UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS' SOCIAL MEDIA USE: A STUDY OF

SELECTED PERSONALITIES IN GHANA

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A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND
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JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Delight Jessica Agboada declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either 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 ANDY OFORI-BIRIKORANG

SIGNATURE: …………………………………………………….

DATE: ………………………………

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the kinds of posts CEOs share on social media and further investigates how the concepts of self-branding and corporate branding are enacted through the posts. This research, through the lens of Goffman's Presentation of Self and the theory of identity construction, and anchored on a case study design interrogates Facebook and Twitter posts of two purposively selected CEOs. This study indicates that the selected CEOs share posts on governance, their personalities, global issues, social and organisational subjects. Also, the study reveals that the CEOs present themselves positively to appeal to their social media followers. This assertion is supported by the CEOs branding of themselves as organisational leaders, corporate spokespersons, social commentators, influencers, globetrotters, religious people and gender advocates. Further, the study showed that the images of the organisations the selected CEOs head are shaped positively through their social media use. In effect, CEOs portray their organisations as competent, innovative and impactful. The study concludes that the CEOs construct, modify, maintain and promote their identities and that of their organisations on social media.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study, concentrating on the background, statement of problem, objectives and research questions. It further provides the significance, delimitation of the study and the organisation of the research.

1.1   Background of the Study

The term 'Web 2.0' was officially coined in 2004 by Dale Dougherty, a vice-president of O'Reilly Media Inc. during a team discussion on a potential future conference about the Web (O'Reilly, 2005 as cited in Anderson, 2007). This origination of Web 2.0 is reiterated by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as they espouse the view that Web 2.0 is a term that was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilize the World Wide Web; that is, as a platform where content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion. Applications such as personal web pages, Encyclopedia Britannica Online, and the idea of content publishing belong to the era of Web 1.0. They are replaced by blogs, wikis, and collaborative projects in Web 2.0.

To Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), user generated content is the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media. The term, which achieved broad popularity in 2005, is usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users. Bringing these two concepts together, Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010, 2012) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 61). Also,

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social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Web 2.0 can be regarded as an umbrella term, encompassing new collaborative technologies whereas social media can be described as a result of applying Web 2.0 technologies in online social environment (Bonsón & Flores, 2011; Morrison, 2009 as cited in Vuori, 2012). Ahlqvist, Bäck, Heinonen, and Halonen (2010) thus define Web 2.0 to refer to collaborative technologies whereas social media is understood to relate to using Web 2.0 technology in a social setting, drawing on the features of user-generated content, communities and networks, enabled by Web 2.0 technologies.

Bickart and Schindler (2001) believe that the social media revolution which almost everybody is cognizant of these days is nothing else than the internet going back to its roots. This is so because in its early days the internet started as a collection of newsgroups where individuals could read or post bulletin board-like messages in categories as geeky as "high tech" and "science fiction". The most popular newsgroups system Usenet was developed in 1979 and publicly established in 1980 by Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis, two graduate students from Duke University. Soon these newsgroups developed into real discussion platforms which allowed individuals to exchange user-generated content with each other – not much different than the discussion forums present on the World Wide Web today, which have become such an important source of consumer information. This is further explicated by Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) that "today's social media revolution" can therefore be seen as an evolution back to the roots, since it re-transforms the internet to what it was initially created for – a platform to facilitate information exchange between its users" (p. 102).

boyd and Ellison (2007) define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) reiterate the above assertion by defining social networking sites as applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other. These personal profiles can include any type of information, including photos, video, audio files, and blogs.

Popular social media sites in Ghana are Facebook and Twitter (Alexa, 2016). *Facebook* was launched in February 2004, "originally for connecting the students of Harvard College, where users can populate their own profile page with personal information and build up a set of friends. Users are able to send messages to one another, join topical social groups, and share photographs, videos, weblog posts and brief public messages on a bulletin board called "the wall" (Golder, Wilkinson & Hubennan, 2007 as cited in Hopkins, 2012). The mission of Facebook is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. The monthly active users of Facebook stand at 1.79 billion while the average daily active users stand at 1.18 billion as at September 30, 2016 (Facebook, 2016).

Twitter, the second most popular social media site in Ghana was launched in 2006 and broke into the mainstream in 2008–2009 (Marwick & boyd, 2011). The microblogging site Twitter lets people post quick 140-character updates, or 'tweets', to a network of followers. Twitter asks participants 'What's happening?' resulting in a constantly-updated stream of short messages ranging from the mundane to breaking news, shared links, and thoughts on life. Tweets can be posted and read from the web,

SMS, or third-party clients for desktop computers, smartphones, and other devices. This integration allows for instant postings of photos, on-the-ground reports, and quick replies to other users. While Twitter can be used as a broadcast medium, the dialogic nature of Twitter and its ability to facilitate conversation has contributed substantially to its popularity (Marwick & boyd, 2011).

1.1.1 Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) are of the view that there seems to be confusion among managers and academic researchers alike as to what exactly should be included under this term, and how Social Media differ from the seemingly-interchangeable related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. Weller (2015) corroborates the above assertion that not even the term "social media" has a universally agreed definition, and there is no standard typology of social media platforms upon which everyone agrees. In spite of the aforementioned views, Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley, (2011) opine that social media are the online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. In the view of these authors, social media can take many different forms, including text, images, audio, and video. These sites typically use technologies such as blogs, message boards, podcasts, wikis, and vlogs to allow users to interact. To Cann et al (2011), social media affords users the opportunity to generate online contents themselves. Marwick (2010) describes social media and Web 2.0 to refer to user-generated content published online through channels that combine collaboration and participation, such as video, audio, blogs, and so forth.

Social media just like most concepts has a number of benefits and downsides as the concept develops and is applied in the daily lives of users. According to Tench and Jones (2015):

> Social media offers a much more effective and efficient method of communication, as it reduces the number of intermediaries and messages can be better targeted. Messages can be personalised and have much wider reach and impact than those communicated via traditional methods of communication. Through tools of social media such as online discussion forums, the nature and ordering of the modern economy, business and society can be discussed, challenged and debated. Social media allow communities of interest to form, shape and influence debates and can be used to hold corporations and corporate communicators to account. They can also be used to help us live fuller, richer and more rewarding lives as employees, consumers and citizens (p. 292).

Further, Tench and Jones (2015) highlighted the challenges of social media as put forth by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2007:

> Challenges related to inclusion, cultural fragmentation, content quality and security and privacy have been raised. A greater divide between digitally literate users and others may occur and cultural fragmentation may take place with greater individualisation of the cultural environment. Other challenges relate to information accuracy and quality (including inappropriate or illegal content) where everybody can contribute without detailed checks and balances. Other issues relate to privacy, safety on the internet and possibly adverse impacts of intensive internet use (p. 293).

1.1.2 Social Media Use

Literature reviewed (Brandfog, 2016; Kietzmann et al 2011; Weber Shandwick, 2012) indicates that social media use could either be referred to as social media participation

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or social media engagement. An online survey conducted by Weber Shandwick (2012) in collaboration with KRC Research define social media participation as "posting messages, videos, pictures, etc. on a social media site."

Social media *participation* is termed online interactivity, or interactive online participation, and can be accomplished either by user–content interactivity or by user–user interactivity (Ksiazek, Peer & Lessard, 2016). User–content interactivity takes place when a user interacts with the content and its producers, while user–user interactivity refers to the interaction between two or more users. To Tench and Jones (2015), participation and engagement can take the form of online conversations, blogs, wikis, social networking, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and other social media applications. It can help bring people together through the formation of new online communities of interest.

Business executives' social media use facilitates the sharing of information among employees and stakeholders, has positive impact on the organisation's reputation, and also builds relationships with the news media (Weber Shandwick, 2012).

1.1.3 Chief Executive Officers and Social Media Use

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the growth of social media is not limited to teenagers, either; members of Generation X, now 35 - 44 years old, increasingly populate the ranks of joiners, spectators, and critics. It is therefore reasonable to say that Social Media represents a revolutionary new trend that should be of interest to companies operating in online space - or any space, for that matter. Although it is clear that for better or for worse social media is very powerful, many business executives are reluctant or unable to develop strategies and allocate resources to engage effectively with social media.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) believe that the concept of social media is top of the agenda for many business executives today. Reeves (2013) opines that any leader who is not engaged on social media today is like the leaders of 50 years ago who insisted on sending a telegram instead of dialling a phone. She further reveals that CEOs are under the pressure to appear accessible and authentic as they have a responsibility to their stakeholders, customers and employees to be visible and social media serves as a medium through which this visibility, accessibility and authenticity can be realised.

In 2016, Brandfog surveyed CEOs use of social media and indicated that they expect that in the next 18-24 months, social media engagement at the executive level will become the norm across many organisations globally. This is an indication that more and more CEOs are getting to know the advantages and disadvantages of social media use and thus may embrace it sooner than later. Brandfog (2016) further indicates that contrary to misconceptions like CEOs do not have time for social media or CEOs engaging on social channels is too risky, survey results indicate a high level of interest from the public for hearing directly from business leaders. It was also evident that CEOs who do not participate in social media encounter the risk of being marginalised while the more social-savvy business leaders become increasingly prominent. This view is further buttressed by Reeves (2013) who states that CEOs who shun social media risk losing touch with some of their most lucrative customers, prospects and influencers.

Porter, Anderson and Nhotsavang (2015) aver that some CEOs are sceptical about the value of social media and also lack understanding about how to actually use social media tools strategically. Inasmuch as there exist sceptics on the use of social media among business executives and by extension CEOs, Brandfog (2016) identify three main advantages of social media engagement that when put together demonstrate how

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crucial it is for CEOs to participate on social media in order to build a stellar brand. To them, CEOs social media participation strengthens brand trust, supports effective leadership and effective communications with stakeholders. Also, CEOs' social media presence and activeness are also believed to showcase innovativeness and enhance their companies' image and reputation (Weber Shandwick, 2012). Consequently, "social CEOs" who can engage their stakeholders in genuine conversations are believed to be the new wave of corporate leaders (Weber Shandwick, 2012).

1.2   Statement of the Problem

A considerable number of research has so far been conducted after the emergence of the phenomena of Web 2.0 and social media on their different aspects using diverse methods of research (Brandfog, 2016; Jameson, 2014; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Kietzmann et al, 2011; Reeves, 2013; Tsai & Men, 2016) but in spite of all these research works, Weller (2016) believes that after roughly ten years of social media studies we do not yet know everything about social media uses and its users.

In their study on *Social CEOs: The effects of CEOs' communication styles and parasocial interaction on social networking sites*, Tsai and Men (2016) concentrate on the communication styles of CEOs on social media and its impacts and illuminate how CEOs' responsive and assertive communications induce the CEOs' followers to perceive the corporate leaders as amicable role models and caring friends, which in turn improve their trust of, satisfaction with, and advocacy for the company.

Reeves (2013) in her study, *"the case for CEOs and social media"*, focuses on whether business executives use social media and whether they are interactive on these social media platforms and revealed that 66% of the CEOs of the world's top 50

companies are social with 18% of CEOs worldwide being social and that 49% of corporate reputation is attributable to the CEO; companies with a higher reputational status have social CEOs. She further avers that a CEO who blogs consistently and well can build an enormous amount of goodwill for the company he or she leads.

Employing a quantitative survey, Brandfog (2016) concluded their study on CEO's level of engagement on social media that CEOs were slowly engaging the social media phenomenon as 93% of respondents agree that CEOs who actively participate in social media can build better connections with customers, employees, and investors.

Jameson (2014) also studied CEOs use of social media by showing a boundary crossing between the private-public spaces and the personal-professional lives of CEOs. The case shows how social media can significantly affect CEOs communication by encouraging boundary crossing. She concluded by suggesting that researchers who take a discourse approach might investigate how CEOs and other business writers create, nurture, and protect their textual identities in social media.

It can therefore be deduced that previous researches on CEOs social media use have focused primarily on their level and angle of engagement, used mostly quantitative approaches in collecting and analyzing data and was done outside Ghana using Fortune 500 and Inc. 500 CEOs (Brandfog, 2016; Jameson, 2014) without investigating how CEOs use social media to brand themselves and their organisations.

Therefore this study sought to investigate CEOs' social media use in branding themselves and their organisations using a multi-theoretical approach and anchored on a qualitative content analysis methodology.

1.3   Research Objectives

Based on the foundation established by the statement of the problem, this research sought to:

1. investigate the kinds of posts CEOs share on their social media platforms.

2. examine how CEOs use the posts to perform a self-branding of their personalities.

3. examine how posts of CEOs reflect the organisations they represent.

1.4   Research Questions

The research aimed to answer the following questions.

RQ. 1 What kinds of posts do CEOs share on their social media platforms?

RQ. 2 How do CEOs use the posts to perform self-branding of their personalities?

RQ. 3 How do the posts reflect the organisations they represent?

1.5   Significance of the Study

Conducting research on this subject is of value to academia and stakeholders in multiple ways. Firstly, it will increase the knowledge CEOs have on their social media use and thus add value to the way CEOs communicate with their various publics since there have been a few news stories and blog posts on the social media use of CEOs in Ghana.

Also, the findings of this study shall enlighten CEOs and their social media strategists on how the CEOs' posts on Facebook and Twitter brand the organisations they represent and or themselves so that they would be able to make good use of their social media engagement to maximize its benefits.

Finally, this research adds to the growing body of social media research as the phenomenon gathers momentum.

1.6   Delimitation

Chen and Chung (2016) define the CEO of an organisation to be the highest-ranking manager in a firm and who is empowered by the company's stockholders. This definition served as one of the criteria that guided on my sample of CEOs for this study. Though many CEOs fall in this category, I sampled two CEOs who fell in the category of the "50 Most Influential Young Ghanaians" and the "Most Influential Public Figure on Social Media" in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

1.7   Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter which includes the background of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and the organisation of the study.

The second chapter presents a review of literature on the study and outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

The third chapter presents the methods through which data was collected for analysis. Aspects of this chapter include the research approach, research design, sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and method of data analysis.

The findings and discussions of the data collected were discussed under the fourth chapter of the study. Data gathered from the study were discussed in themes and analysed using the theories discussed in the second chapter of the study.

The fifth chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the findings and made recommendations for further studies.

1.8 Summary

This chapter started with the explication of the terms Web 2.0, social media, user generated content and social networking sites. It stressed the point that Web 2.0 mediates all social media applications and also enables users to create and consume their own content thus different from Web 1.0. It also highlighted the concepts of social media use narrowing it down to CEOs social media use and also identified some of the advantages CEOs derive from their social media use.

The statement of the problem identified that although a considerable number of researches has been conducted on the emerging phenomenon of social media and CEOs social media use, few works have studied the social media presence of CEOs using qualitative content analysis approach and a multi-theory dimension. Also, the objectives that guided the study and the research questions that the study aimed to answer were outlined. Finally, the significance of the study was also stated.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

Literature reviews can integrate what others have done and said, criticize previous scholarly works, build bridges between related topics and or identify the central issues in a field (Cooper, 2010 as cited in Creswell, 2014). This chapter therefore serves as a review of relevant literature on social media, CEOs social media use, corporate branding and self-branding as a way of identifying central issues, criticising and integrating what others have done on the related fields. It further explicates the theories of identity construction and Goffman's presentation of self and subsequently, shows the relevance of the theories to the study. It concludes with the summary of the chapter.

2.1   Social Media

Orsatti and Reimer (2012) opine that social media is becoming increasingly ubiquitous, a part of people's daily lives, as well as embedded in organisational practices and is now fundamental in how many of us gather information, read news, communicate, interact, socialise, or carry out work. However, many scholars have attempted explaining what social media is all about since its proliferation few years ago. Social media researchers like Marwick (2010) notes that the concepts of social media and Web 2.0 can be used interchangeably as an umbrella term for websites that combine social interaction with functions like bookmarking, video sharing, and content creation. Inferring from the assertion above, the creation of content is an integral part of social media and Web 2.0.

Levinson (2013) however, argues that the so called "social media" should be preferably called "new new media" as the traditional forms of media like print and

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broadcast undeniably have significant social components as well. For instance, he posits that the formation of reading groups is a social component of this older form of media. Further, he states that even conversing with a friend about what you are watching on Television or reading in the newspaper is an example of the intrinsic social quality of media. To him, though the social aspect of new new media is crucial and has more evident of sociability than the old media, it is not unique enough to warrant the use of the terms "social media" and "new new media" interchangeably.

