SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK PARTICIPATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN ACCRA, GHANA

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JULY, 2015
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that except for references to other people’s work which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is in no way a reproduction, in part or whole of any work ever presented for the award of a degree. It is my own original research work.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to my wife Sylvia Abena Danso Mingle and daughters, Naa Shidaa Aku Mingle and Naa Djoomo Adukwei Mingle
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My first and foremost thanks goes to the Almighty God for giving me the guidance and ability to successfully complete this challenging task.

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at social media network participation and academic performance in senior high schools. The study was aimed at identifying social media network sites and their usage among students, how students networked and participated on social media networks, time invested by students on social networks, the effects of social media on students’ grammar and spelling as well as the effects of social network participation on the student’s academic performance within the context of the social learning and the use and gratification theories.

To achieve the objectives of the research, the study used a mixed method approach which involved the survey of students in four senior high schools and interviews of heads of the senior high schools. The study revealed that majority of respondents used Whatsapp and Facebook for making friends and chatting. In addition, majority of respondents experienced negative effects such as poor grammar and spelling, late submission of assignment, less study time and poor academic performance due to the heavy participation on social media networks. Furthermore, there was a high addiction rate among students in the usage of social media networks. Nevertheless, there were cases where others experienced improvement in their readings skills as a result of participation on social media networks. Also, respondents shared ideas, discussed and shared examination questions among themselves on social media networks.

The study recommended the strict enforcement of Ghana Education Service rule on electronic devices usage in schools, promotion of social media usage for academic purpose, counselling for addicted students and the use of the right grammar and spelling when participating on social networks.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Internet revolution has changed the information world with regard to sharing, speed, storage and retrieval of information in whatever form regardless of the person’s location. Through the Internet a number of web technologies emerged, and one technology that is making waves with regard to information sharing and communication are the social media networks. The evolution of social media has cut across all facets of society with its positive and negative impacts. Social media has transformed and impacted on communication, learning, research and education in general. Among the vast variety of online tools which are available for communication, social networking sites (SNS) have become the most modern and attractive tools for connecting people throughout the world (Aghazamani, 2010).

Davis et al (2012), refer to social media technology (SMT) as “web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication”. Through this platform, individuals and organizations create profiles, share and exchange information on various activities and interests. An interesting aspect of social media is that, it is not limited to desktop or laptop computers but could be accessed through mobile applications and smart phones making it very accessible and easy to use. Examples of these social media platforms both on the web and mobile application include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Whatsapp, Instagram, blogs etc.
According to Boyd & Ellison (2007), “Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. These sites are used to interact with friends, peers and others that are found in groups on these sites. The sharing of information ranges from news, debates, gossips, feelings or statement of mind, opinions, research etc.

According to Internet usage statistics for the world, there were 3,035,749,340 estimated Internet users with a penetration rate of 42.3% as at June, 2014. Also, the estimated population of Africa in 2014 was 1,125,721,038 of which 297,885,898 were Internet users. The penetration of Internet on the continent was 26.5%. By December 2012, the number of Facebook users in Africa was 51,612,460. In Ghana, the number of internet users as at June 2014 was 5,171,993 with 20.1% Internet penetration. Out of the total Internet users in Ghana, 1,630,420 users were on Facebook (Internet World Statistics, 2015).

A report by the National Communications Authority (NCA) Ghana indicated that mobile data subscribers in the country has increased exponentially with a penetration rate of 59.78%. As at the end of March, 2015, mobile data subscriber base had increased to 16,106,218 (NCA, 2015). The statistics indicates that as more people subscribe to the Internet and mobile phone, the more the increase in data subscriptions. This data subscription is used to access the Internet which in effect is used more to participate on social networks. Therefore, the number of users who are and will be using social media will therefore not slow down as more people are getting on to the bandwagon.
A number of studies have been conducted to find out the impact of social media on academic performance of students. According to Ito et al. (2009), teens use these technologies for a number of positive activities, which include delving deeper into interest-driven communities and participating in various activities. Ahn (2011) adds that “Social Network Sites (SNS) provide a platform for the youth to participate in communities that help them to learn, and practice skills within a particular knowledge area”. Similarly, a study by Fishman et al (2005), also indicated that college students produce tremendous volume of writing through various social media tools such as blogs, emails and other social media environments.

Conversely, Banquil et al. (2009), found a continuing drop of grades among students who use social networking sites. This was supported by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), who found a significant negative relationship between Facebook use and academic performance. They concluded that students who use Facebook spend fewer hours per week studying on an average than Facebook non users and this resulted in lower mean grade point averages (GPAs). Junco (2012), examined the relationship among numerous measures of frequency of Facebook use with time spent preparing for class and overall GPAs. Hierarchical linear regression analysis from the study by Junco (2012), indicates that time spent on Facebook was strongly and significantly negatively correlated with overall GPA.

Senior High School (SHS) education in Ghana since the year 2000, has gone through a number of changes, previously from secondary school to SHS. It was later changed from three years to four years duration and now back to three years duration. These were done by various governments
which in their opinion would help in raising the standards and quality of students who graduate from the SHS. This was necessitated due to the performance of students in the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). A number of factors such as the duration of education, quality of teaching, teaching methods etc. were seen as factors that might be affecting performance of students negatively in these examinations.

1.1.2 Study Area

The study covered two public Senior High Schools (SHS) and two private SHS. These are St. Johns Grammar SHS, Tema SHS, Action SHS and Ideal College. St. Johns Grammar SHS and Tema SHS are public SHS which fall into the category “A” and “B” schools as specified by the Ghana Education Service School posting hand book respectively, while Action SHS and Ideal College fall into the private SHS category.

