

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**ONLINE IDENTITY NEGOTIATION OF STUDENT LEADERS: A CASE
STUDY OF WESLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL**



MASTER OF ARTS

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UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**ONLINE IDENTITY NEGOTIATION OF STUDENT LEADERS: A CASE
STUDY OF WESLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

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**A thesis in the Department of Strategic Communication, School of
Communication and Media Studies submitted to the School of Graduate
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Barbara Amoni declare that this dissertation, with the exceptions of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledge, is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR Dr. Mavis Amo-Mensah

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

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On this path, I have had family, supporters and teammates that guided me to the finish. I am honoured to acknowledge them here and to be thankful to them for their impact and contribution on my life, my growth and research.

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DEDICATION

To my mother and counselor, Ms. Helena Nator, whose encouragement and support keeps me going.

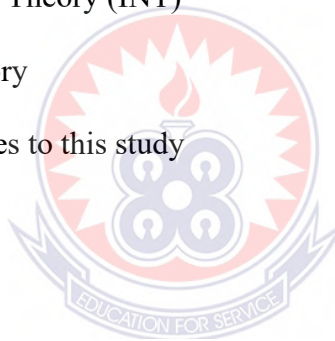


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ABSTRACT

This thesis explored the identity negotiation of student leaders in Wesley Grammar School. The qualitative case study focuses on capturing the perspectives of the participants on the use of social media and how they negotiate their identity on Facebook and in real life. Data was collected using interviews and observation. The study purposively sampled twenty participants consisting of thirteen girls' prefects and seven boys' prefects. The participants were selected and interviewed individually to determine their individual and familial experiences of their leadership roles and their social presence. Interpretive thematic analysis was used to analyze the comments and posts of the participants. The research identified the influence of social media use in shaping their identity, their attitudes and perception with themes of self-concealment, online negotiation and subthemes of variation of names and fake identity. The analyses explored the processes through which identities are negotiated, claimed and performed and also the intersection of conventional identity categories. The study employed Social Identity Construction and Identity Negotiation Theory to conclude that many of these behaviors of participants are encouraged or reinforced by the very structural characteristics of the virtual space, and sometimes the manifestation of certain behaviors is necessary in order to participate with others in cyberspace and enjoy the full benefits of online applications. The study concluded that the social networking sites are increasingly becoming an essential part of our lives and these sites are involved in the different aspects of our social presence. In negotiating identity online and offline, social networking sites influence people to play some social roles on the media as well as what they do in real life.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Social media has been of immense importance to society. In less than a decade, social media has become a powerful vehicle of influence in our society (Dubose, 2011). While the world experience development, progress and speed, humans experience a bonding through social networking. Egea (2014) asserts that our digital lives are contributing to a new modality of social engineering that positions human beings and knowledge as management resources exploited to obtain exchangeable and marketable value. These have been made possible by technology and with the invention of smart phones, social media sites have become a norm in recent times. Some say social media have leveled the playing field of communication by empowering individuals and groups to communicate horizontally at higher velocity and greater momentum than a hierarchical (communication model) can keep up with (Friedman, 2013). This explains the assertion that the Internet and in particular social media applications such as Facebook, YouTube and many others, are obviously overtaking the world and could be regarded as a global consumer phenomenon (Camilia et al., 2013).

The most talked about and used sites are Whatsapp, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Youtube, and Twitter; though used by the masses, it is quite popular among celebrities, bloggers and generally people who love to write. At the time of this study, the most popular and largest SNS was Facebook. Created in 2004 for college students with an .edu email address (Calvert, Pempek & Yermolayeva 2009), the platform has since been made available to the entire world, and by October 2004 it had 1.35 billion

users (Dewey, 2014). Facebook, a SNS with user-generated content was described by Saeed, Sinnepan and Yang (2009) as a fully interactive medium because it incorporates several technologies, including blogging, instant messaging, and video. In recent times, Tiktok, Signal and Telegram are gradually becoming household names. These application developers have seen the need to create sites that keep people entertained and enthused to use them as they seek to enhance features, add up effects that appeared even to be impossible with previous applications. With the emerging and unending technological advancement the world encounters by the day, application developers have to stay updated with the trends such that their applications require updates that introduce new features that appeal to users.

Undeniably, while some turn to these sites as observers, to view pictures, watch videos read comments and react to posts as well as send friend or follower requests to be friends some have likewise seen the need to create pages purposely to serve the interest of people with similar views and a common perspective. Daily, people troop these pages as new members or just observers. It is interesting to note that individuals and administrators of group platforms set out to celebrate the number of followers they have, intermittently.

According to Tankovska (2021) Facebook is the biggest social network worldwide. He further adds that in the second quarter of 2020, Facebook had over 2.7 billion monthly users. During the last quarter of 2020, the company stated that 3.14 billion people were using at least one of the company's core products that include Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram or Messenger each month.

Carr & Hayes (2015) defined social media as an Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and self-represent, either in real time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception with others. Also, social media is an online interaction service that manages to build people and connect them with shared interest (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This asserts that the life led in reality may have some other similarities with the life on social media.

Social media sites allow instant messaging, enable one to check profiles and information of others without seeking their consent and allow the creation of personal profiles that can be easily edited. These sites in a way also encourage comparison. The comparison maybe upward, meaning individuals compare themselves to someone they view as superior, or downward, where individuals compare themselves to someone they view as inferior (Fiacco, 2020).

The use of these sites without self-discipline can be addictive such that there is always something to look up for and content that arouses interest. It is worth nothing that young adults spend more time with technology than any other daily activity (Vaterlaus et al., 2016). With the increased users of social media per observation, people are seen lacking observation skills as they are focused on their devices.

Yet in an age of heavily regulated schedules and few public places for gathering, digital spaces can provide adolescents with valued settings for social connections (Boyd 2014). Peers might closely monitor each other by engaging in social comparison. Social comparison is when individuals evaluate aspects of their lives in comparison to others around them (Weinstein, 2017). What is more? Social

networking sites have become central to the way young people communicate in their everyday lives (Rubin & McClelland 2015).

All these notwithstanding, this study sought to understand what drives the content of what student leaders post and what they even deem fit to post and share on their timelines on Facebook. The identity that student leaders create mainly on Facebook was also a subject of interest. While considering the influence of the user, it is crucial to know that social media has also impacted the academic society as well. Social media, not surprisingly has infiltrated the field of education. “We have been watching social media seep into every aspect of the academy: teaching, outreach, research, professional development, publishing, campus tours and student life” (Parry, 2011).

The student leaders at the Senior High School level are mainly teenagers considering the average age bracket the Ghanaian child starts schooling. College students move through emerging adult development through exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966 as stated by Ahlquist, 2015). Skills built, relationships established and maintained, and experimentation of self-exist during this time. College or high school as it is the case, is a ripe time for development.

The teenager is synonymous to Adolescent. Adolescence is typically a period of time defined by the development of personal identity and an increased in social connectedness. As this time is represented by a growing self, adolescent can be sensitive to social evaluation from others (King et al., 2017).

The contents of posts on social media particular on Facebook have a number of terminologies that explain what the users do and how they express their intents. Dowling (2011) states that constructing identity therefore literally involves life

experiences, relationships and connections, a solid mental and emotional stamp on a human. Constructing identity figuratively involves metaphorical or symbolic representation of thoughts or emotions in an expressive way creating a conceptual visual representation.

In recent years, social media has experienced widespread popularity within our society and digital market (Ramblings, 2014). Starting from small personal web pages to full blown mass communication networks where the user can give or find almost any information about themselves or others within minutes. These sites have gone from only being incredibly user friendly and spreading worldwide. While the popularity of social networking sites continues to grow so does the user's time on the page even to the point of having the sites available on their mobile phones to check while away from the computer (Pew Research Internet Project 2013). As the amount of the time users spend on social media networking sites continues to grow, their interactions with others offline tends to decrease meaning that most of their socialization occurs within the glow of a computer or phone screen.

This research examined the influence of social media on identity negotiation and the understanding of self through the interaction and usage of social media specifically Facebook.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A number of studies have been conducted on identity construction and negotiation. Over the years, scholars have focused on leadership, identity roles and what makes individuals stand out. Identity construction studies as expounded by Marwick (2015) explain the presentation of self. One potential consequence of the individual

increased online interaction time is the formation of identity and understanding of self is affected to a greater degree through the popularity or feedback on certain aspects of the user's life that they are willing to share.

Boyd (2014) affirms this assertion as he states that the dynamics of Facebook have forced teens to alter their conception of privacy to account for the networked nature of social media. She added that drawing on their practices and experiences there is the need to explain how privacy is achieved in networked publics. Her research concludes that adolescents miss out on the ability to engage with people face to face when they are in public. According to Baker (2016) 67% of the people between the ages of eighteen and twenty nine actively use social media. In addition, twenty two percent of all people use it for a specific reason. According to WERSM (2016), individuals use social media to be aware of what their friends are doing, stay up to date with news, evaluate leisure, find entertaining and funny content, share ideas, share videos and information, and meet new people. Boyd (2008) further states that social media provides the teens with the space to develop identity and statuses to make sense of cultural clues and negotiate public life.

The study of identity forms a critical cornerstone within sociological thought. For instance, Rugg (2018) did a discourse analysis on Identity Negotiation in Military Service Members with a female participant. The study's approach was qualitative. Two concepts were employed to guide the research design and to frame the analysis of identity. These were indexical and the positionality principles. The principles were used by the researcher to examine how the participant's identities emerge through her speech, how she positions herself through the interview, and how she indexes herself. It also examined how the participant positions civilians in her discourse. The study

aimed at demonstrating the complexity of identities within a certain period. The study concluded that members of the military negotiate multiple identities, ranging from those belonging to macro-categories, local categories to temporary identities, all depending on time and situation.

Again, Kotoku (2018) did a qualitative study of identity negotiation of newly recruited soldiers in the Ghana Armed Forces. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample four participants for an in-depth interview. The study found out that recruits' identity negotiation is influenced by the form of interaction that takes place between them and the instructors as well as their colleagues in training. Exchange interaction and Cooperation interaction enhance this influence. In addition, the study noted that the recruits negotiated their identity both on an individual and institutional level. The study concluded that in order to produce highly disciplined and purposeful soldiers, there is the need to well structure training policies and programmes. His study agreed with Kummel (2018) on the 'we-identity' where the soldiers were involved in the use of slangs and jargons as a mode of communication within that group.

Owusu-Ansah (2018) in his work Micro celebrities and their self-presentation on social media asserted that individuals can put up various performances. This qualitative study employed cyber ethnography and interviews to collect data for analysis of three micro-celebrities. The study revealed that these performances can be seen through posts they share on their social media timeline. He further states that the presentational self-concept aids in situating the micro-celebrities offline performance and online performance as with backstage or front stage performance. The study

concluded that micro celebrities presented themselves in a manner due to their innate traits and the quest to maintain and increase followers on Facebook.

Odum Sackey (2015) employed a qualitative textual analysis, interview and cyber ethnography to discuss identity construction of selected Ghanaian celebrities on Facebook. The study probe into how celebrities in Ghana construct for themselves their identities. He concluded that in order for celebrities to meet the positive expectations of their followers, they devise schemes to construct favourable identities of themselves on Facebook.

Tosun (2012) states that the main uses for Facebook include maintaining long distance relationships, game playing/ entertainment, photo related activities, organizing social events, passive observations, establishing new friendships and initiating/ terminating romantic relationships. Tosun (2012) argues that expressing one's self on the internet is always to form close relationships with people that are met through social networking sites and that people use Facebook as a social substitutes to create offline relationships and strengthen existing relationships. It was further concluded that Facebook is a buffer for those with issues articulating their thoughts and feelings in person and is used as a substitute for establishing relationships.

Studies have focused mainly on the effects of social media on humans, teenagers alike, the psychological effects, interpersonal relationships and academics. The findings of Larsen's (2007) qualitative research on understanding networked teens stated that victims to online sex offenders than ever before because of the incessant use of social media network sites are teens. Other studies conducted looked at the advantages of social media sites. Boyd (2008) and Ahn (2011) mention that social

networking sites focuses on how teens are staying connected with their friends and how they are making friends through sharing of pictures and ideas.

Aside the benefits and demerits that result from the use of social media as they have been widely studied the content of posts, status updates, blogs and personality profiles of student leaders is a gap that needs to be filled. Several research works focused on identity negotiation and construction, studies on identity negotiation into student leadership in the Ghanaian context.

Many works refocus attention from the individual to the collective; others prioritize discourse over the systematic scrutiny of behavior; some researchers approach identity as a source of mobilization rather than a product of it; and the analysis of virtual identities now competes with research on identities established in the present world.

From the above study, it is apparent that little attention has been given to the identity negotiation of student leaders in particular on social media and in real life. Unlike the other studies on identity negotiation which focused mainly on social media, the researcher considers identity negotiation online and offline space. Lee (2009) states that in judging others based on their profiles, social networking sites users appear to judge the credibility of profile information, quite consistently teens are judged by the company they keep. Boyd (2008) further states social media provides the teens with the space to develop identity and status to make sense of cultural clues and negotiate public life.

This qualitative research sought to analyze the posts of Senior High School student leaders, how they construct their identity on social media through their posts. Again, the research sought to explore the motivation of the student leaders to use Facebook.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

1. To study how the identity of the student leaders are negotiated on Facebook
2. To explore what motivates the use of Facebook by student leaders in negotiating their identity.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do student leaders negotiate their identity on and off social media?
2. What motivates student leaders to use Facebook in their daily lives?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research will help bridge the gap of insufficient information of content provided on social media and its relation with behavior patterns as it will be useful to policy makers. The findings are relevant on policy development as it provides guidelines for the safe use of social media.

The findings of this research will add up to the body of knowledge that Guidance and Counseling units can use this piece to communicate effectively with the student leaders especially during their leadership orientation.

It is further envisaged that the findings of this research will set the stage for other scholarly researchers who will be interested in this field of knowledge and initiate appropriate mitigation.

1.5 Delimitation

The study sought to find out the content of the posts of student leaders of Wesley Grammar School on social media and what informed their posts specifically on Facebook. Their interpersonal relation at face value and interaction using the internet was paramount in this study. The users' interaction in the real world is subject in this study.

However, the study did not cover the student leaders' activities on other social networking sites and the effects on their behavioral patterns.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter served as a general introduction for the entire work. A background of relevant issues was brought to light and elaborated. Various sub headings such as the objectives, research questions, statement of the problem, limitations and delimitations summarized concisely issues that are prevalent in the main work.

Whereas the objectives revealed the goal that is sought to be achieved, the statement of the problem revealed why it is necessary to focus attention on the area of the student leader in a senior high school setting taking into consideration of demographics such as age, geographical location and segmentation within society. Few studies have been done in the area.

In furtherance, the chapter explains the term social media, mentions a number of social media sites, states the relevance of social media and its implication on users as well as the study of the adolescent. The introduction revealed that by creating an online identity which is used to create these friendships with others, the user is participating in the selective process of identity formation. When these relationships are then taken into an offline scenario, the user assumes the role of their online identity and performs the identity that their counterparts have come to know, accept and understand.

The significance of entire study is concisely stated as well even as it encourages further studies in the field.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section considered relevant literature related to the topic. Creswell (2003) suggests that literature review should meet three criteria: to present results of similar studies, to relate the present study to the ongoing dialogue in the literature, and to provide a framework for comparing the results of a study with other studies.

Facebook as a social media application was treated, how it operates, its similarities with other application and other unique features that endear consumers particularly the student leader. This helped for a better understanding of the topic. I further discussed identity and its negotiation, looking specifically at general meanings, types and illustrations.

In this study, the themes addressed through analysis and research helped in understanding the content of the student leaders posts on Facebook, how they constructed their identity and the implication of the use of social media on their and behavior patterns in Wesley Grammar School. Therefore, this study was based on a theoretical approach that considered the content of posts on social media mainly Facebook.