Trottier and Fuchs (2014) are rather of the view that all computing systems, and therefore all web applications, and also all forms of media can be considered as social because they store and transmit human knowledge that originates in social relations in society. Simply, they are objectifications of society and human social relations.

On the contrary, Ellison and boyd (2013) opine that what makes "social media" significant as a category is not the technology, but, rather, the socio-technical dynamics that unfolded as millions of people embraced the technology and used it to collaborate, share information, and socialize.

In the same vein, Orsatti and Reimer (2015) articulate that what sets social media technologies apart from other information systems is the ways in which they create public spaces for social conversations and for connecting with other people. From the foregoing, I term all forms of media mediated by the internet and Web 2.0 technologies that create and facilitate a form of collaboration and interaction among users at a point in time as *social media.*

Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdury (2009) put forth that collaboration and community are important characteristics of Web 2.0 development and are key features of social communication services like social network. In line with the above, Marwick

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(2010) also adds that social media technologies provide expansive new opportunities for content creation and dissemination, collaboration, and creativity.

2.1.1 Types of Social media

Social media can be classified into different types depending on their function and usage. Examples are, social network sites, blogs, and online personals etc. (Ellison & boyd, 2013; Marwick, 2013). This study will, however, look at social network sites and blogs, specifically microblogs.

2.1.1.1 Social Network Sites

One of the most significant developments connected to social media is the growth of Social Network Sites (SNSs), such as Friendster, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Cyworld, and Google Plus (Ellison & boyd, 2013). In the early stages of this phenomenon, terminology varied widely with the interchangeable use of "social networking sites," "social network services", "social network websites", "online social networks" (OSN) or even simply, "social networks" to refer to a diffuse and sometimes improbable range of sites and services. (Ellison & boyd, 2013; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Marwick, 2005). Ellison and boyd (2013), however, raise a compelling argument for the view that "social network sites" as a term is more accurate than "social networks" (which is a sociological term for one's social relationships), "social networking" (which evokes a practice of actively seeking connections and also happens offline), "online social networks" (one's online connections more generally) or "social networking sites" (which emphasizes connecting to new people). From their observation, "social network site" rightfully emphasizes that these sites enable individuals to articulate public connections—to present a social network and to view others' networks. This distinguishing feature sets

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social network sites apart from earlier forms of online interaction spaces and the term "social network site" highlights the role of the network (as a noun) as opposed to the practice of networking (as a verb). I reason with boyd and Ellison on the clarification of the terms in order to make "social network sites" distinct and, subsequently, shortened it throughout the work.

 Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2011) view SNSs as bundles of technological tools that incorporate features of earlier technologies (such as personal websites) but recombine them into a new context that supports users' ability to form and maintain a wide network of social connections. boyd and Ellison (2007) also see SNSs as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections. It can be asserted that the common feature that runs through the above definitions of social network sites is the fact that they connect users across technologically mediated platforms.

However, in spite of boyd and Ellison's (2007) widespread definition of SNSs years ago, they made salient observation in 2013 that as SNSs proliferate and evolve, defining what constitutes a social network site becomes increasingly challenging. To the authors, some of the features that initially distinguished them have faded in significance; while others have been reproduced by other genres of social media. In short, the technical affordances that describe a social network site have become increasingly fluid. For instance, the first SNS profiles were primarily designed to be relatively static portraits, openly constructed through text and other media provided by the profile owner, and only updated when the individual felt the need to do so. However, today's profiles are not simply self-descriptive, static text, but rather a dynamic combination of content provided by the user (such as status updates), activity

reports (such as groups they have joined), content provided by others (such as virtual gifts that are displayed on the profile or "tagged" photographs uploaded by others), and/or system-provided content (such as a subset of one's Friend network and activities on third-party sites.) (Ellison & boyd, 2013).

In view of the aforementioned, Ellison and boyd (2013) suggest the following definition as a more accurate one that clearly maps out what SNSs have evolved into:

> A social network site is a networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-provided data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user- generated content provided by their connections on the site (Discussion 2.0, para. 2).

Even though boyd and Ellison made a valid point, I argue that SNSs still share the same foundational structure as put forth by Marwick over a decade ago. She notes that:

> Although there are differences between the various social networking applications, they tend to have a basic structure in common. A new user begins by creating an account, filling out a profile, searching for other users, and adding people to his or her list of friends. Once people have established a network of "friends", they become connected to a larger network of friends-of-friends (Marwick, 2005: p. 4).

A significant feature of SNSs according to Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton (2012) is that they allow for the rapid dissemination of information and the rapid exchange of information among users. This is corroborated by Ellison and boyd (2013) who aver that the desire to communicate and share content is a primary driver of SNS use. They

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also state that all SNSs support multiple modes of communication: one-to-many and one-to-one, synchronous and asynchronous, textual and media-based.

SNSs are often designed to satisfy the needs of a variety of users and therefore are different from each other in terms of graphics, purpose among others. It is on this premise that Williams, Terras and Warwick (2013) assert that SNSs can be divided into a number of sub-areas depending on functionality and practice.

Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg co-founded TheFacebook with Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin and was launched on February 4, 2004. By September 1, 2004, the Facebook wall was launched giving students a place to post messages to their friends. On September 20, 2005, thefacebook.com officially dropped the "*the*" and becomes *facebook.com*. Then "Facebook photos" was launched on October 1, 2005. Barely 3 years after its launch to be used by Harvard Students and mostly students across the USA, Facebook expanded registration so that anyone could join on September 26, 2006. Moreover, "Facebook chat" was launched on April 6, 2008 to facilitate exchange of information between users. On February 9, 2009, Facebook introduced the "like" button ("Our History", 2017). The company continues to make changes as technology advances so as to make the Facebook user experience an enjoyable one.

According to company's website, Facebook has:

- 1.18 billion daily active users on average as of September 2016
- 1.09 billion mobile daily active users on average as of September 2016
- 1.79 billion monthly active users as of September 30, 2016

- 1.66 billion mobile monthly active users as of September 30, 2016

- Approximately 3.5 million subscribers in Ghana as at June, 2016

Based on the above statistics, van Dijck (2013) is not far from right when he stated that the world's most powerful SNS is Facebook. In his words, "Facebook has crept deeper into the texture of life, its narrative principles imitating proven conventions of storytelling, thus binding users even more tightly to the fabric that keeps it connected" (p. 207).

Russell (2014) also believes:

> "Facebook is arguably the heart of the social web and is somewhat of an all-in-one wonder, given that more than half of its 1 billion users are active each day updating statuses, posting photos, exchanging messages, chatting in real time, checking in to physical locales, playing games, shopping, and just about anything else you can imagine" (p. 35).

The Facebook user experience includes joining groups, becoming a fan, updating a personal status, and games (e.g. Farmville and Sorority Life). These features are accompanied by the basic social networking elements of posting information, communicating with other users, uploading pictures, writing notes (blogs), and sending event invitations, all of which contribute to a more interactive Facebook experience (Hepburn, 2010 as cited in Pugh, 2010).

2.1.1.2 Microblogging

Before exploring the concept of microblogging, it will be noteworthy to understand what a blog is. Blogs are personal web sites that are regularly updated and contain archived dated entries in reverse chronological order, which contain primarily text,

but may also contain photos or other multimedia, and usually allow for audience comments (Herring, Scheidt, Wright, & Bonus, 2005). They combine the immediacy of up-to-the-minute posts, latest first, with a strong sense of the author's personality, passions, and point of view.

Ross, Terras, Warwick and Welsh (2011) define microblogging as:

> […] a variant of blogging which allows users to quickly post short updates, providing an innovative communication method that can be seen as a hybrid of blogging, instant messaging, social networking and status notifications. The word's origin suggests that it shares the majority of elements with blogging, therefore it can potentially be described using blogging's three key concepts (Karger & Quan, 2005 as cited in Ross et. al, 2011): the contents are short postings, these postings are kept together by a common content author who controls publication, and individual blog entries can be easily aggregated together (p. 387).
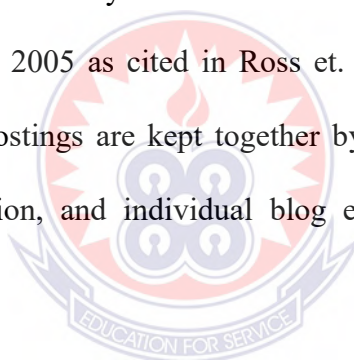
The microblog is a free service that enables users to send messages in real time, and entries of microblog are restricted to a limited number of characters (e.g. 140 characters). Schmierbach and Oeldorf-Hirsch (2012) define microblogging as "a hybrid of blogging and instant messaging in which updates form a feed, similar to a blog, and users can quickly reply to or re-post others' updates" (p. 318). Walton and Rice (2013) also see microblogging as "posting short updates via social media sites such as Twitter.com" (p. 1467).

According to Jansen, et. al (2009), all microblogging applications share a set of similar characteristics: (1) short text messages, (2) instantaneous message delivery, and (3) subscriptions to receive updates.

Twitter

Though there are other microblogging sites, the most popular service is Twitter. Launched in 2006, Twitter is a microblogging service where users send updates or tweets that roughly correspond to thoughts or ideas to a network of followers from a variety of devices for example; smart phones, tablets, laptops. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. The default setting for tweets is public, which permits people to follow others and read each other's tweets without giving mutual permission. Each user has a Twitter page where all their updates are aggregated into a single list (hence the name microblogging). Tweets are not only displayed on a user's profile page, but they can be delivered directly to followers via instant messaging, Short Message Service (SMS), Really Simple Syndication (RSS), email, or other social networking platforms, such as Twitterrific or Facebook. (Jansen, et. al, 2009; Russell, 2014). Abstractly, you might say that a timeline is any particular collection of tweets is chronologically sorted, however, you will commonly see a couple of timelines that are particularly noteworthy. From the perspective of an arbitrary Twitter user, the home timeline is the view that you see when you log into your account and look at all of the tweets from users that you are following, whereas a particular user timeline is a collection of tweets only from a certain user (Russell, 2014). Even in its short existence, Twitter has become a key communications channel during major political events and natural disasters. And businesses now rely on it for marketing, PR and customer service (O'Reilly & Milstein, 2012).

The statistics of Twitter as found on their homepage which was last updated on June 30, 2016, are as follows:

➢ 313 million Monthly active users

➢ 1 billion unique visits to sites with embedded tweets

➢ 82% Active users on mobile

➢ 40+Languages supported

In twitter, users keep profile about themselves and there is open profile which contains the full name, the location, a web page, a brief life history, and the user number of tweets. The people who follow the user and those that the user follows are also listed. Twitter rate-limits 20,000 requests per hour. As a microblogging site, Twitter is a mix between a social networking site and a blog (Edman, 2010). boyd and Ellison (2007) are of the view that microblogging sites such as Twitter have elements of SNSs because profiles are constructed and connections are established and shared with other users.

Information seeking, social interaction, entertainment, passing time, information sharing and social networking are stated as some of the motivations for using a microblogging site (Gan & Wang, 2015).

2.2   Chief Executive Officers' Social Media Use

Unquestionably, there has been a shift from the traditional ways of doing most things as Web 2.0 and social media appeared on the scene. The communicative practice and leadership roles of CEOs have not been exempted from this phenomenon. One would not be far from right to say the presence of CEOs on social media has become a *given* than a choice as most of their target audiences are now on social media and as such, expect to see and interact with CEOs since they associate the faces of CEOs to the services or products ("CEOs urged to", 2016).

Zooming in, a CEO can be seen as the head of a public organisation or the top person in an organisation's hierarchy (Glick, 2011; Girginova, 2013). The role of a CEO as

any other role in a human institution thrives on communication. It is against this backdrop that Girginova (2013) in her work suggests a categorisation of the communicative evolution of CEOs in the past century under three broad titles. These are textualization, mediation and digitization. Textualization deals with the era when CEOs were recorded in lettered and numerical forms in order to preserve and disseminate the CEO and his or her thoughts. Secondly, CEOs became mediated when electronic technologies (such as radio and television) were invented. Their images and voices could be seen and heard by larger audiences and these could travel farther and faster than before. In a subtle way, the internet and social media have come to make dormant the era of textualization and mediation thus giving birth to digitisation. In their digital form, CEOs are enabled to communicate almost instantaneously, across the world and in a manner that allowed for near synchronous interaction with a wide, direct audience. The third angle of Girginova's categorisation has been stressed by Brandfog (2013) who posits that the role of the CEO has evolved to become more visible, social, connected, and accessible than ever before.

In their paper, Marwick and boyd (2011) posit that "networked media is changing celebrity culture, the way people relate to celebrity images, how celebrities are produced, and how celebrity is practiced" (p. 139). In the same vein, networked media is changing CEOs communicative practices as there exists new ways altogether as to how CEOs should communicate with both their internal and external publics. Also, the accessibility of social media has transformed the term CEO from something a person *is* to something one *does* and exists on a continuum rather than a singular quality (Marwick, 2010).

Dutta (2010) as cited in Porter et al. (2015) notes that today's leaders must embrace social media because they provide a low-cost platform on which to build a personal

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brand, communicating who you are both within and outside your company. They also allow one to engage rapidly and simultaneously with peers, employees, customers, and the broader public, especially younger generations, in the same transparent and direct way they expect from everyone in their lives. Lastly, they give you an opportunity to learn from instant information and unvarnished feedback. In his view, active participation in social media can be a powerful tool – the difference between leading effectively and ineffectively, and between advancing and faltering in the pursuit of your goals.

To corroborate the above, Brandfog (2013) puts forth that CEO social media engagement was viewed as a gateway to facilitate deeper connections with customers, employees and shareholders and also enable them become more effective leaders. However, Brandfog identified the following through their survey as the primary barriers to C-Suite social media engagement: risk aversion, time constraints, fear of negative feedback, and a lack of a social media strategy.

In advancing the reasons for the reluctance of CEOs joining the social media train, it was deduced that they avoid social media since they are seen as a representation of their brands and therefore do not want to be this different person they fear might be a distraction from the brands they represent. By extension, social media poses some risks to executives as they try as much as possible to present an authentic self online.

Further, there is no strict way a CEO should use social media. The use, however, differs from CEO to CEO. Some decide to share posts solely on their companies while others decide to share posts on everything that goes on around them ranging from work to entertainment to politics to religious beliefs and personal issues. In spite

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of the risks and mode of use, empirical studies (Brandfog 2013; Porter, et al., 2015) have shown that CEOs presence online is beneficial.

In August 2016, digital communication and marketing expert, Kwabena Appianing stated that a high number of CEOs in Ghana have no or low presence on social media. He further notes that CEOs reluctance to use social media should be of optimum concern to those who manage their digital strategies since CEOs who have used social media have positioned themselves as influencers in their industries and have solidified both their company and personal brands ("CEOs urged to", 2016).

2.3   Corporate Branding

Corporate branding is a "systematically planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining favourable images and consequently a favourable reputation of the company as a whole by sending signals to all stakeholders by managing behaviour, communication, symbolism" (Einwiller & Will, 2002: p. 101). Corporate branding requires a holistic approach to brand management, in which all members of an organisation behave in accordance with the desired brand identity. Effective corporate branding requires consistent messages about a brand's identity and uniform delivery across all stakeholder groups to create a favourable brand reputation. Corporate branding requires increased emphasis on internal brand resources to present a coherent brand identity to stakeholders (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). In furtherance, Mitchell (1997) as cited in Harris and de Chernatony (2001) believes corporate branding involves multiple stakeholders interacting with numerous staff across many departments in an organisation. It is important for all members of an organisation to support the strategy put in place to champion the corporate brand.

Traditionally, corporate brands have been viewed as "the conscious decision by senior management to distil and make known the attributes of the organisation's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition" (Balmer, 2001, p. 281). As the years roll by and many scholars have interrogated the concept of corporate branding and criticisms have also arisen as to whether the concept remains a preserve of senior management (normative perspective) or arises as a result of interactions between the organisation and its stakeholders (social constructionist perspective). Either ways, CEOs play a major role in branding their organisations as they make conscious efforts together with senior management to place the brand they represent in a favourable position. This effort to brand an organisation is not restricted to the traditional means of communicating but can also be carried out on social media as well. This is substantiated by Ann Charles in the 2013 Brandfog Survey that CEOs social media presence strengthens the credibility of the corporate brand. Finally, social media is seen as a form of media that has great potential to build, protect, sustain and develop image, reputation, brand, relationships, as well as value of an organisation (Ple & Caceres, 2010 in Tench & Jones 2015).