St. Johns Grammar School was founded on 16th May, 1954, as a private initiative. The brain behind its establishment was John Hayford Mensah, a pharmacist, with the support of Mr. P. K. K. Quaidoo, Nana Essilfie Bondzie, Mr. Charles Ocansey and Mr. S. M. Arko. The school was accommodated in temporary structures at Kokomlemle, a suburb of Accra with four students. It was a co-educational boarding institution. Apart from the traditional subjects taught, French, Latin and Greek were added hence the name Grammar School. The school was moved to its present location at Achimota on the Accra Nsawam Road in 1964. The school was later absorbed into the public education system in January 1965 and in 1968 the government eventually acquired the
assets from its founding members and is made up of both day and boarding students. The school runs all SHS programmes.

The Tema Senior High School was opened on Friday, September 22nd, 1961 with an initial intake of 52 students and by the end of the month the number increased to 105. There were three Form one streams, namely, A, B and C. These continued to the Sixth Form Level and turned out the first batch of students in 1968. Tema SHS is also made up of both day and boarding students. The school currently runs all SHS programmes.

Action Progressive Institute started initially as “Action Classes” in the year 1993 offering vacation classes for students. In the year 1996, the institute started organizing University Entrance Examination for SHS graduates in addition to running remedial classes for SHS resitters as well. Later on, the classes grew to the extent that the authorities decided to register the school as a full time remedial school. In the year 2000, the school started the full time SHS with two main courses, Business and General Arts. Currently, the school runs almost all courses in SHS.

Ideal College is a registered private educational institution under the Ghana Education Service. Starting in 2002 as a remedial school, with fifty students and six teachers, the school now has about two thousand students spread across five campuses. The main campus is located at Legon in Accra but also has branches in Tema, Takoradi, Sunyani and Kumasi. The school also runs pre-SHS, vacation classes, international programmes such as Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT),
International English Language Testing System (IELTS), University Mature Entrance Examination, language proficiency and counseling services.

1.2 Problem Statement

There have been a lot of debates on various platforms and media as to the impact that social media has on society and specifically, its effect on education. Some of these studies found a drop in students’ grades and academic performance, and lack of time for studies as consequences of social media network participation (Banquil et al, 2009; Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Ndaku, 2013). On the other hand, Pasek et al. (2006) “stated that a site-specific culture can both positively and negatively affect the building of social capital and found that Facebook usage is not positively associated with lower grades of students and rather Facebook users scored higher grades”. Kolek and Saunders (2008), did not find any correlation between GPAs of student users and social network participation such as Facebook. Rather social network sites (SNS) promote interactions among students and teachers (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011).

Preliminary investigation and interviews with some teachers and students revealed a number of challenges in relation to student’s participation on social media networks. These included a high addiction rate among students which affects their time of study, the wrong usage of grammar and spelling in social media discourse as well as distracting students from their studies. As stated by Ndaku (2013), students spend a lot of time on social networking sites than in their academic activities and this affects their academic performance.
Mr. Edmund Oppong Peprah, Chairman of the Kumasi Polytechnic Teachers Association (POTAG), in an interview with the Ghanaian Chronicle newspaper on the 6th December, 2013, appealed to the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to step up education to the teeming Ghanaian youth on the rate of usage of the social media and the Internet at large. According to the Chairman, the emergence of social media had led to the falling standard of students’ articulation in the Queens language (English), which has affected their studies, since English is the universal language teachers use to teach in schools. He lamented that students were fond of using abbreviated words when writing examinations. A situation, he noted that, had affected the spellings of students. “Students spell words raw, as they hear them contrary to prescription of the dictionary.” This is supported by a study conducted by Horton, Alloway, and Dawson (2012) which revealed that the use of Facebook had an effect on the spelling of some of the students. Wood et al (2014), in another study also noted that the use of texting language harms the grammatical understanding of students.

A number of studies in relation to social media have been conducted in Ghana. These, however have centered on social media use in basic schools (Amofah-Serwah and Dadzie, 2015) and social media usage in tertiary education level (Apeanti and Danso, 2014). Since these studies have been conducted in basic schools and tertiary levels the researcher finds it necessary to conduct this study on the role social network participation plays in the performance of students in Senior High Schools. The researcher believes this will add a new dimension and also fill the research gap between basic and tertiary institutions in terms of the effect of social media on students’ academic performance.
1.3 **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to find out how students participated on social networks and as well determine if this participation had an effect on the learning outcomes of these students.

1.4 **Objectives of the Study**

The study sought to address the following specific objectives:

1. To identify social network sites and their usage among students
2. To find out how SHS students networked and participated on Social Media
3. To ascertain the amount of time invested by students on social media networks
4. To ascertain the effect of social media on students grammar and spelling in academic work
5. To find out the effects of social network participation on the students’ academic performance
6. To make appropriate recommendations based on the findings of the study

1.5 **Research Questions**

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following questions were posed:

1. What were the various social network sites known to the students and how they used them?
2. How did the SHS students networked and participated on social media?
3. How much time did students invest on social media networks?
4. What were the effects of social network participation on students’ grammar and spelling?
5. What were the effects of social network participation on academic performance of the students?
1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be of importance to the government, academics and heads of institutions, parents and finally the research community.

For the government through the Ministry of Education, the findings of the study will help inform authorities as to use of social media among SHS students and guide them to formulate appropriate policies or campaigns to educate students on its use.

