networks. The interactions between the network's members are what social scientists are interested in. These linkages, also known as relationships, are at the heart of what social scientists investigate and comprehend. Why do the people interact? What is the level of intimacy — commonly referred to as connectedness — amongst group members and how do they interact? Even though there are many other sorts of relationships, such as mutual, directed, and others, each one may be reduced to either a strong or weak bond.

Strong relationships are close enough that one is likely to know their phone numbers and Facebook pals, whereas weak ties would be astonished if you phoned one of them. However, research reveals that the network's weak linkages are more useful in other aspects. Individual individuals — or actors — within the network are most

easily defined as nodes. This section contains the tiniest piece of the social network puzzle is a place where scientists, marketers, and even politicians try to figure out how a node connects to the rest of the network. Consider the members of a Facebook group page as an example of a social network. Even though everyone on Facebook is connected via the general network, not everyone is connected to the same degree. The worth of a node to the network is determined by its varying degrees of closeness, or connectivity. Others with a high degree of closeness, for example, receive more reactions on a post than people who are not well linked (weak ties). The strength of the links that bind an actor can be determined by where he is in the social network.

In comparison to someone on the network's periphery, a person near the network frequently has more linkages-or links-between himself and the other actors. A user on the network's periphery could be connected to the network via only one link, which helps with Facebook page interactions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the western world like United Kingdom, Online support gatherings among sufferers of medical illnesses or face-to-face meetings of people close to the sufferers were the beginnings of social support groups (Breuer, & Barker, 2015). The main goal of meeting others who had similar experiences was to not only help themselves but also to help others (Breuer, & Barker, 2015). The introduction of this form of self-help organization provided a social alternative. Whereby members in the group assist to solve others problem for them So, the following people did research on the following areas that needs social support and knowledge (Kelleher, 2009), emotional support (Huws, Jones & Ingledew, 2001), social and informational supports (Douma, Dekker, & Koot,2006). social and informational supports (Douma, Dekker, & Koot 2006). Facebook is a popular social media platform that has garnered great reviews from all

over the world. When the researcher looked on Facebook for a social support group, The researcher saw a large list of groups dedicated to certain requirements, such as disability, addiction, and medical illnesses. In Nigeria, a group of people conducted research using the Uses and Gratification Theory, which reveals that people's media choices are driven by their needs and the gratification (or satisfaction) they receive from consuming those media, people can conclude that patrons' interest in social media support groups is a reflection of the pleasure they derive from them (Alhabash, & Mengyan, 2017). Questions about how people use digital spaces to obtain guidance services, why they use digital media platforms to access guidance services, and the quality of guidance services provided in such spaces are all understudied (Hall,2020). Most of these Facebook social support groups cater for those who are affected by issues, however.

Traditionally, informal guidance services were provided by the elderly instructing the family's younger members (Bedu-Addo,2019). This traditional manner of help is increasingly dwindling because of modernizing tendencies. Services that would previously have been sought in physical locations appear to be going online. According to Nielson (2016) 57 percent of teens sought advice from their online social network. Surprisingly, many of the Facebook social support groups in Ghana are demographically gendered and possibly age or profession related (Solomon, & Barker, 2016). Perhaps the most significant is the ever-expanding array of relationship-focused support groups (Tell It All, Abena Manokekame), for women (Tell It Moms), men (Tell It Dads), singles (Unsingle Me), and divorced (Tell It All), or assistance with travel (Trotro dairies) (Facebook groups platforms,2020).

A casual examination of such groups' descriptions reveals that they are primarily concerned with giving some type of assistance to people who may find such groups to be relevant to their requirements. However, there are still concerns about the types of services they provide and how effective they are. To prove this, more research is required (Appiah & Markwei, 2016). In Ghana, research on the use of social media is still ongoing.; focusing on issues relating to preferred sites (Appiah & Markwei,2016) such as the relevance of social media (Lynch, Gadjanova & Saibu,2019), use of social media for education (Asare-Donkoh, 2018), communication (Owusu, 2016), and advantages of social media on marriage (Adebayo, 2020).

As a result of technological advancements and current phenomena such as Covid-19, physical interactions are being reduced and there is much to learn about the ever-increasing virtual societies: Thanks to growing virtual affiliations and increased virtual associations. This search revealed no studies on the subject, particularly in the instance of Ghana; creating a void in the literature about the phenomena. Guidance service practice is limited by a lack of information about social support groups in digital settings, as interventions designed for physical social contact may be less successful in digital cultures (Nielson, 2016). Majority of the research done in Ghana focused more on Social media and the youth, importance of social media, but how guidance services can be done virtually has not been done which creates a contextual gap for it to be filled. Most related literature review on this research lacks methodological gap whereby majority of the research was not an online ethnographic design. There is little to no empirical study to examine how guidance services are rendered on Virtual space.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to use an ethnographic lens to examine Facebook groups as communities whose norms, values, and practices can be observed to gain a more understanding of the guidance services provided on Facebook groups .

1.4 Research Questions:

1. What forms of guidance services are accessed on Facebook groups?
2. How do people access guidance services on Facebook groups?
3. Why do people access guidance services from Facebook groups?
4. How active are these Guidance services rendered on Facebook groups?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study investigated Guidance services in the virtual spaces. The study identified research gaps in context whereby majority of the research work done did not use online ethnographic design and generated new ideas or knowledge in online guidance services, an ethnographic study among Facebook groups. The study also generated data to improve how these services are delivered to people via social media to maintain service quality.

The findings can serve as a foundation for training and capacity building for counsellors. It will help counsellors understand the importance of using digital means to help resolve people's issues without having to meet them face to face or physically. The study's findings will provide updated information that will improve understanding of the roles that school counsellors will play in improving guidance service delivery.

The findings encouraged young people to open-up about their problems on Facebook groups platforms they find themselves, as they realized they were not alone having issues.

The findings will assist the online community in gaining access to guidance services at any given time.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The study will include four groups (Tell it Mom, Tell it All, Abena Manokekame and Trotro Diaries) on Facebook.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS): is a nervous system disease that weakens muscles and impairs physical function.

Abena Manokekame: This is a mixed-gender platform that seeks to address the emotional needs of both men and women.

Clients: Individuals who seek the assistance of a professional counsellor to help them resolve their issues.

Counselling: is the provision of professional assistance and guidance in the resolution of personal or psychological problems for the client to make an informed decision.

Counsellor: Someone who has been trained to assist people in making informed decisions about their personal, vocational, academic, and overall development.

Cursory: quickly going over something without paying attention to details.

Digital Space: What is displayed on the screen of a digital device is referred to as digital space (e.g. laptops, computers, tablets, or smartphones).

Disability: is any medical condition that makes it more difficult for a person to perform certain activities or interact effectively with the world around them.

Ethnography: is a branch of anthropology that is concerned with the systematic study of individual cultures.

Guidance: is viewed as a program designed to assist the individual in making prudent and useful decisions in life, as well as in relating well with others.

Guidance services: These are professional services that assist individuals and small groups in dealing with recurring problems.

Gratification: a response resulting from the fulfilment of social needs such as affiliation, socializing, social approval, and mutual recognition.

Hampered: to make an action that is meant to accomplish something more difficult.

Intervention: The act of intervening, interfering, or interceding to change the outcome.

Mano fans: People on Abena Manokekame page.

Modernization: The process by which less developed countries (LDCs) acquire characteristics of western, industrialized societies.

Metastatic cancer: The spread of cancer compartments from the spot where they first formed to another part of the body.

Neurodegenerative disease: The liberal loss of structure or function of neurons, which may eventually result in cell death.

Nodes: Are the individuals or friends

Opana: Husband of someone.

Pre-Pana: Boyfriend.

Patrons: are individuals who have been chosen, named, or honoured as a special guardian, protector, or supporter of a group.

Social media: are computer-mediated interactive technologies that enable the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression.

A stepfamily: is defined as a family in which at least one parent has children who are not biologically or adoptively related to the other spouse or partner. Children from previous relationships may be the responsibility of either parent or both.

Support Groups: Members of a support group offer each other various types of assistance, usually nonprofessional and nonmaterial, for a common, usually burdensome, characteristic.

Sclerosis: is usually caused by underlying diseases like diabetes or scleroderma.

Tell it all: A small mixed Facebook group where you can share any issue that is bothering you.

Tell Moms: This is a female Facebook group that aims to meet the needs of women.

Ties: are the network relationship in virtual spaces.

Trotro Diaries: A Facebook group that assists people with directions and shares travel experiences.

Virtual spaces: are places where individuals or groups can share information, feelings, or thoughts to inspire others through various mediums.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study will be divided into five chapters: Chapter one deals with the introduction, the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, as

well as the scope and limitations of the study, and Chapter five ends with definitions of terms and the organization of the study. The second chapter will be devoted to a review of relevant literature to the study. It includes empirical as well as theoretical literature. The research methodology will be discussed in the third chapter which includes the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument and data collection procedures, and data analysis plan are all included. The fourth chapter will present an analysis and discussion of the findings. The summary, conclusions, recommendations, and areas for further research will be covered in Chapter five.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This section presents a clear review of related literature on the subject. Some of the points raised in the review are as follows: Guidance as a concept, guidance services, social media support groups, the benefits of social media assistance, the advantages and difficulties of using social networks, digital support groups, the influence of tie strength on social support, disadvantages of Facebook's 'friends' social media group: public and private spheres, digital support group, digital counselling and a comparison of face-to-face and online counselling.

2.1 Concept of Guidance

Guidance can be defined as the process by which a more knowing person assists a less knowledgeable person (individual or group) in understanding and perceiving the nature of himself or herself and to carry out appropriate plans and accomplishing satisfactory adjustment in all parts of his or her daily life in order to enjoy a more productive and happier life (Antwi, Amos & Amoako, 2019). Guidance as a concept refers to the use of one's point of view to assist another; as an educational construct, it refers to the provision of experiences that assist students in understanding themselves; and as a service, it refers to procedures and processes organized to achieve a helping relationship. As a result, guidance is a process rather than a product. It is more vital to learn how to solve difficulties than to tackle specific problems. "Guidance is a learning process," according to (Antwi, Amos, and Amoako, 2019), sees Guidance as to the process of assisting the individual in understanding himself and his surroundings/world so that he can maximize his potential. As with any definition, there is a need for keyword explanation and qualification because they are utilized by

various writers to provide guidance. The first word is "process." Any phenomenon that varies over time is referred to as a process. The word "guidance" is used here to indicate that it is not a single event, but rather a series of activities or steps that lead to a goal. Second, "helping" and "aiding" are defined as assisting or making available. Many helpful professions, such as psychiatry, psychology, social work, and others, have as their primary goal the prevention and resolution of human problems. Finally, the word "individual" relates to classroom pupils (Assoah,2007).

Persons come to know who they are (inimitable persons); become aware of their identity; perceive the nature of their person; experience their world, aggregate surroundings, and the people with whom they interact more deeply and completely" means that individuals come to know who they are (unique individuals); become aware of their identity; perceive the nature of their person; practice their world, amassed backgrounds, and the people with whom they relate more extremely and completely (Assoah ,2007).

Guidance services are established school measures done to make guidance operational and accessible to all students (Shertzer & Stone,1981). These services are classified into three categories: educational guidance, vocational guidance, and personal/social guidance. Individual kids benefit from educational guidance to operate more efficiently at school. It assists students in comprehending and acting on current and future educational needs and opportunities. The purpose of career advice is to assist people in making career decisions. It assists students in deciding on a career path, preparing for it, and progressing in it. It enables the learner to comprehend the working world (Shertzer & Stone, 1981). As a result, vocational counselling helps people understand the terms "dignity of labour" and "work value." Individual guidance aims to help students with their social and sensitive problems.

2.2 The Guidance Services

Orientation or Adaptation services, Appraisal services, Information services, Placement services, Consultation services, Follow-up services, Evaluation services, and Counselling Services are the most prevalent types of guidance services found in schools (Namale, 2012).

2.2.1 Orientation or Adaptive Service

Adaptive services are offered to support pupils in altering to any new location (Makinde, 1990). New students are admitted to the university, secondary and primary schools at the start of each academic year. Countless of these schoolchildren convert socially and emotionally mislaid in their new-fangled environments. This is because kids no longer have the psychological support of their parents, friends, and formal professors. Furthermore, the new environment, with its laws, regulations, and administrative structure, looks to be altogether different. As a result, orientation services are meant to assist students in making adjustments during such key transition periods. Agendas are established to familiarize them with the universal institute setting. They are presented to the physical plants, administrative setup, rules, and regulations governing student behaviour, the usage of school facilities, new course content, teaching personnel, and how the school counselling program can meet their needs. Orientation service allows incoming students to meet with their advice coordinators for the first time in schools where guidance coordinators are present (Taylor, 2006).

2.2.2 Service of Appraisal or Data Collection

The appraisal service is intended to collect, analyse, and apply a wide range of objective and subjective personal, psychological, and social data about each student. It is for kids' better knowledge and to help them understand themselves (Shertzer &

Stone,1981). It will be difficult to assist an individual in solving an issue or making a realistic strategy if appropriate and trustworthy information is not available. It is also a method of assisting a person in acquiring and organizing useful knowledge about himself. This enables him to understand his own strengths and shortcomings, allowing him to make informed decisions from the many options available to him (Makinde,1990). Systematic study of student data enables teachers, counsellors, parents, and school official helps students to make better decisions. This will only be accomplished by employing solid procedures for gathering, organizing, interpreting, and utilizing pertinent student information.

2.2.3 Service of Information or Distribution

While the evaluation service gathers information about the student, the information service disseminates that information to the pupils (Shertzer & stone,1981). The service aims at making a realistic decision considering students' particular traits and opportunities. This assists the learner in accepting responsibility for the choice and initiating a course of action. The primary goal of the information service is to encourage individual students to assess themselves and their potential. The program also seeks to help students make a viable decision based on their features and prospects. This assists the learner in accepting responsibility for the choice and initiating a course of action consistent with the chosen. Didactic, career, societal, leisure, sensitive, or ethical data services are all conceivable (Makinde, 1990).

2.2.5 Service of Counselling

Psychotherapy is one of the services provided by a leader. Counselling, according to Pecku (1991), is a person-to-person relationship. It is a process that permits people to direct their sentiments. It has been referred to as the "heart" of all guiding services. As a result, practically all other services rely on counselling (Gibson & Mitchell,1995).

Counselling, according to Makinde (1990), is a service aimed to assist an individual in analysing his capabilities, accomplishments, interests, and manner of judging regarding new decisions he has made or must make. Behavioural counselling is the process of assisting people in learning how to solve interpersonal, emotional, and decision-making issues Krumholtz and Thoreson as cited in Makinde (1997). Counselling is a process that takes time, it is still going on. It is a joining in with the therapist and the counselee relate face to face.

2.2.6 Service of Placement

Placement is intended to help students improve by providing them with opportunities both in school and in the job market (Marion,1981). According to Pecku (1991), placement begins with information and concludes when students have been able to carry out their plans and have been followed up on to determine their success. He went on to say that it is concerned with assisting students in moving from one level of educational training to the next, such as from senior high school to training college and from training college to university. Miller as cited in (Makinde,1990) stated that placement proceeded in three stages:

1. Pre-placement- knowledge of available opportunities.
2. Placement-plan creation and execution
3. post-placement-assisting the student in adapting and adjusting to the placement.
4. Placement can be work-related, instructive, or an amalgamation of the two. It assists the learner in identifying a place where he may apply his skills to meet his interests and needs.

2.2.7 Service of Consultation

This service brings together the guidance coordinator and other individuals to work with the student to assist him. These personalities deliberate on the pupil, plot as much data as conceivable about him, and plot what can be done to help him. Consultation is required when the student's difficulty involves or is caused by another individual. According to Namale (2012), the counsellor mediates between the client and other persons who engage with the student and are the source of the student's concern. The therapist encounters with the client on behalf of the client's consent to make an informed decision. It may include discussions with others who are concerned about the client's well-being, such as doctors, psychiatrists, and parents/guardians.

2.2.8 Service of Follow-up

The follow-up service is a practice of discovering out how individuals are faring in the spaces where they have been dispensed Pecku (2004). It is vital for guidance coordinators to follow up with pupils to assess their development. Any errors or problems that are discovered can then be rectified. According to Makinde (1990), measuring guidance outcomes is critical since it is used to assess the overall effectiveness of the guidance program. Following-up trials may comprise an inquiry form, a private consultation, and a cell phone conference. It is anxious with persons who have dropped out or progressed from high school. The therapist can aid other scholars in a diversity of traditions grounded on their aptitudes and faintness. The bearing of guidance agendas on the pupil is also addressed in his development.