2.4   Self-branding

Self-branding and personal branding denote the same concept and thus is used interchangeably in this study. Marwick (2010) believes the concept of self-branding is one of the three techniques of self-presentation (life-streaming, micro-celebrity and self- branding) rooted in advertising and marketing which has emerged in response to social media's popularity. Ong (2006) as cited in Marwick (2010) explains self-branding as technology of subjectivity which encourages people to regulate their self-presentation along strictly work-friendly lines. She also believes that self-branding is the strategic creation of identity to be promoted and sold to others. Further, Marwick

observes that self-branding is "primarily a series of marketing strategies applied to the individual which is both a mindset, way of thinking about the self as a salable commodity to a potential employer and a set of practices" (p. 307). Wright (n.d) states that "personal branding involves managing your reputation, style, look, attitude and skill set the same way that a marketing team would run the brand for a bag of Doritos or bottle of shampoo" (p. 6).

Self-branding practitioners identify truths, passions, strengths and goals and use advertising and marketing techniques to frame them for an interested audience. Within the discourse of self-branding, each person has an authentic set of talents, passions, knowledge and skills which can be discovered through self-examination. As long as these truths are positioned in the right way, they will be immensely useful to the right employer and create wealth and happiness for the person behind the brand (Marwick, 2010). Wright again notes that personal branding is not something that you can invest an hour or two in and then never have to think about again. It is a full-time job that takes a lot of attention and tenacity to do right. This assertion is corroborated by Marwick (2010) who puts forth that a successful self-brander is a tireless self-promoter who focuses entirely on work.

Marwick (2010) believes that the use of social media technologies has made the concept self-branding easy and affordable since self-promotion on a wide scale is impossible without the affordable services that the internet provides. Web 2.0 technologies have offered everyone the chance to become a brand. She explicates the above assertion that self-branding in its current form is possible because of the internet for these reasons. Firstly, whereas the traditional forms of media make it economically prohibitive to purchase for instance, advertising time on a television or in a newspaper, this is not true for websites. They afford individuals the chance to

promote online presences that can be equated to those of large companies. Secondly, the internet makes it possible to disseminate personal information to a much greater audience than before. So far, it is the only medium through which average people can generate and distribute content globally, cheaply and instantaneously. Before the internet, those who wish to self-brand would have been limited to putting up fliers at vantage points, buying advertisements in the newspaper, attending events all of which would have still been limited to a small geographical area. Lastly, most social media tools are designed to focus attention inward and this enables the individual to brand his or herself. Marwick (2010) supports this by stating that within social media, the subject of self-branding is self-interested, competitive, and mobile, consisting of constant self-referencing (my thoughts, my activities), done in sight of an audience, with the assumption that someone is interested and watching. The social media persona via the profile is strategically composed and designed to be viewed and to elicit a particular reaction.

2.5   Theoretical Framework

This section highlights the two theories: identity construction and Goffman's presentation of the self that were used to understand and explain the social media presence of CEOs.

2.5.1   Identity Construction Theory

The concept of identity has been expounded differently by various scholars. These different definitions, however, afforded the criteria to classify these scholars under two main schools of thought. At one extreme is the essentialist school of thought and at the other, the non-essentialist. In this study, I shed light on the two and consequently put the spotlight on the one that best fits.

Giddens (1991) and Bauman (1997, 2001) as cited in Easthope (2009) argue that the nature of identity has changed since the late nineteenth century because of a series of significant social and economic changes. According to these theorists, during the pre-modern period, which lasted until early in the twentieth century, the identities of individuals were prescribed by place of birth and the social position of one's parents. Identities were understood to be a matter of human nature, predestination, and fate (Bauman, 2001 as cited in Easthope, 2009). This assertion is the basic assumption that underlies identity in essentialist terms.

To consolidate the above, Orsatti and Riemer (2012) indicate that the concept of identity in essentialist terms is seen as a pre-given. This can also be termed as the 'representational lens' to understanding identity. Under this school of thought, identity is seen as something that is given to the individual who (re)presents it at any given point in time. It is not part of the individual.

In spite of the views conveyed above, a group of scholars who form the non-essentialist school believe that identity in its true sense is not a pre-given; it is performed. Orsatti and Riemer (2012) call this the "performative lens". Wood and Smith (2001) as cited in Lindlof and Taylor (2002) believe that the concept of identity involves cultural modes of understanding and performing the self. To them, it represents the intersection of multiple perceptions and actions associated with the relationship between the self and the other. These elements include who we think we are, how we wish others to perceive us, how we present ourselves, how others actually perceive us, and how others perform those perceptions.

Orsatti and Reimer (2015) challenge the essentialist point of view and as a result, assert that the non-essentialist notion is able to grasp the multiple and social nature of

identity formation, where identity is 1) not simply an accumulation of memories, 2) comprised of multiple identities, 3) socially constructed, and 4) grounded in actively living our everyday lives in a material world.

Burke and Stets (2009) elucidate that we take on many identities over the course of a lifetime, and at any point in time we have many identities that could be activated. A person could be a student in one context, a friend in another, a feminist, a daughter, a teacher, a blood donor, a homeowner, and so on. Each of these identities acts to control meanings or resources in a situation, such that relevant identities are verified.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) worked extensively on identity and interaction through a sociocultural linguistic approach. To them, "identity is the social positioning of the self and other" (p. 586). They argue that identity should be approached as a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories. In other words identity arises intersubjectively rather than individually produced and interactionally emergent rather than in a priori fashion. Similarly, Bamberg and De Fina (2011) also postulate that identity can be seen and defined as a property of the individual or as something that emerges through social interaction; it can be regarded as residing in the mind or in concrete social behaviour; it can be anchored to the individual or to the group. Furthermore, it can be conceived of as substantially personal or as relational. However, there is no doubt that, historically, identity has been persistently associated with the concept of the self. Butler (1990) states that identity is not something that one 'has', but rather something that one 'does', or 'performs' and recreates through concrete exchanges, discourses and interactions between human beings. The connection between identity and performance implies that projecting an identity is regarded as acting and speaking in

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certain ways in concrete social encounters or communicative situations (Bamberg & De Fina, 2011).

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) in their work proposed five principles which they believe are fundamental to the study of identity. These are:

a. The emergence principle

The scholars posit that "identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon" (p. 588). This principle subverts the traditional belief that identity is housed primarily within the individual mind. Moreover, identity is not simply a psychological means of self-classification that is reflected in people's social behaviour but rather as something that is constituted through social action. This opinion is supported by Ofori-Birikorang (2014) who postulates that the cultural identity of social actors arises when they appropriate dialogue, voices, actions and texts within a cultural realm to articulate and assert their new identities. Further, new identities are formed, altered and maintained when people interact with each other.

b. The positionality principle

"Identities encompass (a) macro-level demographic categories; (b) local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and (c) temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles" (p. 592). This principle also contests the view that identity is a collection of broad social categories. First, the principle assumes that the demographic categories of individuals play a role in defining their identities. Second, the local and cultural positions of an individual also build an identity. Lastly, it suggests that the identity of social actors arises as they assume positions in

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interactions. This assertion is substantiated by the view of Bucholtz and Hall that identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants (p. 591). For instance, someone may assume the role of a storyteller at a point in a conversation. Though the storyteller may occupy this interactional position briefly, it becomes the identity he or she bears at that point in time. Simply put, the demographic identities (age, gender, class and race), the interactional positions and the social and linguistic inclination of social actors are all identity markers. This points to the fact that identity is layered and transitory under the positionality principle.

c.   The indexicality principle

This principle states,

> Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups (p. 594).

In its basic form, this principle is concerned with the mechanism through which identity is constituted. It is hinged on the way linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions.

d. The relationality principle

The basic idea that underscores this principle is that "identities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including

similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy" (p. 598). This means that the process of identity construction does not reside within the individual neither is it autonomous or independent but in intersubjective relations of sameness and difference, realness and fakeness, power and disempowerment.

e. The partialness principle

Finally the principle of partialness states that:

> Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others' perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts (p. 606).
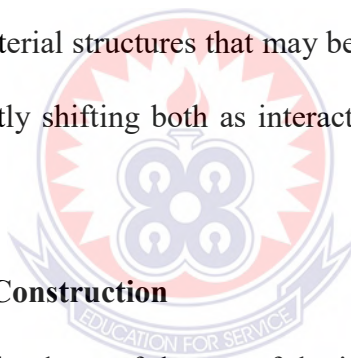
2.5.1.1 Online Identity Construction

As the years go by and the dawn of the use of the internet has brightened, the theory of identity construction has consequently moved beyond what it used to be to the virtual world where internet users get to construct, modify and alter their preferred identities online. Easthope (2009) supports the above statement with his view that "we are moving from rooted identities based on place, and toward hybrid and flexible forms of identity" (p. 62). Orsatti and Reimer (2015) believe that social media might not be much different from traditional discussion boards as it allows for social conversations and connection of people. Yet, what is different is the scale and scope with which social media has become part of people's everyday life. It is against this

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backdrop that identity emerges as a central concept for understanding the use, nature and value of social media.

One outstanding argument that characterised the proliferation of the internet and identity construction is the question of whether new media changes identity or the way people express themselves (Marwick, 2013). This she answers by stating that:

> [New media] has provided a new set of tools for self-expression, from blogs to tweets. Moreover, sites like Friendster and MySpace made the social construction of identity self-conscious and visible. People know that they must choose what facets of themselves they want to present online, and unlike in face-to-face environments where it is possible to switch self-presentation strategies quickly, this must be determined in advance (p. 11).

In line with the above argument, Turkle (1995) cited in Marwick (2013) envisioned that communicating without traditional identity cues might enable people to experiment with different identities and personalities. A year after Turkle's assertion, Stone (1996) as cited in Marwick (2013) also projected that cyberspace would liberate people from their bodies, blur the lines between human and technology, and potentially evolve into a higher type of consciousness, becoming post-human.

The above projections were affirmed by Walton and Rice (2013), who posit that the Internet age offers multiple forms of presenting multiple selves. Their assertion is further substantiated by Ellison and boyd (2013) who believe that since internet users lack visible bodies, self-representation in online spaces offers participants many possibilities to actively construct a representation of how they would like to be identified. Basically, identity is flexible and changeable, and people are highly skilled in varying their self-presentation appropriately. Identity is thus socially constructed in

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tandem with the people around us and also the context in which we find ourselves (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Marwick, 2013).

Orsatti and Reimer (2012) explain a 'performative lens' of identity in social media terms as how one's identity is perpetually articulated, co-constructed and 'lived' through participation in social media-enabled work practices, where one's identity is not something given to be (re)presented but arises holistically and is shaped and changed through every-day participation in social media.

The practical separation by Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) systems of users' bodies (as material containers of identity) from their expressions (as symbolic performances of identity) is seen as a concept that resonates deeply with postmodern theories. Generally, these theories reject models of identity emphasizing its singularity, depth, essence, stability and originality. Alternately, they favour models of emphasizing its multiplicity, diversity, simultaneity, fluidity, surface and relational production (Turkle, 1984 & 1995 as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Marsh (2005) as cited in Pugh (2010) also avers that SNSs provide a medium for users to express themselves beyond physical features and labels, to share experiences, discuss interests, and influence one another in a selective network. In addition, social networking websites are not constrained by the same geographic boundaries as real life networks; allowing users to make and develop relationships with individuals of similar interests around the world. Lastly, SNSs provide an optimal format for users to keep a "personal narrative going" in which they "integrate events which happen in the external world, and sort them into an 'ongoing' story about the self".

Marwick (2010) defines online identity as "both the sum and traces of a person's online content and actions; identity cues can be gleaned from an e-mail address, a nickname or a digital picture" (p. 19).

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Identity in social media sites is often expressed through customization and the appropriation of the various tools available on these sites (Marwick, 2013; Young, 2013). Marwick (2013) posits that people creating blogs, homepages and online profiles can use a variety of digital tokens such as pictures, avatars, icons, nicknames, fonts, music, and video to represent themselves. These items therefore mark a person's online identity. Just as postmodern identity theorists argue that people construct "face to face" identities through consumer goods, media, fashion and styles, online profiles allow people to use the language of media to express themselves to others. The online presence therefore becomes something to be "worked on" and perfected (Perkel, 2008 as cited in Marwick, 2013).

Engaging in online identity construction allows users to define themselves by more than just their actual identity schemas, labels we place on ourselves (e.g. student, niece or husband). Instead, Facebook for instance provides users the opportunity to share interests, ideas (blog), appealing images, and their identity amongst a public network (Pugh, 2010).

To Marwick (2013), self-representation can be understood through the information and materials people choose to show others on a Facebook profile or Twitter stream since social media like SNSs, blogs, and online personals require users to self-consciously create virtual depictions of themselves. Further, identity is also expressed through interacting with others, whether over instant messenger or email. Also, she believes that since there are fewer identity cues available online than face-to-face, every piece of digital information a person provides, from typing speed to nickname and email address, can and is used to make inferences about them.

To better appreciate how the theory of identity manifests in the virtual world, Orsatti and Riemer (2015) developed a richer non-essentialist multimodal approach for

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understanding identity-making on social media. The modes they arrived at are: *reflective identity-making, narrative identity-making and active identity-making.* They explained reflective identity-making as

> […] how we experience ourselves when we think about who we are or who we want to become. It describes how we set explicit goals for ourselves and execute deliberate strategies in shaping our identity. It further captures how we come to experience a coherent self in the face of contradicting events and life episodes (p. 9).

The second mode – narrative identity-making:

> captures how we narrate our own life story when we make sense of episodes and turning points in our lives and how we narrate ourselves into (or understand ourselves against) the shared stories that capture the social expectations in various social contexts (p. 9).

Finally, active identity-making:

> Captures how our unreflective acting in the world already shapes who we are. It captures how we appropriate social identities when we learn the skills and intricacies of social practices and how our various identities are always bound up with activity and the use of tools and technology in our everyday lives (p. 9).

2.5.2   Goffman's Presentation of Self

This theory was propounded by the sociologist, Erving Goffman in 1959. Goffman (1959) used an analogy with theatre to describe the process by which people enact social roles and thus express who they are. Everyday settings are viewed like a stage and people are considered actors who use performance to make an impression on an audience (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Like actors, they communicate not only through

words but also through nonverbal means: appearance, manner, and setting. Goffman defined appearance as signals of social status, manner as signals of the communicator's attitude toward others and the attitude expected from others, and setting as the physical elements like scenery and props that define the situation.

Goffman's theatrical analogy involves what he calls a *region* which is defined as any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception. Regions vary in the degree to which they are bounded and according to the media of communication in which the barriers to perception occur. According to Goffman (1959), this region can be divided into two: *front region* (front stage) and *back region* (backstage). Front region refers to the place where the performance is given while a back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course. Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character. In general, of course, the back region will be the place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude. Also, accentuated facts make their appearance on the front stage while suppressed facts are unveiled at the backstage. "Performers appear in the front and back regions; the audience appears only in the front region; and the outsiders are excluded from both regions" (Goffman, 1959, p. 144).

In social situations individuals consciously or unconsciously engage in a process where they make efforts to control the impressions others have of them. This conscious or unconscious effort is what Goffman refers to as *impression management*. Littlejohn and Foss (2011) explicate this by stating that an overall coherent definition emerges since all participants in a situation projects images. Once this definition is set, moral pressure is created to maintain it by suppressing contradictions and doubts.

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For instance, a person may add to the projections but typically, does not contradict the image initially set. In Goffman's view, impression management is about "successfully staging a character" (p. 203). In Young's (2013) words, the goal of impression management "is to present a positive self by exhibiting the most desirable impression possible" (p. 2).

Though Goffman's theory explicitly focused on face-to-face interactions and did not have the prerequisites to incorporate computer-mediated communication and more specifically social media as at the time the theory was propounded, researchers (Jameson, 2014; Marwick, 2005; Pearson, 2010) have worked on this seminal work extensively in order to make it to suit this current era. For instance, in SNSs, Marwick (2005) submits that front stage performance of identity takes place through profiles, while additional identity information may be conveyed through private messages, emails, or personal meetings. However, because this information is "backstage", it is not available to the casual observer or researcher. Information about the user's identity can also be gleaned contextually from the other members of the user's publicly articulated network, but this is dependent both on the information that the other members of the network make public, and how the observer reads the network. Hence self-presentation is limited to profile construction. I argue that the cues that can be classified as front stage performances of a particular SNSs user have increased with the growth of social media apps. Today, researchers and other users are privy to the user's photographs, videos, voice notes, and written texts in general. Moreover, users are selective of their audience and can therefore segregate their audiences and decide who sees what a point in time through the use of privacy settings that come with these apps. Front stage acts in this context are therefore not solely limited to profile construction as stated by Marwick only but also posts that the user shares.