The study through its findings will also help academics and heads of institutions better understand the effect of social network participation among students and provide a background knowledge in dealing with the issue.

This study will also benefit parents and guardians in understanding the effect of social media and how they can help their wards to use these platforms for their studies.

Finally, to the research community, this study will provide a better understanding of the impact of social media and add to the literature on social media for further research.

1.7 Scope

The study covered two public SHS and two private SHS in the Greater Accra Region. The public schools were St. John’s Grammar SHS, Tema SHS and the private schools were Action SHS and Ideal College. These schools were chosen because of their size, programmes offered which included all the regular courses in SHS, nature of school (both day and boarding facilities), popularity and performance in their respective school category.
1.8 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework according to Ennis (1999), “is a structure that identifies and describes the major elements, variables, or constructs that organize your scholarship. It is used to hypothesize, understand, or give meaning to the relationships among the elements that influence, affect, or predict the events or outcomes you specify. The theoretical framework grows out of the research focus, guides the design of individual studies, and structures your research presentations and publications”. This study adopted Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Katz’s Use and Gratification theory. The two theories answered two aspects of the study, that is, academic performance (learning outcomes) and competition (social media and academic work).

According to the SLT, three elements, including individual learners, peers, and situations, potentially affect individuals’ learning outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Ainin et al (2015), states that the Social Learning theory “basically explains how the environmental and cognitive components collaborate to affect an individual learning and behaviour pattern”. “Social learning theory views learning as a social process that individuals will self-initiate, regulate learning and actively construct knowledge by acquiring, generating, and structuring information” (Yu et al., 2010).

In relation to the SLT as stated by Bandura (1997), the use of the social networks (by the individual or student) with friends (peers) on various social network platforms (situations) affect his or her academic performance (learning outcomes). This is supported by Ainin et al (2015), who “emphasized that individuals' cognition and behaviour are influenced through observation and interacting with peers and the situations (e.g., learning the environmental norms, cultures, policies). It is the individuals' interaction with the environment that causes their behavioural
consequences”. “Therefore, individual interaction with peers, social support from peers and their understanding of situations are important factors which affect individual learning outcome” (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012). Therefore, when students interact with peers on social media platforms through observations, interactions and other activities, these may result in a behavioural outcome which might affect the academic performance positively or negatively.

Also, the gratification theory which answered the second part of the study, holds that people are responsible for choosing a particular media to meet their needs. That media in turn compete with other information sources for viewers' gratification (Katz et al., 1974). Therefore, the academic performance of students is as a result of the competition between social media network participation and academic work. This implies that the amount of time invested participating on social media could affect the time allocated for studies by students and this could affect their learning outcome as a result.

1.10 Organization of Work

The study was organized under six chapters.

Chapter one dealt with the introduction to the study. These included background of the study, study area, research problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and organization of the study.

Chapter two covered the review of relevant literature for the study. Literature was reviewed in relation to the objectives of the study. These included social network sites, history and
development of social networks, educational use of social networks, students’ usage of social networks, as well as social network participation and academic performance.

Chapter three highlighted the research methodology adopted for the study. These included the research design, population and sample size, sampling technique, instrumentation, mode of data collection, data analysis and presentation of results.

Chapter Four also covered the data analysis and presentation of results.

Chapter Five dealt with the discussion of the findings. The discussion was based on the findings of study and in relation to the objectives of the study.

Chapter Six which is the final chapter also dealt with the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations from the study.
References


CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Webster and Watson (2002), defined literature review as one that “creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge. It facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed”. Machi and McEvoy (2009), add that a “literature review is a written document that presents a logically argued case founded on a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge about a topic of study. This case establishes a convincing thesis to answer the study’s question”. Levy and Ellis (2006), state that literature review helps accomplish the following:

- Helping the researcher understand the existing body of knowledge including where excess research exists (i.e. what is already known?) and where new research is needed (i.e. what is needed to be known?)
- Providing a solid theoretical foundation for the proposed study (related to “what is already known?”)
- Substantiating the presence of the research problem (related to “what is needed to be known?”)
- Justifying the proposed study as one that contributes something new to the body of knowledge
- Framing the valid research methodologies, approach, goals, and research questions for the proposed study
The study reviewed relevant literature on social network participation and academic performance. The literature was organized under five themes related to the objectives of the study. These included social network sites, history and development of social networks, educational use of social networks, student usage of social networks, as well as social network participation and academic performance.

2.2 Social Network Sites

According to Boyd & Ellison (2007), “Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. Helou and Rahim (2010), also defined online social networks (OSNs) “as virtual communities which allow people to connect and interact with each other on a particular subject or to just “hang out” together online. Social media sites around the globe provide users with a number of options to interact with each other through entertainment, chats, gossips, and games”. Through these social network platforms students are able to meet to interact with each other on various topics and interests.

Davis et al (2012), refer to social media technology (SMT) as “web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content in digital environments through multi-way communication”. Popular social network platforms on mobile and web applications include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Whatsapp, Instagram, snap chat, Google Plus etc. These platforms have specific roles, functions and modes of communication although their functions are mostly related. This relates to the
definition by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who defined 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”. Ayiah and Kumah (2011), summed up the definition of social network as a web platform where people from different settings can connect and interact with each other.