The Internet and in particular social media applications such as Facebook, YouTube and many others, are obviously “overtaking the world” and could be regarded as “a global consumer phenomenon” (Camilia et al., 2013). According to Grossman (2010) if Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest country after China and India and twice as big as the United States of America. According to Facebook statistics,

“more than thirty billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums) are shared each month” and “People on Facebook install twenty million applications everyday” (PARA, 2011).

It is not surprising that social media usage is one of the most common activities among children, adolescents, and emerging adults nowadays. It offers today’s youth, a portal for entertainment and communication and it is becoming one of the main platforms for accessing information and news.

This aggressive adoption of social media among the younger generation, according to Vorderer (2016) could be attributed to their up to date knowledge of and comfort with the latest technology and the convenient accessibility to these social networking tools. For instance, they can access social media from their cell phones any time any place. This encourages them to use social media not only for receiving and retrieving information, but also for being online and connecting with others, and from being consumers and participants to “prosumers” which means that they consume and produce media on the social media platform (as cited in Obar & Wildman, 2015).

2.1 The Concept of Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined Social media as “Internet based applications that allow the creation and exchange of content which is user generated.” They stated that social media was first known in 1979 when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created the Usenet, a worldwide discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages; and also when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded “Open Diary” in 1998. Open diary was an early social networking site in which members of a certain community share their daily diary online. The word “blog” was

first used at the same time. Before the second stage of development of the internet, “Web 2.0 in the late 1990’s, users browsed only for the aim of getting information through reading from various resources and watching videos (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), users at this time were considered consumers not participants. It was mentioned in Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) study (as cited in Obar & Wildan, 2015) afterwards Web 2.0, representing the second stage of Internet development namely “User Generated Content (UGC)”, Internet users were transformed from being consumers to “prosumers” which mean they consume and produce media as cited in Obar & Wildam (2015).

These new affordances are what made the applications and dynamic interaction of social networking possible. Some of the common features that qualify a tool to be considered a social networking site are: enabling users to communicate with each other in an easy way and allowing users to exchange information, pictures and messages (Dijck, 2011). There are many forms of social media which allows users to interact with media users of their choice.

There are various forms of social media adapted from Grahl (2012) as cited in Alwagait (2015). The first form is the social networking sites. This considers services in which users set up a profile in order to establish a connection with friends or other users, who have similar background or interests. The profile contains a users’ personal information. SNS provide various ways for users to interact with one another, for example Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp.

The bookmarking site is the second category. These sites provide services which allow users to save, search and organize links to various internet resources and websites. Some services will allow the tagging of links in order for them to be shared

easily as well as being searched for. Examples of bookmarking sites are Diigo and Delicious.

The micro blogging sites provide services which combine SNS and blogging but the messages exchanged are limited in terms of size. Users have to subscribe to the services. An example of micro blogging site is Twitter.

Furthermore, the media sharing sites provide services which allow users to upload and share media such as videos and photos as well as allowing users to comment and tag media. Examples of media sharing services include YouTube and Flickr.

The social news sites also provide services that allow other users to vote on news articles and links to external articles, which are posted by users. The news articles that get the most votes are displayed more prominently on the site. Examples of social news sites include Digg and Reddit

The Micro blogging sites provide blogs which are online diaries of thoughts, which give other users the opportunity to post comments on the blog postings. Forums allow registered users to have conversations with other users by post messages. Examples of blogging sites are Word press, Blog.app and Tumblr.

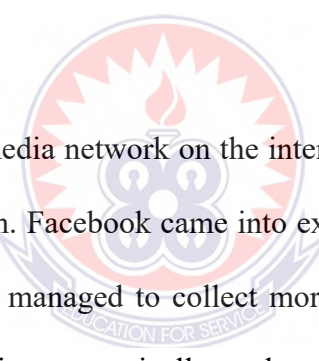
While social media networks collect a lot of personal data about the users, they also afford the privacy of the users. For example, the visibility of the online profiles depends on the social media network website privacy terms and conditions. Boyd and Ellison (2007) mentioned that LinkedIn controls what the user can display and see according to the user's subscription and paid fees. On the contrary, Facebook users' profiles are available to all other users in the same network, unless a profile owner decides to change the privacy options. Moreover, private messaging, comments and

friends features differ from one social media network website to another depending on the feature and user base (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

With all the features social media are providing, they have facilitated the lives of millions of people. Although they are easily accessible and despite the tremendous opportunities they offer, social media can have their drawbacks. Issues of privacy, detachment from reality and being the target of advertisers are some of the main concerns. However, they are creating a new communication landscape that is yet to be discovered and used.

2.1.2 Popular Social Media Sites

Facebook

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sunburst or flame-like symbol in white and red, set against a blue background. Below the central symbol, the text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' is written in a circular path. The entire logo is semi-transparent and overlaid on the text.

This is the largest social media network on the internet, both in terms of social media users and name recognition. Facebook came into existence on February 4th, 2004 and it has within twelve years managed to collect more than one point five nine billion monthly active users. This automatically makes it one of the best mediums for connecting people from all walks of life. It is predictable that more than one million small and medium size businesses use the platform to advertise their business. Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. “People use Facebook to keep up with their friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, post links and videos and learn more about the people they meet” (Facebook, 2014).

Snapchat

This is an image informing application training item that was made by Reggie Brown, Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy when they were undergraduate students at Stanford University. The application was authoritatively discharged in September 2011 and inside a limited ability to focus time they have become hugely enrolling a normal of one hundred million everyday dynamic clients as of May 2015. More than eighteen percent of every social media client utilizes Snapchat.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp messenger is a cross platform instant massaging client for smartphones, computers and tablets. This application thrives solely on internet connection to send images, texts, document, audio and video messages to users that have the app installed on their phones. It was launched in January, 2010 and purchased by Facebook on February 19, 2014. Today, Whatsapp has over one billion active users.

Instagram

Instagram is a visual online networking stage. The site has more than four million dynamic clients and is possessed by Facebook. A significant number of its clients utilize it to post data about travel, form, sustenance, workmanship and comparable subjects. The stage is likewise recognized by its remarkable channels together with video and paragraph altering highlights. Right about ninth five percent of Instagram clients additionally utilize Facebook.

There are countless reasons why people troop on to social media sites and the benefits are innumerable as well the many effects that research has stated it comes with.

Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking and micro blogging service that enables users to send and read “tweets” which are text messages limited to 140 characters.

Registered users can read and post tweets, but unregistered users can only read them.

Users access Twitter through the website interface, text messages sent directly to/from a cell phone or mobile device app (Twitter, 2014).

2.2. Online Identity

On the Internet, people are able to communicate with each other without being physically in the same space and even completely anonym. McKenna (2007) suggests that in such conditions, people are able to share aspects of their inner or true self that might be more difficult to express in the physical world. One can therefore create a different self-presentation online and similarly be perceived differently by online acquaintances. This is due both to differences in the way we present ourselves, but also differences in the communication modalities, that is features of and use of the communications medium. Schau & Gilly (2003) seem to share this notion, when stating that the web space offers limitless digital symbols and may allow researchers to see themselves as consumers as they wish they had. Every time we choose a nickname for an online service, we are doing an act of self-presentation. In visual environments, we have to create a visual icon to present ourselves and this can be seen as a kind of self-portrait. The same is true for textual forms of online sites like weblogs and online diaries, where entries form a cumulative self-presentation and self-reflection of the writer. In fact, the online tools give us the possibility to choose how we represent ourselves instead of acceding to the mass mediated generalizations

(Walker, 2005). We find our place in our culture and in our social worlds through consumption of stories and images. These representations of ourselves are connected to cultural templates that we can adopt, adapt to or reject. When we create representations of ourselves in social media, we also have to respond to these cultural stereotypes in some way.

Robards and Bennett (2011) present a notion that social media sites like Facebook do not so much reshape social relationships or systems of identity and belonging, but they expose and structure existing social practices thus making such everyday dimensions of the human life more visible.

Boyd (2007) states that a social networking profile can be seen as a form of digital body, where individuals write themselves into being. We tend to present the side of ourselves that we expect to be positively received by our peers. Because the links to others are public our associations on social network sites also provide others with information of us, or how we would like to be seen. Identity can be seen as a social process that is fluid and contingent on the situation and in social networking sites an individual's perceived audience provides such a situation or context (Boyd, 2007). In other words, our actions on social network sites are shaped by who we think will see them.

Similarly (Donath and Boyd, 2004) claim that the networks of connections are displayed as integral parts of an individual's self-presentation and that an extended network may validate identity information that is presented in a person's profile. Social Network Sites make it necessary for individuals to make sense of what they constitute as self-identity and it can be expected that this process will strengthen the need for young people to develop a coherent sense of self to be able to take part in

digital culture (Robards and Bennett, 2011). There is reason to assume that this applies for all age groups participating in digital culture or the digital marketplace.

Rettberg (2009) has studied representations and self-portraits in social media and online in general and she found that the most common ways of organizing representations or information of us online are temporal, social, semantic and geographical. The first refers to a timeline of events, the second is used for instance by Facebook mapping our networks and friends. The third is common in blogs where the most often mentioned words are printed the biggest in a semantic map of issues dealt with in the blog and geographical that shows where we have been. Another characteristic of social media is that the structure of presentation is predetermined and you have to fill in information according to certain structures and requirements. These structures could be compared to normative cultural templates. As such, this sort of mass-customization of information helps us see our lives from the outside and confirm our place in the cultural templates of the world. (Walker Rettberg, 2009)

Social media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic texts, graphics, moving images and sound into a structured computerized environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes. The digital environment can include the internet, telecoms and interactive digital television. The web is becoming part of general business for communication, sales and services. It is changing business practices. Its technical limitations affect the amount of material and speed of access to material. The web primarily depends on phone line connections, so the better these are across a territory, the more reliable the service.

The inherent limitations of passing large amounts of digital information down phone lines have affected the type and quality of media that can be used effectively, as well

as the nature of the interaction allowed by the web. There are ways to increase the performance by improving the technical limitations which depends on having a readily available infrastructure that can deliver more data faster and reliably, called Broadband.

Tapscott (1998) talks of growing up in a digital environment referring to the youth as the —Net Generation. Children are socializing in a hybrid virtual space, learning in innovative ways, creating a new language and practicing multicultural values (Tapscott, 1998). The main characteristics of the Net Generation culture are: independence, emotional and intellectual openness, inclusion, free expression and strong views, innovative, preoccupation with maturity, pleasure by the investigation, immediacy, and sensitivity to corporate interest, authentication, and trust. (Tapscott, 1998).

Survey results suggest that gaps between parents and children happens in different ways: Internet expertise, awareness of risk, acknowledgement of domestic regulations in place, and in what parents believe their children are doing versus what they are actually doing (Livingstone and Bober, 2005).

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

Young people are active agents who can manipulate, adapt, create, and disseminate ideas and products through communication technologies (Berson and Berson, 2005). It is evident that there exists a relation between social media and their impact on the youth's change in behavior.

Consequently, messages can reach audiences and target groups in real time and they can generate changes and tendencies. Today, young generations grow up having great contact with different kinds of social media. They are easily acquiring —digital literacy and live in a digital world to which adults are only naturalized citizens.

From the development perspective, it can be argued in relation to the use of the internet by youth that —the multiple sensory inputs are demanding on cognitive resources and can overwhelm children's capacity to engage in thoughtful decision making (Berson & Berson, 2005). At an early age, children are not aware of the risks, and they require adult supervision. During adolescence, a child's ability to make life choices is still under development (Berson and Berson, 2005). In fact, adolescents have especially been often considered as vulnerable to risky behaviors like the consumption of drugs or alcohol.

However, some of the online behaviors performance by children as well as adolescents classified as risky behaviors should be better classified as online challenging behaviors, since these online behaviors are commonly practice by the youth today and in the most cases these behaviors are not associated with negative consequences. Many of these behaviors are encouraged or reinforced by the very structural characteristics of the virtual space, and sometimes the manifestation of certain behaviors is necessary in order to participate with others in cyberspace and

enjoy the full benefits of online applications (i.e. publish photos in social networks, chat, interact or build associations or groups with strangers in video games).

Therefore, social media has an impact on the youth in various ways. For instance, with regard to exposure to problematic material, the Internet has changed the way the consumption of pornography takes place. People have greater possibility to access pornography through their own initiative or accidentally. Research has revealed that the 57 percent of 9 to 19 years old, have come into contact with online pornography. Their encounters with pornography happened in different ways. The most common was in pop-up advert, open porn site accidentally when looking for something else or in junk mail. Also 22 percent of 9-19 year old, daily and weekly users have accidentally ended up on a site with violent or gruesome pictures and 9 percent on a site that is hostile or hateful to a group of people (Livingstone and Bober, 2005). Additionally, a survey of risk, impact and prevention found that using the internet intensively, taking risk online, going to chat rooms, and using the computer in other people's homes are the most predictive behaviors associated with exposure to sexual material on the internet.

In addition, exposition to advertising and consumption of virtual items is also on the rise. Thus, the youth are constantly exposed to different types of marketing, not only by visiting web pages, but also through the practice of their favorite hobbies.

It is evident that there exists a relation between social media and their impact on the youth's change in behaviour. Consequently, messages can reach audiences and target groups in real time and they can generate changes and tendencies. Today, young generations grow up having great contact with different kinds of social media. They

are easily acquiring —digital literacy and live in a digital world to which adults are only naturalized citizens.

2.3. Construction of Identity

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2011) defines identity in the following terms. First and foremost as the state of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual are recognizable as a member of a group. Also, it is the distinct personality of an individual regarded as persisting entity, individuality. The linguistic interpretations of identity are succinct and easily understood. These traits are readily apparent on the surface of all individuals we interact with in our daily lives, but research indicates the construction of identity is much more complicated and convoluted than the simply definition in Webster Dictionary. Vygotsky (1978) viewed the self as a complex emergent phenomenon continually produced in and by individuals and their interchanges with others and with the culturally transformed material world. His writings reflect ideas about socio genetic formation of self and in the ways in which social interaction mediated by symbolic forms, provided crucial resources and ever present constraints self-making.

Eric Erickson (1979) notion of constructing identity not only reflects a culminating summary of a past life but also an ongoing construction created as the basis for future meaningful adult life.

He proclaims identity function is future oriented. It is developed through life stages. Successful orientation produces specific personality traits which are changing and building up on experiences. The development and consolidation of identity or a sense

of sameness and continuity are two important developmental issues that are emphasized in adolescents.

Identity is not given to an individual by society; however, it can be shaped by one's society. In a society saturated in social networking sites and electronic devices, this poses an obstacle for the 'identity-thirsty' adolescent.

Although a person's identity is established in ways that differ from culture to culture, the accomplishment of this developmental task has a common element in all cultures. (Erikson, 1959) states that in order to acquire a strong and healthy ego identity the adolescent must receive consistent and meaningful recognition of his/her achievements and accomplishments. Today's social-media-saturated-culture provides ample fuel for teens to get their desired acknowledgements needed to build identity. Erikson (1959) discusses that, the search for an identity involves the production of a meaningful self-concept in which past, present, and future are linked together.

Consequently, the task has become more difficult in a historical period, in which, the past has lost the anchorage of family and community tradition, the present is characterized by social change, and the future has become less predictable. According to Erikson (1959), in a period of rapid social change, the older generation is not able to provide adequate role models in today's social networking world due to their lack of knowledge in SNS.

Therefore, Erikson believes that the importance of the peer group cannot be overemphasized. Peers help adolescents find answers to the question "who am I?" as they depend on social feedback, how others feel, and how they react to the individual.

2.4 Social Media and Their Uses

Social media (also referred to as new media) is a broad term used to describe web sites where content is generated by users and amended or commented on by users. According to Junco and Chickering (2010), social media are a collection of Web sites, services and activities that engage users through collaboration, sharing, and democratization of roles and responsibilities. They encompass a major shift in focus from iteration of the web because they allow for increase participation, connection and interactivity.