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Another instance of translating the theory in social media terms is put forth by Jameson (2014) who infers that when the concept of *appearance* is

> "[...] applied to a microblogging channel like Twitter, appearance might include the number and quality of followers, which signal status; manner might include tone, register, and humour, which convey an attitude toward others and an attitude expected from others; and setting might include photos, videos, links, @-references, and hashtags, which help define the situation and context. The words in a Twitter post, combined with the elements that constitute appearance, manner, and setting, signal in what role a communicator is speaking, including whether it is personal or professional" (p. 12).

Jameson further argues that networked technologies like Twitter allow people to speak in the voices of their different roles and express different aspects of their own personalities.
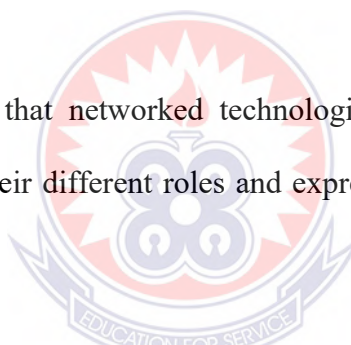
2.6   Relevance of the Theories to my Study

SNSs have opened the doors of communication, allowing people from around the world to engage in identity creations and relationship development (Pugh, 2010). This new development is dramatically changing the landscape of identity construction, and has mobilized people around the world to re-conceptualize their image.

The theory of identity construction enabled me to explain how CEOs navigate their personal and professional identities on Facebook and Twitter since the theory is characterised by multiplicity and subject to modification at any point in time. It also aided me to identify markers of personal identity on the two social media sites selected of the two personalities studied. As Marwick (2013) stated, pictures, avatars, icons, nicknames, fonts, music and video are all symbolic markers of identity as you

can use one or a combination to arrive at an individual's identity. She further cements this view that because online interactions lack the rich feedback of face-to-face communication, any and all digital traces left by a person may be interpreted by curious viewers to augment their perceptions of the user. Finally, the principles of positionality and relationality gave me understanding on the various factors that contribute to the emergence and multiplicity of identity and also helped me explain the identity cues I picked from the tweets and posts of the CEOs selected.

On the other hand, Goffman's presentation of the self gave me the idea on the acts of CEOs that can be classified as front stage acts and those that are backstage acts. The theory also enabled me (an audience member) be on the lookout for the signs the CEOs as performers on the stage of social media give off so as to analyse their performances (posts). Even though Goffman's theory was not propounded to suit the internet environment, I conclude that his perspective seems to be relevant for online self-presentations, despite the obvious constraints regarding the interactive aspect. However, these constraints enabled possibilities for developing Goffman's perspective to online environments (Aspling, 2011).

2.7   Summary

From the literature reviewed, it was concluded that all forms of media mediated by the internet and Web 2.0 technologies that create and facilitate a form of collaboration and interaction among users at a point in time is referred to as social media. Social media can be classified into various types depending on function and use. The study focused on SNSs and microblogging as types of social media in general and zoomed in on Facebook and Twitter as the specifics. Subsequently, the social media use of CEOs was revised and I gathered that CEOs are slowly navigating towards the use of social media as studies have been done to highlight the benefits of CEOs social media

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use. However, the phenomenon of CEOs social media use still remains under researched in Ghana. It also reviewed literature on identity construction theory placing emphasis on the non-essentialist approach to identity construction and online identity construction as well. It continues with the seminal work of Goffman on the presentation of the self where an individual's life is seen as an act on a stage in front of audiences where he or she can navigate a front or back stage. Finally, how the theories helped in my analysis was also discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter outlines the processes I went through to collect and analyse data to answer the following research questions:

RQ1.   What kinds of posts do CEOs share on their social media platforms?

RQ. 2 How do CEOs use the posts and tweets to perform self-branding of their personalities?

RQ. 3 How do the posts and tweets reflect the organisations they represent?

3.1   Research Approach

Qualitative research describes social phenomena as they occur naturally without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research (Hancock, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This study on the social media use of CEOs was conducted without any attempt to manipulate or influence the phenomena under study since qualitative research is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals producing subjective data and not that of the researcher.

Denzin and Lincoln (2007) define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret in terms of the meanings people bring to them. The authors add that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artefacts; cultural texts and productions;

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observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, I chose the case study approach for the study because it offered the opportunity to probe deeper into what CEOs share on social media and how they brand themselves and their organisations through their posts. Also, I employed document analysis as one of the data collection methods so as to make sense of the virtual world of the CEOs without any obstruction from them and the researcher. I finally employed interviews in order to explore the perspectives and perceptions (Daymon & Holloway, 2002) of the participants on their social media use. These methods were used because they facilitated a better understanding, interpretation and analysis of the subject matter at hand.

The qualitative research approach relies primarily on human perception and understanding where the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 2010). Connolly (1998) also states that qualitative researchers typically do not make external statistical generalisations because their goal usually is not to make inferences about the underlying population, but to attempt to obtain insights into particular educational, social, and familial processes and practices that exist within a specific location and context. In the same vein, data collected from the interviews and the documents retrieved from the Facebook and Twitter profiles of the CEOs were solely based on their worldview as I limited my unit of analysis of the documents to original posts authored by them and not those they shared or retweeted. Finally, there was no generalisation whatsoever as qualitative researchers' aim is to study a particular occurrence in-depth.

3.2   Research Design

Yin (2009) posits that research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of study. In a more explanatory and informal way, a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. There are several research designs available when adopting the qualitative approach to research. Some of these are: ethnography, phenomenology, case study among others. The design chosen for this study is case study.

3.2.1   Case Study

Primarily, case study design is used when a researcher wants to probe deeper into a phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Mostly, the research questions tend to determine the research design appropriate for the study. To Yin, a case study may be relevant when a researcher's research questions are tailored in a way that would explain a present occurrence (for instance, "how" and "why" a certain phenomenon works).

Yin (2009) presents a twofold definition in explaining what a case study is. Firstly, "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). Secondly:

> […] the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (p. 18).

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Corroboratively, qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Creswell (2013) posits that case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes.

Per the authors' explication, I adopted the case study design for the study because first, I wanted to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon of CEOs social media use and my research questions set out to explore what the selected CEOs share on Facebook and Twitter and how the concepts of self-branding and corporate branding are enacted in their posts. Adapting Creswell's definition to suit my study, the space of social media is my contemporary bounded system and data was collected over a period of time through document analysis and interviews and later reported by categorising the findings into themes.

3.2.1.1 Multiple Case Study

A major reason for choosing a particular type of case study is the size of the bounded case and the intent of the case analysis (Creswell, 2013). Multiple case study, according to Creswell, is a type of case study in which a case is identified and the researcher selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue. The selection of these sites is mostly purposive so that the researcher can show different perspectives on the

issue. The multiple case study, to Yin (2009), is a type of case study design that gives the researcher the opportunity to study different cases at the same time.

Yin's (2009) advice to qualitative researchers adopting the multiple case study is that although all designs can lead to successful case studies, when you have the choice (and resources), multiple-case designs may be preferred over single-case designs. Even if you can do a "two-case" case study, your chances of doing a good case study will be better than using a single-case design. Single-case designs are vulnerable if only because you will have put all your eggs in one basket. More importantly, the analytic benefits from having two (or more) cases may be substantial.

The multiple case study design was employed because social media is used differently among people and CEOs are no exception. Since the cases selected for a particular study have to be similar in some ways and are somehow categorically bound together (Stake, 2006), I selected two CEOs of two different organisations and by extension, different industries. Each CEO uses any of the social media platforms uniquely and this warranted the conclusion that multiple case study would fit this particular study since the CEOs I studied have different backgrounds, represent different organisations and are of different sexes. This is corroborated by Stake's (2006) assertion that the cases selected may each have a different relationship with the phenomenon.

3.3   Sampling Strategy

Daymon and Holloway (2001) assert that qualitative approaches demand different sampling techniques from the randomly selected and probabilistic sampling which quantitative researchers generally use. They do not start with the establishment of a strict sampling frame, as in quantitative studies because qualitative sampling develops during the research process as you discover new avenues and clues to follow up. The

authors propose that the underlying principle of gaining rich, in depth information guides the sampling strategies of qualitative researchers. Whom you select for your study, where and when depends on certain criteria which are determined by the purpose of your study. Therefore, the term *purposive* or *purposeful* sampling is applied.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) aver that no qualitative project can capture every event as it unfolds. This assertion underscores the purposeful selection of participants of a particular study. They further note that many qualitative researchers use a sampling strategy that guides their choices of what to observe or whom to interview. The right choice of a sampling strategy enables researchers to make a systematic contact with communicative phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort.

Creswell (2014) observes that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual materials) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. In purposive sampling, the selection of participants, settings or other sampling units is criterion based or purposive (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002). The sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study. From the foregoing, the theme that runs through the definitions is the fact that a qualitative researcher selects participants or materials that will help him or her answer the research questions set, therefore, the primary purpose of my study which is to investigate the use of social media among CEOs is the overarching criteria that guided my selection of the participants, documents and sites. First of all, a participant has to be a CEO of an organisation so I first picked Lucy Quist, (the CEO of Airtel, Ghana) the only CEO who ranked eighth among the ten most influential public figures on

social media in Ghana according to the Ghana Social Media Report ranking in 2016 and secondly, Franklin Cudjoe (CEO of Imani Africa) who was ranked eighth among the Avance Media ranking of the 50 most influential young Ghanaians in 2015. I selected him because the first two CEOs before him did not meet the criteria of activeness on social media as operationalised in this study as publishing at least a post per week (Porter, et al., 2015). I selected these two personalities so as to get a representative sample as Biber (1993) defines representativeness as the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population such as age, gender, language, ethnicity or race.

Thirdly, the selected CEOs have to be users of Facebook and Twitter which were ranked the two most popular social media platforms in 2016 by Alexa.com. These CEOs are active users of Facebook and Twitter and publish enough content which gave me the right amount data to answer the research questions. Finally, I studied the CEOs for a period of five months because Austmann (2015) suggests that a study that seeks to probe into the social media use of CEOs should consider a larger number of Tweets and I am of the conviction that collecting the five months posts shared by the CEOs is large enough. Austmann retrieved the most recent 25 tweets per profile while I retrieved 393 Facebook posts and 482 Tweets of Franklin Cudjoe and 68 Facebook posts and 110 Tweets of Lucy Quist. In all, I had 1,053 posts.

3.4   Sampling Size

Daymon and Holloway (2001) refer to qualitative research as small-scale studies. In their view, qualitative researchers are interested in deep exploration in order to provide rich, detailed, holistic description – as well as explanation. Therefore, small samples are the norm.

Daymon and Holloway (2001) note that,

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> […] it is not necessary to specify the exact number of informants in the sample, although you are expected to indicate the numbers involved in your initial sample, that is, 'the initial sample will consist of x number of informants'. This sampling strategy differs from quantitative research where you choose all participants before the project begins (p. 158).

The authors further state that the appropriate number of participants chosen for research will depend on the type of research question, the type of qualitative approach used in the study, material and time resources as well as the number of researchers involved in the study.

Per the above explanation, I chose 2 CEOs since I am interested in studying them in-depth in relation to the phenomenon of social media use. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) corroborate the assertions of the aforementioned authors with the view that the sample size is the terra incognita of qualitative sampling strategy. No tests or coefficients exist to tell the researcher when the sample is big enough. Also, Perrin (2001) asserts that the process of reading and coding text is so time-consuming that studies using qualitative techniques tend to be relatively small.

3.5   Research participants

Franklin Cudjoe

Franklin Cudjoe is the founding President and CEO of IMANI Africa which is an award winning think-tank with the mission to subjecting government policy that is likely to have systematic implications for development on issues of 'value for money', 'due diligence' and 'rational choice', 'public choice' and 'vested interest' analysis. The organisation also actively engages in public advocacy with a view to promoting peace and prosperity.

Cudjoe provides social-political commentary in local and international media on Africa's development. He has made appearances on BBC, CBC, Swiss and Swedish National TV, Austrian National Radio and several local Ghanaian media. He has also been cited severally in *London's Daily Telegraph, The Wall Street Journal* (all three versions), and a host of others. He won two John Templeton Foundation awards for advancing the institutional foundations of free society. In 2010, Cudjoe was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. He was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. In 2015, Cudjoe was one of four African civil society leaders (out of 16 globally) selected by the IMF for its 2015 Civil Society Fellows Programme as part of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings. He came second in the category of Governance and Leadership and eighth in the overall ranking of Avance Media of the 50 Most Influential Young Ghanaians in 2015. He had 34,405 followers on Facebook and 4,990 friends and 20,100 followers on Twitter as of May, 2017.

Lucy Quist

Lucy Quist is a business leader who is committed to the development of Africa's youth. She was appointed CEO of Airtel Ghana in 2014 and has been at post as at the time this study was being conducted. She is the first Ghanaian woman to lead a multinational telecommunications company. She trained as an electrical and electronic engineer and has received numerous awards for her vision and strategic planning for the expansion and integration of various telecoms businesses in Ghana and also across the continent. Notable among these awards is the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana (CIMG) Marketing Woman of the year 2014. She is an accomplished speaker on many subjects in business leadership and technology. She has been on platforms such as TEDxEUSTON, the Leadership and Ethics Conference

at Columbia Business School and the African Development Investment Convention in Zurich. She was also featured on BBC's Power Women series in 2016. Quist serves on several international and local boards including the International Board for African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), Petra Trust Company Ltd, the Business Environment Enabling Programme under UKAID, the Industry Advisory Board for Ashesi University and The Exploratory – an initiative of the African Women Advocacy project. She is a founding member of the Executive Women Network, a non-profit organisation of women in senior management and executive positions committed to inspiring, empowering and supporting women executives to succeed. She ranked eighth in the Ghana Social Media Report ranking of the most influential public figure on social media 2016. As of May 2017, she had 86, 418 followers on Facebook and 2,351 followers.

3.6   Data Collection Method

Spencer and Snape (2003) aver that certain data collection methods have also been identified with qualitative research such as: observational methods, in-depth interviewing, group discussions, narratives, and the analysis of documentary evidence. I was able to collect data to answer my research questions through the utilisation of an interviews and analysis of electronic documentary evidence.

3.6.1   Interviews

Creswell (2014) defines qualitative interviews as a "means that the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, on the Internet, or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally

open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants"

Braun and Clarke (2013) explain the term interviewing as "a professional conversation with the goal of getting a participant to talk about *their* experiences and perspectives and to capture *their* language and concepts, in relation to a topic that *you* have determined" (p. 77). The authors believe that interviews are used when the researcher aims to answer questions relating to the experience, understanding, perceptions and construction of things that the participants have some kind of personal stake in.

Qualitative interviews are mostly divided into three types. These types are structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Braun & Clarke, 2011; Daymon & Holloway, 2001). For this study, I used the semi-structured interview. To Braun and Clarke (2011), this approach to interviews is tailored in such a way that the researcher prepares an interview guide before the interview but does not rigidly adhere to it, either in terms of precise wording of the questions or the order in which the questions are asked. Daymon and Holloway (2001) stress that the sequencing of questions is not the same for every participant as it depends on the process of each interview and the responses of each individual.

In line with the above explications, I had the opportunity of interviewing Quist via the phone because of her busy schedules and used a semi-structured interview guide. Through the interview, I got to know and understand her social media use. However, I could not have an interview with Cudjoe to get his point of view on his social media use because he had a busy schedule as well and all efforts to get him proved futile.

3.6.2 Document Analysis

As a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies—intensive studies producing rich descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organisation, or program (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994).

Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Daymon and Holloway (2001) assert that documents consist of words and images that have been recorded without the intervention of a researcher. They are in written, printed, sound, visual and digital forms. The authors state that analysing documents is a useful method because of its unobtrusive, non-reactive nature. This assertion is apt since I did not create or co-create the electronic documents retrieved because they were posted prior to my study and without my knowledge. This makes the documents naturalistic and also possess a built-in level of authenticity (Leavy, 2014).