Social network sites provide their users with a better avenue for collaboration, participation, empowerment, and time. They provide the ability for users to connect and form communities to socialize, share information, or to achieve a common goal or interest. Moreover, social network sites create a platform for users to express freedom of opinion to anyone to inexpensively publish or broadcast information in near-real time (Helou and Rahim, 2010). In other words, social networks provide users with the medium through which they communicate and interact with each. This interaction is based on shared interest and through this interest communities and groups are built on these platforms to expand and encourage interaction and sharing of information. However, not all users who participate on social media are primarily there to connect with people they are familiar with, but also they participate on these networks to connect and meet loss but found offline friends and close ones (Salvation & Adzharuddin, 2014; Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Leng, et al. (2011) “claim that SNSs allow users to meet strangers resulting in connections between individuals that would not otherwise have be made”.

Richter and Koch (2009), outlined the basic functionalities of social network sites. These include identity management, expert finding, context awareness, contact management, network awareness and exchange. They indicated that in identity management, users of social networks project a
particular identity about themselves with the creation of a particular profile about themselves. The expert finding helps users of the networks to search for particular group of people with a criteria that is useful. Context awareness is simply keeping a common interest of users around you, which may include a particular profession, school mates, work environment etc. Soonhee and Lee (2006), indicated that knowledge sharing requires the dissemination of individual’s experience and collaboration between users of shared interest. Contact management relates to the creation and maintenance of networks and contacts on the sites. The exchange involves the direct and indirect means through which users’ exchange and share information on social networks.

The population on social media networks keep on growing each and every day. According to Bennett (2014), in 2014 there were 1.28 billion active users on Facebook, 540 million monthly users on Google Plus, 255 million monthly users of Twitter, 200 million monthly users on Instagram, 187 active monthly users on Linkedin, 40 million active monthly users on Pinterest, 1 billion active monthly users on YouTube and 6.7 million active users on Blogs. This depicts the extent of usage of these networks and how these social networks have become part of normal life.

According to Marion and Omotayo (2011) “Facebook is a great way to meet friends and keep up on what they are doing. Once you add a friend to your Facebook friend list you will always know when they are adding things to their blog or updating their profile. Users can create profiles with photos, lists of personal interests, contact information, and other personal information. Users can communicate with friends and other users through private or public messages and a chat feature. They can also create and join interest groups and "like pages". In summary, when a teenager joins a site like Facebook they first create a personal profile. These profiles display information such as
one’s name, relationship status, occupation, photos, videos, religion, ethnicity, and personal interests. What differentiates SNS from previous media like a personal home page is the display of one’s friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

One of the interesting social media networks that is growing in numbers like Facebook is Whatsapp. WhatsApp is a “real time messaging, is a mobile messaging app which allows the users to exchange messages without having to pay for short text messaging (SMS). Whatsapp is one of the changes in technology that is commonly used on specific mobile phones and computers. Since Smartphones became popular, many messaging services were launched but Whatsapp has become very popular among them Whatsapp Messenger has been around for a while but recent updates have improved the functionality of the application since its release date. The main purpose behind this application is to replace SMS with a cross platform mobile messenger that works on an internet data plan. If you have unlimited text, it is still beneficial as it is a convenient way to skip international fees that operators may charge (Yeboah and Ewur, 2014). Church and Oliveira (2013), also indicate that “WhatsApp is a mobile instant messaging application for smartphones which allows users to send and receive images, video, audio and location-based messages to individuals or groups of friends using your pre-existing data plan”.

The concept of Twitter also relies on messaging services, whether it uses a cell phone, instant messenger, or website. It allows the user to send messages to friends and family quickly and easily. One question, “What are you doing?” As long as an answer is 140 characters or less, it is possible for thousands of people to see the answer immediately (Marion and Omotayo, 2011). Twitter has 271 million active users who posts text, links, images, and 6 second videos (called vines) in 140
characters or less. Twitter offers instant news source and access to public icons. Character limit limits users in the number of words they post (Bennett, 2014). A user can follow any other user, and the user being followed need not follow back. Being a follower on Twitter means that the user receives all the messages (called tweets) from those the user follows. Common practice of responding to a tweet has evolved into well-defined markup culture: RT stands for retweet, '@' followed by a user identifier address the user, and '#' followed by a word represents a hashtag (Kwat et al., 2010).

Linkedin, a professional social media network has also gained prominence. Linkedin is a network used by 300 million users to share experiences and résumés among business professionals. It is valuable for job searching and exposure to colleagues in the same field as well as to prospective employers. This network is entirely focused on business and careers. It has unique features some of which are limited to the paid subscription aspect (premium) (Bennett, 2014). “A contact network is built up consisting of their direct connections, the connections of each of their connections (termed second-degree connections also the connections of second-degree connections (termed third-degree connections). This can be used to gain an introduction to someone a person wishes to know through a mutual, trusted contact” (Marion and Omotayo, 2011).

According to Mittal et al. (2014), Pinterest is an “image-based social bookmarking media, where users share images which are of interest to them, in the form of pins on a pin board. It emphasizes on discovery and curation of images rather than original content creation. This makes Pinterest a very promising conduit for the promotion of commercial activities online. Similar to other networks, Pinterest also uses some specific terminology to refer to various elements and services
it provides”. Pinterest has 70 million users (80% of them women) use this online collaging resource for sharing inspirational and bookmarking links. It is great for finding ideas around many topics that are inspiring and motivating but have very little social interaction with others. Topics tend to revolve around selected categories e.g. Food, weddings etc. (Bennett, 2014). “A pin is an image that has some meta-data in-formation associated with it. Pins can be thought of as basic building blocks of Pinterest. The act of posting a pin is known as pinning, and the user who posts a pin is the pinner. (Mittal et al., 2014).