Paul Kirschner and Aryn define Facebook and other social media network sites as an online directory that allows people to find their friends and family and colleagues through looking them up on social network sites (Kirscher & Karpinsk, 2010). Curtis states that teens all over the world are starting to lose interest in the use of Facebook and are using Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram (Curtis 2013).

Victoria Rideout states that among the younger generation, the time they spend on social media, what she calls “entertainment media” is “more than twice the average amount of time spent in school each year.” (Rideout 2012) She also adds that an American child spends an average seven and half hours a day just for having fun on the media, not only that, but they multi- task between all the different social media they use. For example, they can be listening to a tweet and also post on Facebook. Rideout says that since Social media is seven days a week unlike school or having a full time job, over the years the amount of time one could spend over the internet has exploded (Rideout, 2012).

Aberlardo Pardo believes that technology offers a platform for innovation and allows it users to express their opinions about how they feel towards the information being

published. He adds that social media is also a platform that allows students to interact with one another with teachers and communities that share their same education. Pardo also states that these types of interaction are essential parts of how humans communicate (Pardo, 2013).

Kirschner & Karpinski discussed Wimveems new term “Homo Zappiens” which refers to the learners of the new generation and the new way they use to learn. This new way is known as “Meta-cognitive skills” meaning they learn on their own with the need for instruction. This is known as discover based learning. They also add that the younger generations share an unclear bond with technology since their birth.

Research in social behavior indicates that the Internet is used to maintain existing relationships, form romantic connections, and create new online friendships (Wang et al, 2010). On most social networking sites, users are not looking to meet new people or to network, but rather to sustain contact with their existing group of friends and acquaintances (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). In so doing, presenting a profile and displaying connections with others publicly forms the basis for interaction on social networking sites (Donath and Boyd, 2004).

Finally, “social media services can be divided into six categories: content creation and publishing, content sharing, social network sites, collaborative productions, virtual worlds and add-ons” (Silius, Kailanto & Tervalkari 2010).

2.5 Impact of Social Media on Education

Social networking technologies also allow one to share thoughts with another. It helps a man towards one side of the world to interface and trade thoughts with a man at the

other side. With the use of social media, students can communicate and share information quickly with each other through social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp.

Positive results which can be gained from education include socialization. An important part of growing up is to socialize and make friends because it allows the children to exchange new things. This will variably makes them confident in life.

Social media not only helps to acquire knowledge but also establishes enduring relationships with real people, connecting with fellow dorm residents through Facebook, Twitter and various social sites can help a student overcome the kind of isolation that otherwise might lead her to leave school (Prafulla Patil and Vishrati Rauf 2016).

Again, it provides an easy and effective way in which students can share knowledge. Hence the flow of knowledge becomes smooth. They will have the capacity to know new things and where it happens. This causes them to refresh their own particular information base.

Also, the long range interpersonal communication advances our work in such a way, to the point that understudies will have the capacity to pick the gathering movement or individual. They will need to take after for everyday refreshes.

The social networking technologies are all about showcasing the trends that run around the world. Students can set up a plan of what might be expected out of them by reserving the changes that are being updated, shared, discussed or spoken about in the social networking sites.

Students frequently do not get the right stage to share their feelings. Through social networking technologies, they are given the option to sound their thoughts. If students were permitted to share what they think and feel, it becomes simple for them to decide what is good and what is bad.

Despite the many merits, there are also some negative efforts. Social media in a way reduces learning and research capabilities. Students are depending more on the information reachable on these social networking sites. This reduces their learning and research capabilities.

Furthermore, there is reduction in real human contact. The additional time these students spend on these online networking destinations, the less time they will go through associating with face to face with others. This decreases their relational abilities. They will not have the capacity to convey and mingle adequately face to face with others. The businesses are getting increasingly unsatisfied with the new graduates because of this reason. Compelling relational abilities are critical to achievement in reality.

Again, it reduces command over language usage and creative writing skills. Students generally utilize slang words or abbreviated type of words on long range of interpersonal communication locales. They begin depending on the pc language structure and spelling checking highlights. This decreases their charge over the dialect and their experimental writing abilities.

Junco (2011) examined the relationship between Facebook use, participation in Facebook activities, and students' performance and engagement. Results from the study show that students spend a great deal of psychological energy using Facebook,

frequency checking on Facebook, and engaging in a variety of Facebook activities (Junco 2011).

2.5.1 Social Media and Academics

The impact of social media on learning and teaching is increasingly considered and debated among higher education scholars, administrators, and stakeholders. Lynn et al (2015) considered social media as one of the game-changers in the realm of learning and instruction. Selwyn (2012) discussed the implications of social media for new types of learners, learning and higher education provision. McLoughlin & Lee (2010) stated that using social media networks in the educational process could help educators to apply the inquiry-based approach and encourage the collaboration between the instructor and the students, thereby encourage engagement. Also important is the potential of these technologies for encouraging independent self-directed learning as well as encouraging students' as active producers of knowledge.

Although, a very large community exists online, including on social media, that focuses on education, this might not be the case for university students (Tariq et al., 2012); even though the majority of students are active users on social media networks, yet seventy percent of them do not use social media for academic purposes (Jones, Blackey, Fitzgibbon, & Chew, 2010). Tariq et al. (2012) are some of the researchers that emphasize that the affordances of technologies might have severe negative consequences on “social networks addicts.” They, for example, fear that “social networks grab the total attention and concentration of the students and divert them towards non educational, unethical, and inappropriate actions such as useless chatting, time killing by random searching”.

Several studies suggest that the time spent on social media takes away from the time available for studying. Alwagait, Shahzad, & Alim (2015) investigated the role of social media on academic performance of 108 Saudi students. Survey data revealed that Twitter was the most popular social network followed by Facebook.

The average number of hours spent by students on social media was 25.3 hours. Sixty percent of the respondents acknowledged that excessive use of social media negatively impacted their performance, and indicated that 10 hours per week of use would ensure that their academic performance is not negatively impacted. Similarly, Krischner & Karpinski (2010) noted that some students do not have control on their social media while engaged in academic activities, and that they spend more time on these networks than they do studying or sleeping. They point out that empirical research suggests the negative impact of multitasking, or attempting to simultaneously process different sources of information, on performance. They underscore that this leads to increased study time and an increased number of mistakes on assignments.

Rambe (2012) employed an ethnographic approach to examine the impact of social media on meaningful learning and pedagogical strategies. To do that, they examined the Facebook postings of students and instructors enrolled in an Information Systems course within the South African context. The results of the study showed that 165 participants posted 154 wall posts, 121 discussion board posts, and 139 posts to the administrator's inbox over two semesters. Rambe concluded that Facebook constituted a collaborative "safe" "third space" that facilitated student expression, the development of learning communities, and encouraged knowledge construction. On the other hand, Rambe suggested that postings fell short of manifesting deeper levels of conceptual engagement and learning.

2.6 Identity in Social Media

The pragmatic concept called sociability emphasizes that our social identity is more likely to be formed through group memberships, rather than individual existence (Bumela, 2012). Identity performance refers to —social identities that are performed with a particular audience in mind, or, literally, in view. By identity performance, what it means is the purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviors relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity (Klein, Spears and Reicher, 2007). Identities online can also be expressed in relation to the offline world, in that —one’s identity emerges from whom one knows, one’s associations and connections (Turkle, 1995).

The self is disembodied online; and the —consciousness becomes separated from the body..., [but online] it becomes a body itself (Bukatman, 1993 quoted in Lister et al, 2003). On Online Social Networks —profiles can be seen as a form of digital body where individuals must write themselves into being... [to] express and represent salient aspects of their identity for others to see and interpret (Boyd, 2008). Consequently, people’s online activities can reflect their offline relations. Facebook users negotiate their relationships and identities through an array of activities using the features and application the site offers and these activities are engaged with in relation to their offline experiences (Chatora, 2010). The ways in which identity is constructed and experienced online is not radically different from how identity operates in the offline social world. Ginger argues that the —foundations of identity do not drastically change in the Facebook realm...social identity remains strongly in place, but instead may be mediated in new ways (Ginger, 2008). While the technology or interface determines what kinds of representations people can

construct, whatever the limitations of the interface, the interface is still able to mediate identity and reflect the offline identities. Identities are also constructed and framed with an audience in mind but when online, this audience is invisible (Ginger, 2008).

People are conscious of who is viewing their online constructions and thus, they actively construct the ideal self-formation in line with how they want to be perceived. Therefore, the online construction of the self is influenced by the individual's offline social identities or subjective positions (Chatora, 2010). Finally, Chau asserted that content sharing gives community members a sense of belonging and identification (2010).

2.7.0 Presentation of Self

As identified by Goffman, two themes are relevant in identifying the presentation of self in using SNSs. They are impressive management and social networking sites as an identity testing ground. Boyd and Ellison (2008) have stated that like other online contexts that offer individuals a possibility to create an online representation of self, social networking sites comprise an important research context for investigation of process of impression management, self-presentation and friendship performance.

2.7.1 Social Networking as a Testing Period

Davis (2012) argues that social networking sites provide means of self-expression for users but by having these outlets of expression creates an issue of balancing multiple selves and their respective audiences. The outlets of social networking sites allow users to make changes to their self and their identity online that they will not make

offline due to confidence (Davis 2012). Davis further states that some users might forget what they are trying to be leading them to become unauthentic and possibly damaging how the user sees themselves (Davis 2012).

Davis also suggests the spheres of obligation consisting of the self, interpersonal relation, online social norms and broad community level which limit the multiplicity of the user and work to intertwine the users online and offline identity (Davis 2012).

In her conclusion, she states that social media allows for multiple personas and outlets for personality issues create a testing ground that is “practice for real life”. Test being one person online see how people react than trying it in real life (Davis 2012).

Although the use of social networking is in the positive, Davis also discusses the issues of multiple personas and offline identity obligation and groups (Davis 2012). In furtherance, the idea of using social networking sites as a tool for identity aligns with the work being done. The selective posting on social networking sites allows users to test their various online self and based on the feedback given by audience of the user is then incorporated to create a new identity and thus understanding of who the user has become. By using social networking sites, the user has control over their identity.

The use of social networking sites creates a space in which the user feels freer to express themselves online and provides the users with the chance to work through certain issues they might be dealing with in their daily lives (Davis 2012).

Davis also suggests the idea of spheres of obligation consisting of the self, interpersonal relations, online social norms and broad community level values which all limit the multiplicity of the user. Livingstone (2008) focuses on a youth centered social networks that consist of self- constructed and peer related pages that are an

integral means of managing identity, lifestyle and social relationships while at the same time developing and gaining confidence in an ego identity that is autonomous and socially valued (Livingstone 2008). Livingstone suggests that social networking creates a space for teens to be visible to peers where they can construct and experiment with a reflexive project of themselves (Livingstone 2008). These pages can be seen and understood as a place marker rather than a self-portrait where peer positioning is more important than personal information that is provided in which the self is embedded into the peer group as known to and represented by others. (Livingstone 2008). This explains the assertion that the user in seeking validation from the online community engages and participates within. The user has this space in social networks to work on their online identity and create an identity that falls within certain peer categories that are seen as popular or beneficial to a larger status structure (Asur & Huberman 2010).

Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe (2007) look at the trend from offline to online relationships and the formation of communities based on the shared interests instead of shared geography (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe 2007). The authors noted that a majority of Facebook users rely on the site to maintain long distance relationships rather than as a substitute for offline interactions with people nearby as a way to maintain social capital (bonds, opportunities, friendships) (Ellison et al 2007). The main friend sources resulted in offline acquaintances, people who live nearby classmates and high school friends with whom connections are kept. There is also a positive relationship between Facebook use and the creation of social capital (jobs, networking) Ellison et al 2007). Communities are formed mainly through shared interest thus when the user finds the community that they are most aligned with then

they engage in socializing with others with that group. This participation involves aspects of socializing and self-representation and presentation that the user generates through the process of selective sharing. As a way to maintain membership within these online communities, the user works to formulate an identity that agrees with others within the group to create a stronger bond among them.

2.7.2 Impressive Management

Following the idea of the need to represent one's self during interactions, Enli and Thumin (2012) focus on the distinction between self-representation and presentation or formation of self with an emphasis on the idea that to fully understand social networking requires self-representation and socializing with others (Enli, Thumin 2012). Enli and Thumin argue that there are choices in what aspects of us to represent and users of social networking sites decide how to represent these aspects as a way to complement the work done through presentation and self-performance (Enli & Thumin 2012). Thumin and Enli also suggest that social networking sites creates a hybrid space that challenges the traditional contexts of online /offline socialization and public/private spheres. Within the discussion of public versus private there is an analysis of public communication and broadcasting on Facebook that changes the dynamics of who is producing and consuming content online (Enli and Thumin 2012).

Another aspect of self-representation comes from the users' creation of hierarchies and groups of who receives or sees the messages they post. Within this realm, there is analysis of popularity which deems more friends online as a badge of status among younger Facebook users in order to obtain this status, users must construct self-

representation in order to participate and employ a strategy of representation to gain status. (Enli & Thumin 2012).

There are several terms and theories put forth that are linked to the power dynamic within social networking. These include global, self and individual (Emil & Thumin 2012) which is the user conforming to the generic expectations of self-representation through images and statuses that represent themselves individually: dominant representation (Emil & Thumin 2012) which pertains to profile pictures and issues of gender in how we view individuals and control of representation (Emil & Thumin 2012) which states that creation of ourselves is invulnerable to the portrayal and interpretation of us by others. Social networking that requires a textual self-representation to describe us, select profile picture to use certain symbols to represent ourselves. Ultimately, we cannot escape self-representation because of our need to connect and socialize fitting the rapidly changing modes. From the work of Emil and Thumin, there is the idea that in order to be part of the online community, you must socialize and through socializing must create an online self-representation. The need for self-representation causes users to pick and choose the best information to convey to the respective audience which in turn can create a certain status for that user based on popularity. The attainment of online status created by the user is the incorporated into their offline identity to help create a new understanding of self-based on the feedback from others on the self-represented self on social networking sites.

4.7.3 Understanding Teams

Teams are formed through relationship interactions in which there is a maintained definition of a situation (Goffman, 1959). The concepts put forth in Goffman's work

meant for in person interactions are very useful in terms of understanding interactions online. The idea that people guide others and create certain images and a desired impression of self for others to attain knowledge about them is similar to selective posting online. A user has the ability to post their interests, hobbies, books they have read, movies they have watched, blurbs or pictures of activities they engage in as a way to guide their audience into creating understandings of them. This allows users to perform a role and present themselves in a way they find most desirable and acceptable to others. Similarly, the user is also part of an audience and reacting to the posts of others and being guided into creating understandings of others. This concept of both actor and audience connects with Goffman's discussion of teams or people who work together to stage a routine. In an online context of social networking sites, these teams can be understood as the people who the user interacts with regularly online. There is an aspect of dependency in which each member of the team upholds the performance of the others due to their understandings of the presentation of each member.

Goffman's discussion of the front stage and back stage applied to social networking sites creates an interesting situation and was a motivation of this study as it similar to the assertion of Tajfel (1978) who defined social identity as the part of a person's self-concept, which is derived from their knowledge of membership of a social group and the value and emotional significance that is attached to that membership. While the user is creating this performance of themselves in order to shape how others see them, there is also the backstage or offline time where the user is no longer performing their role and can be their true self. Based on a positive feedback online, the user take aspects of their popular posts and integrate them into this true self where they interact

with others who have an already informed idea about them based on their online presentation thus forming a new identity and understanding of self.

2.8 Teens And Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Snap Chat, Instagram, Kik, provide teens with a very unique way to carry out Erikson's theory of finding their identity. Erikson (1959) states: "Adolescents are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are and with the question of how to connect to earlier cultivated roles and skills with the ideal prototypes of the day." Social network sites provide just this for our adolescents today.