2.2.9 Service of Evaluation

It is the application of scientific methods to determine whether a program is performing properly and effectively attaining its objectives (Pecku,1991). Unlike the other services, evaluation services are provided to school administrators, the

community, and the guidance program rather than to students or clients. The assessment procedure permits the institute to regulate the level to which the database has met its aims and what variations, or improvements are mandatory. The researcher, on the other hand, believes that clients can reply to questionnaires and interviews covering intangible outcomes. It can then be quantified for evaluation reasons.

2.3 Use of social media

The plural of the Latin word medium (Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus, as we have come to understand it, a dominant route, means, channel or instrument for communication, information-sharing, or amusement (2009, p.576) refers to one of the dominating routes, means, channels, or instruments for communication, information-sharing, or entertainment. Newspapers, radio, television, magazines, and, more recently, the internet have all been referred to together as the "media." It is also defined as "communication channels through" by the Business Dictionary Online of "distribution channels for news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages; including broadcasting and narrowcasting channels such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet" (www.businessdictionary.com). According to the Collins Dictionary Online, media is "a means of communication that reaches a vast number of people, such as television, newspapers, and radio" (www.collinsdictionary.com), however, the Webster Dictionary Online describes it as "a medium of cultivation, conveyance, or expression" (www.webster.com).

Social, on the other hand, originates from the Latin term socius, which means 'friend' or 'buddy,' and refers to things connected to human societies, communities, or groups of people living or doing activities together. It refers to cybernetic and simulated relationships involving people, groups, and businesses. This entails the creation,

exchange, or dissemination of information via texts, images, and other symbols. It is also "human interaction in which people produce, share, or exchange information and ideas through virtual communities and networks" (Ahlqvist et al.,2008). It is also internet-based applications based on Web ideology and technology (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), as well as web-based facilities allowing individuals or groups to create public or semi-public profiles (Boyd & Ellison,2007). Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Reddit, Instagram, and Pinterest are just a few of the many social media sites that have sprung up. According to Hauben and Truscott (1997), Geocities was the first social network site that allowed users to communicate through discussion forums and basic internet platforms as well as blogs. This paved the way for the development of other websites and social media providers, such apps like SixDegrees.com, which enabled people to interact and share messages, was the first to attain widespread recognition. Millions of users were drawn in by SixDegrees.com, however, was unable to establish itself as a viable corporation and consequently went bankrupt in 2000. (Boyd & Ellison,2007).

In October 2011, sonny Jain ranked Facebook first, followed by Myspace, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Bebo (eBizMBA.com, 2014; Vaughan-Nicholas, 2013; Top Ten Reviews, 2013; Jain, 2012). Other publications, however, rank Twitter, social networking and microblogging service that allows users to 'tweet' (140-character postings) and connect to other links, as second only to Facebook (Top Ten Reviews, 2013; Jain, 2012), with YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest trailing. In addition to WhatsApp, which is not a social networking service but an instant-messaging tool for cell phones, these sites appear to be the most appealing among students. Users of this site can exchange photographs, videos, and audio messages. With the proliferation of social media networks, it has become vital for academics to evaluate the usage rates

and impacts of social media. Social media has evolved into one of the primary routes for people to engage with others who are physically separated from them on a regular basis (Omar & Allison, 2012). It is indicated to develop communication skills, social involvement, and dedication, as well as to strengthen peer support and assure the implementation of collaborative solutions in education (Gülbahar, Kaleliolu & Madran, 2010). Arguably, social media has become a global phenomenon, allowing organizations, enterprises, groups, and individuals to communicate with their clients, partners, relatives, and friends in a simple and quick manner. According to Rideout et al. (2010) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), teenage students are the most active social media users worldwide, spending a significant amount of time on social media on numerous platforms.

2.4 The Advantages and Difficulties of Using Social Networks

Interactive technology research uncovers some intriguing trends in the use of social networking platforms by school-aged children and teenagers. Awareness of these developments can assist Professional School Counsellors in making educated decisions about appropriate technological applications, as well as supporting policy decisions and best practices. According to research, social media use is practically universal among teenagers and young people. According to Pew Research Centre (2018a), 95 percent of adolescents have access to some type of smartphone. As technology pervades more and more sectors of education, Professional School Counsellors may play an important role in raising awareness of the potential benefits as well as the potential difficulties that may arise from the usage of new technologies (Gillot-Miller and Partin 2003; Swank & Tyson 2012).

There is evidence that social networking platforms can improve well-being by serving as a source of social support for users (House, 1981). Social support as "an interpersonal transaction including one or more of the following: emotional concern (liking, affection, empathy), instrumental aid (goods or services), information (about the environment), appraisal (information pertinent to the recipient)." Utz and Breuer (2017) discovered that social networking sites (SNS), online social support, and user well-being could be an effective means of giving and receiving social support, a critical part of psychosocial well-being, in a longitudinal study of SNS, online social support, and user well-being. Furthermore, Ozkaya and LaRose (2014) discovered a link between the number of social networking friends, supportive interactions, perceived social support, and life satisfaction among online social networking users. Scholarly interest in the psychological health and well-being of social network users continues to grow, offering data on the efficacy and possible growth of tactics for Professional school counsellors to reach out to today's youth and student populations. Social networking has been shown to improve social well-being (Kim & Lee, 2011; Trepte & Reinecke, 2013). (Valkenburg, 2006), for example, investigated the impact of social networking sites on tweens and adolescents aged 10 to 19, discovering that participants' self-esteem and sense of well-being fluctuated in response to feedback from their peers. Positive peer feedback resulted in higher self-esteem and a greater sense of well-being for students, whereas negative peer feedback resulted in lower self-esteem and a decreased sense of well-being. The researchers discovered that socially anxious adolescents preferred electronic communication to face-to-face conversations and were more likely to interact with strangers online than their less anxious peers. Other research has found that the anonymity of the Internet, as well as the lack of auditory and visual cues, may help introverted adolescents overcome

social inhibitions more easily than in the real-world (Gross, 2002). There is also evidence that digital tools can help with self-care and symptom management (Martin et al, 2011). Furthermore, by improving patient and health care, increasing professional satisfaction, and lowering costs, electronic communication tools improved mental and emotionally problematic behaviours because of an overall increase in service accessibility (Martin, 2011). (Swankand, 2012), like (Martin et al,2011), investigated the use of web-based technology for therapy/medical treatments for adolescents and young adults.

They discovered that a model for school counsellor supervision based on web-based resources could increase time and space flexibility while also increasing access to clinical supervision. (Gillot & Partin, 2003) identified a few useful websites for school counsellors to access. gain access to information about ethical and legal considerations in their practices Although more research on technology's impact on cost-effectiveness and client satisfaction is needed, studies indicate that communicative technologies can supplement and enhance traditional counselling consultations. Digital interventions, such as those facilitated by social networking, may enable Professional school counsellors to build relationships with students who may be hesitant to reach out for assistance or who struggle to connect when they require assistance. Social media may also assist professional school counsellors in identifying students who are dealing with negative peer involvement, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues. Professional school counsellors would be wise to consider using technology to reach out to and support students in need of counselling or intervention. Indeed, to serve students in the twenty-first century, school counsellors must be information literate, as well as being media and technologically literate. The ubiquitous presence of technological communication has an impact on

the work of school counsellors in global contexts. For example, in many Kenyan schools, Teacher-Counsellors (TCs; Kenyan equivalents to American PSCs in a broad sense) face challenges such as juvenile delinquency, school violence, school burnings, and many orphaned students facing the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). TCS are school-based health/wellness experts who oversee meeting students' mental health and academic needs (Goodrich, 2014). (Wambu & Fisher, 2015) have called for a restructuring of TC roles to include training programs, comprehensive school counselling programs, and the development of systemic support, like PSC guidelines in the United States. In Kenya, TCs serve both purposes consultants about students' mental health needs as consultants and collaborators with families, school stakeholders, and the community (Goodrich et al. 2014; Wambu & Fisher 2015). Given how important technology has become in the lives of children and adolescents all over the world, school counsellors should be prepared to provide academic, career-readiness, and mental health support to all students, whether their interactions are face-to-face or online.

2.5 2.4 Social Networking's Benefits and Challenges

The use of social networking sites by school-aged children and teenagers reveals some intriguing trends in interactive technology research. Professional School Counsellors can benefit from being cognizant of these advancements to make informed decisions about appropriate technological applications, as well as to endorse policy choices and best practices. According to studies, teenagers and young people use social networks in almost equal numbers. According to Pew Research Centre (2018a), 95% of teenagers have access to smartphones of some kind. PSCs may enjoy an important role in the formulation of both the numerous rewards and the challenges

involved that may give rise from the use of the latest techniques as technology pervades more and more sectors of education (Gillot & Partin, 2019).

2.5 Guidance Services via the Internet and its Advantages

When similar issues of their problem are shared in the group, online guidance services (group counselling) also allow the people in the group to know that they are not the only ones facing such challenges (Universality) (Yalom, 2013). There are numerous advantages to using an online guidance service. In terms of self-disclosure, Tate and Zabinski (2004) asserted that clients find it easier to disclose themselves to counsellors via electronic means rather than face to face. This is because demographics such as gender, age, and name may be hidden. Other studies show that clients' honesty may improve; they may feel less defensive, fearless, and vulnerable (Kotsopoulou, 2015). This has had a positive impact on modern marriage (Georgescus & Popescus, 2015).

2.5.1 Reliance on social media

With increased access to information and communication online, more people are relying on social media for a variety of purposes ranging from news to other necessities of life. It is just unfortunate that the more people rely on social media and other online platforms, the less they trust other traditional methods and even real-life people (Adebayo, 2020).

2.5.2 Learning Opportunities

The availability of more information online has provided people with numerous learning opportunities. This is a positive development, but it also has drawbacks because people, including married couples, learn bad things through social media and other online platforms to express themselves online while remaining respectful of the opinions of others. This has had an impact on how people think and act, as well as

their choices. This has both a positive and a negative impact (Coker & Schreiber,1990).

2.5.3 Socialization

Another advantage of social media is that it allows people to interact with others. People have been able to meet new and/or old contacts because of this. It also allows them to communicate, share, and/or exchange ideas and feelings via the internet. It is worth noting that, whereas there is a significant limit to the number of people one can talk to or interact with at any given time in the real world, social media has provided platforms for people to interact with more people, people that one may not otherwise interact with the people one can talk to or interact with at any given time in the real world, social media has provided platforms to interact with more people, people one may never meet face-to-face in one's lifetime.

2.5.8 Online guidance

For example, neither the counsellor nor the client is restricted to the confines of the counsellor's chamber when seeking advice (Rommel & Joyce,2010). Online guidance is expected to remove stigma, reduce pressure and frustration, improve accessibility, and boost clients' confidence. As a result, clients can get help from anyone, anywhere; especially those who are facing difficulties and don't have anyone to talk to because of where they live. Clients who have difficulty getting to appointments during normal business hours benefit from online guidance, which reduces the number of missed appointments for in-person therapy.

2.7 Facebook Groups for Social Support

Support groups date back to a clinical trial conducted by Dr. Spiegel in the 1980s, which found that women with metastatic breast cancer who participated in supportive group therapy experienced less fatigue, depression, confusion, and tension, and lived 18 months longer than those who did not (Spiegel, Bloom, Kraemer & Gottheil, 1989). The perception or experience of being loved and cared for, esteemed, and valued, and a part of a social network of mutual assistance and obligations is referred to as social support (Yu-Ping & Chang, 2015). Individuals can provide social support through verbal and nonverbal expressions of emotion, information, or referrals, all of which contribute to a person's well-being and help to reduce stress and illness. Social support was most found in established, multi-dimensional, and dyadic personal relationships, but it can also be found in informal social networks.

Strong social support helps users feel connected to their friends while also building trust. Better social support, according to Liang (2011), leads to better relationships, which can be used to strengthen customer loyalty. Social support can now be provided and received via computer-mediated communication, thanks to the advancement of the Internet (CMC). To obtain social support, people no longer need to know each other or communicate face-to-face (FtF). Unlike face-to-face support relationships, most CMC support exchanges begin with an immediate and often very personal discussion of the topic of concern. Social support is an important social value that Internet users can obtain from an online community, according to (Liang et al, 2016), (Obst & Stafurik, 2010). The Internet has become an important channel for social support because of the popularity of SNSs. On social media sites, people can share their shopping experiences and purchase information with their friends and family. A "Like" can be a source of feedback and emotional support instead of writing direct

responses. It gives the recipient warmth and reassurance that they are valued and cared for.

Furthermore, leaving comments and sending private messages strengthens and strengthens social ties and friendships, which can serve as sources of information and emotional support. If a user receives support from friends on social media sites, he or she may feel obligated to reciprocate. Face-to-face meetings among sufferers of medical conditions or face-to-face meetings of people related to the sufferers were the beginnings of social support groups. The main goal of meeting people who had similar experiences was to not only help themselves but also to help others (Alemi et al.,1996); (King & Moreggi,2007). The emergence of this type of self-help group provided an alternative source of social support and knowledge (Kelleher,1994), emotional support group (Solomon, Pistrang & Barker,2001). It was reported that receiving social and informational supports reduced negative mood and stress (Douma, Dekker & Koot,2006).

2.8 Support Group for Social Networking

Today, social networking is one of the most popular online activities. According to a recent study, the most common online activity of Internet users is visiting social networking sites (SNSs) (Score, 2011). In the United States, over 90% of adult users have used social media (Simmons, 2011). On average, one out of every six minutes spent online is spent on social networking (Score, 2011). The psychological effects of online social networking have gotten a lot of scholarly attention, but the results have been mixed. Despite the fact that major indicators of online social networking (i.e., number of SNS friends, amount of social networking) have often failed to predict positive outcomes (Kim & Lee, 2011). There are two possibilities based on the findings' inconsistency: For starters, previous online social networking research has

focused on a variety of psychological outcome predictors, some of which may be more valid than others. Second, a third variable may mediate or moderate the relationships between predictors and outcomes the current study investigates one possible mechanism by which people's online social networking affects their mental health.

This research claims that the amount of supportive interaction mediates the link between general SNS use and users' psychological states. The importance of the quality of interaction among network members (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2000) and the perception of available social support from other members is also highlighted in traditional social network literature (Young, 2006). Pursuing this argument, the current study proposes several mediating variables that include supportive interaction, affect, and perceived social support. The current study focuses on two psychological outcomes: sense of community and life satisfaction, which are frequently mentioned in the literature on online communication and social networks (Young, & Kremer, 2010).

Using a momentary sampling technique, which allows an examination of effect immediately after behaviour, this study first examines the direct relationship between the amount of supportive interaction and the positive effect following that interaction for five days. Web-based applications that allow users to create a profile that other users can see and list connections with other users are known as social network sites (SNSs) (Ellison, 2007). Although the goal of an online social network is the same as that of an offline social network, namely, to connect people and share resources in the network, users benefit from online networking's unique features related to computer-mediated communication. Certain studies have discovered that there is an increase in the use of SNSs because of their growing popularity. Certain studies have found that

social networking on various social networking sites has positive psychological outcomes (Kim & Lee,2011). The number of SNS friends and the amount of SNS use are the two most studied indicators of online social networking now. One of the most widely studied constructs in the online social networking literature is the number of friends, which is the primary source of social support (Kim & Lee, 2011).

These studies, on the other hand, found mixed results when using the number of SNS friends as a direct predictor of psychological outcomes, implying that in a regression analysis (Valenzuela, 2009). Other indicators of well-being showed either negative relationship with Facebook intensity (Vitak et al.,2011). Even though this report has been criticized for its exaggerated notion that there is no clear evidence linking Facebook use to depression, there is still a debate about whether online social networking causes clinical disorders like depression (Magid,2011). As an example, (Pantic et al.,2012) discovered a link between the frequency of Facebook use and depression indicators in high school students.

Another recent survey found no evidence of a link between the use of SNS and clinical depression (Jelenchick, Eickhoff, & Moreno, 2013). This study discovered that person-directed communication reduced loneliness and increased bonding social and capital, which is the perception of available emotional and/or tangible resources from one's social connections (Ellison ,2007). However, solitary content consumption depleted social capital and increased loneliness. The rise of social media, particularly Facebook in 2004, has given computer-mediated social support groups a new perspective. Facebook is a popular social media platform that has received positive reviews from all over the world. Because of its ease of use, Facebook has a high usage rate as more people use it as part of their daily routine. Because of the ease of access and the popularity of Facebook, a new phase in the evolution of social support groups

has emerged. Indeed, Facebook has become a more popular platform for groups to organize social support. The feature that distinguishes Facebook from other computer-mediated social support groups (e-mails, chatrooms, and bulletin boards) is the ability to communicate both synchronously and asynchronously is necessary to communicate. Other features, such as the ability to 'Like,' 'Comment,' and 'Share' with others, can be accessed with a single mouse click. Additionally, private messages (pm) and free calls allow for more private communication (Burke,2010).