Instagram on the other hand, is primarily a mobile app that 200 plus million users share pictures and short videos. Easy scrolling without much text and no links. It is beautiful, eye catching photography. Less one to one engagement than other networks. Complicated features may cause stress (i.e. Filter anxiety) (Bennett, 2014). Instagram is an online social networking service that lets you share photos and apply a variety of filters to them. The Instagram application is distributed worldwide through the Apple Store and Google Play. Instagram photos are easily recognizable because the pictures it releases have a square shape reflective of the Instamatic and Polaroid photos the program was modelled after (Marion and Omotayo, 2011). Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014), states that “Instagram, a mobile photo (and video) capturing and sharing service, has quickly emerged as a new medium in spotlight in the recent years.

“YouTube is also a free popular video hosting and sharing service that was purchased by Google in 2006. The service lets users view and upload video files. In addition to hosting videos, the service lets users’ rate videos, add comments, and subscribe to their favorite producers. It is not
required to view videos, but you do need to register for some features. One of the reasons YouTube has been so popular is because it fosters a sense of community. You can not only view videos, but you can also rate and comment on videos. Some users even respond with video commentary” (Karch, 2015).

Google Plus, is a less-popular network created to compete with Facebook and 300 million users are on it. It has good features such as like circles, communities and video hangouts with few active users than most networks (Bennett, 2014). Google+ is literally Google with a plus. The "+" is the social networking piece it adds to all of Google's other services, including Web search, Gmail, and YouTube. Google+ brings popular social-media features like comments, photo and music, sharing, video chat, etc. to your social circles. It's basically what any user chooses it to be, from an ongoing conversation to a platform of self-expression, with tools for making it as individual or collective as you want (Magid and Collier, 2012). On Google+, people share ideas and personal news, post photos and videos, stay in touch, play games, plan get-togethers, send birthday wishes, do homework and business together, find and contact long-lost friends and relatives, review books, recommend restaurants and support causes (Magid and Collier, 2012).

Snapchat is also a mobile application for sharing pictures between friends. There about 100 million users and rapidly growing. Normally used by the young, it is private, cool and mom-free. It does not store photos automatically, so it does not take up memory on your phone. There are privacy concerns, spam issues, and limited functionality (Bennett, 2014). Snapchat’s major feature is that messages automatically disappears after it has been opened by the recipient and sender specified time out (normally up to 10 seconds) has elapsed. It is a social network that inculcates a lot of
privacy and sensitive content. It is mostly associated with ‘sexting’ content. In reality, it is used for a number of activities such as drawing on photos, chats (Roesner, Gill and Kohno, 2014).

2.4 History and the Development of Social Networks

There have been a lot of debates as to when social networks began in the history of technological advancement. Many have stated that it started in the 1990s while others have indicated that it began in the 1960s. The study tried to trace this history from its early beginning from the 1960s to date. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the history of social networks could be traced from the 1960s “when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded ‘Open Diary,’” an early social networking site that brought together online diary writers into one community. The term “weblog” was first used at the same time, and truncated as “blog” a year later when one blogger jokingly transformed the noun “weblog” into the sentence “we blog.” Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis of Duke University created the Usenet in 1979 which was a discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages”.

Curtis (2013), traces the beginning of web 2.0 and social media from 1969 when the first major commercial internet service provider known as CompuServe was formed. In 1978, two Chicago computer hobbyists invented the bulletin board system (BBS) to share information among friends through postings. It was the beginning of a small virtual community. In 1979, the Usenet as an early bulletin board that connected Duke University and University of North Carolina was also created. In 1984, the Prodigy online service was introduced which later became the second largest online service and by 1990 had about 465,000 subscribers.
Ahmed and Qazi (2011), are of the view that the first official social network sites to be created was classmates.com in 1995. This provided students with the opportunity of connecting with each other during and after completion of their university education. The authors indicated that creation of social networking sites (SNSs) brought a huge leap in technological evolution in the world of Internet. In 1997, blogging begun as well as the creation of SixDegrees which allow users to create profiles and list friends (Curtis 2013; Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In 1999, Friends Reunited was created in Britain to relocate old school pals. This is was the first social network site to achieve prominence. Friendster, a social networking site was opened to the public in the US in 2002 and within three months had a membership of three million users (Curtis, 2013).

The year 2003 saw the creation of MySpace social network site as a clone to Friendster. LinkedIn was also started in the same year but as a business oriented social network site purposefully for professionals. In 2004, Facebook was created by students of Harvard College. This saw a surge in the usage of social network sites in the world. Bebo (Blog Early, Blog Often) was also started as a social networking site. In that same period Facebook launched a version for high school students. After creation of Facebook, Twitter was also launched in 2006 as a social media and microblogging site. The name of Facebook stems from the spoken name for the book given to students at the start of the academic year by university administrations in the US with the purpose of helping students to get to know each other better. This helped users to send and receive messages called tweets. Facebook was also expanded and opened to anyone over age of 13 years. In 2010, Facebook grew above 400 million users, while MySpace users declined to 57 million users. Google created Buzz to compete with Facebook and Twitter. In the first week of its launched there were 9 million posts (Curtis, 2013; Haq and Chand, 2012). Other social network sites that have emerged but not popular
as compared to Facebook and Twitter includes “Bebo, BlackPlanet.com, Flickr.com, Reunion.com, a Small World, Bebo, etc. (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011).