Finding identity is necessary for adolescents. If one fails in their search for identity, Erikson (1959) believes that the teen may experience self-doubt, role diffusion, and role confusion. These setbacks can stem into even greater risks, such as adolescents falling into depression and even indulging in self-destructive behaviors. Ahn (2011) mentions the failure of teens to develop identity and further concludes that failure to develop identity can lead to teens being morbidly pre-occupied with what others think of them. They may also withdraw and no longer care about themselves and others (Ahn, 2011). Ahn (2011) summarizes that this can lead to ego diffusion, personality confusion and in most severe cases lead to suicide attempts. Forming identity is a major developmental step all teens must achieve; failure to identify their identity can lead to many harmful effects. Now that SNS has taken over teenagers' lives, finding out how SNS can either aid or hinder teens' identity development is crucial for today's research (Ahn, 2011).

Media today has a huge influence on teenagers. Be it television, computers, video games, social networking sites – it hugely impacts all aspects of a teen’s life. Everything is not bad with the media. If used in right way, media can transform lives of the youth from good to better. A positive effect of social media on kid and teens help develop awareness. Most teens live a sheltered life. But with exposure to various media outlets, they can develop awareness about society and the world. With news channels, magazines, social networking sites blaring about world happenings, youth can understand that there is more to the world than just what is happening around them.

Again, the use of social media helps develop social skills. Many teens are socially awkward. Social Media also gives them the probability to develop their social circle and develop new friendships. Other benefits include social confidence, heightened literacy in the media, and more social support. Social media diversifies teen’s social skills, which in turn helps them navigate successfully through modern society.

On the other hand, the use of social media might create a distorted body image. With the use of Photoshop, the images are everywhere and lead to distorted body image among a number of teenagers. Anorexia and bulimia are a fall out of this body image crisis.

Risky sexual behavior is likely to be on the rise. Young people are simply finding their sexuality. It is exceptionally typical for them to be occupied with everything sexual. However, the measure of sex in media today can make an adolescent befuddled. Sex without duty – that is by all accounts the message being radiated at adolescents. The media today is powerful and omnipresent. Its tentacles cannot be escaped.

In conclusion of Erikson's theory and the present behaviors of adolescents today, the importance of self-identity motivates research to be completed on the obstacles and/or benefits of our media-saturated environment and the effects on teens' ability to form identity.

2.9 Impact of Social Media On Society

The use of social media facilitates a massive impact on our society. Some social media destinations have changed the way where individuals convey and mingle on the web. Person to person communication destinations render the opportunities for individuals to reconnect with their old companions, partners and mates. It additionally causes individuals to influence new companions, to share content, pictures, sounds, recordings among them. Web based social networking moreover changes the life style of society.

A positive effect of social media on society is connectivity. The first and foremost benefit of the social media is connectivity. People from anywhere can connect with anyone regardless of the location and religion. The prettiness of social media is that you can attach with anyone to learn and share your thoughts. This explains the assertion that there are benefits of developing past and current networks on Facebook (Mangao et al., 2012; Pempak et al., 2009; Sponcil & Gitimu 2013; Tosun, 2012)

Furthermore, social media has been of help since one can impart issues to the group to get help and energy. Regardless of whether it is helping in term of cash or in term of advices, help can be received from the group that one associates with. In terms of information and updates, the primary favorable position of the web-based social networking is that it provides refreshment from the most recent happenings around on

the planet. More often than not, television and print media nowadays are one-sided and does not pass on the genuine message. With the assistance of web-based social networking you can get the actualities and genuine data by doing some exploration.

With the use of social media the businesses can connect with their targeted customers for free, the only cost is energy and time. The increasing popularity of social sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, social networks has gained attention as the most viable communication choice for the bloggers, article writers and content creators. These long range informal communication destinations have opened the open door for every one of the bloggers to associate with their well-informed customers to share your ability and articles with viewers will share your articles, blog or expertise in their social circle which further enhance your networks of the followers. Social Media helps to meet people who have not met outside the social media forums. Social Media helps to share ideas beyond geographical boundaries. It provides open opportunity for all writers and bloggers to connect with their clients. It unites people on a huge platform for the achievement of specific goals. This brings positive change in the society.

2.8.1 Negative Effect of Social Media on Society

Klomek et al (2010) defined cyber bullying as an “aggressive intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and overtime against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.” This can include anything from pictures and comments that are embarrassing to ones that have roots in harassment. Junco and Gross found the most common of cyber bullying includes stealing passwords and posting on behalf of that person, as well as insults and name

calling (Junco & Gross 2011). Cyber Harassing is one of the many negative effects of social media. According to a report distributed by PewCenter.org, the greater part of the youngsters has progressed toward becoming casualties of the digital bullying over the past. Since anyone can make a phone record and do anything without being tailed, it has ended up being exceptionally straightforward for anyone to spook on the Internet. Dangers, terrorizing messages and bits of gossip can be sent to the majority to make inconvenience and uproar in the general public. Personal information and security can be hacked and shared on the Internet. Some Twitter and Facebook accounts have been hacked in the past and the programmer had posted materials that have influenced the person's lives. Several cases are available where people have committed fraud and scams through the online networking.

The addictive piece of the online networking is awful and can exasperate individual lives also. It can likewise squander individual's time that could have been used by profitable tasks and exercises. There is also the issue of reputation with the use of social media. Without much of a stretch, users on social media can destroy somebody's notoriety just by making a false story and spreading over the online networking.

Also, it prompts fixation. Spending endless hours on the social destinations can occupy the concentration and consideration from a specific errand. Users of social media can principally depend on innovation and the web as opposed to taking in the down to earth information and skill of the regular day to day existence. Occasionally, individuals share photographs via web based networking media that contains savagery and sex, which can harm the conduct of children and youngsters. Another drawback of the web-based social networking is that the client shares excessively data which

may posture dangers to them. Indeed, even with the tight security settings data may spill on the social locales.

Pempek et al. (2009) discovered that almost half of students participated in “lurking” or observing without posting. This was also confirmed by two studies (Brandtaeg 2012, Sponcil & Gitimu 2013). This passive behavior include scrolling down the Facebook home page, observing posts and pictures or going into profiles of “friends” without commenting, liking or contributing any activity. While this behavior is not completely negative when done in moderation, excessive use can be concerning.

2.8 Students Leaders and Social Media

Leadership is defined as “a process of influence between a leader and his followers to attain group, organizational and societal goals” (Avery 1990). Leadership is classified or defined as the function of a leader- one who guides, influences or directs a group. “But in a social media world of empowered consumers and employees, does a leader direct the group, or does the group guide the leader?” (Friedman, 2013).

“The key principle is to empower the group rather than tell it what to do” (Friedman, 2013). This statement is consistent with Burns theory of transformational leadership, which “occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns 1978). Social media, according to Friedman (2013) changes the leadership equation. According to Friedman,

“Social media breaks apart (the traditional hierarchy of leadership) by empowering individuals and groups to communicate horizontally at higher velocity and greater

momentum than a hierarchical model can keep up with. We call this leveling the playing field of voice. Stimulate groups to lead your goals for you, rather than do it yourself. You influence, you must listen, to lead, you must learn to follow.”

Social media platforms have provided opportunities for widespread engagements and instantaneous feedback with few resource restrictions. Applications and websites offered a range of functionality to students, with specific capabilities in constant evolution to meet the needs of users (Biddix, 2010). Social media space operates beyond traditional communication hierarchies, providing users with a high degree of utility and access. For example, social media has facilitated student activism through in- person and online action for both individuals and groups (George Mwangi et al. 2016: LaRiviere et al 2012)

The horizontal, democratized nature of social media means the truth will always come out. A leader then suggests, insists on, and practices transparency and authenticity. Success and mistakes are acknowledged. Groups are empowered and more effective when they embrace reality and can trust each other to work together (Friedman, 2013).

On the other hand, Kuh (2000) described the campus climate as “how students, faculty, student affairs staffs and other institutional agents perceive and experience their institution. The social climate in a school describes how students perceive and experience their socially based interactions at their institutions. This includes experiences within residence halls, classrooms group projects and student organization. The social climate is the personality of a setting or environment (Moos 1987) Halpin and Croft (1963) state personality is to the individual that climate is to

the organization. If students in an organization felt that their members embrace their ideas, then they would perceive the environment as supportive.

Research has started that modern technology pushed activism increasingly online as 19% of internet users have posted material about political or social issues (Smith, Lehman Sclozman, Verba & Brady 2009). Through online tools, individuals spanning vast geographical distances immediately respond to concerns (LaRiviere, Snider, Stromberg & O'Meara, 2012). The range of available platforms caters to a diverse array of users and functionalities including sharing information, gauging interest and building relationships (Biddix, 2010; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Activists now have multiple tools available for instantaneous, widespread impact.

For high school, student leaders defined as those holding leadership positions in clubs and organizations in school (Nakagwa & Arzubiaga, 2014). Arminino et al. (2010) stated that student leaders of colour expressed a group responsibility for their involvement in students' organization. Individual identity-particularly gender, race, income and education levels (Junco, Merson & Salter, 2010; Swank & Fahs, 2011) influence social media usage.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This section highlights the two theories: identity negotiation theory and social identity theory and that are used to understand and explain how student leaders present themselves on social media. The theories indicate that regardless of whether one may or may not be conscious of these identities, identity self-conception and other typecasting influence our everyday behaviours in a generalized and particularized manner.

2.9.1 Identity Negotiation Theory (INT)

The actual phrase “identity negotiation” was introduced by Swann (1987) who emphasized the tension between two competing processes in social interaction, behavioral confirmation and self-verification. Ting-toomey (2015) defines the term identity in the Identity Negotiation Theory as an individual’s multifaceted identities of culture, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role and personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other categorization social construction processes. The term negotiation on the other hand refers to the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages between two communicators in maintaining and threatening or uplifting the various socio-cultural group-based or unique personal-based identity images of the other.

The original concept of Identity Negotiation Theory appeared in 1986 as a chapter in an edited book in which the focal constructs emphasized the importance of affirming both sociocultural group membership and personal identity issues to develop quality intergroup-interpersonal relationships and not to the exclusion of emphasizing personal-based identity issues only.

The theory posits that human beings in all cultures desire positive identity affirmation in a variety of communication situation. However, what constitutes the proper way to show identity affirmation and consideration varies from one cultural context to another. The INT emphasizes particular identity domains in influencing individual's everyday interactions.

The 2005 INT consists of ten core assumptions, which explain the antecedent, process and outcome components of intercultural identity-based communication. Under competence, the core dynamics of people's membership identities (cultural and ethnic memberships) are personal identities (unique attributes) are formed via symbolic communication with others. Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels. However too much emotional security will lead to ethnocentrism and, on the converse side too much emotional insecurity (or vulnerability) will lead to fear of out groups or strangers.

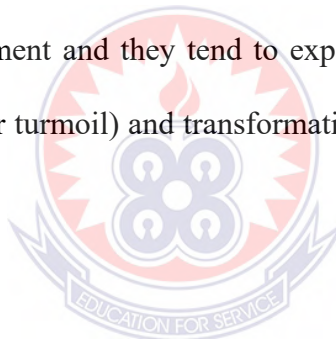
The same underlying principle applies to identity inclusion, predictability, connection and consistency. Thus an optimal range exists on various identity negotiations, dialectical spectrum. Individual tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment.

Individuals tend to feel included when their desired group membership identities are possibly endorsed (example in positive in-group contact situation) and experience differentiations when their desired group membership identities are stigmatized (example in hostile out-group situations).

Persons tend to experience interactions predictability when communicating with cultural familiar others. Interaction predictability tends to lead to either further trust (i.e within the optimal level) or become rigidified, stereotyped categories (i.e beyond the optimal level). Constant interaction unpredictability tends to lead to either mistrust or negative versus possible positive expectancy violation.

Persons tend to desire interpersonal connection via meaningful close relationship (e.g in close friendship support situations) and experience identity autonomy when they experience relationship separation- meaningful intercultural–interpersonal relationships can create additional emotional security and trust in cultural strangers.

Persons tend to experience identity consistence in repeated cultural routines in a familiar cultural environment and they tend to experience identity change (or to the extreme identity chores or turmoil) and transformation in a new or unfamiliar cultural environment.



2.9.2 Social Identity Theory

Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as the part of a person's self-concept, which is derived from their knowledge of membership of a social group and the value and emotional significance that is attached to that membership. Three components contribute to a person's social identity: a cognitive component (self-categorization or awareness of a group membership), an evaluative component (group self-esteem) and an emotional component (affective commitment to a group). According to the social identity theory (SIT) the self-concept consists of a personal identity that includes idiosyncratic characteristics such as bodily attributes and abilities and a social identity that links the individual to salient groups (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). It is the

interpersonal contexts that implicate us as individuals and intergroup contexts as group members (Tajfel, 1978). Following the logic therefore, we always compare ourselves to others and define ourselves in relation to something else. The self-concept grows out of the evaluations of people around us; therefore we direct our behavior to obtain positive reactions from the significant references around us. In this process, people use tools such as consumer goods through which the individual communicates meaning about himself to others (Grubb & Gratwohl, 1967).

Dumpit and Fernandez, 2017 identifies the role schema, the ideal schema and the identity schema (Kleine et al. 1993). The schemas are used to guide having and doing in relation to a societal role or personal identity (Kleine & Kleine, 2000). The role schema is a stereotypical perception of the typical or average person performing the role resulting from socialization, media exposure and meeting people occupying such roles. The ideal schema on the other hand represents the vision of a person of how they would ideally act as someone in the role. The role schema shapes the ideal schema together with perceived personal competencies. The identity schema represents people's perceptions of themselves with respect to adopting a role-identity. The ideal schema has an impact on this vision of "how I am now" as this person and the identity schema functions as a frame of reference for engaging in this particular role (Kleine et al. 2009). An example of such a schema, could be a design professional having a role schema that highlights certain kinds of stereotypical behavior and appearance for this line of professional. The ideal schema would then be an interpretation of how they would ideally be design professionals and the identity schema would represent their idea of themselves as design professionals. If there are discontinuities between these schemas, role-conflict can occur.

Social Identity theory describes two identity change contexts: category and network. Category traits may influence individuals' motives and the identity selections over time. Individuals learn to evaluate category desirability by using in- and out-category comparisons (McFarland & Pals 2005). Similarly to Grubb and Gratwohl (1967), McFarland and Pals (2005) go on to state that we strive for positive affiliation and self-efficacy and this motivates us to maintain or exit categories. When we are attached to a category, however we are more likely to view that category better and therefore category comparisons, but also in-group bias, are motives for identity change. This is a valid point, but as this bias is a natural part of the human psyche and in my opinion it is naïve to assume that the category evaluation process is rational to begin with. According to Kleine et al. (1993) individuals' social identities are linked to an internal representation or schema and an external social network of people where the individual performs and cultivates the identity. The person's social identities are organized hierarchically and form together the global- or overall self. The identities that are evoked at certain times depend on identity importance that is the relative ranking of a social identity within the hierarchically organized self-concept (Kleine & Kleine, 2000). The three related schemas explain a person's role perceptions: Social Identity theory describes two identity change contexts: category and network.

2.10 Relevance of Theories to this study

Harwood (2020) states that social identity theory provides a framework for explaining intergroup behavior and intergroup communication based on inherent values humans

place on social group memberships and their desire to view their specific social groups in a positive light.

Within the media space, social identity theory can help us to understand the links between media ownership and media content, the nature of the group portrayals in dominant group owned media, group based selective consumption of specific media messages and the effects of exposure to that content for dominant and subordinate group members. The theory is important to the study because the theory can be used in the contexts of multicultural counseling, research and practice to understand the process by which individuals develop and maintain social identities and groups.

On the other hand, theories of identity negotiation theory challenge conventional models of the person as a bounded or monadic individual with a fixed essential identity, assuming instead a fragmented, incomplete social subject.