2.9 Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder

Searching for social support groups on Facebook garnered a long list of groups set up specifically to cater to different needs, such as disabilities, addiction, and medical conditions. Most of these Facebook social support groups accommodate those who suffer from those conditions themselves, but a further search resulted in social support groups for parents/carers for those sufferers. These groups are mostly initiated by the parents themselves as a forum for them to share their parenting experiences. It also serves as a support system for them. A Facebook social support group for parents and carers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been established. Support Group Australia-Parents of Special Needs Children, Support Group for Moms with Kids with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), ADD (attention deficit disorder), Autism and Behaviour Issues, and Tasmanian Parents Support Group are just a few examples of Facebook groups for parents of ASD children in Australia. In Malaysia, there is a Facebook social support group called Autism for parents of children with A S D child (attention deficit disorder), Autism and Behaviour Issues, and Tasmanian Parents Support Group are some of the groups that children are introduced to. In Malaysia, there is a Facebook social support group called Autism that was created specifically for parents of ASD children.

2.11 Benefits of online support Groups

There are numerous advantages to joining an online support group, (Madara,1997). Asynchronous communication allows participants in online groups to communicate at their leisure, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Individuals can carefully develop responses at their own pace thanks to synchronicity. There are no geographical or transportation barriers. People with mobility, speech, communication issues, and people with stigmatizing illnesses such as AIDS or breast cancer, as well as those recovering from sexual abuse, may find online support to be a more welcoming environment to discuss sensitive topics.

- The anonymity provided by online groups allows for the discussion of potentially embarrassing or otherwise taboo subjects, as well as increased opportunities for self-disclosure and intimacy. (Klemm & Nolan,1998). Unlike traditional support groups, which are limited by space, an online group can have an unlimited number of participants (Hall, 2020).
- On the Internet, there is global coverage. Members of the group can draw on a wide range of perspectives, experiences, disabilities, and points of view because of the group's international scope. Simultaneously, it has been argued, online support groups empower consumers by acting as a voice for a cause or disease, as well as a means of organizing and networking politically. Such organizations may represent local, state, national, and international concerns and priorities to local, state, national, and international organizations. (Feenberg,2006).
- As identified a cost-effective method of providing support, encouragement, and health information to many people. Online support can provide continuously available health information and education at a reasonable cost

by reducing transportation costs, the need for physical meeting space, and reliance on professionals to facilitate groups (Galinsky, 1997).

2.12 Public Forums

On the Internet, public online groups centred on a single disease or condition are common. Miller and Gergen analysed the content of a suicide-related American Online forum (Miller & Gergen, 1998). After an 11-month analysis of 232 bulletin board postings, the authors discovered that 20% of them were about personal experience and self-disclosure, with the remaining 18% offering encouragement and empathic understanding. The forum was likened to a friendly neighbourhood, with transactions that lasted rather than changed. The researchers also asked for volunteers to participate in a qualitative analysis of the forum as part of the study. Members remarked on the ready availability of sympathetic people, as well as the ability to act as a "responsible helper" by offering support and the therapeutic value of writing about one's feelings and problems, as well as assistance and advice.

Researchers compared the gender composition, organizational features, and interpersonal relationships that developed in a public depression newsgroup to traditional face-to-face groups (Salem et al., 1997). The authors discovered a high percentage of males used the group, and message content was similar for both males and females, after examining 1863 messages from 533 participants (273 males and 173 females) over two randomly selected weeks. The most common type of posting was self-disclosure (51 percent). Offers of instrumental assistance were uncommon, and some online friendships were maintained through other means, such as private e-mail. Although there was no formal leader in the group, several members took on this role informally by introducing new members, providing amusing asides, and assisting members with administrative tasks. Messages with a specific goal in mind

(encompassing asking for or providing information, problem-solving, computer talk, or group cohesion). He discovered that over half of the posts were about socioemotional interactions. Health and interpersonal relationships were the most discussed topics, followed by legal and political issues.

Similarly, Braithwaite et al... (1999) looked at 1 months' worth of messages (1179 postings) on a disability bulletin board. They discovered that the most common category of posting was emotional support (40%) followed by information (31.7%), esteem support (18.6%), networking (7.1%), and tangible assistance (7.1%). (2.7 percent). This research investigated a few unique aspects of online support. Members contributed poetry, journal entries, personal stories, and artwork on occasion, usually as a form of emotional support for other members. The privacy provided by the computer's ability to provide comfort may lead to an increase in the willingness to share various forms of self-expression. Humour was used to express support or lighten the tone of the conversation. Signature lines, a type of writing unique to computer-mediated communication, were common in many messages, and they frequently contained favourite quotations or axioms meant to convey support and humour. Traditional support groups have long been an important part of cancer treatment (Spiegel et al.,1989); (Cella and Yellen,1993).

2.13 Online cancer support groups

Fernsler and Manchester sent an email to the 1400 members of the CompuServe cancer forum, asking them to fill out a survey about how useful the online forum is to them (Fernsler & Manchester,1997). 54 people responded with their thoughts were overwhelmingly positive. The most beneficial aspect of the forum, according to over 85% of the members, is the opportunity to connect with others who have had similar experiences. Coping, information, reciprocal support, a sense of community, privacy,

availability, and hope were the seven themes that emerged from the survey responses. (Klemm, 1999) looked at postings from an online support mail group for colorectal cancer patients and their families. The authors discovered that 150 messages from one 4-day period and 150 messages from one 5-day period 6 months later could be categorized into eight groups: information giving and seeking (25.4 percent of interactions), personal opinions (22%), encouragement and support (17.4%), personal experience (16.4%), thanks (7.7%), humour (4.5%), prayer (2.9%), and miscellaneous (3.2 percent).

White and Dorman looked at 532 messages sent to a public mail group for Alzheimer's disease caregivers over the course of 20 days (White and Dorman, 2000).

Using Klemm et al., 1999) categories, the researchers discovered that nearly 30% of postings were about information giving and seeking, and nearly 25% were about personal experiences. Encouragement and support came in second with 14.3 percent, personal opinions came in third with 11 percent, humour came in seventh with 7.8 percent, thanks came in fifth with 5.9 percent, prayer came in second with 2.8 percent, and miscellaneous came in third with 3.6 percent. During the study period, only 178 members of the online group posted messages, even though the group had over 1015 members. Caregivers frequently expressed gratitude for the opportunity to express their frustrations, anger, or helplessness to sympathetic listeners. Because concerns could be expressed as soon as problems arose, the stress of the situation was reduced.

2.14 A comparison of in-person and online support

While both face-to-face and online groups offer members support, encouragement, and information, there are a few key differences. Some of the most noticeable distinctions have already been mentioned. Face-to-face groups are limited by time, space, and geographic boundaries. Online groups, on the other hand, can have an

unlimited number of members and are not bound by international borders. Availability of online support is convenient and accessible at the user's discretion 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As caregiving responsibilities and the onset of crises increased, White and Dorman discovered that caregivers of Alzheimer's patients welcomed the ability to write about problems (White & Dorman, 2001). Members can think carefully and deliberately before sending messages or responding to postings because of the synchronicity of online communication. The occurrence of the tendency of 'lurking,' or reading messages in an online forum without actively sending any messages (White & Dorman, 2001).

Reciprocity is usually required in face-to-face groups (Dickerson, 2000). In any group situation, whether face-to-face or online, passive online members may choose a low level of visibility and participation as their preferred method of functioning (Brennan, 2002).

(Finfgeld, 2000) both suggest that shy or reserved members may prefer to lurk until they understand the online group's norms and style. Online groups can be joined by family, friends, health care professionals, and caregivers to gain understanding and insight. to join online groups to gain insight, perspective, and understanding on issues faced by people with a specific disorder or condition without disrupting the group process (Lamberg, 1997). This topic has not been thoroughly researched to date (King & Moreggi, 1998). It will be interesting to see if lurkers gain any intrinsic benefit from reading but not posting. Dickerson et al. discovered that lurkers to an ICD group would occasionally write to express their gratitude for the group's value and then retreat to 'lurkdom' (Dickerson, 2000). Face-to-face support groups were linked to more expensive diagnoses and treatments, whereas online support groups favoured conditions that were poorly understood, difficult or impossible to cure, or were

overlooked by traditional health care (Davison, 2000). Online communities were frequently used to mobilize advocacy and political action to change the status quo. Writing about one's thoughts and feelings has been shown to help with depression, loneliness, and pain, and stress (Smyth, 1999). Members of online groups have expressed catharsis after sending messages to their respective groups in several studies (White & Dorman, 2000). Online groups have a distinct advantage over traditional groups in this regard.

2.15 Traditional groups and online groups.

Members of online forums have been known to intentionally deceive others to gain sympathy and attention. Both Rheingold and Madara warned that deception could occur in cyberspace, just as it could in person or over the phone (Madara, 1997). Patients with a factitious disorder or Munchausen by proxy, on the other hand, have a new venue in the form of online forums. Members of the group often feel shame, distrust, and suspicion after witnessing such deception. Overly dramatic stories, as well as those that are inconsistent or even contradictory, may be indicators of virtual factitious disorder (Feldman, 2000).

2.17 Traditional Social Support

We argue that some of our above-mentioned hypothesized relationships are similar in a traditional social support context, while others are dependent on the type of social support context, based on evidence from the literature (Chan, 2012). The relationships between daily stress, social support seeking, perceived social support, and adolescents' depressed mood will be investigated to test this claim in a traditional social support seeking context, the relationships between daily stress, social support pursuing, perceived social support, and adolescents' depressed mood will be examined and integrated into our hypothesized online model. To summarize, the proposed

pathways will be examined in a traditional offline context and integrated into our hypothesized model to test our claim that social support seeking will indirectly decrease adolescents' depressed mood regardless of the type of context, while the direct impact of social support seeking on adolescents' depressed mood is assumed to be dependent on the type of context (Burke, 2010).

2.18 Counselling via the internet

Online counselling as the process of a professional counsellor meeting with a client one-on-one in a remote environment using electronic means. There are two types of online counselling (Li, 2013). There are two types of forms: synchronous and asynchronous (Gamble et al., 2015); (Suler, 2011). Synchronous counselling is instantaneous, in the sense that messages are sent in real-time (WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram, video chats), whereas asynchronous counselling is time-delayed (Gamble 2015). Traditional face-to-face counselling has been found to be like video conferencing in that it involves the counsellor communicating with the client face-to-face (Barak & Grohol, 2011).

The anonymity provided by online counselling, which allows clients to create a new e-mail address that does not include their name and is not linked to anything else that could identify them, may be beneficial. Given that clients' anonymity will alleviate their suffering and reduce stigma and boost their self-assurance when speaking with counsellors about their problems (Mishna, 2015). Similarly, the anonymity of online counselling may help clients feel less anxious and under pressure (Manhal-Baugus, 2001). Based on the discussions about anonymity, it appears that (anonymity in counselling) may be beneficial for clients dealing with rape and abuse issues that are accompanied by shame or a fear of being judged (Cipolletta & Mocellin, 2018).

As a result, clients who receive online counselling are said to reveal important information sooner than those who receive face-to-face counselling (Young, 2005). There is scheduling of meetings for online counselling, just as there is for face-to-face counselling. However, one of the most important aspects of online counselling is that it is confidential, however, because online counselling is data-driven, the counsellor and client become more focused on the issues to be discussed, saving time for the counsellor to attend to other responsibilities as well as the client (Kotsopoulou, 2015). Online counselling offers many advantages in terms of convenience, accessibility, and cost. For example, neither the counsellor nor the client is restricted to the confines of the counsellor's counselling chamber when seeking counselling (Rummell & Joyce, 2010). Online counselling is expected to remove stigma, reduce pressure and frustration, improve accessibility, and boost clients' confidence.

As a result, clients can seek counselling from anywhere; students can keep in touch with their counsellors during their vacations and can keep in touch with their counsellors no matter how far apart they are. It also allows counsellors to follow up on students even after they have completed the program, regardless of the type of space they are confined in. Online counselling is flexible and simple to use because of the process involved. Clients prefer online counselling, according to studies, because they can communicate with their practitioners whenever they want and do not have to leave their work or home to see a counsellor (Young, 2005).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses primarily on the research methods utilized by the researcher to gather data for the study. The research designs, study environment, population, sample size and sampling processes, instrumentation, data collecting, study reliability, and data analysis are all included.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The researcher employs an interpretivism paradigm for this study. Interpretivism is based on the assumption that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed. That is to say one can only understand someone's reality through their experience of that reality, which may be different from another person's shaped by the individuals' historical or social perspective (Goldkuhl, 2012).

3.2 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was utilized to get an in-depth information and knowledge on how and why participants seek for guidance on various Facebook group sites. Furthermore, because posts are published in words on a website rather than numbers, it will be difficult to examine the post in a positivist approach because thoughts, feelings, and experiences shared on multiple platforms cannot be quantified.

In addition, the qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to investigate participants' various perspectives and understandings of the subject under investigation with "Open-ended inquiries and probes providing in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, attitudes, sentiments, and knowledge," Patton said of telephone interviews (Patton, 2018). Through first-hand experience and

information (Forum post), truthful reporting (Online observation), and quotations from post-reading and monitoring, this approach can guide the researcher gain a better understanding of the issues being investigated. It also helped to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings and how that meaning influences their behaviour. The fact that qualitative researchers do not attempt to generalize their findings to a larger population is perhaps the most essential aspect of qualitative research. Instead, they try to find examples of conduct, clarify the thoughts and feelings of study participants, analyse respondents' perceptions of the phenomena of interest, and come up with explanations for human behaviour in a specific situation (Zubin & Sutton,2014).

3.3 Research Design

The study used an ethnographic design to delve into the specifics of digital guidance services. Ethnography is a qualitative study of social interactions, behaviours', and attitudes that occur inside groups, teams, organizations, and communities, according to (Ratcliff, 2018). The goal of this style of anthropological study, which dates to the turn of the twentieth century, was to learn not only how people behave and interact, but also how their location, environment, and other settings affect their daily lives. This methodology enabled the researcher to collect data from participants on virtual Facebook groups and investigated how certain interactions on the platforms had a positive or negative impact on people. The researcher also explored and reported on what, why, and how of the practices of Facebook groups of members, not only by interviewing them but also by observing their behaviours and reactions in the group daily.

The goal is to gain an understanding of how each group of people views the world. Because Facebook groups is also seen as an online community where people come from different origin to form one family, the researcher employed an ethnographic design for the study. The growth of the Internet and social media has given researchers more opportunities to conduct virtual ethnography studies. (Hine, 2015). The premise behind virtual ethnography is that the ethnographer should participate in the social lives of the research subjects, regardless of how such encounters are mediated. Ethnography, in this context, can be global, multifaceted, and mobile in the sense that researchers follow individuals around physical and virtual locations (Epstein, Fahey, & Kenway,2013).

3.4 Population

The study's target population was limited to Facebook social media groups (Tell it All, Tell it Mums, Trotro Diaries, and Abena Manokekame). The researcher chose four Facebook groups with which she has been a member for several years. Because of the design (ethnographic study), the researcher must spend a year with these groups to monitor and engage in the interactions that take place on the platforms (Creswell ,2016). These social media communities are made up of people who are interested in gender, children, and marriage concerns. Other groups discuss relationship concerns, employment opportunities, and school social life, as well as public knowledge, cooking skills, and spouses and fiancées. Some groups also deal with religion, politics, health issues, dating sites, placement, counselling, accommodation and adjustment, orientation on all issues, old student platforms, and others; some of these groups are secret, while others are open to the whole public.

Men use Facebook more than women, with 35.1 percent being women and 64.9 percent being men, with persons aged 25 to 34 being the largest user group (1,740,

000). Total number of people in various study groups. Population of the study consist of the following: The total population of people on Tell it All group as at June,2020 were 281,000, Tell it Mums were 296,000 while Abena Manokekame's group 417,000 and people on Trotro diaries were also 371 all as of 30th June,2020. These four Facebook groups sum up to 1088.417.