2.5 Educational Use of Social Networks

Social networks have become an integral part of student social life (Tavares, 2013). These networks have become important as they serve as platforms for users to interact and relate with their peers. Social networks are now been seen as learning platforms or communities that could be utilized to enhance student engagement and performance. Deng and Tavares (2013), were of the view that the notion of learning communities has become increasingly prevalent in schools at all levels. Cross (1998), sees a learning community as “a group of people who are engaged in learning activities”. Social networks have been seen as platforms that could create a learning environment for students and their peers.

A number of researchers have found several positive outcomes in online community engagement among students and their peers. A study by Tiene (2000), showed that “written communication on cyberspace enables students to take part in discussions at a time convenient to them and articulate their ideas in more carefully thought-out and structured ways. In support of Tiene’s (2000) findings, Deng and Tavares (2013) also concluded that “Web-based discussions can contribute to the development of students’ reflective ability and critical thinking skills. Also, compared to face-to-face (F2F) interaction, students are more willing to voice their views or even disagreement and are more attuned to others’ opinions in online discussions”. According to Apeanti and Danso (2014), students believed that it would be fun for their lecturers to use social media. Also, their grades would be better if they could contact lecturers through social media and lecturers should
hold lecture hours on social media. This was revealed in their study among students of the University of Education, Winneba.

Furthermore, Al-Rahmi et al (2014) and Kirkup (2010) have observed that “the ability to explore unasked questions inside a less formal atmosphere, getting a strong voice through web technology, and getting a location to go over issues within an open, public format are other provisions of social media”. Thus, social networks provide an atmosphere different from the classroom where students feel free to interact, ask questions and discuss class room related issues.

Oye, Mahamat and Rahim (2012), found out some benefits that helps students in their education. In a study among students of University of Technology, Malaysia, they indicated that social networks provide students access to “intentional or spontaneous knowledge opportunities by gathering students around shared interests, exchanging information, discussing topics and collaborating”. They stated these collaboration, exchange and sharing of information improved students’ academic performance. Blanchard et al. (2007) were of the view that in places where social network sites access and skills are promoted, they can “enhance the interactions of marginalized young people with their teacher and increase their confidence in educational activities”. This indicates that marginalized students who might find it difficult interacting in class, will embrace and use social networks to interact with peers and teachers on various subjects they may need assistance.

The study by Apeanti and Danso (2014), found that students’ accessed social media using laptop/personal computers, smart phones, Internet cafes, campus computers and tablets with a few
indicating that they did not access social media. It was also found that students who had accounts on social media frequently used it to connect with old friends and family members, find new friends, obtain or share learning materials, receive update of events, post information, while away time among others.

“SNS can facilitate learning and skill development outside formal learning environments by supporting peer-to-peer learning of knowledge and skills, collaboration, diverse cultural expression, the development of skills valued in the modern workplace, and a more empowered conception of citizenship” (Ito, et al, 2006). Green et al. (2007), also posited that due to the “high level of urgency and personalization involved, SNS can be particularly important learning spaces for young people who struggle in traditional educational settings. This further indicates that students who may struggle in normal class room environment, may embrace social network platforms for learning, discussion and other educational purposes. Ito et al. (2008), adds that “when sharing content and creating or maintaining relationships, young people engage in peer-based, self-directed and interactive learning (accessible from outside the classroom), essential for engagement and deep learning”.

Notley (2009), noted that the “evaluations of electronic learning strategies have found that SNS platforms allow for the extension of learning discussion outside the formal classroom setting, therefore promoting deeper learning as young people not only engage with the material for longer but are more likely to relate to it and incorporate it into their everyday lives”. Social media networks therefore provide platforms for non-formal educational discussions that help students to go beyond what they have been taught in the class room. This also helps them to relate whatever
they have been taught with the outside world. Oye, Mahamat and Rahim (2012), revealed in their study that some participants use the “social networks for sharing resource information, exchanging messages, chatting, uploading files and sending and receiving photos, updating and sharing of personal information, booking appointment for meeting, watch movies, review lectures, seminars, books and even political campaign”.

A number of researchers have outlined a number of student benefits in relation to education as a result of social network participation. Yunus et al. (2012), indicates that students gained more vocabulary and improved their writing skills as a result of their participation on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Asad, Mamun and Clement (2012) stated the exchange of assignments, resources and discussions on academic work and other issues on social networks among students.

Jain et al. (2012), were of the view that social networks also bridge self-esteem deficiency for students and help build social capital. Students also benefit from chatting with other students, teachers and external sources to acquire more information and knowledge. Lam (2012), also stated that social networks such as Facebook “improves learning through users interrelationship, communication, social relationship, and participation”. He added that social networks provides motivation for learning among students. Van-Vooren and Bess (2013), added that Tweets improve English language education. Blogs improve student performance (through other social media tools influencing students’ achievements.
2.6 Student Usage of Social Networks

Social network sites (SNS) have become an interesting part of student life as a result of their features and medium of usage. Students engage each other, friends and peers on various issues and topics as well as share interesting things about their lives and their surroundings. Ito et al (2009), were of the view that, just as it is done in parking lots and shopping centers, young people gather in network public spaces for a number of reasons and these include negotiate identity, gossip, support one another, jockey for status, collaborate, share information, flirt and joke.

Hargittai (2008), studied a sample of 1,060 students and found that “overall 88% students use social network site, 74% report using at least one social network site frequently and only one student have not heard any of the six social network sites included on the survey. Over 12% respondents do not use any of them. Facebook is the most popular service among these students, with almost four in five using it, and over half of the overall sample doing so repeatedly”. A survey conducted by Kist (2008), also showed that “approximately ninety percent of teens in the United States have Internet access, and about seventy-five percent of these teens use the Internet more than once per day. This study also showed that approximately half of all teens who have Internet access are also members of social networking sites, and use the Internet to make plans and socialize with friends”.