These theories helped to conceptualized and explain the phenomenon of the identity negotiation and construction of student leaders. These theories further stressed that student leaders subtly confer onto themselves peculiar personalities. This is possible because social media allows the individual to modify, add and challenge his identity.

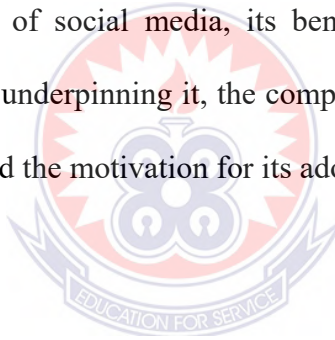
Again, since individuals can put up various performances the theories help to clear the relationships between the posts and the influence the posts have on the individuals.

2.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have reviewed literature related to this work in this chapter. Since social media has become a part of an everyday lifestyle for the technophile, I believe a review of that in addition to Facebook would not be out of context. Further,

adolescence is a crucial point between childhood and adulthood; I reviewed studies on identity and identity negotiation on Facebook. Mainly at this point in life for teenagers, the idea is to feel accepted thus I drew the identity negotiation from their profiles, their updates, their general posts reaction to posts and their perceptions about the use of social media. According to the literature presented, social media has the potential to help a leader to improve transformational leadership, transparency and authenticity.

To answer my research question one which seeks to examine how the student leaders use Facebook in their daily lives, a thorough look of the application was considered and then how the system is being used by these students. To answer my questions two (2), I reviewed the uses of social media, its benefits and importance, the theory adopted, the assumptions underpinning it, the components that make one sign up into social networking sites and the motivation for its adoption.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the approach by which data is extracted to be clearly understood.

This chapter therefore focused on the following subheadings. They were research approach, research design, sampling, data collection methods, data collection processes, data analysis and interpretation, trustworthiness and ethical issues.

3.1 Research Approach

There are two general approaches in research that is the quantitative and qualitative research approach. There is the third approach which is the mixed method. The qualitative approach has a number of designs that will aid the process. Some of the designs are case studies, framing, content analysis, ethnography, textual analysis among others. The differences between quantitative, qualitative research and the mixed method approach in research are based on the basis of the operational specificity of concepts, hypotheses and methods of observation. In the quantitative approach knowledge claims are founded on the post positivist perspective that reflect the need to identify and access the causes that influence outcomes such as those found in experiment (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Mixed method includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach that in they “integrate the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative research deals extensively

with description which represents more the mutually distinct components of the typology.

Qualitative research requires data analysis of data gathered using information gathering methods such as interviews, document analysis, and participation observation (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2010). In this study, students' experience, knowledge and habits related to social media usage were analyzed. The student leaders who participated voluntarily in the research answered these forms in class.

The qualitative study also concludes with tentative answers, these answers formed the basis of future quantitative studies (Leedy, 1993). The qualitative analysis aims to give a complete, detailed description in the form of words, pictures or objects while in an attempt to explain what will be observed. Qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers a variety of styles of social research.

According to Denscombe (2003), qualitative research is a method of understanding meaning and patterns of behavior. Leedy (1993) expands on this definition by viewing qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of a smaller number of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.

Qualitative research, then, is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena, its various genres are naturalistic and interpretative, and it draws on multiple methods of inquiry. The work was a qualitative one because it concerned itself with a social issue that involves a careful investigation into the social life of a group of people to understand their world from their perspective. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research approach examines real-life bounded system over a period of time

through detailed and in-depth data collection that involves multiple sources of information. Data collected for the research using this approach reflect the views of the participants and what they put on their Facebook profiles.

This study does not seek to generalize the results for all student leaders. Patron (2002) states that qualitative research samples are usually small and do not necessarily represent a broader population; therefore it is difficult to generalize results.

Conclusively, following researchers such as on the field of leadership studies, I adopted the qualitative research in investigating the self- presentation of student leaders in Wesley Grammar School on Facebook.

3.2 Research Design

In gathering data for the research, there is the need to work with a design that will aid the collection and analysis of data. Planning, organization, collection and analysis of data form significant aspects that provide answers to questions of the techniques used to gather data, the sampling strategies and tools to be used and how to deal with time and cost constraints Leedy (1993). The researcher used Case study to gather data relating to the Facebook posts of student leaders at Wesley Grammar School, their behavior change, attitude and perception as influenced by the use of social media.

3.2.1 Case Study

A case study is a detailed study of a specific subject such as a group of people, an organization or phenomenon. Zainal (2007) posits that case study, in their true essence explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed

contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. The case study is good for describing, comparing, evaluating and understanding different aspects of the research problem. Rowley (2002) states that case studies have often been viewed as a useful tool for the preliminary, exploratory state of a research project, as a basis for the development of the 'more structured' tools that are necessary in surveys and experiments. Through discussion, participant observation, online observation interview and thematic analysis, the researcher will be able to collate data for use. In recording the behaviours, the researcher used observational and interviewing tactics as well.

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

Hence, within this context, the qualitative research was particularly important for this investigation as it attempts to explore a relatively unknown area of study. This rationale is confirmed by Denscombe (2003), when he states that qualitative research should be favored when a topic of interest has been relatively ignored in the literature or has been given superficial attention. Moreover, the generation of descriptions, generalizations, themes and relationships from the data in the study can possibly

contribute towards the policy development in the educational sector especially in the Senior High Schools where we find more teenagers and a discourse environment that specifically molds the children.

The main objective of a case study according to Cousin (2006) is not to analyze specific cases but rather to serve as a good was to define cases and their setting which eventually aids in understanding them. This was what the research sought to do/

3.4 Sampling size and Techniques

A sample is a smaller number or the population that is used to make conclusions regarding the whole population. The purpose is to estimate unknown characteristics of the population. Sampling therefore is the systematic process of selecting a number of individuals for a study to represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay, 2011). A sample is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population (Kothari, 2004) while sampling is the process or technique the researcher employs to select the sampling from the targeted population.

The process of sampling takes in to account various issues and will depend on the organization type, purpose, complexity, time constraints and previous research in the area.

There are two types of sampling techniques employed by researchers - probability and nonprobability sampling. Probability sampling, as the name suggests, is based on the idea that people selected as the sample will be representative of a cross-section the population under study. Non-probability sampling is conducted without such

knowledge about whether those included in the sample are representative of the population (Denscombe, 2003).

The researcher employed the purposive sampling procedure for choosing the participants for the study. This sampling technique involves the selection of participants based primarily on the fact that they possess the needed data to answer the research questions (Patton, 2002). To Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), this sampling method involves the identification and selection of people who have knowledge or experience about the phenomena under investigation. Based on this sampling method, the researcher interacted with these participants who were readily available in the school and are willing to share their opinions and experiences on the topic of investigation. Therefore, by employing the non-probability purposive sampling, people who are found available and possessed the needed data were the choice of the researcher. Since the participants are selected using this sampling technique, time is saved and information easily gathered.

The selected process is chiefly random and independent of the person doing the research. This method produces unbiased estimates with measurable precision that requires relatively little knowledge about the population.

Due to time and cost constraints, the sample will be purposively drawn in Wesley Grammar School because they have more day students than boarders and the school is situated in the heart of Accra. Also, the head prefects, protocol, compound, dining hall and chapel prefects were used. The sample size is in keeping with the qualitative research. Generally, in qualitative research, the sample size for small-scale research should be in the region of about five to eight participants after which the likelihood of repeated findings is increased greatly (Henning, 2004).

The target population refers to the specific group relevant to a particular study. Mugenda et al (2003) explain that a population is a group of individuals or objects that have the same form of characteristics. They are the totality of cases that conform to certain specifications, which defines the elements that are included or excluded in the target group.

Wesley Grammar School is one of the missionary schools located in Dansoman in the Greater Accra Region. Dansoman is one of the prime places in the nation's capital. The town is also known for being one of the largest estates in West Africa. Several schools are located in Dansoman and Wesley Grammar School is one of the many Senior High Schools in the town.

Although the school is under the Ghana Education Service, it is partly managed by the Methodist Church. As a missionary school and as part of the activities of the school, students are taken through other religious activities which are geared towards their moral education and upliftment. This is evident even in the description the school states on their online portal; "Wesley Grammar School aims at providing relevant education with moral values as well as academic excellent in all areas to be benefit to the nation through the help of God who is the source of success."

Unlike the other schools in the vicinity, the school also shares campuses with the Methodist University College as well as the headquarters of the Methodist Churches. In a way, students are bound to be influenced by the presence of these people they share boundaries with. Since the researcher is a teacher in the school, she may get rich data and she is offered the privilege to visit the school at any available opportunity with ease and her knowledge of the school offers ease in collecting of data.

3.5 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

There are numerous ways of collecting data and these depend on the purpose and aims of the research. In this study, data was collected by means of interviews, online observation and participants' observations.

The characteristic nature of qualitative research to gain knowledge about an individual or groups of individuals in their social context compels qualitative researchers to normally employ interview as a main source of data collection method (Hoe & Boeije, 2005). Also the traditional task of qualitative researchers to gain subjective knowledge about a phenomenon also encourages interviews (Woods, 2011). Daymond and Holloway (2010) buttress this by professing that interview is the most popular method in qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (1995) also listed ethnography, observation, interview and document review as a primary data collection methods in qualitative research. I employed observation and interviews to collect data for this research as seen in the literature reviewed.

Interviews are well suited in qualitative research such that they help the researcher to understand people's perspectives and experiences (Lindorf & Taylor 2002; Bertrand & Hughes 2005). Interviews allow the researcher to hear the stories of the experiences of the people.

Data collection involves contacting the members of the population that will be sampled in order to collect the required information about the study (Saleemi, 1997). The researcher employed the services of research assistants mainly the colleagues of the teenagers being used.

The objectives of the study demanded an in-depth explanation, as such the researcher needed to speak to the respondents to produce explanation of their online performance and behaviours, and how they apply what they know in the online space.

3.5.1 Observation

Observations are data collection methods which waive communication between the researcher and the respondent by answers and questions during the whole research period (Kuss 2012).

For Marshall and Bossman (1989), this way of gathering data is the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study. This method employs vision as the basic means of data gathering where the researcher describes existing situations in a particular setting. As we mostly observe things around us, observation appears to be frequently used in studies of this nature. Under the observation method, the researcher employs the participant observation and online observation. This helps the researcher to learn about the activities of the people under study in their natural setting and to get closer through participation in their activities. Both formal and informal interviews, researcher asks the participants some of the captions they attach to their virtual stories, the people they follow and their reasons for approving friend requests and the informal observations are made where the people are not informed they are being observed online. Data were gathered precisely on school campus and online (their Facebook pages) Places, where the data is collected, include the classroom, dormitories and dining hall, churches. The investigator used a Samsung A21s phone to track their posts online. Field notes are also taken to supplement the observations.

3.5.2 Participants Observation

Participant observation is a form of qualitative data collection that involves the immersion of researchers into the environment of their subjects for an extended period of time. The reasoning behind participant observation is, as Harper Lee wrote in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, that ‘you cannot really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it (Brancati, 2018).

Through immersion, researcher is able to observe the daily lives of people – their exchanges with each other, their formal and informal conversations, activities, habits, and so forth. Immersion provides researchers with an opportunity to collect candid and intimate information about people. This information, though, is filtered through the perspective of the researchers who, in using this method, are at risk of losing their objectivity and of altering the behavior of the groups that they study through their presence. The offline observations are commonly used to gather a better understanding of the way of life in a particular segment in the society while the online observation focus on incidents on virtual communities (Mann & Stewart 2000). This can include studies about the usage of websites by evaluating saved usage statistics or the tracking of mouse or eye movement during the website use, leading to complex usability texts. The increased popularity of social media has also greatly expanded the possibilities for online observation (Theobald & Neundorfer, 2010).

Despite the fact that the online observation comprise of the reactive and non-reactive, the later was used. In the case of non-reactive online observations, the observed people are not aware of the observation process. The researcher observes the incidents

occurred on the internet without any intervention of direct participation (Theobald & Neundorfer, 2010).

3.5.3 Interviews

Daymon and Holloway (2010) opine that interviews are a major source of data in qualitative research and also enable the researcher explore participants perspectives and perceptions. Interviews are described as a means to collaboratively extract information about people's feelings, intentions, experiences and ideas (Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

Interviews were also conducted to clarify most of contents and reactions to posts by the people rather than depending solely on the posts even though it can be utilized in researches. This was to obtain accurate information on the posts observed, the meanings they communicate, and their contexts of usage. The use of interviews mostly allows the case study researchers to find out more about the lives and behaviors of the people. Creswell (2014) define interviews as conversations that are held face to face or sometimes telephone mediated between the researcher and participants, or when researchers engage in focus group interviews with six to eight members in each group. Unstructured interviews were employed as it allowed for free interaction between the participants and the researcher. A section of the questions from the interview guide was used for different set of participants. Unstructured and open-ended questions are bent on eliciting view points of the participants (Woods, 2011). This method enabled the investigator to video record the participants as well, their meanings. The interviews are also recorded using the Samsung A21s phone.

Interviews concerning the identity negotiation of student leaders on Facebook were conducted in person. All the interviews took place over a month time. Frame at different locations within the school depending on the convenience of the interviewee. The length of the interview was specific to the user interpretation, the all range between forty five to sixty minutes. To elicit in-depth discussion on the reasoning behind identity negotiation through the use of Facebook and offline, the researcher adopted Pugh (2010) interview technique. Similar to this study, Pugh did a qualitative study on how Facebook users desire to influence, associate or negotiate a desired and ideal identity. She made the interviewee to personally navigate their profiles during interviews. In her opinion, allowing participants to navigate the user profile is a technique related to auto driving. Auto driving requires participants to navigate through their profile page during their interview and therefore explain their reasoning behind some of the posts and performances. Creating a more interactive interview (by navigating user profiles) eases the participants' ability to express himself better.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Brau and Clarke (2012) opine that “thematic analysis is a method for specifically identifying, and organizing insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset. Themes are identified and used to answer a specific evaluation question as a result analysis using themes “entails careful reading and rereading of data (Guest & Macqueen, 2011).

Thematic analysis is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining and recording patterns (themes) with data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a

phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question. The themes become the categories for analysis. Thematic analysis is performed through the process of coding in six phases to create established and meaningful patterns according to Braun & Clark, 2006. These phases include familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the final report.

Thematic analysis is inductive, flexible and can be incorporated into any epistemological approach. An inductive approach to data coding and analysis is a “bottom up” approach and is driven by what is in the data. In contrast a deductive approach to data coding and analysis is ‘top down’ where the researcher brings to the data a series of concepts, ideas or topics that they can use to code and interpret the data. What this means is that the codes and themes derived from the content of the data themselves so that what is mapped by the researcher during analysis closely matches the content of the data. In reality, coding and analysis often uses a combination of both. It is impossible to be purely inductive, as we always bring something to the data where we analyze it and we are completely ignore the data themselves when we code for a particular theoretical construct- at the very least, it is important to know whether or not its worth coding the data for the construct. Guest et al., (2012) states; “thematic analysis goes beyond merely describing implicit idea.” Theoretic approach is experiential in its orientation and essentialist its theoretical framework, assuming knowable word and “giving voice” to experiences and meaning of the world as reported in the data.

In the process of analyzing data using the thematic approach, twenty student leaders were interviewed. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed orthographically, reproducing all spoken words and sounds including hesitation.

What is essential for doing a thematic analysis are a clear understanding of where the researcher stands in relation to these possible options, a rationale for making the choices they do, and the consistent application of those choices throughout the analysis. Every text derived from participants to be analyzed in this study is complete and accurate

3.7 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba established in 1982 four tenets of trustworthiness. They proposed credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability to replace their quantitative counterparts in qualitative research. The trustworthiness of research instrument is the extent to which such an instrument is able to measure what it is supposed to measure. The content related technique will measure the degree to which the question items reflect the specific areas covered.

Participants will review the data collected and its interpretation. The researcher will also establish the data interpretation as likely and not as a definite outcome. The results can as well be replicated by other researchers as the outcome will be devoid of biases.