Table 1: Population of the Study

GROUP	POPULATION
Tell It All	281,000
Tell It Moms	296,000
Abena Manokekame	417 ,000
Trotro Diaries	371,000
Total	1088.417

Source: (Facebook group platforms, 2020)

3.5 Sample Size/Sample Procedure

Individuals of the entire group who were active and had been in the group for more than one year were divided into subgroups, each with its own set of characteristics (male and females). In this type of sampling, members are chosen based on a set of specific criteria The researcher chose the participants based on how long (1 year) they had been in the group, their gender, and how active they were. (Those who liked comments and had previously posted, commented, or assisted someone on the page were considered.). The researcher got representative data from a group through this form of sampling. The number of participants were divided into participants who have sought help from the platform before and others who were there to like and respond to comments, on how they were interviewed and whether they were male or female (Cresswell, 2014). Because all ethnographic study participants should range between 20-30 (Creswell,2018); out of the 30 participants, after all data was collected from the

30 participants, the researcher analysed the data and realised 6 participants gave same information which made the number reduced to 24.

Quota sampling was used to reach this sample size. Members were chosen based on some specified traits each group dealt with (issues being handled by each group) decided by the sampler when the population is placed in a quota based on this type of sampling. The researcher got representative data from a group through this form of sampling. The number of participants were divided into categories based on the method of interviewing the participant and issues handled by various platforms (Guetterman, 2015).

The sample size is listed in Table 3 for your convenience. The researcher started the interview with participants in Tell it All, after the 8th person, no new information was acquired from participants that's why the researcher used 8 participants for Tell it All and Tell it mum group due to its larger population of members with participant from these two groups (Abena Manokekame and Trotro Diaries too were interviewed and saturation set in on the 4th persons in each of the groups.

Table 2: Sample size of the study

Groups	Sample Size
Tell it All	08
Tell it, Moms	08
Abena Manokekame	04
Trotro Diaries	04
Total	24

3.7 Instrumentation

3.7.1 Observation, post-reading, and monitoring

Observation, post-reading, and monitoring are all things that can be done online.

The process of tracking information on social networking sites, blogs, news sites, wikis, forums, message boards, and other websites to find out what people are saying about a post on a platform, participation services, and just about anything else one is interested in learning is known as social monitoring (Guetterman, 2015).

What was said about companies, posts such as photographs and videos on social media, and the daily/weekly/monthly reporting of the dissemination of contents made in a good, negative, or neutral tone was also gathered by social monitoring (Guetterman, 2015). From January 2020 to December 2021, the researcher took a snapshot of the post. The researcher read and monitored 230 posts across all four platforms, allowing the researcher to keep track of the participant's activity across the platforms. Because the researcher was observing participants in their natural surroundings, post-reading and monitoring was used because the participant's activities were largely published on platforms (Beninger, Fry, Jago, Lepps, Nass & Silveste, 2014).

3.7.2 Forum Post on Facebook

The researcher used Forum Post to ensure that the data acquired was consistent, as members' posts served as evidence of the participant's exact phrases. Online forums were determined to be one of the most used qualitative Internet research methodologies in a recent review of Internet qualitative research. Online forums are discussion platforms where users can post messages on certain topics and engage with other users to further the discussion.

Various groups of people were known to use online forums for elective emotional and informational assistance. Online forums have also been mentioned as a good alternative for a qualitative study because they provided a safe atmosphere for some to debate (Eun-ok & Wonshik,2013). Online forums have been reported to provide a more comfortable environment for some people to discuss sensitive personal health issues and have been proposed as a viable alternative to traditional face-to-face focus groups. The effectiveness of the emotional and informational support provided by online forums has been reported (Kramish 2001). Furthermore, online forums are typically run over a longer period of time (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, 3 years), which minimizes deadlines, allows researchers to improve the technological features of the forum, and therefore reduces the burden of participation and time pressure (Hsiung,2000). After all the instruments had been employed, the researcher copied, and recorded some of the forums and triangulated the information acquired (Creswell,2018).

3.7.3 Telephone Interviews

Because of the study's design, persons who might be ready to participate would be practically all participant on various platforms. and because of the COVID19 pandemic, the researcher used telephone interviews, which were easier to reach out to participants who were far away from the researcher. This method of data collection was used to communicate with respondents over the phone. It is not a widely utilized technique, but it plays an important role in industrialized studies, particularly among advanced populations (King, Marston, & Bower,2014). Participants were reached out using Facebook Messenger call after they accepted to be part of the interview. Questions such as: (what will inform you to recommend your group page to a friend? How did you come to know about the social media group you are in? Why did you

choose to join that group? Tell me about time you sought help from your group, what was it about? Were you satisfied with the results or the feedback you received from the platform?).

It is faster than other approaches since it is a quick means of gathering data. It was also less expensive than individual interviewing because the cost per response is relatively low.

3.7.4 Interview Guide (Semi-Structured)

Because the results were compared to the data acquired via forum posts, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to apply the research questions for all four groups, and the unstructured part also allowed the researcher to gain in-depth information and understanding about the data. Semi-structured interviews, as the name implies, are based on an outline structure or a set of core questions, but with some leeway for the interviewer to delve deeper into the issue as the conversation progresses. A semi-structured interview is one in which the interviewer asks the respondent to answer questions from a list provided by the interviewer. Questions like; (How did you come to know about the social media group you are in? Why did you choose to join that group? Tell me about the time you sought help from your group, what was it about? Were you satisfied with the results or the feedback you received from the platform?).

The goal was to get to speak in their own words, thus questions are not very specific. The interviewer checks this box if the participant delivered responses to another area while talking about the first. The questions do not have to be asked in any order; instead, they were asked in such a way that the dialogue progresses. It was less structured than a structured interview and allowed the interviewer to give, as well as received information. In a semi-structured interview, the focus was on general

questions or subjects, and many questions was likely to come out during the interview, all within a pre-determined general framework. The extent to which the semi-structured interview builds the respondent's frame of reference rather than receiving comprehensive answers to pre-designed questions depends on how much the interviewer was encouraged or able to probe responses to pull out respondents' meanings in their terms. When probes are pre-defined, as in structured interviewing, the semi-structured interview is less likely to go beyond the researcher's categories than when the interviewer was free to pursue an independent line of probing aimed at eliciting the individual respondent's perspectives and frame of reference.

3.8 Ethical Issues to Consider:

However, it is critical to address the fundamentals of ethical research involving human subjects in greater depth (Fleming,2018).

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent was the cornerstone of ethical research (Dentin& Lincoln,2011). The word was made up of two key elements: 'informed' and 'consent,' both of which required careful study. Participants were fully informed about the questions they will be asked, how the data will be used, and the potential implications (if any). The participants gave their express, active, signed agreement to participate in the study, which included recognizing their rights to view their data and the ability to withdraw at any time. The procedure of informed consent can be beneficial. The process of informed consent can be thought of as a contract between the researcher and the participants (Creswell,2018). A clear explanation given by the researcher to participants was one of the aspects of 'informed.' The researcher sent a copy of letters to the administrators of various social media groups informing them of the intention to conduct a study, explaining how the data would be collected through a telephone

interview, Facebook forum posts, Facebook chats, or comments and observations, and how the study would not be based on compulsion but rather voluntary participation. Members and participants were given the option of opting out of the data if it would be harmful to them. The participant was given the opportunity to redraw information that had previously been submitted to the researcher. They were also informed about the length of time and format of the study.

3.8.2 Risk of Harm, Anonymity, and Confidentiality

Participants' identities were kept private or anonymous and promises went beyond preserving their names to include avoiding the use of self-identifying comments and material.

Anonymity and secrecy are critical safeguards against potential harm to participants. The information obtained by the researcher on participants was safe; even though the researcher was an insider (participant observant), the fact that someone was exploring the group was not exposed to members, therefore the natural setting of group activities was not changed. The participant was given the right to redraw their information which had already been given out to the researcher. And the level of time and form the study took was communicated to them. The members of the group who posted concerns to be discussed did so in an anonymous way, ensuring that all information shared between the four groups remained private. The secrecy and anonymity of the telephone interviewee were guaranteed, protecting them from being seen by the throng and allowing them to speak freely (Creswell, 2014). The terms "participant anonymity" and "participant confidentiality" are often used interchangeably, however, they are not interchangeable. Anonymity refers to the fact that the researcher is unaware of the participant's identity (e.g., when using

anonymous surveys, the participant's identity is truly unknown to the researchers). As a result, only confidentiality, rather than anonymity, can be provided).

3.8.3 Debriefing

The researcher presented the findings of the study as well as the overall concept of the study to participants, and the researcher also made herself available to answer questions about the study's findings. This was done to dispel any misconceptions or fears participants had about the study and to instil a sense of dignity, knowledge, and wasted time in them.

3.9 Evidence of Trustworthiness

The data's credibility was demonstrated through detailed background information and phenomenon descriptions, which also serve to generate competition for comparison. An in-depth discussion of the approach was also provided to determine the level of integrity. To ensure credibility, the researcher did a member check whereby the transcribed interview with participants was sent to them to confirm if that was the exact words from them. Dependability was also ensured by sending the work to the supervisor to check at every stage of the research, Transferability the extent to which findings are transferred confirmability was done by following the audit trail and study design.

To verify the reliability, voice recordings were compared to transcriptions once more. Confirmability, according to Anney (2014) and Shenton (2004), relates to When other researchers can validate data, the study's objectivity is proven. By following the audit trail and study design, you can get accurate findings and results. The audit trail of the inquiry process, as well as the reflexive process, were used to confirm the research's validity. The triangulation of data was done using data from several sources like post reading, observation and interview by participant to check if the information getting

was the same. To determine the study's transferability, I created a comprehensive summary of the study's environment (i.e., the background, research design, data collection, and data analysis) The interview procedure was generic and applied to all respondents in the same way. The study could be reproduced in other social media accounts by recording and describing the complete research method in full. Finally, to address ethical concerns, each respondent's full agreement was obtained before any data gathering method was used. Participants were informed of the confidentiality of information they supplied verbally and in writing through the consent form provided, as it is a basic principle of research ethics to preserve the privacy of participants. Furthermore, the study participants' privacy was protected by issuing each of them an alphanumeric code.

3.10 Procedures for Data Collection

The (researcher) received an introductory letter from Winneba's Department of Counselling Psychology and formally introduced herself to the selected organizations' administrators and patrons. Before conducting the interviews, permission was requested from the administrators of the social media groups as well as the participants. No one was forced to participate in the research. The researcher conducted online interviews, Forum post recordings, and observation after explaining the study's goal and significance to the participants. To raise the study's degree of trustworthiness, the researcher encouraged participants to submit honest responses, after which a triangulation was performed to compare data from another source of collecting.

The researcher conducted the interviews over the internet via WhatsApp conversations, phone calls, Facebook messenger, SMSs, and email. The participants chose the options based on their network connectivity, and privacy. To preserve

confidentiality, all phone interviews were conducted in an office that was devoid of noise and people moving around. The rest of the interviews were conducted at a convenient location where internet access was excellent. 2 participants chose phone calls, 15 chose WhatsApp conversation, and 15 chose Facebook messenger chat. The remaining 7 interviews were performed through email and SMS, ensuring the privacy and security of the participants' information. At the time of the interview, no one indicated dissatisfaction with the interview.

Online interviews, post-reading, and monitoring were the primary means of data collecting; however, alternative data collection methods included forum posts and comments, as well as field notes. Data was gathered through in-depth online interviews as well as participant posts and comments. The interviews were performed digitally, using one-on-one phone calls that lasted between 25 and 40 minutes. I used a voice recorder software on my phone to capture all the interviews, and I also took notes from WhatsApp chats, SM Ss, and messenger from Facebook and was later transliterated for analysis and approval with the Field notes and post Snapshots. In one example, the researcher had to conduct follow-up interviews with two of the participants because their network troubles prevented them from conducting a productive virtual interview. Four participants (4 girls from the Abena Manokekame group) dropped out of the interview because they didn't trust the researcher with their credentials since they didn't think their information was safe and they hadn't met her in person. On these social media networks, I also gathered and analysed certain postings and comments from participants.

On Facebook, social groupings follow a similar pattern. Participants upload their tales on the group page, and other members of the community remark on them willingly. Encouragement, praise, and useful ideas for posts that require them are examples of

such comments. For a year, I served as a participant-observer on these pages, reading, posting, and commenting on other people's contributions.

The researcher used relevance to the study's subject-advice services-in picking which posts or comments to include. As a result, I scrutinized every post or comment, decisive whether they might be classified as one of the guidance services. Call-backs were simple and inexpensive, and recollection was peaceful. There was a higher level of response than with the mailing strategy, and the non-responses were generally modest. The responses were recorded without causing respondents any discomfort.

3.11 Data Analysis

Each participant was asked to reply to a series of study questions. Participants who had never sought assistance from the group page before but responded to posts with emojis and comments to give assistance to others' concerns were asked ten questions. The information gathered during the interviews were transcribed verbatim transcribed. Participants who have not sought assistance from the group page before.

The data obtained through the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Questions 1c (Tell me about a time you sought some help from your social media group?) Q3a (As regards the help you sought from the social media group, why did you choose to post your concerns there?).4b (Did the feedback you receive have any influence on your subsequent decision?) were not included for participants who have not sought help from the Facebook groups before, while participants who have posted to seek for help on the group page answered all the research questions. Participants were directed to gather data to examine the first research question regarding how they came to know about the Facebook group page they are in? Although not all participants responded to research question 2, the data was gathered via the researcher's field notes as well as

the reading and monitoring of participants' posts in the group. To protect the participants' identities, each was assigned an alphanumeric code.

The responses to the in-depth online interview questions were used to create codes. At the first level of analysis, I found twenty-six codes in total. These codes were cross-checked against those found in the post-reading and monitoring field notes. Following that, the twenty-six codes were grouped or labelled to discover emergent themes at the second level of analysis. Accessibility, effectiveness, and the reason for accessing were reduced from twenty-six to three key codes. Accessibility included answers to open groups, invitations from friends, relationship issues, parenting, academics, and directions.

Participants difficulties, assistance, as well as the good and negative responses they received from their posts on their Facebook groups. Effectiveness included answers such as providing financial assistance to others, resolving people's relationship problems, education, product advertising, providing directions to locations, a sense of belonging, and technological development. Finally, responses for proximity and speed in getting a response to problems, anonymity from family and friends, not paying for the services, not being preached to but to address the problem, and having a variety of feedback to choose from were among the reasons for accessing the Facebook group page to resolve issues. Aligning the themes with the research questions was the third step in the analysis process. Three themes arose from the three major codes identified:

- Facebook group pages' accessibility.
- The challenges that various platforms handled impact the choice of the Facebook group page.
- Participants' perceptions of the Facebook group page's effectiveness.

From June 2020 to June 2021, the researcher took a snapshot of twenty posts and comments on four different Facebook groups platforms to see how they were related to guiding services.

The researcher got no new information saturation set in thereafter collecting and analysing data in an iterative process until I got to the 20th person when I realized the participants were saying one thing at a particular point in time, I ended the interview and proceeded with the transcription of the 20 recorded information.

3.12 Positionality

3.12.1 An insider's perspective

The researcher was a well-connected insider. The researcher was an insider in the sense that she had been a member of the four Facebook groups of the study for the past two years, posting, commenting, and liking comments with emojis to convey her opinion to a post.

The data obtained by the researcher will be triangulated with data from other sources such as observations, screenshots of comments and posts, and interviews with participants to determine the data's reliability.

3.13 Reflexivity

Because the researcher is an insider, the data collected from participants and field data was genuine, as the researcher was seeing everything that happened on the page, though the researcher was an insider, the researcher did not let her positionality influence the data collected.

Furthermore, because the researcher was not a participant in the study, the credibility of the findings will be enhanced, since her positionality has no bearing on the results, she can't influence them.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This study was conducted to explore how guidance services are rendered among social support groups on social media platforms – Facebook. Approaching this study with an ethnographic lens, the researcher utilized these social media groups as communities on their own. In the typology of (Douma,2007), the Facebook social media communities utilized in this study can be described as communities of interest. This is because members of these communities are bonded together by their common interest in subjects such as parenting, relationships, and travel experiences. In this chapter, I share my experiences living in these virtual communities as a participant reader, as the researcher interrogate the utilization of such communities for guidance services.

The researcher begins with stories of my relations with four social media communities, describing who they are and recounting how the researcher got to study them. I then follow with data on happenings in these groups that may be interpreted as guidance services. Cumulatively, the researcher attempted to answer questions relating to the nature of these communities, the kind of guidance services offered, and their effectiveness, as well as exploring reasons why members of these communities choose to seek support from their Facebook groups.