According to Ahn (2011) current tools by which young people like teens communicate with each other go by peculiar set of names, which include wall posts, status, updates, activity feeds, thumbs ups and profile. He indicated that these tools are features of social networks such as Facebook, twitter, MySpace, Whatsapp etc.
Nowadays, social network participation among students and young people are no longer limited to desktop and laptop computers but now accessed largely through mobile applications and smartphones. A study conducted by Negussie and Ketema (2014) in Jima University, Ethiopia, indicated that most students use their personal laptops and smart phones to access social network sites such as Facebook. This was also in line with the study conducted by Ahmed and Qazi (2011) in the United States that most students use their smart phones to access and participate on social media networks. Also, Mehmood and Taswir (2013), research conducted in Oman also indicated that 80% of the students reported using their mobile phones to access social media networks. They indicated that the mobile phone helped increase their access to peers and flexibility of staying in touch with them. They continued that smart features such as reading RSS feeds, location tagging and status posts were popular uses of social network on mobile phones.

According to Haq and Chand (2012) “one of the largest social networking sites like Facebook have become so popular, especially among students that it reflected many other traditional features of society. Facebook users share ideas and pictures with friends and family members. Facebook is also used to keep in touch with previous high school classmates and work mates. It creates new relationships and friendships or simply a way to unwind with one of the many Facebook applications that include games and quizzes”. According to Amofa-Serwa and Dadzie (2015), who explored the implication of social media use on child behaviour in basic schools in Ghana, Facebook was the most preferred social media site among students who used social media.

In relation to gender, Facebook is equally popular among male and females. Male students though spend more time on internet browsing as compared to female students but female students spend
more time on the Facebook. This may be due to the fact that males generally have lesser social restrictions on having their social interactions so they can meet their friends around. As expected, female students feel insecure on sharing their personal information on their Facebook account and due to this most of them do not have their accounts in their real names or have not put their real picture on their profile (Haq and Chand, 2012).

A number of studies conducted by researchers in the area of social networks discovered many uses of social networks by students and young people. Lenhart and Madden (2007) found out that majority of youngsters used social networks for the creation and maintenance of friendships. Madge et al (2009), concluded that most students used social networks such as Facebook primarily for social purposes although their interaction with their peers was on academic matters. However, they were not keen on using social networks for formal teaching-and-learning related discussions or for interacting with their instructors. A study conducted by Yu, et al (2010) revealed that “online social networking helped strengthen social relationships among students, heighten their self-esteem and boost their learning performance”.

According to Salvation and Adzharuddin (2014), students are able to formulate group discussions to exchange ideas and communicate to their teachers as well as appeal to their friends about assignments on SNSs. They indicated that teachers share course related materials with their students and create student groups to collaborate on projects and communicate with their fellow lecturers from other universities through SNSs, thus facilitating teaching and learning process and the enhancement of academic performance. English and Duncan-Howell (2008), also used Facebook as a tool to enhance peer support among business education students during their training
programme and detected that students’ exchanges were mostly of the affective type facilitating group cohesiveness through encouragement and support.

Deng and Tavares (2013), were of the view that social networks created have been able to address a number of important needs from casual chatting to more serious issues like discussion of academic and pedagogical issues. The group they created was found to have provided students and teachers with informational, social and intellectual support. Wang et al. (2011) also “explored the application of Facebook in formal educational settings and denoted that Facebook could offer features that helps in putting up announcements, sharing resources and conducting discussions. On the other hand, a study by Gbagonah (2012), among Ghanaian youths revealed that “most of the youth used social media not for research or academic work but rather connecting with old friends, making new ones, sharing information, status enhancement and perhaps for emotional and psychological satisfaction”

Palen et al. (2010) stated that “social networking can offer new methods for individuals to interact both within and outdoors of the spatial bounds from the event. The popularity of utilizing social networking among college students appears to be growing on a daily basis and a lot of them depend on their usage for interactions and communication. For example, when “a teenager joins a site like Facebook they first create a personal profile. These profiles display information such as one’s name, relationship status, occupation, photos, videos, religion, ethnicity, and personal interests. What differentiates SNS from previous media like a personal homepage is the display of one’s friends” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).
One of the merits of social networking is its remarkable ability to facilitate information distribution. Among the examples include blogging tools which are used by many students to disseminate information within their area, their peers and also to everyone globally (Bukvova et al., 2010). Roblyer et al., (2010) was also of the view that social networks such as Facebook have the potential to become an appreciated source to support students’ educational communications and associations with faculty.

On the frequency and usage of social networking sites among students many studies have found that students use a lot of their time on these social network sites interacting with peers. Pempek et al. (2009), in a study conducted in the United States, “found that students spend approximately 30 minutes on Facebook throughout the day as part of their daily routine. Facebook was used most often for social communication, mostly with friends with whom the students had pre-established offline relationship”. A study conducted by Lenhart and Madden (2007), in the United States also majority of young people spend several times in the day on social media networks and they use them to make new friends and stay in touch with existing ones. They added that approximately, 91% of the youth who used SNS reported using it to communicate with friends and peers.

Greenhow and Burton (2011), found that “low-income high school students perceived social network sites as an environment in which it was easier to share their emotions with both close friends and weaker contacts. Students believed their support networks were actually stronger after prolonged SNS membership, citing various channels for communication and frequent personal profile updating as helping them feel closer to, and maintain an awareness of, their close and
extended friends; they felt regular online social networking “encouraged openness, sharing, and getting to know more ‘sides’ of a person”.