According to Mugenda et al (1999), reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time. Hence, reliability is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated

trials. To test the reliability of research instruments used, test and re-test techniques will be used.

3.8 Ethical Issues

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

3.9 Summary

This chapter involves outlining the steps taken in conducting the study. The study is qualitative in nature and its own research design which is case study and instruments like participants' observation, Facebook or online observation and interviews are used. The interviews are conducted to ascertain the meaning of posts gathered. After employing the purposive sampling method, a sample size of twenty students was obtained from the total population. Collecting the data from Facebook, the posts were recorded in a note and videos and pictures saved on the researcher's mobile device.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter captures the findings of the study as well as the analysis of the data collected from interviews conducted with the student leaders in Wesley Grammar school and the analysis of information gathered from the Facebook profiles and walls of the students as well as the interaction with colleagues on campus and observation.

A total of twenty students were sampled for the study that is thirteen (13) females and seven (7) males. The results shows that sixty five percent (65%) are females and thirty five percent (35) are males. On the age category, all the participants are between the ages of 14-20 and the educational level is pre tertiary particularly second year senior high school students. Their prefectorial positions range from senior head prefects, dining hall prefect, compound prefects, chaplaincy prefects, protocol prefects and house prefects. This shows that all the respondents are educated and are proficient in understanding both written and oral language. In addition, they are in the formative years and they are still finding themselves: constructing and negotiating their identity.

After conducting the analysis of the findings, some themes emerged: online negotiation of rules and boundaries, social media on student leadership. Owusu Ansah (2018) on the other hand identifies concealment, filtering, affiliations and performativity which equally served as a matter of interest in the study as against the other themes.

Through the lens of the theories used in this study (identity negotiation theory and social identity), the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data to answer the

questions posed by this study. The analysis was done using the research questions as sub heading. The questions that guided the study are:

RQ1. How do student leaders construct their identity on Facebook?

RQ2. What motivates student leaders to use Facebook in their daily lives?

RQ1. The identity construction of student leaders on Facebook

This research question sought to understand how student leaders defined themselves online. Again, the question focused on understanding the presentation of self of the student leader in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are and how to connect to earlier cultivated roles and skills with the ideal prototypes of other Facebook users.

4.1 Self-Concealment

Concealment as a thematic concern reveals how social media users on Facebook and other networking sites may turn to hide their identity or present themselves in a light that is accepted by society. Cipriano (2015) states that the generation is growing up in a time where one click stands between us and letting all of our followers sneak a peek at our lives. She further adds that we have Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat and so on, where we can construct our lives in a way that we want the world to perceive us. While some participants claim to express and live in acceptance of who they are, the findings on their Facebook walls revealed otherwise.

Facebook profile can be thought of as an online embodiment (individual representation) of real persons using the sites established by (Boyd, 2004; Boyd & Heer 2006). As part of the rudiment of acquiring a Facebook account, personal

information such as name, gender, date of birth, educational information, phone number, email address are to be provided (Lewis & West, 2011 cited in Avorgah 2013).

Facebook provides profile template which prompts for different kinds of personal information and users have considerable freedom to provide some of the information or not or to provide any other information or pictures of their choice (Pelcuhette & Karl 2010). All these information are grouped under various headings. This is the standard format of creating an account on Facebook. It is through a handful of these pieces of information that the digital embodiment of self becomes realized.

This information that the person provides is what constitutes the profile of a person. The profiles (information provided) have conversations with each other when we talk to someone online; we are talking to his or her profile (Boyd & Heer, 2006). We get to know someone on Facebook through his/her profile. Many Facebookers believe that they can get a good understanding of that person, even complete strangers simply through admittedly exaggerated Facebook profile (Farquduar 2012,). On Facebook, all these information about the person is captioned under the heading “About me”. This is supposed to inform other users about the person.

In constructing the identities, the first thing users do is to choose what information is suitable for the public and what is not. From the interview, with support from the case study, observation of the participants, personal Facebook account and pages, it is revealed that these leaders are not so concerned about concealing certain information from the public unlike other “known” leaders and celebrities who are particular about concealing certain information from the public. Celebrities on the other hand are concern about what goes into the public domain especially via social media domain

like Facebook. They put in place filtering mechanism to check what goes into the public domain.

Despite these, their images are filtered and look “enhanced”. This is made possible not only by the device used but because the application provide multiple filters. Thus the idea perpetuated from the post gives the impression that having a flawless skin is what society embraces. The photos have gone from being about capturing a moment to projecting a false reality. The reason people feel inclined to post filtered picture is because social media serves as a platform for competition.

A participant stated that:

‘I am much interested in the likes I receive from the picture I post so I post my nicest pictures. I post one picture after many days on my newsfeed. My posts are likely to appear on the walls of most of my friends online and they are in a way forced to like my picture because they have not gotten used to seeing my posts always.’

The reasoning behind this is not about the actual number of likes but it is the fact that they do not want others to see the lack of likes and judge them (Cipriano, 2015).

4.1.2 Fake Profile

A section of the sample admitted to have fake profile while a section indicated that the information provided was partly true. Thus this is reasonable to conclude that nearly 40% of the sample definitely or likely benefit from fake profile(s) to surf Facebook.

Table 1

Explicitly Yes	Explicitly No	Somewhat Yes
6	8	6

From *table 1*, six out of the twenty participants indicated that their profile on Facebook is fake or a mere creation. People who knew them in person could easily tell that the information provided (name, location, employment status) on their timeline is not true. Eight stated that the information given about themselves on their ‘*About me*’ (Facebook profile) was true but the remaining six indicated that they blended truth and changed some details.

4.1.3 Variation of Naming

Name can be said to be a word or words that a particular person is known by. Provision of name is one of the requirements for creating an account on SNSs including Facebook. This is a very important component or significant part of the identity of the individual.

The Name Appearance analysis shows that all the participants clearly use Facebook either with their full real name or have hidden whole or some part of their name. The results show that a section of the sample avoid being known by their full name and make access to themselves limit to others.

The details for this is as tabled below:

Table 2

Abbreviated both First and Surname	Exclusively First name	Abbreviated First name with Real Surname	Anonymous First name in company with Real Full Surname	Real name in company with anonymous Surname	First in company with Surname
3	5	3	5	4	

From the table, three students abbreviated both their first and second names on Facebook, five used only their first names, three abbreviated their first names and used their actual surnames, nine posted anonymous first or surnames.

When participants were asked if they used their official names on Facebook; four participants used while the other four did not use. According to some participants, they say:

“Most people address me by my Facebook name because that is what they know and I respond to it.”

“I spell my name the way I do because I feel it is nicer and trendy. I don’t think there’s any difference between my official name and my Facebook name because they are both pronounced the same.”

“I use a different name from the one people know because I do not want others to notice me easily. I share my profile name with those I want as friends or better still I send them friend request on Facebook.”

4.1.4 Privacy Setting

The intention behind the question was to know that how much open access has been provided by the users against the unknown people and how much privacy they believe on their social network life. Upon the final findings, majority of the users set their privacy to open to public while others set it to limited to friends.

Table 3

Birth date	Pictures	Mobile number	Email	Friends	Video/ Music	Message
8	6	9	9	2	0	0

4.2 Online negotiation of cultural rules

According to Certeau, social life may be defined through the concepts of strategies and tactics. A strategy is the “calculus of force-relationships, which becomes possible when a subject of will and power can be isolated from an environment” (de Certeau 1984). These institutions and structures of power determine the social reality of the consumers who are in position off powerlessness. Nonetheless, in this predetermined environment, “consumers” employ tactics in order to manage their way by seizing “opportunities”. Strategies that exist in pre tertiary schools dictate strict rules and imposed boundaries on the use of mobile phones and internets within school hours.

This is explain in the assertion of the identity negotiation theory that individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, predictability, connection and consistency on both group-based and person-based identity levels. Again, society dictates what virtues are for individuals, teens inclusive. Nonetheless, access to new technologies multiplies the availability of tactics to evade the strategies pervasive in the society. Given the fact that in this particular society, teens and children are the weakest “consumers” analyzing how student leaders who fall within the category of teens or adolescent use social media is especially interesting.

Despite the conservative culture, interviewees indicated that they usually have no hesitation to reveal nationality, gender or age in social media. The interviewees particularly the males use their real first names, however the young females use tactics to negotiate their identities for fear of being rejected.

The first tactic is using a nickname. A participant stated:

“Using a nickname gives me more freedom because I can express myself more. I can post my opinions without looking like a bad girl. I don’t think much how people think of me.”

Concealing identity from scrutiny of other people in the online environment protects individual privacy, enables these teens to explore other subjects of interests that cannot be tolerated in public:

“Yeah, I am a girl....we talk about boys. We talk about what we comfortable with, and who did what and we will discuss what the guys do and of course I wouldn’t talk about that with my family.”

On the other hand, online environment allows student leaders to negotiate more than one identity depending on the set of people this identity is presented to. The interviewees noted that they would use multiply identities online and offline. For example their juniors and teachers are presented with a similar one, and their colleagues and friends are presented with another and their families, another:

“You know teenagers the way they speak to each other and the posts and things like that. There are certain things that I don’t want my family to see. So I have my family to be....maybe different statuses, different biography about myself. I think it would be just different, something just for the family and something else for my friends that I would share.”

Similar difference will be made depending on the social background of one’s friends and their level of openness as negative judgment and gossip is to be avoided:

“Well if certain people send me a friend request on Facebook I wouldn’t accept because of my pictures, because of the society we live in. Even some of my mates that I am close with here, I wouldn’t necessarily accept on Facebook because they are judgmental. I wouldn’t accept my friends from scripture union and my juniors because they will talk and gossip about the pictures I have. But let us say my friends from my hood and class, I will accept them because they are much closer to me and they are okay with my lifestyle.”

Some interviewees also post pictures using other images than themselves such as that of celebrities, memes on their profiles and walls. This is the second tactic participant use. Even though the Ghanaian culture does not frown on posting pictures, images of

participants will not help them to be anonymous especially for the females. The males on the other hand were indifferent:

“I don’t like taking pictures and I don’t consider it as much of a big deal to post my picture on Facebook. I prefer to post my favorite players instead and sometimes wrestlers on my profile. On my wall, I post funny memes instead.”

Another tactic implored is the filtering mechanism. Nissenbaum, 2010 states that not only do people have to monitor the information they consciously and directly give to others but the information other people “give off” about them. Owusu-Ansah also adds that another through which celebrities construct their identity on Facebook is by filtering posts on the wall. A participant during the interview stated that;

“I know things posted on the net are not completely erased or deleted and so I am careful of the posts I put out there. If it is funny picture of myself, my friends might repost and laugh about it and if it is sometime that contradicts societal norms, it might go against me later in life”.

Majority of the posts on the personal walls of these student leaders are regular posts of themselves; pictures or motivational words or the two put together. A participant says:

“The words do not get more likes but the pictures do. Some people may not read at all so the pictures attract them.”

Another activity through which Facebook users negotiate their identity is the joining of groups and liking of pages. Owusu Ansah (2018) identified this under his theme of affiliation. The study revealed this activity as a way of validating their social status and seeking for belongingness. Through this performance the student leaders like the

ordinary Facebook user join groups that give them the self- fulfillment and entertain more than to educate. Also, they join groups and like pages their celebrities may be on. They also accept to join pages that they may have received requests from mutual friends. The pages and the groups that the participants like and join respectively are that of musicians, sports men, actors, bloggers and many others. This shows the kind of people the participants wants to associate them with as part of their identity negotiation on Facebook. This supports the fact that in the desire for social acceptance, people tend to align themselves with particular groups while trying to avoid identification with other groups. People also choose groups also based on a need or security what explains as the people desire to wake up in the morning knowing who they are and how they should act (Cochran et al., 1988: Laing 1969 cited in Farquhar 2012). Another way of categorizing and validating the self, student leaders affiliate themselves with pages and groups. This is another way through which their identities are again constructed. When asked why they like pages of celebrities who they are not likely to come into contact with, a participant revealed:

“It is my love for the things that they do, I love their music and I’ll want to be a part of the first people to see their new single releases so that I can share with others. Even their pictures, I love to repost them.”

Online presence also allows the student leaders to network online and make new acquaintances. One interviewee noted, however the following:

“I met a friend on Facebook, later we met face to face and we became friends. We relate normal like my other friends.”

Another participant indicated she can freely express herself with her online friends much more than those offline. She stated:

“Because, I am not seeing my friends in person, I am not shy to tell them certain things. I speak freely and it is much easier. Facebook gives me that freedom.”

And they also felt a sense of satisfaction from an online acquaintance only:

“There is this man I knew for some time on Facebook, we got disconnected for a long time. We just share information, nothing deep. He has a studio and he has sent me a message on Facebook telling me he will give me the opportunity to record whenever I am ready. It makes me happy, like I know I won’t give up on singing.”

The interactive nature of social networking sites is an advantage to users because of the rapid response they get. Chatting is an important part in the construction and negotiating identity in the online space. The participant revealed:

“I hardly send messages to my real life friends on Facebook messenger because the response delays especially when I have to log out. Whatsapp messenger has always been my preferred choice. But for the people who are my friends online, I sometimes respond to their messages online if they are engaging enough or I realize we have a number of mutual friends, maybe I will get to know them offline.”

Formerly, texting and phone calls used to be the main ways of communicating but the advent of SNSs have taken away this flow of communication. Birnbaum found that “Facebook profiles suggest how students believe their friends expect them to behave

and reflect the social pressures that students negotiate to be seen as good graduates”. Through observation, as well as interviews, Birnbaum established the following six fronts: partier, socialite, risk-taker, comic, institutional citizen, and eccentric.

The most used and recognized college student “front” was the partier. On their Facebook profiles, these students posted pictures of alcohol consumption, even to the point of losing control. Because of the high use of this front, the author proposed that a perception of what it means to be a college student must include intoxication. “If Facebook profiles do not include these types of images (alcohol/intoxication), students run risk of giving the impression that they are not good undergraduates” (Birnbaum, 2013). The socialite front was another common profile type; these students posted picture of themselves with many friends, especially through membership in groups such as Greek life or campus clubs. Next was the risk-taker front, with the student taking part in dangerous behavior such as skydiving. Birnbaum (2013) reported that over 80% of the students admitted that they or a close friend had sought out a risky behavior just to post it on Facebook. The author again connected this with the perception that it gives to current and future college students observing the “college experience.”

The opposite of the risk-taker front was the comic. This was a profile that included posts that were funny. An interesting discovery was the importance of humor on a Facebook profile, which set the tone that the student was interesting, accessible, and fun. Further, Birnbaum (2013) found that “the comic front was one of the most important self- presentation techniques students used on Facebook profiles to ensure that audience members felt connected to the person.”

Birnbaum encouraged college administrators to first be concerned about the behavior of students with the risk-taker front, which could result in injury. For other fronts, such as the partier, a general educational effort of student awareness should be implemented.

No matter the front each student used, each was very aware that their behavior online created a perceived impression by their classmates. Further, “Students were aware that profiles represented an opportunity to present themselves positively and also were aware that other students did the same” (Birnbaum, 2013). In the one-hour interviews, 80% of students formed an impression of other students, many times within seconds, and 80% were also aware others had impressions of their profile too.

4.3 Social Media and Student Leadership

Most of the participants logged in to social media all seven days in a week during the period of study. When asked how much of their social media is related to their leadership and student activism, most stated less than half, they believed that their “followers” may not be interested in their roles outside the confines of the school. That notwithstanding, their walls expressed some engagement in social media activism as cited under publicizing events, connecting with like-minded individuals, and learning about current events as their primary functions (see table 4)

Table 4

Engagements in forms of Social media Activism

Uses of social media	Frequency	Percentage of total
Publicize events	5	25
Connect with like-minded individuals	10	50
Learn about current events	4	20
Share resources	None	None
Express solidarity with other courses	8	40

There was the sense that 20% of the participants used social media to respond to current events and to develop their opinions. Facebook allows individuals to formulate and edit ideas prior to sharing them. A participant shared:

“I have spent a lot of time trying to be more conscious about how I write and what I’m saying specifically because I understand that there are people who disagree with me. I don’t want to sound like somebody who is insensitive to the feelings of others.”