4.1 Demographics

The semi-structured interviews included twenty-four participants: eight from the Tell it All group page (mixed group), four from the Abena Manokekame group page (mixed group male and female), eight from Tell it Mum (all females), and four from the Trotro Diaries (mixed group) group page on Facebook. Based on their duties as

being accountable for the development of the members in each group, one group administrator was chosen from each of the four pages. Furthermore, the group administrators must have identified the guidance services employed on social media support groups to aid people in overcoming their troubles or reclaiming their sense of belonging. The group administrators chosen had an average of one year of experience with the organization. Selected individuals have also been with their respective groups for a year and have used social media to seek information or assistance.

Finally, out of the twenty-four participants, sixteen were females and eight were males since the researcher selected volunteers using the Quota sampling approach, which states that each group should receive a fair representation of the overall population in the group (Bhardwaj,2019).

Table 3: Sample Size based on Gender

GROUPS	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Tell it Mum	8	0	8
Tell it All	4	4	8
Trotro Diaries	2	2	4
Abena Manokekame	2	2	4
Total	16	08	24

4.2 Virtual Community one: Tell It, Moms

The first community I joined is captioned “Tell it, Moms”. As the name suggests, it’s an all-female group for people with interests relating to parenting. According to information available on the group page, the group was established in March 2016 by a woman pseudonymized Araba Otsiwa, who describes herself as a Ghanaian young entrepreneur. By creating the group on Facebook, she gained the digital privilege to

manage the group as the administrator. Information picked up from the group page describes it as an award-winning female support group, and its goal is to impart positively, inspire and educate by sharing real-life struggles to help gain insight on Parenting, relationships, business and life in general” (Data from group platform). Despite being a social community, the group respects its members' privacy. As a result, being a member of the group does not get you access to the pages of other members. You can only tell who is there if that individual is already a Facebook friend of yours.

Only ladies are invited to the gathering, which aims to spice up their marriages and relationships with the help of others' experiences. The group had 3,090,000 members at the time of this study, with new posts arriving every day. Around 177 new posts are published on holidays and weekends when members are most active, and approximately 75 new posts are made on weekdays when members are too busy to post. I was introduced to this group by a friend who was already a member. Sharing my interest in counselling in digital spaces, my friend said so much about this group that got me curious to know what goes on in there. I followed the procedures for joining which included sending a request to the administrators through a button available on the group page. Pressing the “join” button led me to a questionnaire page where I described myself as a woman and my interest in becoming a part of the community. I call this the “visa acquisition process” which was a deal-breaker in terms of determining whether I will be permitted in this community or not. Having submitted this form, I had to wait for approximately three hours but, felt like two days because I was so anxious to know the outcome of my “visa application”. Finally, I got a notification that I have been approved as a member of the “Tell it, Moms”. It didn't take long after I joined to observe that, membership of this community comes with

some privileges such as being able to post questions and complaints and offer support to others who post their issues. Again, it also allows you to join affiliate physical groups that are in the cities and big towns across Ghana.

Soon after I joined this community, the administrator made members on the page aware that, some males have infiltrated the community which was a worry because it was supposed to be an all-female group. The “visa application process” was not rigorous enough as some males managed to use their spouses or partner’s phones to Nikodemusly join the community unbeknownst to other members of the group. After a lengthy debate and some bashing of these “traitors” and their spying male spouses, the community agreed that an all-male version of this group should be established for curious men to join and do their “men talk” in their community. This was a very exciting experience for me, and it was there that I realized how this assemblage of individuals of different backgrounds in a virtual environment could still function and exhibit the characteristics of physical communities.

4.2.1 The rise of Tell it, Dads

Eventually “Tell it Dads” was established and the link was posted on Tell it Moms for wives and partners to share with their spouses and significant others to join. Tell it Dads mimicked Tell it, Moms, in every way possible. The group had rules for everyone to abide by and one is removed or blocked when they go contrary to the rules. From the group page I sourced some of the rules as follows:

- No women are allowed,
- One must be courteous,
- one can only advertise his product with the approval of the administrator,
- members, members must post use the anonymity form (Observation notes)

- Sadly, this how close I was able to get to this community. My positionality as a woman prevented me from “getting a visa” to this community.

4.2.2 And back to Tell it, Mum

Back at my newly migrated community, I began to learn about their vocabulary because it was the only way I could gain a nuanced understanding of some posts and comments. I learned about terms such as:

- Yummies – this is how members of this community refer to themselves
- Opana – meaning spouse as in husband,
- Pre-pana – meaning fiancée
- Ex-pana – meaning ex-boyfriend or husband
- Main-chick – Wife or legally married spouse
- Side-chick – illegal girlfriend of a married man (Observation Notes).

Knowing these terminologies was crucial to making meaning of comments and questions. In one instance this became very apparent when a member posted a message seeking help with keeping her “Opana”. As she narrated the incident, she explains that the man was a fiancé and not a husband. In the comment session of this post, members were quick to educate her to use the right terminologies. Akua wrote: “Are you talking about pre-pana or opana?” Amina also commented “It is important members learn to use the right terminologies. In your case, you are talking about your “pre-pana” and not “opana” as you claimed in the post.” In all these members were very forgiven for some of these errors which they considered pardonable for new entrants. In the tell it moms’ community, most of the posts I monitored were about women, how to handle marriages, personal hygiene, cooking skills, and parenting.

most at times people also get connected and days are given to people to advertise their products.

There is also a day married people on the page will share their experience in marriage to the singles to learn or model, some mistakes they did and do not wish the singles will do are also shared out. Skills for cooking different foods too were shared to empower women to spice their homes. The page consists of people in all the sixteen regions in Ghana and some international people who are from Germany, the UK, France, etc on the page. All groups of workers are also on the platforms.

4.2.3 The rise of Tell it all

Not long after the spying males had been escorted out of this community, some members raised concerns about how the males being there would have been helpful.

Adwoa posted:

The men are gone but I think we should have let them stay so that we can educate them on all the bad experiences they give to us.

Fifty-four people liked this post within thirty minutes and others commented in support of this idea. This generated some interesting discussions which culminated in a decision to have a third group to be called “Tell it all” which will admit both men and women so that issues that concern both sexes can be addressed. The administrator created this group and within three days 36,000 people had joined. In this instance, I was able to join this group without any “visa application” because all the women were automatically offered “dual citizenship” at “Tell it all” by their membership in “Tell it, Moms”.

Tell it all was also founded by the same administrator for Tell it Mums, Araba Otiwa, in January 2018. The name **Tell it all** means, “all gender should share their issues bothering them. Before your request to join the group is approved, one must go through some rules of the group such as one must not share nudes or sexually explicit content in the group, bullying was not allowed in the group, degrading comments too was not allowed if one accept on the terms and conditions before the persons request is approved. The administrator must authorize all posts to vet them. As of June 30, 2021, the organization had 153,000 members. Every day, an average of 178 posts are made. The study noticed a member on the site post information about generating a profit in the company as late as 1 p.m., yet strangely, others were there to comment within minutes. This group is open to the public, thus anyone in the group can see someone they're friends with on Facebook in the group, as well as their posts in the group if they don't use the anonymity template. The page is generally used for sarcastic posts, relationships, jobs, health, education, and other topics. Personal difficulties concerning females are posted on female platforms, and the administrator and her team will occasionally organize fun gaming trips and other exciting activities for people on the platforms to meet one on one for a little price.

People receive husbands, wives, jobs, friends, and other significant offerings from the group. A post was made on the platform for people to comment on vacant positions in their workplaces for others who are unemployed to apply, and two sisters and a brother provided feedback that the post about who needs a job helped them find work, and they appreciated members who commented on the post to help them find work. Due to the mixed nature of the group, a post was created for single girls to choose any number and guys whose date of birth matched theirs to inbox that lady and converse,

which is where two of the members met their husbands, and they posted to encourage other singles to heed some of their advice.

4.2.4 Trotro Diaries

Trotro Diaries is the name of my third virtual community and the fourth community I joined. As the name implies, Trotro refers to a tiny sum of money (coins). In Ghana, public transportation is commonly referred to as Trotro because the fare is usually low. It's a heterogeneous collection of people who are interested in topics pertaining to public transportation around the world. The group was started by a young man named Papa Yaw, and it is made up of both young and old people from all over the world. Among the other three study groups, the Trotro Diaries were the first to form. It was founded in the year 2011.

The organization was founded in January 2011 by a man who goes by the pseudonym Papa Yaw and presents himself as a Ghanaian young entrepreneur, according to the documentation on the group page. He obtained the digital authority of managing the group as the administrator by creating the group on Facebook. According to the group page, it was one of the first Facebook groups to be founded, and its goal/aim is to share a community and its trip adventures, as well as connect with young people all around the world. According to the information uploaded on the page, which invited all users to remark on their whereabouts, over 70% of the members are from Ghana's 16 regions, with the rest coming from other African countries such as Nigeria and Togo, South Africa, as well as other members, will be able to live in the UK, the US, France, and other countries (Data from group platform, 2020). Even though it is a social community, the group respects its members' privacy. As a result, being a member of the group does not get you access to the pages of other members. You can only tell who is there if that individual is already a Facebook friend of yours. The

gathering is open to people of all genders to spice up the challenges of boarding Troto and to direct people who are visiting new places for the first time to the correct bus to their destination, as well as weather changes (floods), traffic in town, and transportation price stability, based on others' experience. The community had 391,000 members on the page at the time of this investigation.

Approximately 80-105 new postings are received per day, according to my estimation; the biggest number of posts is received when there is an increase in fare, weather conditions, and traffic in various locations. Members try to post the new fare on the page at various points to avoid others from being scammed by the mate, and members also post when there is a lot of traffic in town to identify areas where there is traffic to dissuade others from utilizing that route. (From December onwards, in some sections of Accra and Kumasi, it's typically every Friday). When I questioned my uncle about the fare from Accra to Tarkwa, he told me that unless he inquired from his group page on Facebook, he wouldn't know. He then called to notify me about the pricing and where to find a straight car to my location. I was quite interested in learning more about the Facebook platform that provides assistance to its users. I then inquired of my uncle, who told me so much about this outfit that caught my attention in learning more about what it can accomplish. I followed the joining processes, which included making a request to the administration using a button on the website.

After clicking the "join" button, I was taken to a questionnaire page where I described myself as a woman and expressed my desire to join this group. This is what I refer to as the "visa acquisition process," and it was a deal-breaker in assessing whether I would be allowed to stay in this town. I had to wait for only an hour after submitting this form, but it felt like a year because I was so anxious to know the outcome of my

"visa application." Finally, I received notification that I had been accepted into the "Trotro Diaries." It didn't take long for me to realize that being a member of this community entails certain benefits, such as the ability to post on the community's forums for answers to questions, and concerns, as well as providing support to others who have posted their problems. It also allows you to join affiliated physical groups in cities and large towns around Ghana and other countries. The drawback of the page is that all the posts I've seen aren't anonymous; instead, they are directly from the poster. In an interview with the administrator, he stated that since all the posts are broad and not personal, there's no reason to hide the author's identity. I learned that unlike tell it all and tell it all, Trotro diaries do not employ the anonymity template, and everyone who shares a post-identity is not hidden to tell it all, tell it moms and Abena Manokekame. In a week after I was added to the page, the researcher asked assistance in finding a good place to spend the holidays; many recommendations were made by members, and the researcher chose from the choices; the researcher was pleased with the outcome of the replies. I noticed after joining the Trotro diaries group that the majority of the posts were more about sharing hilarious experiences in Trotro, by the roadside, looking for directions to a new environment, collecting updated information on fares and weather conditions in order to avoid flooded regions and traffic.

The Trotro Diaries page is not a relationship page, but rather a guide to making the most of your journey while being safe on the road. Trotro diaries normally go on face-to-face trips to donate to the less fortunate, according to the administrator, "we embark on one-on-one give away at the circle in February 2021 food items and some mobile phones were donated to the less fortunate, members used that opportunity to get to know one another, people whom we reached out to were happy and grateful".

4.2.5 Abena Manokekame Group

Abena is a Tuesday female born, Manokekame means my mouth itches me to say everything, I cannot keep it anymore. The founder of the group is Abena Mano. From my interview with her, she claimed her roots in the Central region of Ghana. This group is so far the newest among the other communities of study. According to information on the group page, on January 11th, 2018, the Abena Manokekame group page was founded. It seeks for users to use the anonymous template to submit stories on the page, as well as bring up general news or problems for members to help resolve. The administrator ensures that all posts are emailed to manokekame@gmail.com, where they are reviewed before being posted on the page for all members. It is a mixed group that welcomes people from all walks of life. This group is also concerned about the welfare of its members who require assistance. Most of the posts on this group are about news such as work, marriage, suicidal ideations, relationships, health education, and product advertisements as some of the main things members shares on the page. The group currently has a foundation named "Mano fans" that donates sanitary goods to schoolchildren, stationery, and helps members in need start a small company.

Aware of the actual entries can help you relieve tension, educate yourself, and unlearn some bad habits. The researcher came across a post on Facebook with Abena Manokekame's inscription and decided to enquire. "I have not regretted joining all of the groups since I have learned a lot and I am still learning from the group," she said. As of June 30, 2021, the group had 287,000 members. Most of the posts in this group are about relationship and marriage concerns, with a few exceptions. New individuals joined in June 2020, when Ghana experienced its first lockdown during the Covid19 outbreak, according to the researcher.

During the same period, the number of posts climbed, with members looking for ways to spice up their marriages, pair orientation, internet marketing, and how to stay safe.

4.3 General monitoring note on the four group pages (Tell it mum, tell it all, trotro diaries, and Abena Manokekame)

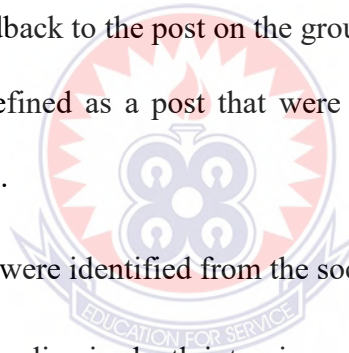
As I was monitoring and reading posts of these groups, I came across some posts that I found interesting, and if they a lot of but the comments and reactions under it is limited., I expected to see more reactions and comments, but it did not happen the way I expected. There is always a post on the group platforms and some members are also there to assist their fellow members, there is always a form of communal spirit on the page, though members are not bound by blood to be seen as one family. Facebook community was seen as a family on its own which is also bound by feelings, emotions, and kindness to one another. The feeling of empathy was also real on all the four groups of study.

Most posts in tell it mum was on parenting, health and relationship issues, and education on how to make Opana (husband) or (pre-pana) love you more and less post on others. Tell it all (mixed group) mainly post on relationship issues, health, education, seeking information, and sarcastic post. Tell it all is almost like Abena Manokekame. They all share similar posts. Trotro diaries as the name implies (trotro meaning public transport) shares posts related to the bad condition of cars, transport fares from one location to another, traffic jams, flooded road area nice places in the world, and issues happening in trotro mate pretending to forget passengers change and crushing on someone in trotro and not getting the vibes to approach).

The content of the online interview and Facebook social media platforms were analysed based on the second participant problem which was also captured. This was done to identify any form of consistency or similarities. Subsequently, a content

analysis was taken to identify issues on Facebook group platforms (Tell it All, Tell it mum, Abena Manokekame, and Trotro diaries) based on the following criteria:

- Total reach; defined as the number of people on various group platforms who visited the post through the viewing of posts and posts.
- Total engaged users: defined as the number of people who commented on, and reacted to the post using emojis to express their feelings (liked, sad, angry surprised cared)
- Positive comment, defined as the number of people who gave positive comments to the post on the platform.
- Negative feedback, defined as the number of people who gave negative comments or feedback to the post on the group platform.
- Sarcastic post, defined as a post that were funny and does not relate to the guidance services.
- six topical issues were identified from the social media content analysis. These differed from the online in-depth interview.



4.5 Table 2 Media monitoring of trending issues on Facebook group platforms for one year (January 2020-December 2021)

Top/Trending issues	Comments (both positive and Negative) by emojis		Reactions
Suicidal cases	561		1345
Relationship issues (single and married issues)	721		4865
Educational	102		543
Direction to places	345		1001
Personal Hygiene	234		658
Parenting	345		2354
Work	564		3547

4.6. Study Results

The first level of data analysis sought to determine the connection of interview responses, from some members in the group and the administrators from the two groups. There were 26 codes identified in the first level of data analysis. Subsequently, these codes were clustered and categorized to identify emerging themes. Similarly, post-monitoring reports were analysed to explore how people seek help on social media platforms (Facebook). The following section outlines the various responses and data revealed about the use of social media (Facebook) groups to resolve issues.