To Bowen (2009), documents can take various forms like advertisements, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspaper etc. but in the case of this research, I retrieved and analysed posts that were shared on Facebook and Twitter by the two selected CEOs. I treated the posts as documents which serve as a reservoir of ideas, voices and views of the CEOS.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

At the outset of the data collection, I ensured my presence on Facebook and Twitter. After purposively selecting the CEOs, I did a search for them using their names as the keyword on the aforementioned social media platforms for their handles. Fortunately,

I found the two with ease. In the case of Facebook, I sent a friend request to Franklin Cudjoe first but he had reached his Facebook friend limit so the system prompted that I follow him instead. For Lucy Quist, her Facebook profile is a "page" so I had the option to "like" the page instead. I moved to Twitter and replicated what I did on Facebook but this time, instead of sending a friend request, I sent a follow request and started following them outrightly. After the preliminary stage of following the two CEOs, I set out to retrieve any written text believed to have been originally authored by them for the period of one month which was the exploratory stage. I retrieved 62 Facebook posts and 145 Tweets of Franklin Cudjoe and 16 Facebook posts and 25 Tweets of Lucy Quist. I retrieved texts authored by the CEOs. I then operationalised texts believed to be originally authored by the CEOs to be written texts that were posted with their accounts and do not have retweets (RTs), an @twitterhandle within the tweets, shared and links to other sources except to another social media platform of the CEOs. Posts on Quist's pages were confirmed to be authored by her through my personal communication with her. However, there was no other means to ascertain the originality of the posts of Cudjoe because I could not have an interview with him. Therefore, posts on his profile were assumed to be authored and shared by him personally. This assumption is substantiated by the view of Porter, et al. (2015) that any post on the profiles of CEOs must be sanctioned in tone and content of the corporate leader even if the effort of an executive assistant or an employee in the communications department was being used since the CEOs are the owners of the accounts. In the same way one would accept a CEO quote in a corporate press release as attributed to in the document. Each post was treated as representative of the voice chosen by the CEO who owned the account.

I retrieved and stored the texts in MS Word document. This follows the assertion of Altheide and Schneider (2013) and Leavy (2014) that qualitative content analysis focuses on pre-existing data that exists independently of the research process not ongoing interactions. I had Microsoft Word Documents dedicated to each of the CEOs and compiled all the data I retrieved from their profiles. For each CEO, I had two word documents; one for Facebook and the other one for Twitter. I therefore had four word documents in all. Following Austmann (2015) and Girginova (2013), I considered each post to be a single, unique unit of analysis.

I converted the Word documents into PDF files so as to prevent changes from being made to the data mistakenly. I then printed the documents and began the analysis. This method actually follows Altheide and Schneider's (2013) advice of saving the data retrieved for later research because it can be more easily searched and a more secure way of reviewing data since you can go back to it at any given time in the course of the study. I then designed a coding scheme with the codes that emerged.

I first skimmed through the data collected and later engaged it closely putting down descriptive notes at every stage in order to gain a general understanding of the contents. After having a full grasp of the issues that were espoused in the data, I began coding and came up with some thematic categories. These thematic categories include: *personal, organisational, inspirational, industry, Africa's development, women's participation, leadership, sarcasm, religion, philanthropy, faith, social, political and economic.* I later developed themes out of the categories since some of them were interwoven. The themes were: *governance, personal, global, organisational and social.*

I coded the rest of the data based on the codes that emerged. I kept notes on insights, ideas, patterns, and connections that occur to me as I read and reread the data

(Benaquisto & Given, 2008). The notes helped me to keep track of the emergent definitions of codes and their distinctive criteria.

The data obtained from the content analysis of the Facebook and Twitter content analysis was supplemented by the personal interview. The primary purpose of this additional data collection step was to provide a rich, contextual backdrop for understanding the social media use of the CEO. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

3.8   Method of Data Analysis – Content Analysis

Altheide and Schneider (2013) identify two types of content analysis. These are Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) and qualitative content analysis also known as Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) or latent content analysis (Julien, 2008). This study employed the qualitative content analysis as its data analysis method. To Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis is one of the numerous research methods used to analyze text data. Bowen (2009) believes that the method of data analysis suitable for data mined through document analysis is content analysis. The goal of content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). The above definition resonates with the case study design which seeks to study a phenomenon in depth for a better understanding and interpretation.

"Content analysis is the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes" (Julien, 2008, p. 120). This method of data analysis is a way of reducing and making sense of data and also deriving meaning. It is a commonly used method of analyzing a wide range of textual data that might be in verbal, print or electronic form, including interview transcripts,

manuals, recorded observations, narratives, responses to open-ended questionnaire items, speeches, postings to listservs, and media such as drawings, photographs, and videos (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Julien, 2008).

Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 18). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) also view qualitative content analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.

Few of the works I reviewed on the phenomenon of social media use employed content analysis as a data analysis method. For instance, Porter, et al. (2015) used the content analysis method when they probed the Twitter engagement of executives. Austmann (2015) also used content analysis to ascertain whether the presentation of the self of Social CEOs on Twitter entails micro-celebrity strategies.

Based on the above explications, the current study employed the content analysis approach to analyse data in order to gain new insights (Krippendorff, 2004) and to understand and interpret the kinds of posts the selected CEOs share on their social media platforms. Furthermore, I went through the systematic process of analyzing the data I collected from the Facebook and Twitter profiles of the CEOs by first skimming (superficial examination), reading closely, organizing the information into categories and themes and finally making interpretations.

3.9   Ethical Issues

Bowen (2009) states that in a research, the researcher is expected to demonstrate objectivity (seeking to represent the research material fairly) and sensitivity

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(responding to even subtle cues to meaning) in the selection and analysis of data from documents. Ultimately with "passive research" online (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 81), i.e. studying pre-existing content, one must be ethically concerned about the use of comments or postings of private individuals. However, if the site is intended to reach the general public the material may be freely analysed and quoted to the degree necessary in the research without consent (Austmann, 2015; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Since the CEOs under study are public personalities, their profiles are accessible for every internet user whether you follow them on Twitter or on Facebook. Moreover, the CEOs use their Facebook and Twitter platforms as a public communication tool in their function as executive leaders and therefore do not "have an expectation of privacy concerning their posts" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 81).

Finally, a number of research works (Austmann, 2015; Brandfog, 2016; Jameson, 2014; Porter, et al., 2015) have been conducted by retrieving and analysing data from the personal social media profiles of CEOs without the researchers seeking the consent of the CEOs before collecting the needed data. Altheide and Schneider (2013) posit that researchers must be mindful that collecting certain data from users' personal profile pages may require ethics approval, however, other data that are posted to publicly accessible group pages as public information are probably safe for collection. I argue that data collected from the Facebook and Twitter pages of the selected CEOs are public and thus everyone can see these posts once they sign up to any of these social media platforms therefore it does not breach ethics since the CEOs are followed by thousands of people. Nevertheless, the two CEOs under study are aware of the study being conducted.

3.10   Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the process of the research and the method of data analysis. Firstly, it highlighted the approach of research used and the design suitable for the study. It also shed light on the sampling method and size and at every stage rationalises to suit the study. Finally, it discussed the method of data collection and analysis in detail and wrapped up with the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter outlines a detailed presentation of the findings from the data collected from the two social media platforms of the two selected CEOs and that of the interview conducted. The findings are from the investigation conducted into the kinds of posts CEOs share on their Facebook and Twitter pages and how they ultimately brand themselves and the organisations they represent through those posts. The research questions posed at the beginning of the study are answered in this chapter by reducing data obtained into themes and analysing them using the relevant theories and literature reviewed in the Chapter two of the study. The first research question, is however, answered by using descriptive statistics which afforded me the opportunity to present the findings in a graphical representation through tables and bar charts. I first presented the thematic categories as it appeared in the aggregated post of each CEO in a tabular form in order to appreciate which of the categories was given the greatest concentration in that order and also be able to compare the social media use of the CEOs to see what each of them gives prominence to. I then collapsed the two respective tables into one cumulative table to ascertain the one that was given more attention. I wrapped the research question one up with a pictorial representation of the tables.

4.1   RQ.1. What kinds of posts do CEOs share on their social media platforms?

Social media is considered an evolving phenomenon, a shift in how people discover, read, and share news, information and content. Social media enables individuals to

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generate and consume content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) thus making consumers more active as opposed to the previous era where media conglomerates generated content for their passive consumers. Despite all the numerous benefits accrued from social media use, CEOs are one unique group of social actors most research findings have qualified as laggards in the adoption of social media (Brandfog, 2016; Weber Shandwick, 2012) usually due to their lack of time and fear that they may contradict the image they already have for themselves should they join the social media train (Reeves, 2013). However, the era of CEOs remaining aloof and in the shadows, never mixing with mere mortals, is over (Holmes, 2016) as social media use by CEOs is now more of a given than a choice since most of their customers have an online presence. This phenomenon has led to a modification in the communication practices of CEOs as they are now digitized (Girginova, 2013) and can generate and distribute content globally, cheaply and instantaneously.

Moreover, some CEOs have also become active social media users as they generate and share posts ranging from mundane to breaking news for their followers to consume. This research question therefore sought to identify and examine the themes that run through CEOs social media posts. A thorough coding of five (5) months posts of the CEOs totalling 1,053 indicated that the CEOs weave their social media discourse around *governance, personal, global, social and organisational subjects.*

This manifestation of CEOs sharing posts on diverse subjects on social media is substantiated by the assertion of Papacharissi (2012) that an online presentation of the self must "convey polysemic content to audiences, actual and imagined" (p. 1989).

Table 1

Frequency distribution of posts shared on Facebook and Twitter by Quist from December 2016 – April 2017

Kinds of Posts	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Percentage (%)
QUIST				
Personal	48	41	**89**	52
Governance	17	29	**46**	27
Global	6	13	**19**	11
Organisational	12	6	**18**	10
Social	-	-	-	-
Total	**83**	**89**	**172**	**100**

Table 2

Frequency distribution of posts shared on Facebook and Twitter by Cudjoe from December 2016 – April 2017

Kinds of Posts	Facebook	Twitter	Total	Percentage (%)
CUDJOE				
Governance	129	143	**272**	31
Social	64	115	**179**	20
Global	35	136	**171**	19
Organisational	70	80	**150**	17
Personal	49	67	**116**	13
Total	**347**	**541**	**888**	**100**

Table 3

Cumulative frequency distribution of posts shared on Facebook and Twitter by the two CEOs from December 2016 – April 2017

Kinds of posts	*Facebook*	*Twitter*	Total	Percentage (%)
Governance	146	171	**318**	**30**
Personal	97	108	**205**	**19**
Global	41	149	**190**	**18**
Social	64	115	**179**	**17**
Organisational	82	86	**168**	**16**
Total	**430**	**630**	**1060**	**100**

4.1.1 Governance

This theme includes posts that incorporate all processes of governing either in the country, organisation, family and others. The indicators of this particular theme are posts in relation to *governance, politics*, *business, women participation, leadership* and the *economy.* The results of the data obtained, as shown in Table 3 reveal that although this theme ranks first in the cumulative distribution of posts shared on both platforms (30%), and that of Cudjoe (31%), it ranks second in the distribution table of Quist (27%). A scrutiny of this finding reveals the possibility that each CEO's line of work has an influence on the kinds of posts they share on social media. The findings appeared skewed in favour of Cudjoe because he leads a think tank whose main aim is to provide public policy research, analysis and advice (McGann, 2005). He even revealed in a post that:

> It so happens that our serious work in the past 8 years has been to focus on incumbent governments… From IMANI's side, annual and quarterly

performance reviews of the executive, manifesto tracking, serious parliamentary scrutiny and an intelligent engagement with the youth of Ghana are just a few of the cocktail of plans.

- *Cudjoe (December 26, 2016)*

It is therefore not surprising to see Cudjoe contribute more to the discourse of governance than Quist who is the leader of a telecommunication company which produces hardware, software and also other services in order to make communication possible and easy. Relating this occurrence to the theory of identity construction, it is evident that Cudjoe identifies himself as a think tank leader and also wants his followers to see him as such so he simply reaffirms the identity he already has as a think tank leader by sharing more on his line of work on Facebook and Twitter. This revelation is affirmed by the definition of identity by Wood and Smith (2005) as a complex personal and social construct, consisting in part of who we think ourselves to be, how we wish others to perceive us, and how they actually perceive us. During the course of the coding, it became evident that, Cudjoe added his voice to all hot issues in relation to governance and the economy of the country and it is during these seasons that his social media posts increase. This active use of social media to share his thoughts on governance has given him an identity not just as a think tank leader but also a political analyst. The following are excerpts of his posts relating to the theme of governance:

Is it time to introduce private sector pathways to intervene in the financing of the NHIS to ensure provision, especially given that relying solely on government funding has not led to efficient provision?

- *Cudjoe (February 21, 2017)*

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He critiques government policies and also expresses his disgust for bribery and corruption in the public sector in his posts. He indicates this in the post below:

> Soon the annual ritual of lamentation over excessive waste with our public accounts will be upon us. The sittings of the Parliamentary Accounts Committee have become funeral grounds for ordinary observers like us while the demeanour of public officials appearing for questioning is simply dismissive. But please what will be playing out mostly is not necessarily stealing- at least with the many instances of excessive expenditure over allocations sometimes by over 450%. It is simply an agreement between the politician and the civil servants to pay themselves odious allowances beside their salaries!
>
> - *Cudjoe (January 26, 2017)*

Quist also has her domain inasmuch as Cudjoe seems to be very active when it comes to issues in relating to the governance and the economy of the country. She as an award-winning business woman who leads a multinational telecommunications company gives her varied identities which afford her the opportunity to touch on a whole range of subjects on social media. The performances of the identities she possess are manifest in her social media posts as she shares more on the other indicators of governance like leadership, business and women participation. Quist as a leader shares posts in relation to her leadership role and lessons she learns from this role each passing day. She even confirms the above assertion by posting that:

> I decided to use social media to reach many people to share life lessons on leadership, STEM and how to develop our country and continent. For young people to realise their potential.

- *Quist (March 17, 2017)*

Secondly, Quist uses her experiences to inspire other women to reach greater heights. Through her posts, she promotes the idea of gender balance in the area of technology thus she mostly uses the hashtag #Women4Tech.

> #EvolveWithSTEM
>
> Accelerating development requires dramatically increasing participation in STEM. In Africa I believe we need increased participation across board - both male and female. We must ensure that participation in STEM is inclusive. Sometimes this means giving women extra encouragement into STEM. I am looking forward to joining a remarkable group of women at Mobile World Congress next week to share ideas on what more we can do to achieve this.
>
> We are #women4tech
>
> - *Quist (February 22, 2017)*

Followers of Quist also get to know her as a leader who has constructed her identity on Facebook and Twitter as one who is passionate about business and impactful leadership. Through her use of social media, her followers get to know of her programme - the Business Case Hub where she brings together astute business men and women from diverse sectors to share their ideas with others. For instance, she explains that:

> To compete globally and grow our economies we need business leaders who will run sustainable profitable businesses that will last decades. We need to raise our business leadership acumen to global standards. As I shared a couple of weeks ago, these ideas created the vision for the Business Case Hub.
>
> - *Quist (February 24, 2017)*

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Below is a thought on leadership:

> Business leaders today are called to be moral leaders. To make their leadership serve a higher calling. For me it feels like thinking on leadership is coming full circle as the topic of moral leadership is discussed more and more. It seems to centre around leaders being good stewards; of the people they lead and the planet we live on. Leaders must serve these interests better by prioritizing them.
>
> -   *Quist (January 9, 2017)*

Cudjoe sometimes share posts on these other topics but it is not as frequent and encompassing as Quist's. For instance, he espouses his idea on leadership that:

> […] A great leader either leads, follows or simply gets out of the way. There are no natural born leaders!!!
>
> -   *(February 18, 2017)*

In the above exemplars, Cudjoe and Quist were both seen creating identities for themselves even as they may be seen as just sharing posts in an attempt to contribute to the narrative that is already going on in relation to such topics in the society. This form of identity construction is what Orsatti and Riemer (2015) term as active identity-making. In this form of identity-making, the unreflective acting of users of social media shapes who they are. Therefore some identity cues picked by their followers are given off unknowingly. However, Quist is seen creating identities for herself intentionally for example as a business leader. This she even affirms in my personal communication with her that she strategises what should be shared on her social media pages. This is what she revealed about what goes into her strategy of social media use:

What are the things that define me? What are the things I'm familiar with?