Another participant stated:

“I don’t post too much. I don’t post any opinion stuff. I will definitely post things that imply what my opinions are...it is once in a blue moon that I will comment on something that I disagree on”

Supporting the findings, 50% of the participants agreed that liking a status or article could serve as a form of activism. Participants noted that liking was a public act

visible to others through features such as notification and newsfeed. As a result liking showed an individual's congruence and commitment to pursuing social and political change (HERI 1996). From the table, 25% of the participants used social media to publicize current events especially those related to the school and other schools. A participant noted;

“If the entertainment committee posts an update on Mr. & Ms. SHS, they tag us. We see the notification and we can see the number of people who like it as well. My likes will show on other pages as well.”

Liking makes a news item more prominent, helping to amplify its reach. A participant shared his belief that an item may impact Facebook analytics to make that post show up more frequently than other. He further added that the cumulative impact of likes may be able to demonstrate broader social opinion and emphasize forms of solidarity. In line with this a participant shared an experience:

“There was a time I commented in a way that I felt was sarcastic on a story I read from a group on Facebook. I noticed forty seven people reacted to my comments, they “liked, loved and cared”, I really felt important that day. It was as though I really made sense even to people who are not even my friends on Facebook.”

Finally, while social media platforms aided communication and demonstrations of solidarity, the remaining 60% of the participants felt the tools are ineffective to change others' beliefs. A participant said:

“I personally don't see the value in having Facebook debates where only two or three people are going back and forth. Nobody else is really reading.”

RQ2. The motivation that influences student leaders to use Facebook in their daily lives

Tosun (2012) states that the main uses for Facebook include maintaining long distance relationships, game playing and entertainment, photo related activities, organizing social events, passive observations, establishing new friendships and initiating or terminating romantic relationships. Tosun argues that expressing one's self on the internet is a way to form close relationships with people that are met through social networking sites and that users use Facebook as a social substitutes to create offline relationships and strengthen existing relationships (Tosun 2012). After analyzing the data, Tosun concluded that Facebook is a buffer for those with issues articulating their thoughts and feelings in person and is used as a substitute for establishing relationships. (Tosun, 2012). This assertion is evident on the Facebook wall of the participants. Tosun's argument affirms the assertion in the identity negotiation theory that posits that people tend to desire interpersonal connection via meaningful close relationships.

A post of a participant reads:

“Ladies, the number one trait most of you exhibit is BLOCKING your partners after an argument and that definitely toxic! I don't care what happened but if that relationship is not over, I think you're also emotionally abusing the guys (or whoever's doing that) and that's wrong.” July 2021.

The ideas within the Tosun article regarding Facebook as a social substitute to create relationships supports the theory within this research that more socializing is occurring in the online sphere. By creating an online identity which is used to create these friendships with others the user is participating in the selective process of

identity formation. When these relationships are taken off the online scenario, the user assumes the role of their online identity and performs the identity that their counterpart has come to know, accept and understand.

Skues et al (2012) focus on the effect of personality traits on the amount of usages for social networking. They argue that the user's personality changes the information selected to be presented or withheld from others (Skues, Williams & Wise 2012). The study found that the type of personality a user has changes their ideas of the impression management, their openness to connect with others suggests that lonelier students compensate for their lack of offline.

4.6.1 Introduction to Media

In finding answers to what motivates the use of social media there was the need to identify how the student leaders were introduced to it. This described how and when participants were originally exposed to media. Technology was introduced between early childhood and adolescence, with social media accounts following after. Participants shared about their first electronic device. They indicated that their first device was received between the ages of 3 and 12. Participants noted that their first device was either a phone or game console.

One participant stated,

“The first device, I used was an old phone given to me by my elder sister. It could only make phone calls and play games. I used it to call my parents when I got home.”

Participants reported that they opened their first social media account between the ages of 8 and 13, noting that their first accounts were either Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram. Social media was more likely to be introduced by peers or influencers, while other media was more likely to be introduced by parents or advertisements. Student leader participant

When discussing social media, participants reported learning about new social media from peers in school, influencers (social media users with a large number of followers), or advertisements on social media sites.

When asked how they would anticipate learning about new media, one participant stated,

“I only find out new media from my friends...people would probably be talking about it at school.”

When asked the same question, another participant said they learn about new media from *“...my friends... well not even them...but also people on social media...hying it up.”*

4.6.2 Consumption of Media

Again, their motivation affected the usability of social media such that how much time participants spent exposed to media and their feelings about their own time spent using media were crucial in the discussion. It also includes information about how participants compared their use to others in their lives. Time spent on social media varied. Some participants reported that they spent more time on social media on the weekends than weekdays. For instance, one participant said:

“On weekends, like if I hang out with friends, we’ll surf the net together and take pictures we can post on Facebook so it’ll be around a few hours. If I’m by myself, a lot of times, I just watch my notifications and react to them, but it’s probably still around a few hours.”

Another participant reported spending more time during the weekends *“because during the school week I stay in school for longer hours and visit social media when I get home from school.”* Other participants reported that they spent less time on weekends using media compared to school days as they spent more time with family. Many participants felt that they used media too much, while others felt that they had a good balance. When asked about their feelings about their media consumption, most participants reported feeling that their use was “unhealthy” or “too much.” One participant stated,

“I sometimes feel like my use is too much. I’m usually on my phone. Before I had it, I used to go outside, now I don’t anymore.”

A different participant said, *“I think sometimes I use it too much...I’m always on it. If I get a notification and see it, I look at it right away.”*

Another participant highlighted the importance of finding a balance by saying:

“Um I feel like sometimes I can use it a little too much because I should like go like outside or hang out with my family. But sometimes I feel like I just need my alone time too”.

Participants perceived that they used media less than their peers, but more than their parents. Participants were also asked to reflect upon the time their peers and parents

spent on social media. All the participants reported that they believe their classmates used social media more than they did. Per one participant,

“I know people who spend 6 hours per day on their phone. I think it’s pretty dangerous because it’s a waste of time.”

4.6.3. Regarding Parent Use As Motivation

Most of the participants indicated that they used media more than their parents did. Throughout the interviews, participants largely talked about the role their parents and other family members had on them in the digital space. A variety of common messages were provided to participants in their early teens, including fear, as well as the use of interventions by parents. Some students experience an approval process through their parents for any social media activity. Participants also explained a disconnection their parents faced not understanding or really knowing much about technology or social media. This resulted in the participant’s ability to explore and experiment on their own and or to creatively hide their online activity from their parent. Student leader participants describe their parents’ action as an attempt to control or supervise their activity online. These included setting rules such as not allowing them to join a social media site or reviewing each post the student want to share. A participant explained the restriction on her online activity growing up. She said:

“The only reason my parents allowed me to have Facebook was because they made an account too and I had to friend them. So it was like them being able to keep an eye on what I was doing.”

Other participants related to being supervised by their parents due to sharing technology tools. Another participant shared,

“Everything [social media activity] was always under the consent of my parents because they had access to my phone. I am not allowed to have password either. It is possible for them to answer my calls and see my messages as well even though they hardly do that.”

A participant joined her first social media site, Facebook later in junior high school. Her mom was involved in this process.

“My mom was right there next to me helping me fill out all the information. My parents are pretty strict to start with so they would always like to check to see who I was friends with or you know if I wanted to post something I would be like, I would have to ask them like is this okay like can I post this.”

Some participants experienced extreme versions of supervision. A participant expressed frustration with how controlling her mom was with her activities. For this participant, her mother used supervision along with messages rooted in fear. The participant stated:

“My mom created a Facebook so she could be my friend so she could make sure I wasn't doing anything. Seriously! She generally, I mean I knew much more about social media than she did so she didn't really instruct me on anything, but she wanted to keep tabs on what I was doing.”

With the awareness that their parents were heavily monitoring their social media activity, participants used creative measures to still join the online conversation. A participant shared,

“I know at one point my mom didn't allow us to have social media, so it was like I learned how to use the privacy settings because I didn't want to get caught.”

A participant similarly echoed this behavior,

“I learnt how to use the privacy settings because I didn't want to get caught in that sense or I just didn't want—I didn't want certain people to see certain things.”

Learning and using privacy settings was a common method participants used to hide their activity from their parents, both when the parents knew they were online or if they had a secret profile.

Finally another participant explained how her parents were involved in her social media activity as a teen,

“Well for me, my parents are always super protective about what we do on the Internet. I had my friend create my Facebook account, but my parents didn't know about it for a while.”

In these accounts, students sought out tools not approved by their parents. Most of the time, their parents found out, and they got into trouble. The attempt from parents to control student behavior was observed while participants were in high school. Having rules and expectations was one piece of the influence on social media activity. However, parenting tactics did not necessarily minimize their desire for or usage of social media. What did have an impact on their view of digital communication tools were the messages their parents would send about social media and the Internet.

Overall students experienced conflict related to their social media use with their parents. From getting in trouble, to hearing fear-filled messages about what happens to kids online, to being control—these parental interventions resulted in students using Facebook subtly.

Although the participants admitted that using Facebook helped them keep up with the trends they stated that time spent on Social media could have a negative impact on sleep hygiene. Most of the participants indicated that the usage of media has affected their sleep as they have frequently stayed up late on social media. Some participants noted that it has been hard to stop engaging with media and that they have lost track of time while using media. One participant said:

“I feel like Facebook has affected my sleep very much. I do not sleep until very late in the night and I check my Facebook feeds as soon as I wake up. I almost sleep during the first lessons. It takes up most of my time. I’m trying to cut down so I can sleep earlier but the content and people and videos can be so addicting.”

Another participant reported feeling as if they “*get kind of lost in it*” at night time.

Along with feeling that media affects their sleep, participants also felt that media affects the sleep of their peers as well. The same findings were taken from observations and questioning the colleagues of participants. They know this because “*a number of students sleep during class because they are up late on social media and stuff.*”

Another participant noted,

“so many students come to school sleep deprived and they’ll complain that they didn’t get enough sleep because of Facebook and other social networking sites”.

This further explains the assertion by Victoria Rideout states that among the younger generation, the time they spend on social media, what she calls “entertainment media” is “more than twice the average amount of time spent in school each year.”

Participants reported that similar to their own experience, they felt that their peers “lose track of time” or “get super into it.” Two participants in the study reported that they did not feel social media had a positive or negative impact on their sleep hygiene, although both noted that it has negatively impacted them in the past. One of those participants stated:

“Social media affected my sleep back when I had my phone. I don’t know, I would just stay up to text my friends and to keep up with them. Now, I can’t do that anymore. I had to stop and focus on school. The other reported having a similar experience, noting “I don’t think...it hasn’t affected my sleep anymore.”

4.6.4 Social Influence

This cluster illustrates the participants’ perceptions regarding how others might or might not have influenced their media use. Participants discussed how parents, peers, family members, and personal choice have played a role in choosing the media with which they have engaged. Most student leaders reported their parents had influence on their social media use. A participant stated,

“I think I use [the social media that I use] because like probably because I see my mom post a lot and I want to see what she is posting.”

Contrarily some participants stated that some social media was known to be used by older generations and that they have avoided or have not been interested in certain social media because older generations were known to use it. For example, one participant said,

“Um I feel like Facebook...I don't want to say it's for old people 'cause like everybody uses it but it's like I don't know...I just don't see myself on the app even though I have an account”.

Other participants' responses supported this statement as well, indicating that they were not interested in using Facebook because *“only old people use Facebook now.”* Other family members also played a role in choice of media. Along with peers and parents, some participants reported being influenced to use social media by other family members including siblings, cousins, and aunts. Some indicated that they were influenced to use the media so that they could connect with family members. For example, one participant said,

“My brother also uses Facebook messenger. I use it to text back and forth with him.”

Another participant indicated that it has helped them stay connected with family members who are in other schools.

Feelings of belonging and ease of communication with peers were a major factor in social media use. Participants indicated that social media is used to communicate with

their peers and that frequent communication has made them feel a sense of belonging.

When asked why they downloaded Facebook, one participant said,

“I couldn’t really text my friends before that like if I was bored or if I wanted to talk I get it because all my friends had it.”

Another participant shared,

“I started using Facebook cause everyone else had it and I wanted in on the action!”

High school students like some other adolescents likely would not use social media if their friends did not use it. Participants felt that engaging with media helped support peer connection, noting that they likely would not use social media if their peers did not have it. One participant said,

“I don’t think I would use any social media...I only use it to talk to people so it’s not that important to me.”

Social media informed what was trendy and popular for adolescents. Some participants also felt that social media could be a good way to stay up to date. They expressed that social media has been important for them to be able to keep up with “trends” and “learn what is popular.” Per one participant;

“There are a lot of trends to keep up with, like you learn what’s popular...clothing, the things we say, like ‘LoL laugh out loud, asap, as soon as possible, dances.”

Some peers specified that they have been influenced by peers because it gave them a sense of belonging. Although others influenced adolescents, personal interest was still important when using social media. While participants acknowledged that they are

often influenced by others in their lives, they also highlighted the importance of having a choice when making decisions regarding their use. When one participant was asked about how their usage has been influenced by others, he replied,

“I’m on the Wes-G page like my other colleagues I don’t really join groups or follow celebrities or any other similar to friends. I never really cared what groups they join. I don’t even really ask them the pages they follow on Facebook.”

When a different participant was asked why they felt that they were not influenced by others, she stated:

“I’m not that kind of person. I have a different mindset. I’m different because they care too much about what others think. I’m not really like that. If you think a certain way about me, I don’t know what to tell you. I’m not going to change so you can be happy.”

Another said, *“I don’t feel like I just use social media based on what my friends or family choose. I like using them for myself.”*

Some participants noted that their own personal interests were a big influence on the media with which they engaged. A participant shared that *“I don’t use other social media friends use because I think it’s a waste of time.”*

Upon analyzing the results, the hypothesis that the users of social networking sites create online identities based on positive feedback internalize that identity and present it offline is supported because there is a correlation. The positive feedback on a person’s online posts would lead to the user placing that aspect of their online presence into their offline identity although there are certain aspects of their online

identity are independent of each other. The age bracket of the participants and their online activity are dependent and can be seen as such.

In regard to Goffman's (1959) work on self- presentation, the sample characteristics show that a majority of the users agreed in some form that their online identity and offline identity reflected one another. Likewise a majority of participants agreed to some degree that receiving 'likes' on their posts made them feel good about themselves. From this it is obvious that the online identity that a user presents is validated and is reflected and maintained offline. This suggested that because the online presentation is popular among peers the user continues his presentation offline as a way to convey this specific image of themselves to others.

4.7 Analysis of Facebook Posts

The second part of this study was to examine the Facebook posts of the student leaders within the three months of the study. The student leaders weaved the posts around education, social, faith based content and advertising. Slater (2002) believes that you become what you type. By having control of one's online identity, the possibility for multiple identities becomes available. This confirms Buckingham's (2007) identity formation process which declares, "identity is something we do, rather than something we are". In applying these concepts to the table below, digital identity can be observed by the actual behavior exhibited online by students as they tell the stories of who they are at that point in time. The research revealed more about digital identity as well as how lives are enacted and negotiated online and developed overtime through the influence of technology. Teens specifically are at a heightened state of development as they explore their interests and their sense of self. They are

highly susceptible to peer feedback and may change direction as they achieve greater levels of self-awareness (Arnett 2000). In addition it is vital to note that the range of available platforms caters to a diverse array of users and functionalities including sharing information, gauging interest and building relationships (Biddix, 2010; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Social media like Facebook creates a platform for diverse activities.