4.6.2 Research question one: How do people access guidance services on Facebook groups?

For this research question, one theme and two sub-themes emerged as responses to the question.

4.6.2.1 Theme 1: Introduction to Facebook groups

4.6.2.2 Recommendation by Friends

In exploring the participants' responses concerning the accessibility of social media groups on Facebook, participants agreed they were invited by friends and have also recommended the group to other friends before.

Joe: Actually, a friend introduced me to it. I will introduce my friends and have already recommended it to friends, and they are happy I recommended that page for them because it has also helped one in her marriage, and other things too. So far, I have invited 6 people for now.

Kwaku: The invite from a friend prompted me to preview the group, when I went through the posts in the group, I found them interesting, I decided to join to enjoy the group.

My friend invited me to the group since I keep on liking and commenting on some of the posts from his group on his Facebook wall. (Efia).

As the excerpts indicated, friends were critical to individuals' association with Facebook groups. They either directly invited their colleagues, or they were attracted to the groups based on their friends posting in such groups. A common pattern is to have participants invited by friends who are also ready to recommend it to other friends. This pattern of snowball referral confirms Domingo's (2019) assertion that on Facebook, one's contacts are called friends, anyone can invite a friend to join the group and have fun. Also, Facebook members can join virtual groups based on common interests, romantic relationship initiation due to few ties to friends and neighbours Kingsley,2010); (Pilgrim & Bledsoe,2011). Today's youth are growing up in an environment with an affinity for and familiarity with technology. As digital

natives, they use the Internet for all things related to their identity, self-esteem, and social status; they regularly turn to friends and family online for emotional support.

4.6.2.3 Reading posts and commentaries

Another way by which people access guidance services on social media is through the reading of posts on social media groups as well as their associated commentaries. It appears an unwritten cultural practice in these social media groups is for newcomers to observe and read posts and comments without reacting. Jones, one participant I interviewed had this to say:

When I joined the group, I did not comment for a long time. I was just reading posts because they were exciting. I was also not sure what to do so I just observed to see what other people were doing. It took me like errrm..., one month before I started commenting.

Another lady participant was inhibited by fear of making grammatical mistakes. She said:

I was initially afraid of posting because my English is not very good you know so I don't want trouble. I only read and use emojis.

Regardless, they still access useful guidance services through reading posts and other people's comments. Periodically, some new members post to show their interests in a particular post and how helpful they need answers to some questions. For instance, Akosommo said:

I am new to this place, but I am loving it here. Thank you, (Tell it Moms).

4.6.2.4 Posting of questions, emotional issues, general challenges, and advertisement of product.

A different way by which people access guidance services on social media is through posting of questions, which entails emotional stability advertisement of products and information on all issues. After new members have been able to adjust to the group and study the group trends for some time, they try to also post and comment under people's comments. Ama, one of the participants I interviewed had this to share:

I started commenting under people's posts, I quite remember my first comment was on a post on "Share your worst moment at the hospital" where I commented my experience on how I nearly lost my son due to the negligence of one nurse, I vowed to myself not to give birth again in the public hospitals some of the nurses are an agent of darkness. (She reacted with a sad emoji).

Another lady was glad on the first day she was able to post her products (pastries) on the Tell it All platform and how she got customers through the posting.

Afia 'my pastries are on the international market ha-ha due to the posting I did, I get more orders and I am getting money, I mean money from this platform, I should have known this platform long ago aww. I am grateful to the founder.

I saw a post on a friend status that was funny which was from Tell it All and I decided to also ask my friend about the group and I later joined it. (Ebo)

4.6.3 Research Question Two: What forms of guidance services are accessed from social media?

According to the requirements of an ethnographic study, I tracked the trend of everyday posts on the four study platforms for a year (Creswell, 2018). Following my observations and analysis of these posts, I classified them as follows: information, orientation, placement, follow-up, evaluation, referrals, appraisal and counselling. The captured posts were determined to be related to almost all the nine Guidance Services except, Individual counselling services which were not included in any of the offers. Most of the issues that group members sought help with were consultation and information services. The concerns mentioned on the pages are listed below as examples.

Themes: Forms of Guidance Service on Facebook Groups

4.6.3.1 Sub Themes: Appraisal Service

Before being allowed into one of the three groups (Tell it All, tell it Moms and Abena Manokekame), I first answer several questions and follow the joining procedures, which involve making a request to the administrators via a button on the group page.

When you click the "join" button, you'll be taken to a page where you'll be asked to identify yourself as a woman (Tell it mum) and your interest in joining the community (Ama shares her experience with the researcher).

4.6.3.2 Consultation Service

In the consultation service, the counsellor meets with individual stakeholders to assist them in overcoming challenges they may face while performing their duties as counsellors (Bedu-Addo, 2019). The poster was unsure about the lucrative business she could start with the money she had, so she posted it. Most of the help given in the digital community is based on personal experiences.

Tell it All) I want to become a nurse, but I had D7 in science will I be admitted to the nursing training school, and those who have links should help me out (Kofi)

Response from DEDE Inbox me and let's see what we can do.

AMA: I think you should resist and write the science since it is nursing you want.

(Abena Manokekame) A lady worked hard at his fiancée chemical shop and accumulated 30,000gh. Within a year, she was jilted by the fiancée and the guy used the money that has been saved by the fiancée for future use and has used some to marry another lady) please let's help this lady (Kwame).

Responses from Koo: *"Be strong and pick up from where he left you.*

The best is yet to come, you were just saved from a more serious heartbreak in the future, a broken relationship is better than a divorce. Cheer up and thank God for his deliverance (ANA).

Keff *"that's painful but let Karma deal with him. God is in control.*

(Tell it All)

I am freaking out please, I need your advice.

I just found out that the lady I am planning marriage with was in a 2years relationship with my dad. But we love each other, what should I do help a brother (Joe).

Response from MAY: *'Hmmmmm I think you cannot marry her since she has been in a 2years relation with your dad, it will be a curse when you do*

that, please try and let her go her way than to carry a curse you are not the cause.

4.6.3.3 Information Service

In an increasingly complicated environment, information services help people gain a better understanding of educational, vocational (career), and personal social options, allowing them to make more informed choices and decisions (Bedu-Addo, 2019). People require support in making decisions about their employment, school, and social interactions because of improvements in science and technology, politics and the industrial world, and a competitive labour market (Bedu-Addo, 2019). Almost many of the posts on the four groups, particularly on Trotro diaries, are about information services, in which other users with more expertise and knowledge assist those in need. The post is also classified as an information service because it contains three sorts of information (educational, career, and personal).

(Tell it, Mum) “We have launched a scholarship program for female tertiary students studying bachelor’s degree, kindly let such people chat me up to get a form filled, they will deliver the hard copies of the forms to W3 initiative office in Kumasi, it will be easier if you live in Kumasi, however, we encourage every student with admission or currently in school but facing financial challenges to apply.”

4.6.3.4 Placement Service

Placement services are intended to assist people in selecting and utilizing possibilities available within and outside of the virtual community to improve their social or academic standing, position, or securing employment status (Bedu-Addo, 2019). Regarding the post, the platform member was able to be put and recommend the work she can accomplish for the sum specified in the post. Members did their best to recommend a variety of job opportunities, and the poster made the decision that has aided her.

(Tell it, Mum) I posted here for you people to help me with the kind of business I can do with 10000gh, I read a whole of comments and I decided to go into Mother care products and women wear, thanks so much for the recommendation my business is booming now I am located inside Makola shopping mall, for items for babies and women.

Tell it mum) ABA: Thank you all for the recommendation of the schools you gave, I have selected one for my ward and she will be starting on Monday, I am grateful.

4.6.3.5 Orientation Service

Orientation services are provided by a Guidance coordinator or another experienced individual to assist people in better adjusting to any new environment. The goal of orientation is to assist people of all ages in feeling emotionally confident in a new environment (Buku, 2016). (School, home, and beyond Ghana) (Bedu-Addo,2019).

This article was created by parents on the Tell it Mum platform to help other parents understand how their children can adjust to the new Covid 19 environment in schools.

This is because the youngsters no longer have the psychological support of their parents, friends, and formal teachers. Furthermore, the new environment, with its laws, regulations, and administrative structure, looks to be altogether different.

(Tell it, Mums) yummies let all educate our children on how to get used to the wearing of facemasks since students will be going to school this Tuesday. Let's note this;

- *Put two or more facemasks in your ward's bag, a bottle of sanitizer, and tissues.*
- *Educate him or her on how to wash his or her hands regularly.*
- *Educate them on the consequences of contracting the Covid virus which can lead to death and other health conditions.*
- *Always get them a prize when they can do that.*
- *Educate them not to exchange their face mark with friends*

- *Let's us all adhere to the WHO protocols and we will be free from this virus.*
- *This COVID19 has come to stay and don't put so much fear in our children and shielding them not to go to school but rather encourage them all*
- *Stay safe*

4.6.3.6 Evaluation Service

The evaluation service is used to assess the status of any services, particularly counselling services, provided in a specific location. This enables practitioners to determine the "strength" of the service rendered, as well as the flaws of the service rendered, as well as the performance of the services rendered. This evaluation service post demonstrates that the technique members are taking to assist postings is assisting members on the platforms (Bedu- Addo,2019).

Anonymous post; I am a single mother and this man wants to marry me, but anytime he visits me and see my daughter who is 8 years old , he becomes angry and he have not even ask my daughter how she is doing, I questioned him on that and he said all his concentration is on me not the child and he suggest I send my daughter to my mum when we get married, but I love this man too and I am also afraid I might lose my daughter too, please help me out.

(Tell it All) Admi; "In response to one of the messages, she should never let any man come between her and her daughter; it's perfect if he marries someone who doesn't have a child, and she also marries someone who will accept her child.

4.6.3.7 Referral Service

Referral service implies that not every imaginable scenario or problem in a client's life can be addressed by experiences or counsellors. For example, if a client constantly complains about headaches, the counsellor must refer that client to professionals (doctors) to aid that client. (Antwi, Amos & Amoako,2019). Because the experiences

of members cannot assist the poster, this post under Referral was referred to as an expert (gynaecologist).

Anonymous; I always feel shy to have sex with my husband after our first child due to some odour from the vagina, the most serious part is that, I smell very bad and all my colleagues at the workplace have ignored me, I feel rejected and I want to end it all, I have tried all that it takes to get rid of this odour, but it persists, has anyone experienced such thing before please help your sister because I am dying slowly.

(Abena Manokekame) ‘This person has been asked to see a required gynaecologist for proper treatment.

4.6.3.8 Follow Up

This service is often provided to examine whether individuals are developing socially, educationally, and vocationally in the locations where they have been placed. This service is regarded as a component of placement (Buku,2016). Members were able to position this woman well in a business and when they followed up, she was thriving in the sector of business she was suggested to engage in.

Tell it All

. NANA Tea: Exactly a week today a post was made about a member whose son is of age to go to school but due to financial issues, mum was teaching the child herself, as the mum sells water too, a follow up was made to confirm it, now the son has been placed in school, the mum to has been given, the mum is doing well in her business since she is making a lot of profit in her business, thanks to you all.

4.6.3.9 Amusing and Hilarious Posts

These posts did not fall within any of the nine services, indicating that a service should be added to the nine guidance services to catch the remainder of the concerns being posted on the digital community for help or solutions. I will suggest that Comic and Hilarious post should be added to the nine existing digital services since it also helps people to distress themselves.

People may refrain from commenting on such posts owing to the absurdity or hilarity of the post or reply. Some of these articles are listed below.

4.6.3.9.1 Reporting from Ablekuma

Accra stayed by the plan. Last night something terrible happened to me and I will not even wish that for my enemy, I bought indomie with my last 10cedies at Ablekuma curve and someone on a motor snatched my indomie and shouted “wonya sika wannum” which means herrrrrrrr I was paralyzed with shock.

- *How do you tell your partner it's over in the King James version?*
- *Why do women Transfer their love and attention to their children after marriage?*
- *How much is the fare from Accra to Kumasi and the number of days to spent before reaching your destination, Akua please if you know you won't come, please resend my transport money back to me in my Momo before I curse you.*
- *The drama I acted in my secondary school as a poor man looks like say God don take am serious.....oooooooooooooooooooo.*

4.6.4 Research Question 3: Why do people seek guidance through Facebook groups?

Another goal of this research was to find out why people use social media for guidance.

According to the data gathered, the main reasons were convenience, anonymity, and a sense of belongings that is why people seek for guidance on Facebook.

Theme: Effective use of Guidance services on Facebook Groups

4.6.4.1 Sub-Themes: Convenience

Participants noted in interviews that the accessibility of social media gives them a reason to seek counselling services. To understand why people, seek aid from social media, I interviewed my participants, and here are some of the reasons:

Ana replied that,

It was a great opportunity to be part of the digital family, I joined this family due to proximity wise, quick responses, and variety of responses I can choose from since my friends' issue too was resolved, and also, how low cost it involved seeking help from social media groups, with the small amount of data someone can hear me out.

Kwaku:

I can't travel from here to see my mother on certain issues, at times too I think it will be appropriate to get answers from your peers online than to worry old lady on broken heart issues.

Efua:

I needed someone to talk to on one odd-time bi, I nearly committed suicide that dawn around 1:00 am, if I didn't get this social media group to assist me. By that time no pastor will be ready to hear me out because they are fed up with my issues.

One administrator further espoused and she stated

the complementing nature of social media helped in reaching out to thousands of people to decide on marriage, career, work, and others within a twinkle of an eye. She noted that even if people send issues and it is posted on the platform in the mid-night or day, there are still some people on the platform to assist that person during that moment.

This repotes from participants shows how convivence, accessibility and low cost of online support groups can give and this confirm what (Rummell & Joyce,2010), mentioned in their study as "convenience, accessibility, and cost are all very helpful to online therapy." For example, both counsellor and client can easily access counselling anywhere, rather than being restricted to the bounds of the counsellor's counselling chamber" (p. 482–496??). As indicated by the data presented here, participants validate Rummell and Joyce's argument that their usage of digital venues for problem-solving is motivated by ease and quick response.

4.6.4.2 Anonymity

I also discovered that the anonymity provided by digital venues influences participants' use. Participants told me in an interview how much they value anonymity:

Araba I prefer to share my problems with someone I don't know since that will make me more comfortable because no one closer to me will hear it.

Kwaku also confirmed the value of anonymity when he stated: I choose to post my concern there because with that place no one knows who I am in person and my identity was hidden.

We can deduct from these two respondents that anonymity is important to their decision to seek assistance through social media. This is hardly surprising given the importance of confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy in therapy. As some scholars have stated, the client's anonymity is critical for them to feel comfortable disclosing all difficulties (Kraus,2011); (Mishna et al.,2015). This also confirms the client's anonymity while seeking assistance through social media groups on Facebook. Given that clients. anonymity will alleviate their anguish, minimize stigma, and boost their confidence while discussing their difficulties with counsellors (Kraus,2011); (Mishna et al.,2015). Similarly, the anonymity of online counselling may reduce stress and pressure. the stress that clients are under (Manhal-Baugus,2001). Based on the debates about anonymity, it may be concluded that (anonymity in counselling) may be good for clients dealing with rape and abuse issues who are ashamed or fearful of being judged (Cipolletta & Mocellin,2018). As a result, clients receiving online counselling have been found to divulge critical information earlier than those receiving face-to-face counselling (Haberstroh et al.,2007); (Young,2005).

4.6.4.3 Belongingness

Participants shared with the researcher how their various Facebook pages have helped them to feel some form of belongingness and how some posts from their group platforms have given me a lovely new family. In a WhatsApp chat interview, participants shared the following:

Ana: I believed if my family that could help me had rejected me, then my last hope was on social media, I might die out of hunger, what I was going through didn't need those preaching, I don't know any counsellor too I need a family like our group to support me since they have been supporting people, now I have a family I belong to on Facebook and I am happy now.

Akua: I decided to share my problem. And God being so good someone on the page offered me an amount of money to start a small business. Others also paid for my rent (single room). And from there, I will say life is better now□□□□□.

We can deduct from these accounts that individuals on various platforms seek help (emotionally, monetarily, and physically) from their groups when they are in need.