What are the things that I can talk about freely, you know, without having to, I

don't know, make it up cos everything I write is true, yeah?

-    L. Quist (Personal communication, May 24, 2017)

She also added that she has a lot of audiences including her staff and customers who read and draw inspiration from her posts. This knowledge introduces a level of intentionality in the staging of her performances on social media. It is also an indicator that she works on the identity she wants her followers to be familiar with. This phenomenon is what Orsatti and Riemer (2015) refer to as reflective identity-making where social media provides a platform for an intentional self-presentation that enables one to actively and strategically express aspects of him or herself to their friends and followers through profile pictures, status updates and photos. Although Cudjoe creates several identities for himself I could not get a confirmation from him as to whether he deliberately strategises what to share or not but it is evident from researches that most posts shared on social media are not spontaneous or knee-jerk as social media users always strive to present a self that has been worked on and perfected because frontstage performances need to be rehearsed so as to be staged well (Girginova, 2013).

4.1.2   Personal Posts

Personal posts ranked the second on the cumulative list of the kind of posts CEOs share on Facebook and Twitter with a percentage of 19 but ranked first on Quist's table with 52% and last on Cudjoe's table with 13%. Although the percentages seem to favour Quist, the raw scores as displayed in Tables 1 and 2 imply that Cudjoe shares more on himself than Quist. Essentially, Cudjoe had 116 thematic categories

relating to his personality whereas Quists had 89 thematic categories within the same time frame of 5 months. This is due to the fact that Cudjoe is a very active social media user who shares information more than once a day as opposed to Quist who is an active user who shares three times a week. This disparity can also be attributed to the fact that public company CEOs (for instance, Quist) have investors and regulators to worry about when it comes to disclosing material information (Weber Shandwick, 2016).

Personal posts are posts that basically relate to and reveal the private and professional life or identities of the CEO. Identity captures the ways in which we actively live our lives in various contexts (Orsatti & Riemer, 2015). An individual is said to have a private or professional identity if he or she performs roles in relation to these two. To better understand the terms private and professional identity, I fall on the definitions by Tomer and Mishra (2016) who explain private identity as an identity derived from character traits, personal attributes and their conduct and professional identity as a self-descriptory reference that addresses their own self-concept and their professional self-concept based on motives, values and experiences regarding their work.

Girginova's (2013) study revealed that CEOs either had a social media platform dedicated solely to posts related to their professional identity or a combination of their professional and personal (which I term private) lives. However, none of the CEOs she studied had a Twitter account dedicated solely to posts related to the private identity of the CEO. My study also revealed that the two CEOs have accounts that have a blend of their private and professional identities which is corroborated by Papacharissi's (2012) view that online social platforms collapse public and private performances.

Applying Goffman's (1959) presentation of self to this theme, it is evident that all performances on social media are front stage acts as followers are not privy to the backstage where preparations go on for the performance on the frontstage. For instance, Quist had this to say when asked the processes she goes through before sharing posts on social media:

> What you find is that most of my posts are based on real life experiences. They are not just abstract, they are real so I make a note of it or a thought comes to mind, I make a note of it and I carve out time to flesh it out, to write it more fully so for instance, majority of my posts you will find are eerm, maybe before 6am around 6am.

- L. Quist (Personal communication, May 24, 2017)

This revelation indicates what she does on her backstage before the performance on the frontstage. However, on the posts that CEOs share on their personal lives, it is imperative to note that the CEO is left with the decision to reveal what he or she wants his or her audience to be privy to. Quist, CEO of Airtel Ghana affirms this statement when asked how she navigates between her professional and private self by stating that:

> Erm, what I try to do is ensure that there's a message. So what determines the navigation is the message. Is this post actually going to inspire or motivate or encourage somebody, right? If it is then I can share it and the personal posts tend to be specifically about me directly. If it's about my family then it's more limited.

The above excerpt confirms what Wood and Smith (2005) stated, that to some degree we can control what others know of us by making some choices in life, yet certain

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qualities of our identities are predetermined for us. From my interaction with Quist, it was clear that she controls what she wants her followers to know but cannot control her identity as a CEO of a multinational company because she leads publicly. The authors further assert that people infer qualities of our identities based on our gender, race, clothing, and other nonverbal characteristics in face-to-face interactions. Because many of these cues are invisible online, internet technologies [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 social media posts that allowed the followers of the CEOs to have a feel of their private lives.

It has been one of those days when the changing weather and a busy schedule have caught up with me. Lots of sneezing and sniffles. Uncooperative headache. But as usual, with amazing people around me, I got through it. Will try to catch an early night. Next time you feel a little worse for wear, lean on the great pillars around you. Sleep tight!

- *Quist* (January 23, 2017)

Meanwhile, I am dead serious about my weight. 2/3rd of my clothes now make me look like one on hunger strike. So, if you see me please I am not hungry. Just being serious with my life. Good evening.

- *Cudjoe (March 2, 2017)*

Secondly, the CEOs under study also shared posts on their professional selves. These posts are mainly related to their work, the roles they play at work and their relationship with their employees. The following are illustrations:

I was reminded of why I am so passionate about what technology can do and why I continue to work tirelessly in technology.

- *Quist (February 1, 2017)*

I am looking forward to joining a remarkable group of women at Mobile World Congress next week to share ideas on what more we can do to achieve this.
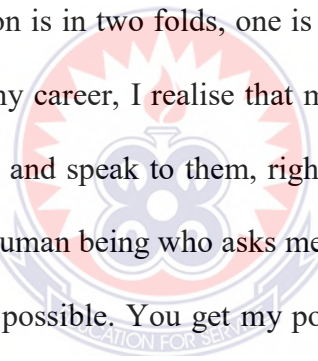
- *Quist (February 22, 2017)*

The IMANI team that spent the night of Budget Day to present IMANI's initial outlook. I will be presenting the initial positive reaction of IMANI to Parliamentarians this evening at Ada.

- *Cudjoe (March 4, 2017)*

Sharing these kinds of posts about themselves is a way of constructing and performing their 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 a Facebook profile or Twitter stream. Performing an identity through posts shared on Facebook and Twitter becomes a way of reaffirming or strengthening their private and professional identity as CEOs of their organisations. Papacharissi (2012) corroborates the above assertion by positing that social roles associated with a profession are performed through repeated behaviours. In the above excerpts, both Cudjoe and Quist perform how they go about their professional roles in their organisations in a repeated mode on social media.

Furthermore, posts that are meant to inspire were categorised under personal posts as it became evident that the inspirational posts are a combination of the private and

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professional identities of the CEOs. Cudjoe and Quist were seen revealing some of their private and professional identities through sharing of personal success stories to motivate or uplift their followers. CEOs are a group of seasoned individuals who have had a lot of experiences either in the world of work or in their private lives. Due to this, they share posts on the successes they have chalked, the failures they have encountered and challenges they have surmounted so as to serve as living testimonies for those followers who aspire to tread similar paths or simply, aspire to higher heights. Quist for instance shares a lot of inspirational posts and indicated that behaviour as one of the reasons she decided to be active on social media. This is what she has to say:

> Errm, my motivation is in two folds, one is that over the time as I continue to make progress in my career, I realise that more and more young people want me to mentor them and speak to them, right? And I would love to be able to meet every single human being who asks me for my time but I also realise that it is not physically possible. You get my point? If I try making appointments with everyone, I just couldn't be able to do that even if I agree to talk, actually, it wouldn't be possible to meet everybody so I realise that, you know, there are a lot of young people who are relatively well engaged on social media and so at the end of 2014, I decided that okay, let me start something on social media so that at least some of the things I will tell someone who is physically in front of me at a mentoring session, if I could put it on social media, then a lot of people can read it at the same time and so that is what I think … so number one is about mentoring and guiding and sharing so mentoring is really about being able to share what I have learnt and by sharing maybe someone may learn something from it maybe get an example, learn

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something that they might want to [learn] from me or learn something that they might want to do the same way but in any case, it is about them being able to learn from me. That is the number one motivation.

Below are some of the posts that fall in the category of inspirational posts:

Good morning. No matter what happens in life, never change your principles for making sound decisions. Don't go with the wind

- *Cudjoe (January 20, 2017)*

Boldly create the future! We must take charge and create the future we want to see in Africa. The call to action is urgent. It is not enough to speak of change. Change must be based in a vision. Visions require action to come to life.

- *Quist (April 14, 2017)*

The performance of the private and public self can ultimately be termed as autobiographical performances, aimed at sustaining story-telling reflexively employ performativity to traverse from private to public and back (Papacharissi, 2012).

Furthermore, the sub-theme of patriotism was also classified under personal posts. All posts in relation to patriotism were in one way or the other woven around the life of the CEO. They call on their followers to be patriotic and by that create an identity for themselves as patriotic citizens through their social media posts. The following posts are instances in which CEOs expressed their patriotic identities.

Generally most Ghanaians are deeply resentful of others' success. Just a reminder that Ghana can be well represented among the best in the world. Encourage all other think tanks, CSOs and everyone in any form of business to be the best and represent Ghana. Let us use Ghana's 60th Independence

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Anniversary to reflect on all the heroines and heroes in our land and truly "mobilise" their resources "for the future". Yes, we can!!😎😎😎

- *Cudjoe (March 1, 2017)*

4.1.3 Global

This theme placed third in all the three distribution tables as displayed in Tables 1, 2 and 3 with 11%, 19%, and 18% respectively. This indicates that the CEOs are not parochial or focus on local issues only but rather are also interested in other countries and also travel widely. This particular theme encompassed posts related to any country other than Ghana and Africa's development. They thus share posts on any issue in relation to other countries ranging from politics to governance to famine among others. These are some examples of instances the CEOs shared posts on other countries:

Rwanda continues to shine a light and show the way…If Rwanda can, all of Africa can. We just need to focus and act on the right visions with dedicated consistency.

- *Quist (February 14, 2017)*

Trump wants the state to ensure every child in America is educated but they must be free to choose between public and private pathways.

- *Cudjoe (March 2, 2017)*

On the development of Africa, Cudjoe's interest stems from his work as a think tank leader as he believes Africa can develop if we deal with corruption and other activities related to ineffective governance that cripple the progress of Africa. He also shares experiences he had in other countries with his followers. Below are illustrations:

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Three million South Sudanese and severely famished people in the horn of Africa are displaced due to very bad governance!

- *Cudjoe (February 10, 2017)*

South Africa's Jacob Zuma is the lowest new normal in Africa. Clueless, AGGRESSIVELY CORRUPT and incompetent at best

- *Cudjoe (March 10, 2017)*

On the other hand Quist, who is very passionate about Africa, is of the view that Africa can develop when it rides on the back of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). This idea is even seen in the CSR initiative of the organisation she leads.

STEM is moving in Africa! We must accelerate development in Africa through STEM. STEM that is driven by African people who understand the contextual significance of their ability to analyse problems on the ground and create solutions that are relevant and sustainable.

- *Quist (April 5, 2017)*

She even indicated in my interview with her that she dedicates her Friday posts to talk about Africa and how the youth can develop it through their potential. Here is an excerpt:

Friday is about Africa, how we can realise the Africa potential not just the individual is linked to the larger continent.

- L. Quist (Personal communication, May 24, 2017)

Through posts as these, followers get to know that CEOs are not just interested in Ghana but also interested in the development of Africa and how the world has or may

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have an impact on Ghana and Africa. They ultimately create an identity for themselves as Pan-Africanists since they stage performances in relation to their passion for Africa through posts shared on social media.

4.1.4 Organisational

This theme ranked fourth on the distribution table of Cudjoe and Quist and fifth on the cumulative table with the percentages of 10, 17 and 16 respectively. As Glick (2011) asserts, a CEO is the head of an organisation and therefore leads the organisation in a greater part of its dealings with their stakeholders. In many cases, CEOs and other top executives are seen as the company's spokespeople as they are naturally assumed to reflect the views and vision of their company thus anything they say or do in public may impact their company (Fetscherin, 2015). Corroboratively, Girginova (2013) asserts that in the case of sharing posts in relation to their organisations, CEOs create an identity for themselves as representatives of the organisations and assume the role of the main spokespersons for their organisations. This was evident in the findings as the CEOs were seen assuming the role of the communications specialists of their various organisations as they share posts in relation to what the organisation does, what it stands for, the employees behind the day to day activities of the organisation among other related issues.

Quist for instance does not share explicit posts about Airtel, Ghana but rather shares a lot on the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative (Evolve with STEM) of Airtel. In these cases she virtually assumes the position of Communications Manager of the organisation as she revealed that she strategised with her team to share posts on Evolve with STEM every Wednesday. Below are excerpts:

This year, part of our STEM journey will be practical. We must translate what we know and are capable of into real products, services and new creations. We must find the people doing these things and talk about them. They need our support, patronage and encouragement to keep going.

Using STEM to leapfrog our development requires active participation.

#onlywecan #STEMAchievers

- *Quist (January 4, 2017)*

Conversely, Cudjoe shares explicit posts on his organisation – Imani Africa. He gives regular updates on the projects the organisation undertakes as a think tank and also about the employees. Cudjoe's Facebook and Twitter engagements on his organisation especially syncs with the findings of Porter, et al. (2015) which revealed that Fortune 500 CEOs kept tweet topics at a very high level such as: highlighting news articles about the company; posting links to the company web site to generate traffic; and recognizing employees for great work when tweeting about their companies. Below are instances when he talked about Imani Africa:

IMANI is looking for a creative graphic designer with working experience in photography and video editing. Interested candidate should send their CV & digital portfolio to social@imanighana.org

- *Cudjoe (January 29, 2017)*

#IMANI archives-- One year after founding IMANI, I gave a talk on African Health Economics to an all female staff at the Bill &Melinda Gates Foundation--archival material as we begin our 13th low key anniversary celebrations this year. IMANI turned 13 on March 9, 2017. God is good.

- *Cudjoe (March 10, 2017)*

They also use their social media handles to talk about their employees.

For instance:

> Congratulations to the team at Airtel Ghana. We turned an idea into reality and sustained it. An idea born out of CIMG's recognition of our work.
>
> - *Quist (December 14, 2016)*

> Make no mistake. IMANI's Patrick Kwabena Stephenson has eloquently stated IMANI's position on all varied media houses today on the Free SHS
>
> - *Quist (February 13, 2017)*

The above posts highlight the CEOs belief in their employees as competent. Employees they believe can deliver.

4.1.5 Social

This is a peculiar theme that runs through Cudjoe's posts only. It was deduced that he shares posts on issues about any other topic that is of interest to him in the society. However, it was gathered that Quist did not have any post related to social posts. This is attributable to the fact that she strategises her social media engagements and thus has specific topics she shares on. This does not mean some of her posts are not related to the society. It means the posts had an overarching theme that runs through them and those posts being classified under as social posts as another thematic category is insignificant and further, are not iterative to be categorised under this theme. The indicators of this theme are: Sarcasm, humour, entertainment, football, among others.

Inasmuch as CEOs are presumed to be serious-minded individuals focusing on business and how they can make profit, they also take a breather by sharing posts related to their interests other than business.

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What is "nngengne"? and "solo"? Why gyrate like grasshoppers to lyrics you don't understand? Don't you think some of our hiplife artiste are just poor when it comes to lyrics? All that helps them is the 'kpanlogo' beats else stripped off, the lyrics are empty.

- *January 25, 2017*

Last year in Church, one homily was based on dreams. Essentially, "Our dreams reveal ourselves to us"the priest said to us. And I can relate: The story is told of one Musah who had a dream that his bank was going into liquidation and he had lost his savings. The next day he went to the bank to withdraw all his money. You know why? Because the motto of the Bank is "Your Dreams Come True". May all your dreams come true and dream on. Good morning again everyone January 3, 2017

Here, Cudjoe is seen to be amusing his followers at the same time inspiring them.

#110 is the short code for any job at the presidency. Call now

- *April 22, 2017*

The above post shows Cudjoe criticising government's appointments of ministers in a humorous way.