Frequency Distribution of Participants Posts on Facebook

Frequency	Advertising	Faith Content	Based Intellectual openness	Social Trust
None	2 (10%)	5(25%)	-	-
2x	10 (50%)		2 (10%)	-
3x		4 (20%)	2 (10%)	15 (75%)
4 or more	9 (45%)	2 (10%)	-	10 (50%)

Faith Based Content

Religion online originated with websites and discussion boards that created spaces where communities of faith could express themselves (Helland 2002,2012) Social networking sites provide users with the ability to build bonds, make connections and become part of communities of faith (Miller et al., 2013). As SNS are appealing to people of faith, it is noticed that the student leaders identified themselves with religion and various denominational posts through their engagement on Facebook. Most of the posts they shared portrayed them as Christians. This adds up to the assertion that among the network publics, individuals “gather for social, cultural and civic

purposes” connecting with diverse people and communities of varying beliefs and religion (Boyd 2011). A post on a participant’s wall was;

“Mention where you fellowshiped today, you may meet your church member.

I am a proud Wesleyan! We ... one!”

Other posts were:

Leaving home and returning safely is such an underrated blessings Chale!

“Your husband or Wife is cheating on you, and the only way to get him back forever is to do 30days fasting and prayers. Are you going to do it...?”

Family, pray for me to get a new phone. Three days no Facebook. Good morning ooo Facebook, August 2021.

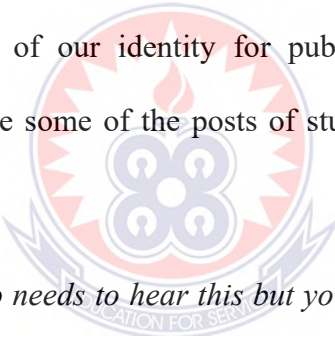
The relatively wide spread use of social media for proselytizing, by individuals and institutions alike has been both commended and criticized. Supporters argue that social media allows believers to participate in two-way conversations that build relationships (Rosen-Molina 2009). In addition, it connects younger generations to religion (Brunet 2014).

Facebook technological affordances have the capability to influence how and even why people of faith are motivated to utilize Facebook. Facebook makes the recording, archiving and even live streaming of event possible. It also enhances the visibility of the content. Observing from the walls of the participants as well, some participants have shared certain religious programmes as well and this explains the assertion that individuals could share a link to a live stream (Murashko, 2011).

Conclusively, by leveraging multimedia elements (photos, memes, gifs, text and video), users create and recreate shared cultural and spiritual experiences (Treem & Leonardi, 2012)

Social trust

Posts grouped under this section ranged from inspiration or motivational quotes either as captions on photos or posts on newsfeed. Others were also related to love, relationship and romance. This explains the assertion of Wood and Smith (2005) that people infer their qualities of their identity based on gender, race, clothing and other non-verbal characteristics in face-to –face interactions but since many of these cues are visible online, internet terminologies (social media) offer us the possibility of controlling more aspects of our identity for public consideration than has been possible before. Below are some of the posts of student leaders which elaborate the assertion:



“I don’t know who needs to hear this but your happy place should never be a person”

“Every girl has done this; Call him and tell him that I’m crying”

“No matter what you say about your present relationship, know that relationship is like politics, the next is worse.” (August, 2021)

‘Inhale some positivity, and suffocate not on the many negatives. Take care of yourself, your body, your mind, what you allow in and out. Embrace peace of mind always, as your priority, hold calm in your storms’ (July 1st, 2021)

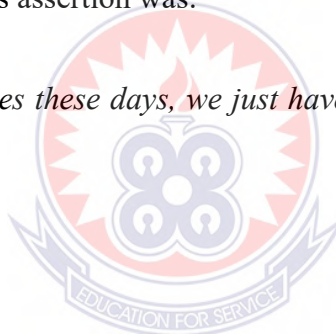
“I’m not negotiating my value with anyone. I’m worth it, I’ve been worth it and will forever be worth it” (July 12th, 2021)

“Darling, love yourself. It is with the same inspiration that others will look on to love you.” (June 5th, 2021)

Sharing these kinds of posts about themselves is a way of constructing and performing identities on social media. Marwick (2013) affirms that users self-consciously create virtual depictions of themselves and one way of understanding such self-representation is the information and materials people choose to show others on Facebook profile or Twitter stream.

Another post to affirm this assertion was:

We no longer have families these days, we just have people we share surnames (July 31st, 2021).



Educational

According to Wesseling (2012), there are four major activities practiced by Facebook users which include information-sharing (receiving/providing information and generating ideas), sharing for educational purposes (for learning, problem-solving and sharing work) social purposes (retrieving personal information about others or themselves, chatting, making appointments and generally keeping in touch) leisure (gaming and relaxing). In general, students have positive perceptions towards using social networking tools as learning mediums: and they went beyond that when they agreed with a suggestion to adopt social networking as an e-learning platform (Tasir, Al-Dheleai, Harun and Shukor 2011). The findings in the table revealed that student

leaders post contents in line with general education, enlightenment and with a sense of humor attached and not necessarily on their course related.

Some of the posts were:

“Which word do you struggle to pronounce when growing up? #oneword per post” (June 6th, 2021)

“So the homework they give children these days, is it for them or for their parents?” (June 28th, 2021)

A follow up comment on the post read:

“One kid’s homework he brought to me to help him read; ‘What’s the average temperature of a fish in Indonesia?’ Can you imagine? I told the kid I honestly didn’t know. How do I answer this?”

It is certain that the way in which students use Facebook can determine the effects of its use on students’ academic achievements. Junco (2012) found that when students use Facebook for educational purposes such as gathering information, checking to see what friends are up to and sharing information (sharing links) it results in positive academic outcome better than when they use it merely for socializing such as status update and chatting.

Advertising

Facebook marketing is a platform that offers a variety of highly targeted paid advertisements and organic posts, allowing brands to put their products and services in front of the massive audience. Advertising on Facebook ranges from video ads, images ad, carousel ads, collection ads, slideshow ads and lead generation ads. Chi

(2011) defines social media marketing as a connection between brands and consumers while offering a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction. Posts from the walls of participants indicated their use of Facebook to advertise. Some of the posts were;

“This is a great initiative...SHS leavers should take advantage of it. @ Andis barber1 is teaching all SHS graduates free barbering course.” (August 30th, 2021)

“Hello, Have you ordered for your combo yet? #EviviFriday from Esgot Local Bar gh. Please share to enjoy discount on drinks and deliveries”

“On the real... you notice that clients that don't like paying well are the ones that always give headaches. Unnecessary pressure, comparison and tins...bruuh. You don't pay well but you want everything some.” Facebook July, 2021.

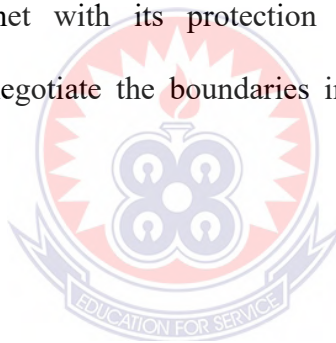
Cox (2010) investigated the correlation between age and attitude and found that social network user attitude toward online advertising formats (i.e. blogs, video and brand channel or page) differed to some extent across age groups. She explained that users who fall in the 18-28 age brackets had strong positive attitudes toward blogs, video and brand channel ad formats. This presupposes that the teen student leader who has started advertising on the Facebook platform is only warming up to this stage.

The findings of this research agree with the assertion of Boyd (2014) whether in school or in informal settings, youth need opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge to engage with contemporary technology effectively and meaningfully. Becoming literate in a networked age requires hard work regardless of age. Again, it

further stresses the point that the identities that are evoked at certain times depend on identity importance that is the relative ranking of a social identity within the hierarchically organized self-concept (Kleine & Kleine, 2000).

4.8 Summary

This chapter provided results of the findings and analysis of data collected. It sought to answer the research questions and also analyzed the findings from the interviews and focus group discussions. Long and informal interviews were carried out with the subjects regarding the perceptions of student leaders on their identity negotiation on Facebook and the motivation for using social media. The interviews from the chapter revealed that the internet with its protection of individual privacy provided participants a space to negotiate the boundaries imposed on them by cultural and societal rules.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The concluding chapter presents the summary of the findings, analysis and conclusions drawn from the study. The chapter further discusses the limitations of the study and offers recommendations for researchers and users with an interest in students' leadership development and the use of other emerging social networking sites particularly Facebook and identity negotiation of mainly student leaders in senior high school.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The following vital findings were revealed in the quest to answer the proposed research questions guiding the study.

Social media has given rise to a different genre of communication where conversations are quick and information is easily relayed. The responses received from the participants during the data collection and analysis indicate that in communicating, they either engage people in Facebook messenger, they send pokes or they simply tag people they wish to communicate with under certain posts so that they comment under those posts.

Research question one sought to describe how student leaders construct their identity on Facebook. The study established that student leaders like other Facebook users use the platform to communicate with their friends, stream for trending news, build a network of other friends and construct and establish a social media presence and

identity. These young adults have noticed that beyond the communicative dimensions, they can hide behind anonymity to share their thoughts and fears and to relate to the many experiences of 'one's self on the many pages they find themselves in. They also have the opportunity to keep abreast with many blogs that they consider educative, informative and entertaining.

Research question number two focused on the motivation for using Facebook. Tosun (2012) states that the main uses for Facebook include maintaining long distance relationships, game playing/entertainment, photo related activities, organizing social events, passive observations, establishing new friendships and initiating/terminating romantic relationships (Tosun 2012). Tosun argues that expressing one's self on the internet is a way to form close relationships with people that are met through social networking sites and that users use Facebook as a social substitute to create offline relationships and strengthen existing relationships (Tosun 2012).

After analyzing the data, Tosun concluded that Facebook is a buffer for those with issues articulating their thoughts and feelings in person and is used as a substitute for establishing relationships (Tosun 2012). The ideas within the Tosun article which is evident in this research as well regarding Facebook as a social substitute to create relationships supports the Identity negotiation theory within this research that more people use Facebook to find themselves and construct their identity based on a number of factors like culture and geographical location.

This research concludes that increased introversion causes social networking to be used as a substitute while an increased extroversion causes social networking to be seen as an extension. As introversion increases, the user seeks social networking to substitute those interpersonal interactions and based on the feedback can create a

more extroverted identity that in turns becomes an extension of this created identity. Essentially, the user turns their introversion into a form of extroversion through an identity formed online.

5.2 Conclusion of Study

To sum up, the results of the study indicates the posts of student leaders through the social context of Facebook and the real life interaction of peers aids the construction of identity and this is informed by the ‘ideals’ of society. Students leaders construct ideal and favourable identities on Facebook and in real life through their posts and how they present themselves to their superiors and subordinates. Their images are filtered and some information concealed from their friends on Facebook.

Also, as a way of validating their status, they send requests to be friends with colleagues and friend, they join groups and pages that serve in their interest and attend Facebook paid advertised programmes, their peers maybe present. In some cases, they tend to buy from the Facebook advertisements and play games as well as challenge their online friends to these games.

From the study, it can also be conclude that social networking is a testing ground. Davis (2012) argues that social networking sites provide a means of self-expression for users but by having these outlets of expression creates an issue of balancing multiple selves and their respective audience. The use of social networking creates a space in which the user feels freer to express themselves online and provides the user with chances to work through certain issues they might be dealing with in their daily lives (Davis 2012). The outlets of social networking allow the user to make changes

to their self-identity that they would not have necessarily make offline due to confidence issues (Davis 2012).

In addition, the ability for users to present their identity in a variety of forms is an affordance of social media tools. In terms of identity development, Junco saw youth as able to ‘test out’ or try on their different facets of their identity their online self-presentation.

This notwithstanding, understanding social media users has options for presenting digital identity come back to actual student identity development. Junco (2014) differentiated these different online identities as real identity, psuedonymity and anonymity. Real identity includes personal information and pictures. Psuedonymity is a fake account, while anonymity is real identity without personal information that identifies user.

The use of qualitative research yielded more conclusive evidence and led to a better understanding of the participants’ responses and feelings about their understanding of self-online and offline thus having such information have led to better accuracy and validity of results. The research allowed for users to fully describe how they felt about their understanding of self within the areas of online and offline socializing.

5.3 Recommendation

A possible direction for future research can involve the incorporation of additional theoretical model. For example, one possible new perspective might be Charles Cooley’s idea of the looking glass self which states that an individual self-concept is shaped on the interpersonal interactions and perceptions of those interacting with the

individual would further create an understanding of the effect of social networking sites on identity formation (Cooley 1902).

Similarly, Robert Jay Lifton's (1971) protean self which discusses the shifts in identity as a result of mass media which would help to create an understanding on how the formation of identity and understanding of self is an ever changing process.

As Davis states within her article, some users might "forget what they are trying to be which leads to feeling of being unauthentic and possibly damaging to how the user sees themselves (Davis 2012). She further suggests that the ideas of obligation, consisting of the other self, interpersonal relationship, online social norm and broad community level values which all limit the multiplicity of the user's online and offline identities (Davis 2012)

In her conclusion, Davis stated that social networking allows for multiple personas and outlets for personal issues creates a testing ground that is practice for real life. Testing is being done for one person online see how people react then trying it in real life (Davis 2012). Although the use of social networking is mostly positive Davis also discusses the positive that is "practice for real life".

5.4 Limitations

Due to time constraint, only the selected respondents from the students leaders were used that is the head prefects, the protocol prefects and the chaplaincy prefects totaling six participants. The case study was done within averagely a year coupled with school breaks and vacation. Data collection posed a limitation as respondents did

not always have access to their electronic devices to post as often as they desired. This posed a difficulty in achieving the initial sample size as proposed in the study.

Another limitation of this research was the implementation of an anonymous online survey which might have led to the respondents not answering fully or with their full attention. The issue of an online survey is that there are too many distractions that might cause the surveyor responses to not be taken seriously by participants.

The lack of incentive for participating is another factor of the interviews and focus group discussions. Since there is no payment or incentive reward, participants do not feel obligated to respond fully or take time to answer questions honestly and thoughtfully.

5.5 Recommendation for Future Research

This study focused on how student leaders in pre tertiary institutions particularly senior high school negotiate their identity on Facebook and in real life.

In conducting of this study, it was realized that the nature of digital data, the attitude of social media users, the external influence of others on the teen student leader and particularly the endless stream of raw data make social networking sites such as Facebook a researcher friendly arena. This study therefore suggests that future researchers will probe into how leaders in tertiary institutions, students from private high school institutions and the ordinary young adult negotiate their identity on other social networking sites. A research in this direction will add up to the body of knowledge gathered in this research.

Also, future research using the uses and gratification theory and identity construction theory can also probe into how social media users portray various attitudes on digital space and how they construct their identity in groups they join on social media. This research, I believe will also be a strand of research in identity negotiation on Facebook and other social networking sites.

The growing and continuous updates, the framework developed for this study can be applied to a variety of upgraded Facebook formats. This study therefore proposes that future research should focus on applying the methodology to the updates of Facebook formats.

Also, there is the need to research a larger sample size over a longer period to determine the impact of identity negotiation of content creators on other fast growing social networking sites.



INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Facebook Usability

- a. What is your motivation for making a Facebook profile?
- b. What activities do you do online?
- c. What online behaviors do you demonstrate?
- d. With whom do you establish relationships?
- e. How do you build relationships on Facebook?
- f. What inspires you to read others' profile?
- g. How do you sustain online and relate to offline friends?
- h. How much time do you invest in online activities?
- i. What are the challenges you face using social media?
- j. How do you use hash tags on Facebook?
- k. Do you think hash tags are abused?



2. Leadership

- a. What is the impact of the online interaction in your life and in your leadership development?
- b. What do you do to stay motivated?
- c. What is the biggest compliment you have received in your current role?
- d. Are there any duties you dislike doing?
- e. How will you recommend combating hate speech on social media?
- f. Which of your traits make you a strong leader?
- g. Are there opportunities for growth and advancement as student leaders?

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