This is the kind of belonging that they crave but do not always find in actual familial relationships. This supports the findings of (Oh et al,2014), who discovered a favourable connection between perceived social support from Facebook friends and life happiness.

4.6.5 Research Question 4 (How active are these Facebook groups services?)

In analysing participants' answers on the effectiveness of social media guidance services, individuals who sought assistance from their social media group shared the following narratives:

Theme: Active use of Guidance services on Facebook groups

- **Sub-Themes Creating job opportunities for people**

Aba:

I was in a relationship with someone who promised to marry me, but fortunately or unfortunately I got pregnant along the way. When this happened, he denied being the father of the baby. I must feed myself and my

unborn child. It wasn't easy. ☐☐. My family did not support me because they said I have brought shame unto them. Heerrr this day☐☐☐☐, it was at this point that I remembered the social media group my friend introduced me to. So, I decided to share my problem there. And God being so good someone on the page offered me an amount of money to start a small business. Others also paid for my rent (single room). And from there, I will say life is better now☐☐☐☐☐.

Efia

- **Resolving people's relationships**

One time and it was about my relationship, it was collapsing, and I run to the group since people bring in their issues. I got a broken heart I thought the world has ended and I needed someone to talk to at that moment. I was surprised by the kind of comment I got, without someone knowing my identity and a shorter period I have been able to be assisted and get options to choose from. one woman commented, "sweetheart don't worry okay everything will be fine, a better person will locate you put yourself together work hard and upgrade yourself your prince charming will locate you" and other motivational comments I don't recall mpo, some people also shared their experiences in the comment at that moment my broken heart was partially pathed. I love my group platform (tell it mum and tell it all)

Aba:

OK... I had some misunderstandings with my guy, and due to that, he decided to quit the relationship. And I was also not ready to leave him so due to that I was going through a lot of pains and didn't know what to do at that time, so I decided to post my issues if I can get any help from them. Within 3mins of my post I had about 15 comments from people, I always have to travel to my mum and discuss such issues with her since there is no proper network in my village to call my mum, this time round I had instant responses on what to do to keep my man since I was always talking about his female colleagues at work being his fiancée. One Maame Ama said "trust your guy and understand the work he does as a nurse, he will be working with females, give him space and allow him to love you" I adhere to that and am currently married to that my guy.

- **Advertising people's business**

Maame Ama:

☺ok so tell it mom n Mummihood is a female group for women and I joined because am a mum and some of the issues discussed over there are on parenting and very educative, interactive, inspiring n motivating, as for tell it all de3, to release stress n also for advertisement for my baking job.

- **To get rid of stress**

I come to the group page to read post and laugh over issues that can send me to my grave, there was a time my wife used our children's fees to invest in one of these collaped bank without informing me, it was when the proprietor called to inform of owning school fees for the past term, I became furious and

my breath size for some time when my wife confess to me about the investment, I decided to ignore my wife that evening so I got cling to my phone and went to my group platform and there was this post on 'how do you tell your girlfriend its over in king James version ,come and see comment.....I laugh saaaaa.

We can assemble from the narrative that, various platforms of participants offer quick solutions to problems unless they do not post the issue, even issues that members will not get anyone to talk to (face-to-face), immediately they post they get feedback. Arguably, social media has become a global phenomenon enabling organizations, businesses, groups, and individuals to easily and quickly connect with their clients, partners, relatives, and friends which make it effective and convenient.



Code Book:

Code	Meaning Unit	Condensed Meaning Unit. Description close to the text	Condensed Meaning Unit. Interpretation of underlying meaning	Sub-Themes	Themes
Ebo	Actually, a friend introduced me to it. I will introduce my friends and have already recommended it to friends, so far, I have invited 6 people for now.	I was recommended to join the group and I am ready to also invite people to the platforms.	Friends recommended Facebook groups for people to join and develop strong ties	Recommendation by friends	Introduction to Facebook Support Groups
Araba	A friends status prompted me to preview the group, when I went through the posts in the group, I found them interesting, I decided to join to enjoy the group.	People post some of the comments of others on their status and that draw people closer to the group.	Post from the group is sometimes screenshot by members to use on other social media handles like WhatsApp.	Friend's WhatsApp Status	Introduction to Facebook Support Groups.

<p>Ama</p>	<p>I first answer several questions and follow the joining procedures, which involve making a request to the administrators via a button on the group page. When you click the "join" button, you'll be taken to a page where you'll be asked to identify yourself as a woman (Tell it mum) and your interest in joining the community.</p>	<p>Before a member can be accepted on selected Facebook platforms, he/she has to answer to questions and go through a series of checklist before one is accepted.</p>	<p>Analysis and procedures one ought to go through before being a member of these Facebook support Groups.</p>	<p>Appraisal Service</p>	<p>Forms of Guidance services on Facebook Groups</p>
<p>Akua</p>	<p>Tell it, Mums) yummies let all educate our children on how to get used to the wearing of facemasks since students will be going to school this Tuesday. Let's note this;</p> <p>Put two or more facemasks in your ward's bag, a bottle of sanitizer, and tissues.</p> <p>Educate him or her on how to wash his or her hands regularly.</p> <p>Educate them on the consequences of contracting the Covid virus which can lead to death and other health conditions.</p> <p>Always get them a prize when they can do that.</p> <p>Educate them not to exchange their face mark with friends.</p>	<p>After a member has joined the group, he/she is allowed to post and share ideas on social issues that will help the rest of the members adjust to their new environment.</p>	<p>Guidance and direction given to members for a proper adjustment in a new environment or situations.</p>	<p>Orientation Service</p>	<p>Forms of Guidance services on Facebook Groups</p>

	<p>Let's us all adhere to the WHO protocols and we will be free from this virus.</p> <p>This COVID19 has come to stay and don't put so much fear in our children and shielding them not to go to school but rather encourage them all. Stay safe</p>				
Kofi	<p>(Tell it, Mum) "We have launched a scholarship program for female tertiary students studying bachelor's degree, kindly let such people chat me up to get a form filled, they will deliver the hard copies of the forms to W3 initiative office in Kumasi, it will be easier if you live in Kumasi, however, we encourage every student with admission or currently in school but facing financial challenges to apply."</p>	<p>This information is for those on this platform, get involved and let your Child's dream come to pass.</p>	<p>Gaining a better understanding of educational and personal life to make informed decision.</p>	Information Service	<p>Forms of Guidance services on Facebook Groups</p>
Efia	<p>Anonymous; I always feel shy to have sex with my husband after our first child due to some Odor from the vagina, the most serious part is that, I smell very had and all my colleagues at the place have ignored me, I feel rejected and I want to end it all, I have tried all</p>	<p>Admi: "This person has been asked to see a required gynaecologist for proper treatment.</p> <p>Since the issue is beyond just commenting and liking.</p>	<p>Making a recommendation for a client whose issue is beyond counselling for medication.</p>	Referral	<p>Forms of Guidance services on Facebook Groups</p>

	that it takes to get rid of this odour, but it persist, has anyone experienced such thing before please help your sister because I am dying slowly.				
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<p>Kwabena</p>	<p>Efua: I needed someone to talk to on one odd-time bi, I nearly committed suicide that dawn around 1:00 am, if I didn't get this social media group to assist me. By that time no pastor will be ready to hear me out because they are fed up with my issues.</p> <p>One administrator further espoused and she stated</p> <p>the complementing nature of social media helped in reaching out to thousands of people to decide on marriage, career, work, and others within a twinkle of an eye.</p>	<p>It becomes easy and simple to get people to hear and assist you when you have data without worrying yourself to travel.</p>	<p>Getting access to guidance services in a swift and moderate way without difficulties.</p>	<p>Convivence</p>	<p>Seeking for guidance on Facebook</p>
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4.7 Findings in Relation to Theories

The study is underpinned by two theories: the social learning theory and the Social Network theory. In relating the findings of this study to social learning theory, two concepts seem very relevant to understanding the happenings in social media groups. I explain this relationship with the concepts of modelling and motivation. Two theories underpin the research: the social learning theory and the social network theory. In relating the findings of this study to social learning theory, two concepts seem very relevant to understanding the happenings in social media groups. I explain this relationship with the concepts of modelling and motivation.

4.7.1 Theory of Social Learning (Modelling)

At the heart of social learning theory are three key concepts. The first is the notion that people can learn by observing others. Following that is the idea that internal mental states are an important component of this process, following which the person tried and modelled what she witnessed. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned through observation and modelling (Cherry,2021). Modelling is one method of teaching behaviour. When a person watches another's conduct and then imitates it, he or she is modelling the behaviour (Bandura,1977). This is also known as social learning or observational learning. Modelling is a type of vicarious learning in which direct instruction is not required. Indeed, one may be unaware that another is imitating his or her actions.

Modelling can be used to teach a new behaviour, affect the frequency of an already learned behaviour, or enhance the frequency of a comparable behaviour emphasizes the significance of reflection and imitation that occurs from an individual's perspective through the personalities depicted in media (Facebook), and how it causes a change in their behaviour, Information, attitudes, and morality. Participants in the

social media community imitate the acts and behaviours of others. If a member publishes a concern or something on the page and people begin to like that post with emojis, other users on the site will want to replicate the same behaviour. For example, when new members join their various groups, they take some time to study how things are done and then imitate as soon as possible as they begin to post. The mimicked behaviour is gradually reinforced, and the subject identifies with the model and attempts the behaviour gradually.

4.7.1.1 Motivation

Motivation is another component of the social learning theory that is relevant to the investigation. Of course, replication of the behaviour/task would be impossible if the desire to do so did not exist. Motivation is one of the most important beliefs in social learning theory; all the others rely on it. Both reinforcement and chastisement play important roles in motivation (Daniels & Billingsley, 2014). If the viewer does not see a favourable outcome from the conduct he or she is watching, he or she will be unmotivated to imitate it (Bandura, 1917). People who post every day on various group sites are encouraged by the likes and comments they receive each day, whereas those who do not receive sufficient reaction on a post are discouraged from posting issues. The usage of social media gives a great opportunity for members at all levels to engage people in a new paradigm of human contact and social learning. Social media applications have been utilized in social support groups to enhance critical thinking and reflection (Daniels & Billingsley, 2014).

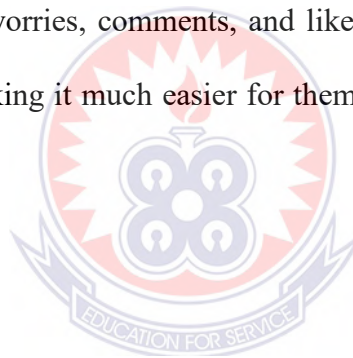
4.7.2 Murino's Social Network Theory

4.7.2.1 The Influence of Tie Strength on Facebook Social Support Groups

Tie strength is a crucial concept in social network analysis. It explains the strength and quality of a relationship between two people. According to Granovetter (2011),

the strength of A social tie is defined as a mix of the amount of time, emotional intensity, closeness, and reciprocal services devoted to a relationship, all of which are independent but correlated. It is a regular and positive relationship, with bonds that can be strong or weak. We share and trade the most intimacy with the friends with whom we have the strongest links; we enjoy more and higher self-disclosure, emotional and instrumental exchanges, frequent interaction, reciprocity, and time commitment with them. People in various social media groups become familiar with one another through the posting of concerns, comments, and likes; also, some were invited by their friends on the site, making it easy for them to communicate.

People in various social networking groups become acquainted with one another through the posting of worries, comments, and likes; also, some were invited to the site by their friends, making it much easier for them to speak on the issues bordering them.



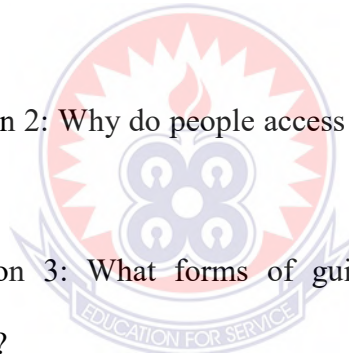
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The goal of this qualitative digital ethnography study was to see how social support groups on Facebook might obtain advisory services through digital space. How people get support from Facebook groups is crucial for public participation, counsellor approval, and policy story acceptance. The research focused on Facebook's public and social support groups. Four research questions led the study:

- Research Question 1: How do people access guidance services on Facebook groups?
- Research Question 2: Why do people access guidance services from Facebook groups?
- Research Question 3: What forms of guidance services are accessed on Facebook groups?
- Research Question 4: How active are these guidance services rendered on Facebook groups?



Information for this qualitative study came from digital in-depth interviews, post-reading, and other sources based on field notes, the research questions were then linked with four themes that emerged. In this chapter, I provided a summary of the key findings, as well as recommendations, conclusions, and limitations for how counsellors of all spheres can reach out to members of the public who require professional support through digital methods.

5.1 Findings in Summary

1. Facebook groups have evolved into virtual communities where members are recruited through referrals, join voluntarily, participate freely, and seek assistance. New entrants watch the platform they have joined as a cultural community (albeit virtual) and learn the norms and practices of the virtual community through modelling before they begin to post for support. Participate openly ask for assistance if necessary.
2. Participants join Facebook groups to get guidance services through referrals from friends and family, according to the study. Such assistance can be sought by making direct requests for assistance, reading blogs, and leaving comments about problems they're having.
3. Except for individual counselling services, all guiding services such as appraisals, consultations, information, placement, follow-up, and referrals are provided through Facebook virtual communities, according to the findings.
4. It was revealed once again that people seek advisory services online due to a variety of factors, because of the ease, quick reaction time, anonymity, and sense of belonging that virtual communities provide.
5. Due to the number of comical postings and entertaining comments, virtual groups on Facebook are platforms for many users to de-stress when they are stressed out.
6. Members of Facebook virtual communities attach to these groups because it effectively addresses their financial, interpersonal, emotional, and parental demands, according to the findings.

7. Participants who find solutions to their difficulties are more likely to seek help from the same medium in the future, according to motivation theory (self-efficacy).

5.2 Conclusion

1. With technology and urbanization altering the socio-cultural fabric of physical civilizations, Facebook groups have arisen as virtual communities where individuals can have access to benefits that are often not easily available in the physical civic.
2. Guidance services that were previously exclusively available in physical venues are among these advantages. Participants in Facebook virtual communities appear to love their newfound communities, which provide all the advisory services in various forms and metrics.
3. Academics and practitioners can only embrace this new phenomenon at this moment and investigate the possibilities for extending professional counselling services through this medium.

5.3 Recommendations

- According to the findings all forms of Guidance services are on various Facebook platforms, The researcher recommend that counsellors can use such space to reach out to their clients to address all issues.
- Since majority of people who get access to these platforms were invited by friends and are also ready to recommend their platforms to others, then it means online guidance has come to stay and the researcher recommend that Ghana Psychological Association encourage its members to create such platforms using their members to assist people.

- Conveniently, people prefer seeking help from Facebook groups and due to that, the researcher recommend that, online and Face-to-face guidance services should go far to assist people irrespective of where they stay.
- In terms of providing assistance, professional counsellors should not narrow themselves to institutions such as churches and schools but should instead focus their efforts on the virtual community, as most people are now attached to social media.

5.4 The Study's Limitations

1. Because of the prevalence of scammers on social media, several participants found it difficult to share their information with the researcher. Despite the fact that an introductory letter was sent to them for participation, one of the administrators was unwilling to have an interview with the researcher because it was conducted via virtual means and did not know the researcher to sell out her information.
2. More data was generated because of the post monitoring, a picture of the post, and the interview, making it difficult for the researcher to keep track of everything and unsure of which data to use for the study.
3. Some of the interviews were hampered by internet and network challenges.

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APPENDICES

ONLINE INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. How do people access guidance services on Facebook groups?
 - a. How did you come to know about the social media group?
 - b. Why did you choose to join the group?
 - c. Tell me about a time you sought some help from your social media group? What was it about?
 - d. Tell me about a time you offered help to someone in your social media group?
 - e. How regularly do you comment on posts on your social media group?

2. What forms of guidance services are accessed on Facebook groups?

Data from the pages

3. Why do people access guidance services from Facebook groups ?

- a. As regards the help you sought from the social media group, why did you choose to post your concerns there?
- b. Did you trust the feedback you were going to receive?
- c. Did you consider other options (pastor, Elder, traditional, family members, counsellors etc) of seeking help before choosing to post on the page?
- d. Did speed have anything to do with your decision to seek help from the page?