Figure 1. Bar graph of the distribution of the five thematic categories of the Facebook and Twitter posts as shared by Cudjoe and Quist from December 2016 – April 2017.
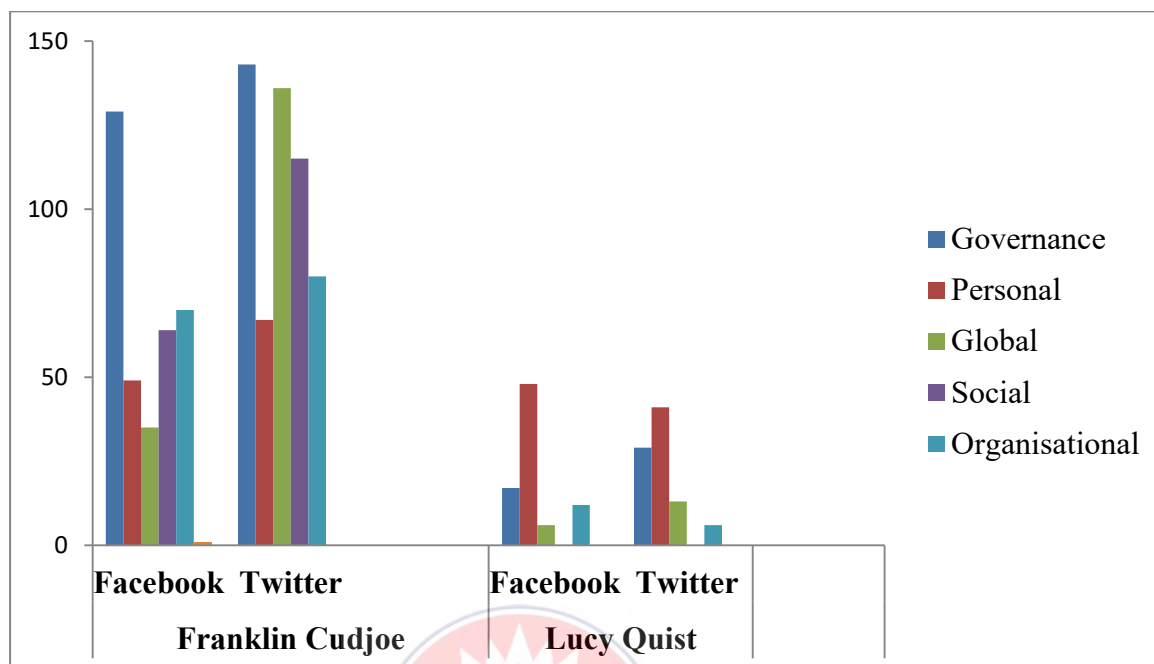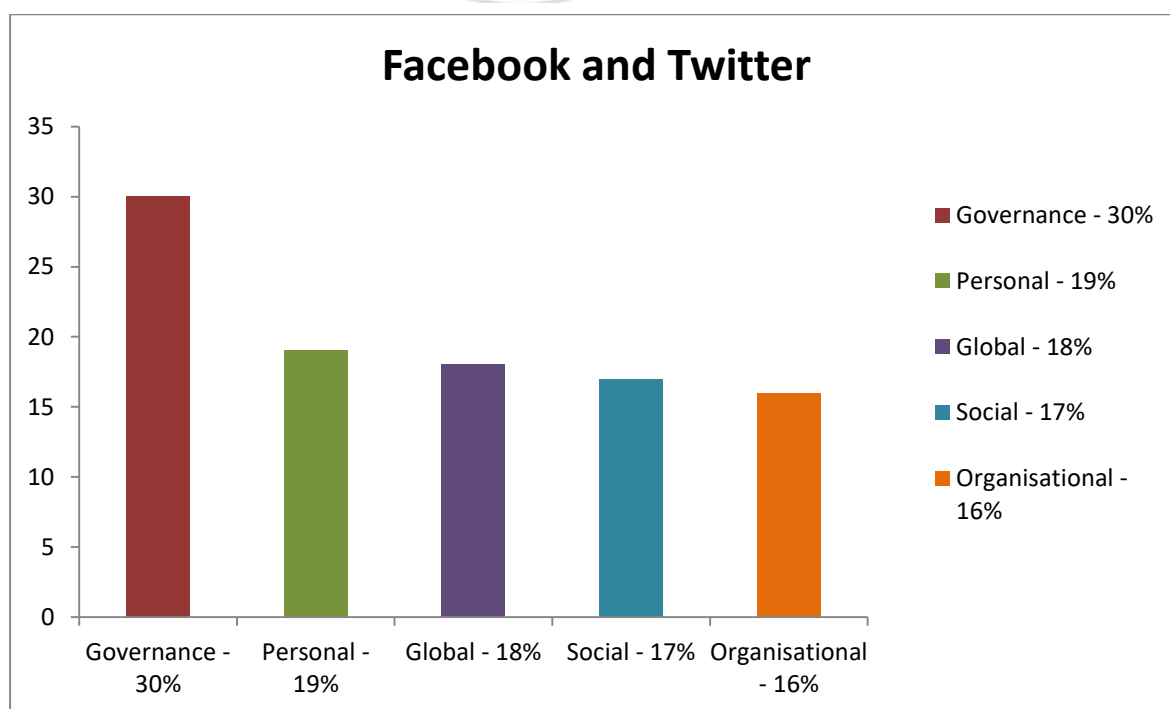

Figure 2. Bar graph of the cumulative frequency distribution of the five thematic categories of the Facebook and Twitter posts as shared by Cudjoe and Quist from December 2016 – April 2017.

4.2   RQ. 2. How do CEOs use the posts to perform self-branding of their personalities?

The internet has become the number one branding tool in this era and the advances in social media are offering an unprecedentedly easy, convenient and flexible ways for corporate leaders to manage their public relations and personal images (Alghawi, Yan & Wei, 2014, p. 184). In an ultra-connected world where the democracy of information rules, today's corporate leaders have an individual brand—separate from the corporations they run—outlined by the opinions, comments, values, stories and even personal quirks (Lu, 2015). This research question sought to bring another dimension to understanding CEOs social media use by identifying and analysing how CEOs present a salable self to their Facebook and Twitter audiences. The data revealed, Cudjoe and Quist build and develop a personal online brand through the use of social media. They thus brand themselves as *organisational leaders, corporate spokespersons, social commentators, influencers, globetrotters, religious people* and *gender advocates.*

4.2.1   Organisational leaders

CEOs are now increasingly regarded as the face, the advocate and the spiritual leader of the ships they helm. In general, CEO brands follow the same rules as corporate brands, except that CEOs are humans. The men and women who wear these hats have real, distinct personalities, which often evolve into their personal brands (Lu, 2015). Girginova (2013) is of the view that CEOs' personal tweets, however seemingly banal, shape and reinforce their professional identities. For example, Cudjoe signs off a Facebook post like this:

> "Franklin Cudjoe Founding President and CEO IMANI"

- *February 24, 2017*

> I have said to all my noble Vice-Presidents for instance that the titles come
> with duties that must be performed else no chop money.

- *Cudjoe (December 27, 2016)*

It is evident that Cudjoe brands himself as the CEO of Imani Africa and he does so either explicitly or tacitly. In identity construction terms, this is the way he wants his followers to see him thus he reaffirms his status in the organisation through his social media posts.

> Over the past weekend I learnt, with great fascination, the impact fake news can
> have. It was about me and my role as MD/CEO of Airtel Ghana and it was fake.
> Nothing has changed about my role.

- *Quist (February 27, 2017)*

In the above post, it can be deduced that Quist is subtly managing the impression people have of her.

From the aforementioned excerpts, it is evident that the fact that Cudjoe and Quist occupy a position in the organisation gives them an identity. This sits well with the third angle of the positionality principle where identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Furthermore, the manifestation of CEOs reaffirming their status through social media posts can equally be explored through the lens of the definition of identity by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as the social positioning of the self and the other and also through their principle of relationality. This principle stipulates that the process of identity construction does not reside within the individual neither is it autonomous or

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independent but in intersubjective relations of sameness and difference, realness and fakeness, power and disempowerment. In this case, Cudjoe and Quist are organisational leaders because there are employees to lead. Therefore, the existence of the employees who are on a lower level than the CEOs give Cudjoe and Quist the high status they occupy. The fake news circulated about Quist's position for instance was so because she has the position in reality.

Also, to have an identity as an organisational leader, one has to perform this identity as Butler (1990) states that identity is not something that one 'has', but rather something that one 'does', or 'performs' and recreates through concrete exchanges, discourses and interactions between human beings. In simple terms, audiences get to know that Cudjoe and Quist are CEOs based on their revelations on Facebook and Twitter of the roles they perform in their respective organisations.

Further, Goffman posits that when an actor takes on an established social role, for example as a CEO, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both. This can be seen in the instance where Cudjoe and Quist were seen branding themselves as organisational leaders. The front had already been established and all they had to do was to perform roles that fit in.

4.2.2   Influencers

The power that comes with leadership equips leaders with the quality of influence. This influence can flow through all aspects of their lives and they thus brand themselves as people who can influence decisions and most importantly the lives of people by being role models and mentors. This form of brand identity is created by

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Cudjoe and Quist with the embedded goal of being patronised by their followers. Below are examples of such posts:

"Update: It has been 2 months of peace since I got the NPA & EPA to stop the gas station close to my home from operating. Thank them."

-   *Cudjoe (February 27, 2017)*

This post inadvertently brands Cudjoe as someone who has the power to influence certain decisions in the society as he was able to stop an act like the one described in the above quote.

So, help me out here. I am to finally recommend for full sponsorship into a global leadership programme one of two names of young Ghanaian women with some public profile in activism plus effective communication skills. These two women were tabled for the programme myself. Now, I need to drop one of them. I have tried all manner of elimination tactics but still struggling. Would you recommend I focus on emotional stability? What else would you suggest I look out for? I won't mention their names but these are known persons. One is a communications professional and the other a development activist with good interpersonal skills. Start work.

-   *Cudjoe (February 19, 2017)*

Through the above post, Cudjoe gets the opportunity to restate his position as someone who can influence decisions at some levels. His followers get to know him as someone who has the power to make a decision that can change a person's life.

Quist as a leader was able to influence the Airtel's CSR initiative (Evolve with STEM) to give back to the society based on the recognition she received as the CIMG Marketing Woman of the year 2014. She revealed through my interaction with her

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that Evolve with STEM came to realisation after merging her field (STEM) and part of the theme of CIMG that year (The Future of Marketing: Evolve or Die). Obviously, there would have been a different CSR initiative if Airtel had a different CEO since the CSR concepts are not etched in stone in the organisation. This positions her as an influential leader who can impact strategies in the organisation and beyond. She also brands herself as an influential woman in STEM. Below are some examples of such posts:

> Hear from women that empower, encourage, transform and innovate #mobile #tech at #Women4Tech Summit http://ow.ly/1Ju1308XQZt #GSMAW4T
>
> - *Quist (February 23, 2017)*

She brands herself as an influential woman in STEM through this post because she was also sharing the platform with the same women she describes as those that empower, transform and innovate.

Also, since CEOs are acknowledged as seasoned individuals and thus have had a lot of experiences, they sell themselves as people who should be looked at as role models and mentors as Chen and Chung (2016) affirm that internally, the CEO behaves in the capacity not only of a manager but also of a role model. Inasmuch as the above assertion is true, it is noteworthy that CEOs are not role models to their internal publics only but also to their external ones as the branding is done on social media platforms. Below are some instances:

> Each bias built strength in me for the journey ahead. A journey that allows me to bring all of me - technology professional, music lover, creative thinker, mother, wife, daughter, friend, mentor, leader - to provide solutions for real life. Because like you, my life is real.

- *Quist (March 8, 2017)*

Leadership Representation! Our young people need to see relatable examples of leaders to inspire them into greater action…We need to mentor our small business owners to grow their enterprises into large businesses – to transform Africa, and of course my beloved Ghana, into the amazing place that I believe and I know is possible. Let us redefine what is normal in Africa

- *Quist (April 3, 2017)*

Through the above posts, Quist builds her personal brand as a leader and mentor for her followers to see.

4.2.3 Religious People

The two CEOs studied present themselves as Christians through their Facebook and Twitter engagement. Some of the posts they share typify them proclaiming the Christian faith. These are some of the posts that point to this type of brand:

My Church Choir can sing! A choir of about 10 sing and you feel like heavenly angels are marshalling you to a feast with the Lord God. As a Catholic, any good Latin spiritual can get me to donate my heart. Church was good. I bring you blessings from the Lord God. Make it a good week

- *Cudjoe (January 22, 2017).*

Leadership has gone full circle for me because it is finally reaching the core of true practical Christian values. To serve a higher purpose requires love that transcends immediate self.

- *Quist (January 9, 2017)*

4.2.4 Globetrotters

Cudjoe and Quist also present themselves to their audiences as people who travel widely and have bagged a lot of experiences. Through posts related to this theme, they share what they did in the countries they travel to, the people they meet and also, the experiences they have had. In other instances too, the posts are kept short, just to notify their followers about their location but all these go a long way to create an identity that can be purchased. For instance:

> Enjoy your holiday and have a good morning from me here in Buckinghamshire, UK.
>
> - *Cudjoe (December 2, 2016)*

> I feel like going back to teach 'economic freedom' in seminars for African Universities. I left off at Cape Town, having done West Africa, East Africa & Mozambique. Rejoice Ngwenya Adedayo Thomas let's do Zimbabwe!
>
> - *Cudjoe (March 18, 2017)*

> The real news is the fact that this week I have the great privilege to participate in two discussions at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. MWC is the global meeting of all telecom leaders.
>
> - *Quist (February 27, 2017)*

> While in Rwanda I spent an evening with mathematicians from across the continent who are studying at Aims.
>
> - *Quist (April 21, 2017)*

4.2.5   Corporate spokespersons

An individual's image and reputation may be the most important intangible asset, whether it's a movie actor, a political candidate who acts as a spokesman for his party or a CEO who represents a company. In many cases, CEOs and other top executives are seen as the company's spokespeople as they are naturally assumed to reflect the views and vision of their company. Anything they say or do in public may impact their company and vice versa (Fetscherin, 2015). This phenomenon is exemplified in the social media posts of both Cudjoe and Quist. For example:

Tonight: IMANI's 6th Inspirational Public Sector Leaders Awards. Guest Speaker: H.E. Mrs Tove Degnbol, Danish Ambassador to Ghana. Theme: The Virtues of a Leaner Goverment in the face of Fiscal Challenges. Time: 6pm. LIVE on Joy FM from 7:00pm.

MC: Nhyira Addo Broadcast Journalist and Co-Host, Super Morning Show, Joy FM.

Venue: Coconut Groove Regency Hotel.

**Performances by the Ghana Dance Ensemble, Hewale Sounds & Nana Asaase, the Poet.

-    *Cudjoe (December 22, 2016)*

By the way, IMANI is starting major value for money analyses on all oddious past and current government projects. We just don't know where to start from. But one at a time. Right now we are focused on Ameri and doing it the IMANI way. IMANI hardly does vested intetest analysis. We will leave that tiny bit to other organisations. Citizen Kofi B Bentil please call us to order now. Bright Simons one at a time. 😎😎

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- *Cudjoe (April 25, 2017)*

A year ago we embarked on an ambitious initiative. Evolve with STEM is all about encouraging children to dream big dreams for themselves and participate more in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. There is no career in the world today that does not require some knowledge of STEM. Our future will continue to require that we are comfortable with STEM.

- *Quist (December 14, 2016)*

4.2.6   Social commentators

A social commentator is someone who explores the issues of the day and can note connections between politics, sociology, economics. They put forward their opinion of the meaning of these connections either through the media; traditional or new or writing books. Contributing to the narrative of the society is a peculiar indicator of this theme. Cudjoe and Quist were seen contributing to the discourse in society by appearing on TV and Radio talk shows or simply in a write up. Some of such posts have been illustrated in the following posts:

The Minority Chief Whip is really asking serious policy questions of the nominee minister for Agriculture. I'm afraid the nominee should be able to answer why Cocobod has now been moved from the finance ministry and placed under the Agric ministry. It is a policy oriented question and not one at the pleasure of the President as the nominee suggests rather evasively. Im on metro tv from 9:30pm discussing the vetting

- *Cudjoe (January 24, 2017)*

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11 years ago on the BBC in London, the Swiss Ambassador to Kenya and my good self discussed and said same of famine in East Africa

- *Cudjoe (February 26, 2017)*

I believe that development is transformational journey that spans generations. I talked about this at TEDxAccra last year. Yet to be able to develop across generations we need to plan across generations

- *Quist (January 1, 2017)*

I shared my thoughts on #thenewnormal today on Starr103.5Fm. Here is another chance to watch it.