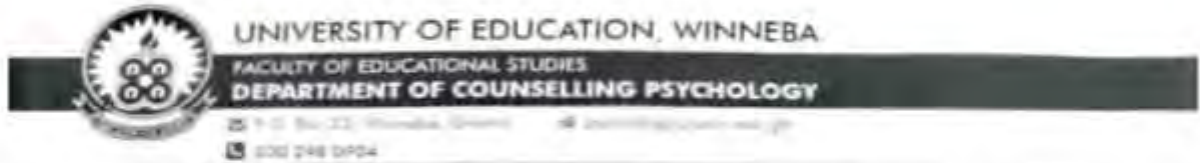
4. How effective are these guidance services rendered on Facebook groups?

- a. Were you satisfied with the responses you got for your problem?
- b. Did the feedback you receive have any influence on your subsequent decision?
- c. How would you respond to people who say that the stories posted on such platforms are not true?
- d. Have you or would you recommend the Facebook page to a friend?
- e. Do you think the Facebook group is solving people's problems?
- f. In the near future, do you think your Facebook page will continue to be relevant?



APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



24th June, 2021.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce to you, DARKWAH SARAH OFORIWAA, the bearer of this letter who is a student in the Department of Educational Foundations of the University of Education, Winneba. She is reading Master of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology with index number 200041532.

She is conducting a research on the topic: GUIDANCE SERVICES IN DIGITAL SPACE: A DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS ON FACEBOOK. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the above mentioned degree.

She is required to gather information through interview guide to help her gather data for the said research and she has chosen to do so in your outfit.

I will be grateful if she is given permission to carry out this exercise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Eshun", is written over a faint circular watermark of the University of Education, Winneba logo.

DR. PETER ESHUN
AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT



APPENDIX B

A PRIOR CODE FOR POSTS

Themes	Story/Post	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
Counseling			
Placement	I posted here for you people to help me with the kind of business I can do with 10,000gh, I read a whole of comments and I decided to go into Mother care products and women wear, thanks so much for the recommendation my business is booming now I am located inside Makola shopping mall, for items for babies and women	Amina; oh, wow hope I will get a discount when I come to buy from you? AAM; I will dm you now. SA: you are welcome yummy.	
Appraisal	Why do you want to join the group? are you a male or female?		
Consultation	EB “please I need your advice. What kind of business can I gain profit from by using 10.00000gh cedi as starting, help me”? Okyerere D. “please does anyone know where I can get an affordable wedding ring to buy within Accra? It’s quite urgent” JJ: The doctors/nurses here, what	BBC “Sweetheart go into mother care a very lucrative business that’s what am into” ACT: “Go into men’s wear” MS: “Women’s wear especially, makeups wigs, rentals, etc Dede: Fante jewellery adjacent to Ghana library board. SIM: “Makola shopping Mall.”	Ama:” some people want to show off their capitals” Sally: “Scammers on board be alert” Ash “Go to my village you will get as low as 10peswess, just for a laugh no hard feeling”. Tina: ‘it will end in tears” SS: that blood group I learned they can cheat paaa.....” (laughing and running away emoji).

	<p>does it mean to be blood group type B positive?</p> <p>AR: "How do you get over your Ex? I need help pls".</p>	<p>SN:" Your blood type is determined by genes inherited from your parents. Whether your blood type is rare, common, or somewhere in between, your donations are vital in helping save and improve life. B positive is an important blood type for treating people with sickle cell diseases and thalassemia who need regular transfusions. These conditions affect South Asian and Black communities where B positive blood is more.</p> <p>KK:"my dear try had and forget about him, the better one will come after you have been able to let him/her go.</p> <p>SAN; Weigh the negative thing he/she did to you and picture that into the future when that same incident happens again"</p>	<p>QLA:"Fa dua bo ni trim na Ku no wai. Wetin concerns me la.</p> <p>SAD:"look for a funeral in your area irrespective of who the deceased is, go there and cry your head out you will be fine"</p> <p>ANA: "invite him over and give him nkura aduro"</p>
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		<p>SIM; throw away anything that makes you remember him, block him on all the social media handles. Burn all anything of his that binds u together”.</p>	
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Admi; ‘‘Feedback to one of the posts, She should never let any man come between her and her daughter, it’s best he marries someone who doesn’t have a child and she also goes to someone who will accept her child”.</p>	<p>SQ: ‘‘I don’t see how this little child is going to spoil your marriage or is there anything your pre-Pana knows about your child that you don’t know? Please your child is your happiness, who knows if that child will be your only child, don’t agree to his suggestion to send the child to the village. If he doesn’t love the child, he doesn’t love you either”</p> <p>MA: Madam ask him whether he has not heard this quote before if you love me, love my dog too”.</p>	<p>KA: Let the child go to his father”.</p> <p>Reply to KA: from AB: ‘when you were a little boy, if your mother was a single mother and a man interested in marrying her had told your mum to take you to your father, would you have grown to appreciate it? Because it means your mother would have raised your half-siblings but pushed you away.’”</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>(Abena manokekame) A lady who worked hard at his fiancée’s chemical shop and accumulated 30,000gh within a year was jilted by the fiancée and the guy used the money that have been saved for future use to marry another lady.</p>	<p>MRN ‘‘Be strong and pick up from where he left you. The best is yet to come, you were just saved from a more serious heartbreak in the future, a broken relationship is better than</p>	<p>NAAA ‘‘curse him, if anyone comes to talk to you to forgive him, curse that person too and if anyone comment on your post which talks about forgiveness or rubbish feel free to use him or her</p>

	<p>Tell it All I am freaking out please, I need your advice. I just found out that the lady I am planning marriage with was in a 2years relationship with my dad. But we love each other.</p> <p>Anonymous: I met this lady on one of the social media platforms which we fell in love, the problem is I am a married man, I told her about me being married thinking it will push her away, but she is now loving me more and I am also falling in love with her what do I do to avoid her.</p>	<p>a divorce. Cheer up and thank God for his deliverance.</p> <p>BAJ “that’s painful but let Karma deal with him. God is in control.</p> <p>‘ MAY: ‘Hmmmmm I think you cannot marry her since she has been in a 2years relation with your dad, it will be a curse when you do that, please try and let her go her way than carrying a curse you are not the cause.</p> <p>JK-K:” End it fast that girl is for the singles market, not married men. AKA;” Breda, you know what to do paaa stop asking us.</p> <p>ASA; wives, try and do anything to please your husband, after one child from the women, some people don’t even try to please their husbands by wearing that sexy panties</p>	<p>as a thanksgiving offering to the god.</p> <p>WBD “my dear send him this message asked whether he likes madness or erectile dysfunction?</p> <p>BP:’ Massa’’ kill her, nonsense girl you want to chop father and son together.</p> <p>NN;’’ She is a home breaker foolish girl; they won’t work but following people’s husband karma awaits them all.</p> <p>SN: simply buy a coffin and do your burial plans to insure your wife and children.</p> <p>AR; post her picture here she will stop loving you.</p> <p>Y.GH; Mad man, you are</p>
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		<p>night wears and that nice perfume they wear before they sleep, they just wrap their cloth on their waist, why won't they cheat....</p>	<p>one reason why some women hate men, eye red men like you.</p>
Information	<p>(Tell it, Mum) “We have launched a scholarship program for female tertiary students studying bachelor’s degree, kindly let such people chat me up to get a form filled, they will deliver the hard copies of the forms to W3 initiative office in Kumasi, it will be easier if you live in Kumasi, however, we encourage every student with admission or currently in school but facing financial challenges to apply”</p> <p>Office Manager wanted urgently, qualification should be first degree, salary—5000gh</p>	<p>Safia: ‘ ‘ God bless you for your kind gesture, at least those who want to further their education but there is no hope are saved.</p> <p>Abena “Great opportunity but please give us a clear direction to the said office.</p> <p>Ama M. ‘ ‘the charcoal seller son will also wear a white uniform.</p> <p>KKD’ ’ thanks for the info I will dm you as soon as possible</p> <p>AF:’ ’5000gh a month for a degree holder?</p> <p>ONAA:’ ’MA Guidance and counseling</p> <p>AFIA’ ’ONAA pm me now! I need a social worker for my school</p>	<p>AD: ‘ ‘scammers, 5000gh for a degree holder in Ghana here this one I doubt.</p> <p>AMA:’ ’What is the person going to manage...tweeea scammers.</p> <p>SN:’ ’ A lot of people do not share their stories because of how others</p>

	<p>What's your qualification, someone may have a job offer for you.</p> <p>If suicide ever crosses your mind, just know that I would rather listen to your story than attend your funeral. Let's talk by sending your issues on manokekame@gmail.com is available 24/7.</p> <p>MNA: Ladies kindly desist from so-called online shopping ..the scammers are pretty much innovative lately.”</p>	<p>AO:”I remember about a month ago when all I wanted was to kill my son then kill myself after. Hmm... this suicidal thought is serious oo, everything and anything gives a death idea. I know I am not out of it but sometimes sharing it rather gets more insult instead of comfort, people will hide behind the post and make you feel more useless than ever felt.”(32 sad, and cared emoji under this comment) and 27 replies some were encouraging her to speak out and get realized and others too said yes people may bash you, but there will be a positive comment that will help you.</p> <p>SAO: ”yes you are right I have stop online shopping when I was dupe by someone. Some apps koraa de3 buying</p>	<p>would judge and laugh at them</p> <p>It was on this same page a married man brought an issue concerning her wife-beating her and using abusive words on him, but most people didn't show concern but rather laugh at him.”</p> <p>Reply from RM to SN; That's why you said most, meaning all the comments were not negative, he might get help from the positive comments it better to share rather than to kill yourself.”</p> <p>MAD; ‘please use the word some and don't come and destroy our business, there are bad nuts but not all of us, be vigilant yourself.”</p> <p>TK: “Who is this?” (With a frowned emoji)</p> <p>PPL; Pick aboboya and fly with it, you guys can worry us on this platform.</p> <p>CCR: Fly to that place.</p>
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	<p>IDD’ ‘I need help please I am going to Wenchi where can I get a straight car in Accra?</p> <p>AC: I want to become a nurse, but I had D7 in science will I be admitted to the nursing training school, and those who have links should help me out)</p>	<p>dresses you will receive rags’’. BKN: ‘‘Please advise Delivery, verification before payment does not desist, doing business without advertising on not on social media is like working in the dark. AMA; go to circle VIP bus station. ACA: go to circle neoplan station and asked for it. DEDE Inbox me and let’s see what we can do. AMA: I think you should resist and write the science since it is nursing you want.</p>	<p>Afi: madam goes and rewrites the science before you use the protocol to become a nurse and start killing innocent souls. Esi: you guys like the short-cut dodo.</p>
<p>Orientation</p>	<p>AA; yummies let all educate our children on how to get used to the wearing of facemasks since students will be going to school this Tuesday. Let’s note this;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put two or more facemasks in your ward’s bag, a bottle of sanitizer, and tissues. 	<p>MINS; thanks so much for this, I was scared to allow my kids to go to school but with this education, I will try and let them go back to school. AA; I have even bought a</p>	<p>AS; I won’t allow my only child to go to school and contract this virus never. ESI; ‘‘The government want our children to die that’s why they are</p>

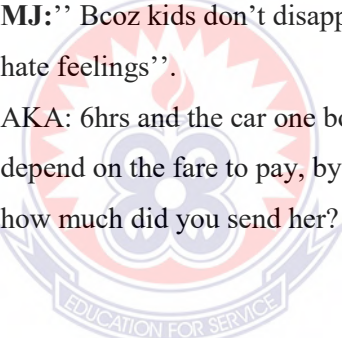
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate him or her on how to wash his or her hands regularly. • Educate them on the consequences of contracting the Covid virus which can lead to death and other health conditions. • Always get them a prize when they can do that. • Educate them not to exchange their face mark with friends • Let's us all adhere to the WHO protocols and we will be free from this virus. • This COVID19 has come to stay and don't put so much fear in our children and shielding them not to go to school but rather encourage them all • Stay safe 	<p>box of facemasks a gallon of hand sanitizer for them, I am tired of keeping them home for a whole year, all they do is eat, shout and prevent us to do the do</p> <p>They will start on Tuesday nothing will happen to them.</p> <p>AS; 'Noted thanks so much</p>	<p>asking them to come to school tweeeaa I will teach them at home</p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>NANA Tea: Exactly a week today a post was made about a member whose son is of age to go to school but due to financial issues, mum was teaching the child herself, as the mum sells water too, a follow up was made to confirm it, now the son has been placed in school, the mum to has been given some pomade to start a business, other members also sent them some dresses and money for a plate to be</p>	<p>Enam: God bless everyone who contributed to the warfare of these families.</p>	

	sent for them,		
Referral	<p>Gifty; referred A.O to us, and the team has been able to support her financially to take care of her 3 kids and her condition(amputee), who is also a widow but lost her job as a tax collector when she was amputated.</p> <p>Admi: ‘‘This person has been asked to see a required gynecologist for proper treatment.</p> <p>Anonymous; I always feel shy to have sex with my husband after our first child due to some odor from the vagina, the most serious part is that, I smell very bad and all my colleagues at the place have ignored me, I feel rejected and I want to end it all, I have tried all that it takes to get rid of this odour, but it persists, has anyone experienced such thing before please help your sister because I am dying slowly.</p>	<p>NIB; ‘God bless you, Abena.</p> <p>NHIS:’’please any momo number available, so that some of us can also send our contribution.</p> <p>BC; sorry dear I feel your pain see a proper gynecologist.</p> <p>US; please try orthodox medicines too it helps.</p> <p>DEDE; I feel your pain yummy, but don’t end it all ok, there is a solution to all problems.</p> <p>SAM; try and undergo proper personal hygiene,</p>	<p>Mama: These sons of Saw don’t disappoint at all, instead of your husband assisting you he is rather neglecting you too</p> <p>When you become fit, starve him in bed for a whole year</p> <p>AM; ask google ...</p>

APPENDIX C

OTHER COMMENTS WHICH WERE NOT UNDER THE GUIDANCE SERVICES WERE ALSO CAPTURED. (SOME BEING SARCASTIC POSTS OTHERS TOO WERE QUESTIONS)

Posts	Agreed on comment	Don't agree with the comment
<p>CNB: “How do you tell your partner it’s over in King James version.</p>	<p>GWAJ: I like reading Psalms!</p> <p>Ye, the pooreth lady cried, and he heareth her not. For thy troubles with thine master is huge and abominable.</p> <p>Selah</p> <p>Lo, thy iniquities have transgresseth upon thy master’s face. Be it known unto thou, your master turneth away from his face from you. Selah</p> <p>Evil slayeth the wicked woman, this thou your cup of pain. Thy master despiseth thy face and thy trust in you shall be desolate.</p> <p>NANA: “Oh thy comments alone maketh me findeth thou strength to experiment it on my boo. And if ye is beateth, behold, let all my generation and the generation yet to cometh knoweth that I once joined a crazy group called Tell it All (TIA)</p> <p>FA: ‘Brethren for thou goeth our separate way, thou shall obeyth before complaints.</p>	
<p>(Tell it, Mums) OAS:” Why do women</p>	<p>MEW:’ Because children needed it most.</p>	<p>HD: “Hmmm, this issue err, I think</p>

<p>Transfer their love and attention to their children after marriage?</p> <p>KAF: How much is the fare from Accra to Kumasi and the number of days to spend before reaching your destination, Akua please if you know you won't come, please resend my transport money back to me in my momo before I curse you.</p>	<p>JM: "Bcoz kids are helpless the man isn't. it is called responsibilities".</p> <p>NWC: "cos when they leave us and go cheat our children are the ones to cheer up and they always with us".</p> <p>PD: "When you get pregnant and have your own baby, you will understand".</p> <p>JAD: "Because children love us unconditionally irrespective of how big or small our tommy become".</p> <p>MJ: "Bcoz kids don't disappoint or hate feelings".</p> <p>AKA: 6hrs and the car one bords depend on the fare to pay, by the way, how much did you send her?</p> 	<p>women should try our possible best to balance it because it easily pushes men from home, don't forget that the same children will one day grow up get married and leave, it will be left with the couples, so please let's try and balance it"</p> <p>CBOG; I can never divert my love to my children, the love between man and woman is different from the one I share with my children. I can comfortably say 'Opana' has a special place in my life where my children will never be. He is always going to be there but my children will leave some days as I have done to my parents.</p> <p>CEF; ego over you, sika no is gone"...</p>
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		<p>NA; go and sleep somewhere you haven't heard about these daughters of Eve errh</p> <p>CR: oooh that's your first time, right? In fact, thee ladies here if you know you are not interested in us don't deceive us to send you guys money for transport when we ask u to see us.....</p>
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