- *Quist (January 11, 2017)*

4.2.7   Gender advocates

Finally, the two CEOs brand themselves as leaders who are concerned about the representation of women and also support women to achieve their potentials as they also have equal rights and abilities. However, this theme runs through Quist's posts more than that of Cudjoe. This can be attributable to the fact that Quist shares these posts in the quest to motivate women from a phenomenological perspective whereas Cudjoe might have learnt about this phenomenon of giving women equal platforms and rights as men. Below are exemplars:

IMANI has more women than men.

- *Cudjoe (March 8, 2017)*

Bias presupposes what a person is capable of based on their physical attributes. Our most obvious physical attribute is our gender. The greatest bias against women realising their potential is created by the subliminal messages

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people receive over time. When men were hunting and gathering women spent their time home-making. How is it alright for men to progress beyond hunting and gathering but women must stay the same? Should only half of the human race evolve?

- *Quist (March 8, 2017)*

The findings of this research question debunk the traditional representationalist view that identity is a static and single essential personality tied to an earthly body which remains constant (Marwick, 2013) because we get to see the CEOs put on different identities through their social media posts.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Cudjoe and Quist build and communicate their brands in a positive manner. This is substantiated by personal branding experts (Peters, 1997; Montoya et al. 2002) who suggest that the online personal brands are to be built on the quintessential aspects of human personality and it should highlight the strength, goals and personality in a persuasive manner (as cited in Hillgren & Connor, 2011). Also, the personal brand of the CEOs is likely to be more effective in generating goodwill for the organisation they lead (Chen & Chung, 2016) therefore the onus lie on them to present their best attributes only.

On the theoretical level, this work on the self so as to present the best attributes of the self is what Goffman (1959) termed as impression management. The findings under this research question confirm Goffman's assertion that in order to stage a favourable character, one has to engage in impression management. This is where one gets to engage in strategic actions to create and maintain a desired image. Also, the actors (CEOs) get on the stage (social media) to perform (post pictures, videos among others), they implicitly request observers to take seriously the impression fostered

before them. This is how the observers get to know how the actor wants to be seen. It is important to note here that all these performances and the art of impression management are portrayed on the front stage. Goffman further asserts that the front stage must have a fixed setting unless in extreme instances where the setting goes with the performer.

Moreover, Cudjoe and Quist were seen engaging in what Orsatti and Riemer (2012) term as identity work. In this concept, people engage in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness. It was gathered from the data collected that Cudjoe and Quist from the start formed several identities for themselves as multiplicity of identity is characteristic of social media identity construction. Over time, these multiple identities were either repaired, maintained, strengthened or revised due to situations. Situations, according to Goffman (1959) determine how performances are staged. This view of Goffman is corroborated by Orsatti and Riemer's (2015) that, "identity evolves over time and it is a product of our engagement in various contexts such as work, family and other social contexts" (p. 6).

Finally, it is worthy to note that personal brands sustain and build up corporate brands through personal charisma therefore the CEOs convey a carefully pre-selected set of skills, ideas, and values which are associated with their personality and accomplishments (Chen & Chung, 2016).

4.3   RQ. 3. How do the posts reflect the organisations they represent?

The presence of CEOs on social media begs the question, what do CEOs say about their organisations in the social media landscape? To Girginova (2013), CEOs' personal tweets aid in the construction of an organisational image. As such, CEOs are

at the forefront of organisational communication and are certainly key figures in the constitution of organisational reality. CEOs' personal social media accounts were related to their organisations but perhaps, in less direct and traditional ways than might be expected. Furthermore, unlike the product brand which falls within the remit of the traditional directorate of marketing, the corporate brand resides with the Chief Executive Officer. This research question was posed to understand how organisations are communicated, differentiated and enhanced through CEOs social media posts.

From the analysis of the posts retrieved it was revealed that the organisations the CEOs represent are branded as *competent, innovative and impactful.*

4.3.1 Competent

Competence is the quality or state of being functionally adequate or having sufficient knowledge, strength and skill (Vincent, 2008). Cudjoe and Quist present their respective organisations to their audiences as organisations that are competent; with the requisite skills and resources both human and material to meet their organisational goals. They thus share posts that highlight their skills and edifice on their personal social media platforms. Also, they show that they possess intelligent staff that can deliver on their organisational promises. Below are some of such posts:

> Make no mistake. IMANI's Patrick Kwabena Stephenson has eloquently stated IMANI's position on all varied media houses today on the Free SHS.
>
> - *Cudjoe (February 13, 2017)*

> According to the 2009 Index Report, IMANI was the only African think tank to make the list of top 25 "Most Innovative" across the world. IMANI has since 2009 made it severally unto the top 150 global think tanks list and crucially of think tanks with most innovative ideas and significant impact on

public policy outcomes. In the latest 2016 rankings, IMANI's work on political party manifestos, titled "Critical Analysis of Key Political Promises" was mentioned as one of the most significant publications globally to have had impacts on the political process of electing a government.

> \- *Cudjoe (February 24, 2017)*

Congratulations to the team at Airtel Ghana. We turned an idea into reality and sustained it. An idea born out of CIMG's recognition of our work.

> \- *Quist (December 14, 2016)*

4.3.2 Innovative

Organisations thrive on innovations as technology seems to rule everything in this century. In this case, the CEOs share posts on the creation and adoption of an idea which is believed to be new to the organisation. Through these posts, Cudjoe and Quist end up portraying their organisations as ones that embrace innovation so as to look appealing to the technology savvy generation. These are some examples:

> […] IMANI is announcing the launch of a new Tracker for what has popularly, even if also erroneously, come to be known as 'FREE SHS'. The Tracker shall be known as EQUINOX- Expanding Quality, Inclusion & New Opportunities in Education
>
> EQUINOX is a unified gauge with composite indicators. These indicators include 'enrolment trajectory', 'per capita. spending', 'per capita spending efficiency', 'assessment metrics', 'resource disbursement schedules', and 'resource availability metrics'.

We shall work with government and allied civil society organisations on EQUINOX*"*

- *Cudjoe (February 14, 2017)*

In the above, Cudjoe is seen portraying his organisation as up-to-date that uses innovative ways in interrogating government policies. Below is an excerpt from Quist:

The biggest innovation Africa has given the world recently is mobile money. Yet with even that we have not created a global footprint of a large company. Today many different companies are serving mobile money around the globe.

- *Quist (March 15, 2017)*

Quist is seen branding her organisation as innovative since they also provide mobile money services in their distinct way. Inasmuch as she shapes her organisation like this, she still believes that there is much more to be done when it comes to innovation.

4.3.2 Impactful

Organisations make impact in the society they exist in by delivering on their core mandate and CSR initiatives.

STEM is empowering. As we learn and understand more of the world around us, superstition goes out the window. We learn cause and effect. We learn not to be afraid of living our full potential because the power lies within us all! Happy Wednesday! #realisingpotential #EvolveWithSTEM

- *Quist (January 25, 2017)*

The above post shows Quist revealing her trust in the CSR initiative of Airtel Ghana indicating that it is empowering which in effect has an impact on society as she is

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indirectly bringing the idea of STEM to the top of mind of her followers. Cudjoe also has this to say about his organisation:

> The entire IMANI is solidly behind the Ameri advocacy to bring finality, which must save some money for Ghana.

> - *Cudjoe (April 21, 2017)*

In the above example, Cudjoe believes that his organisation has a role to play in the society by investigating some ludicrous government deals so as to prevent corruption thus saving some money for the country.

In effect, it is evident that the CEOs through their personal social media platforms give the organisations they lead an identity that makes them distinctive thereby positioning their organisations in the mind of their followers and persuading them into patronizing the services they offer. This is confirmed by Balmer (2001) who states that an organisation's identity is a summation of those tangible and intangible elements that make any corporate entity distinct and is shaped by the actions of corporate founders and leaders, by tradition and the environment.

Furthermore, the social media activities of Cudjoe and Quist confirm that ongoing management of the corporate brand resides with the chief executive officer and does not fall within the remit of the traditional directorate of marketing. From the excerpts above, it can be deduced that what the two CEOs share encompass the vision, core values, image and actions of the corporation (Shahri, 2011).

Additionally, how the corporations are branded through CEOs post are not necessarily strategised to be shared but rather can be picked from posts that may be strategised or not strategised. This falls in line with what Orsatti and Riemer (2015) indicate as active identity-making. Under this mode of identity-making, everything one does on

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social media leaves a trace. It captures how individuals appropriate social identities when they learn the skills and intricacies of social practices and how their various identities are always bound up with activity and the use of tools and technology in their everyday lives.

4.4   Summary

This chapter presented the findings, discussions and analysis of the study. It sets off by answering the first research question which sought to interrogate the kinds of post shared on social media by the CEOs. It was revealed that Cudjoe and Quist shared posts in relation to the following subjects: personal, organisational, governance, social and global. Secondly, the concept of self-branding exhibited through the social media posts of the two CEOs was explored. The identity construction theory and Goffman's presentation of self were used to interrogate this question and it was concluded that Cudjoe and Quist brand themselves as organisational leaders, corporate spokespersons, social commentators, influencers, globetrotters, religious people and gender advocates. Finally, the study concluded that CEOs shape the image of their organisations in their social media posts since branding of organisation resides with the CEO. Cudjoe and Quist therefore brand their organisations as competent, innovative and impactful.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0   Introduction

This chapter summarises the research, draws conclusions and finally makes recommendations on of the importance of CEOs social media use and as well highlights its benefits embedded for personal and corporate brands.

5.1   Summary

This research set out to examine the social media use of CEOs. It probed into the kinds of posts shared by the selected CEOs and also, explored how the concepts of self-branding and corporate branding are enacted through the posts on Facebook and Twitter. The importance of the study was outlined as it would increase the knowledge base of CEOs on their social media use and also add to the scant local literature on the phenomenon.

Also, the extensive review of literature served as a foundation for exploring into the phenomenon. The concepts of social media and its various typologies, corporate branding and self-branding were discussed. The theories that were used to explicate the data – Goffman's Presentation of Self (Goffman, 1959) and Identity Construction theory (Orsatti & Riemer, 2015) were also reviewed and situated in online contexts. Here, the multiplicity and fluid nature of identity were reiterated drawing on the argument raised by the non-essentialist school of thought that identity is performed not static. Although Goffman's theory was propounded before the outburst of technology, it still remains relevant as social media users appropriate social media platforms as their frontstage whereas any other space aside social media becomes their backstage. It was therefore established that users get to manage the impressions

others have of them by rehearsing their frontstage acts (composing and reading through their Facebook posts) and successfully staging their performances (e.g. posting the reviewed post). These theories enabled me make sense of the data collected.

The research approach and design for this study were qualitative (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) and case study (Yin, 2009). These afforded me the opportunity to delve deeper into the phenomenon in a natural setting. The two CEOs were selected based on a set of criteria thus the appropriateness of purposive sampling (Daymon & Holloway, 2001). The dominant method of data collection was document analysis where I retrieved 5 months posts on the Facebook and Twitter platforms of the CEOs. I further employed semi-structured interviews to elicit the perspectives of the CEOs on their social media use. Finally, I content analysed the data. This method of data analysis was deemed appropriate since a large chunk of the data was mined through document analysis (Bowen, 2009). This method also gave me the chance to present the findings of Research Question one graphically through the use of tables and bar graphs.

5.2   Conclusion

The key findings that were discovered upon analysing the data to answer the research questions led to several conclusions.

The first research question which sought to explore the kinds of posts Cudjoe and Quist shared on Facebook and Twitter revealed that the CEOs conversations are woven around *governance, personal, global, social and organisational subjects.* It was established that the selected CEOs also join the social media conversation by

generating and sharing content on subjects they are most familiar with thus making their posts skewed mostly towards their line of work and their personal lives.

Research question two probed into how the concept of self-branding is enacted through the social media posts of the CEOs. It was deduced that the posts the CEOs share shape and present them as salable commodities to their audiences. Due to this subtle act of making their images appealing to their audiences, the CEOs were found sharing mostly positive posts about themselves. The CEOs brand themselves as *organisational leaders, corporate spokespersons, social commentators, influencers, globetrotters, religious people* and *gender advocates.* Under this, it was substantiated that the selected CEOs get to construct, modify, maintain and promote multiple identities through their social media use in order to be and remain appealing for consumption by their audiences.

Also, the study shows that the images of the organisations the CEOs lead are shaped by the social media posts of the CEOs. This goes to confirm the numerous research findings (e.g. Balmer, 2001) that the branding of an organisation resides with the CEO of that organisation. Thus the participants of this study brand their organisations as *competent, innovative* and *impactful*.

Drawing from the theories of identity construction and Goffman's presentation of self, it was concluded that the identities of the CEOs are constructed, modified and affirmed on social media as identity is fluid and multiple in nature. Also, Goffman's presentation of self was seen at play in the use of social media by the CEOs as they prepare or rehearse on their back stages (where the audience are absent) before staging their performances on social media (in front of an audience) so as to stage a favourable character.

In conclusion, all the preparations CEOs go through before sharing a post and the management of the multiple identities that are given off are all geared towards the creation of a work-safe professional brand out of themselves.

5.3 Limitations

This study set out to investigate into the social media use of CEOs in Ghana and also elicit their perspectives through personal interviews. However, the study encountered a few limitations.

I realised that most CEOs were not active on social media. This was a major drawback for me as I had to reduce my sample size from 6 to 2 participants. Also, getting the CEOs for a personal interview was a big challenge thus I ended up having an interview with just one of the participants. This challenge can be attributable to time constraints on the part of the participants.

Although data was collected from both Facebook and Twitter, most of the excerpts used to illustrate the phenomenon were retrieved from Facebook as the CEOs share virtually the same post on both platforms. Also, the Facebook posts were the complete version of the posts which capture the full message the CEOs want to convey whereas the Twitter posts were just part of the message since Twitter as a microblogging site has a 140 word limit.

However, these limitations did not take away the credibility of the study as it has implications for further studies.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

In view of the opportunities and challenges I had while reviewing literature and collecting data for the study, I make the following suggestions for future research so

that the knowledge base of social media users will be increased and also serve as a repository for researchers.

A similar work may be done taking into consideration a larger number of CEOs, an extended period of study and the views of their audiences to investigate how they perceive the use of social media by CEOs so as to get a comprehensive and detailed data on CEOs social media use.

Also, a yearly survey can be conducted into the social media use of CEOs in Ghana as these studies abound in the developed countries. This can serve as a means of piquing the interest of social media use in the CEOs.

Future research may take a critical discourse analytical approach to study how the issues of power, hegemony, dominance etc. are enacted through CEOs social media posts.

Also, further studies can be on a comparative study of CEOs and politicians use of social media to brand themselves and the spaces they occupy since both groups are located within the highest decision making stratum of the society.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

As the era of Web 2.0 is elapsing and welcoming Web 3.0, consumers expect to hear and interact directly with the CEOs of the organisations they align to. CEOs have to strengthen their social media use. I therefore recommend that CEOs and social media strategists take social media seriously as the phenomenon of social media use has come to stay.

CEOs should carve out time for their social media use the same way they do for their media appearances as social media offers a more affordable way of reaching an unimaginable number of people instantaneously.

Informed by Goffman's presentation of self, CEOs should rehearse their performance on the back stage before they stage the main performance on the frontstage (social media) because a knee-jerk approach to sharing posts on social media may communicate impressions that are not intended.

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APPENDIX

Interview guide

1. What was the motivation behind your use of social media?

2. Do you publish the posts we see on your page yourself?

3. Can you discuss with me the processes you go through before you share your posts?

4. What are the themes you like to touch on in your social media posts?

5. The literature I have read so far indicates that CEOs share posts about themselves, their profession or both. Which applies to you?

6. In communication we say that people's social media posts are a reflection of the self? How do your posts reflect your personality or your "self"?

7. How has social media reinforced or heightened Lucy Quist as a brand?

8. You always caption most images you share? What is your rationale for that?

9. While going through your posts, I deduced you share a lot on Airtel's Evolve with STEM initiative, what does STEM mean to you?

10. Can we say that your posts indirectly serve as PR tool for your organisation?

11. How do your posts impact your organisation?

12. Can you please share any additional thoughts on your social engagements with me?