2.7 Social Networks and Academic performance

There have been mixed reactions from academics and researchers with regard to the impact of social networks and how they affect academic performance. Studies have found that the participation of students and young people on social networks may have both positive and negative impact on their studies and for that matter their academic performance. Tuckman (1975) defined performance as “the apparent demonstration of understanding, concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person and proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student”. Hence, their academic performance must be managed efficiently keeping in view all the factors that can positively or negatively affect their educational performance. According to Mehmood and Tawir (2013), the use of technologies such as social media networks and the Internet is one of the most important factors that can influence educational performance of students positively or adversely”. “Researchers have also provided evidence to show that students’ online participation is correlated with their learning performance” (Deng & Tavares, 2013). Hoskins and Van Hooff (2005) reported that the active participants in online bulletin boards outperformed the passive or nonusers. Huang, Lin, and Huang (2011) also noted a positive correlation between students’ online activities (e.g. forum posting, viewing files) and the stated learning outcomes.

A study conducted by Roberts and Foehr (2008), in the United Studies about student extracurricular activity, rather suggested that new media, such as Facebook, Twitter etc. replace
or enhance other leisure activities, but do not take away time from the youth. In other words, they were of the view that the time spent by students on social network sites is the same time that normally use for extracurricular activities and therefore do not take away their productive time for studies. Negussie and Ketema (2014), study in Ethiopia also indicated that there is no significant relationship between times spent on social networks such as Facebook with students’ grade point average (GPA). This was also consistent with a study by Ahmed and Qazi (2011) who conducted a study in Pakistan among six universities. They discovered that there no much difference between times spent on social media networks and students’ academic performance.

A study conducted by Helou and Rahim (2014) in Malaysia found out that “most of the students are engaged in the use of SNSs for socializing activities rather than for academic purposes. However, most of the respondents do feel that SNSs have a positive impact on their academic performance, due to the fact that SNSs can be used for various academic activities such as communicating with the faculty and university authorities, communicating with lecturers and supervisors, discussing academic topics with classmates and chatting with friends on topics of educational interest. Meanwhile, the negative impacts of SNSs on their academic performance are considerably low”. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007), also indicated that engagement with social networks such as Facebook has also been shown to be closely related to an increase in college students’ social capital, especially for those low in self-esteem and life satisfaction. 

Jones and Madden (2002) reported that almost 79% of students thought that the Internet and social networks had a positive impact on their academics whiles there was positive correlations between the use of social networking websites and student engagement, a predictor of academic success (Kuh, 2009). Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008) observed that the lines between the virtual
and real world is increasingly blurred for youth today: “for today’s youth, media technologies are an important social variable and physical and virtual worlds are psychologically connected; consequently, the virtual world serves as a playing ground for developmental issues from the physical world”.

Hu and Kuh (2001) and Jones and Madden (2002), found out that students who attended more technologically inclined institutions were more likely to report good education practices such as student teacher contact, interaction and cooperation among students, and active learning than those who attended less technology inclined institutions although they also added that this might also be as a result of other factors that may have explained these outcomes. These they indicated will lead to better learning outcomes and performance. Also, the study by Amofa-Serwa and Dadzie (2015), revealed improvement in reading habits and communication among students who participate on social media networks.

Conversely, a number of researchers and studies have also found a negative impact that social network participation has on students’ academic performance. In the study of Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), they found a “significant negative relationship between Facebook use and academic performance. Facebook users reported lower mean GPAs and also reported spending fewer hours per week studying on average than Facebook nonusers. A majority of students claimed to use Facebook accounts at least once day”. Malaney (2005), found that 8.9% of students in 2000, and 4.4% in 2003, reported that their grades had suffered as a result of too much time spent on the Internet as well as on social media networks.
Kubey, Lavin, and Barrows (2001), found a number of issues such as psychological dependence, and academic impairment as some of the resultant effects with the use of the Internet and social media. They also indicated that students who indicated that they use the Internet and participate on social networks more often reported that their schoolwork has been hurt in that regard. Similarly, Gordon, Juang, and Syed (2007), also reported that the use of the Internet as well as participation of social media networks for coping purposes was correlated with higher levels of depression, which can affect cognitive processing and, therefore, educational outcomes.

Junco (2012), also “examined the relationship among numerous measures of frequency of Facebook use with time spent preparing for class and overall GPAs. Hierarchical linear regression analysis showed that time spent on Facebook was strongly and significantly negatively correlated with overall GPA”. A study by Haq and Chand (2012), conducted a study to find out the opinion of students on usage of social networks such as Facebook and their academic performance. Results of the study showed that many of the students (61%) believed that use of social media networks adversely affects their academic performance. They went on further and also discovered that these network participation adversely affected more of the male students (68%), than female students (53%).

According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) “social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting”. This therefore implies that spending a lot of time on social networks and not engaging in any productive discussion could affect the learning outcome of the student. Hamat, et al. (2012) added that “SNS users spend more time for socializing rather than learning. This indicates that excessive use of SNSs reduces student’s academic performance since time meant for studies is
used on non-academic issues like chatting and making friends”. Also, a study by Oye, Mahamat and Rahim (2012), in Malaysia, revealed that most students unconsciously get addicted to the use of social media networks and get obsessed with them. The participants indicated that they always intend to spend few minutes but always ends up spending hours surfing and updating profiles as well as viewing photos. They indicated that spending more time on social networks results in low grades in their studies.

A study by Rithika and Selvaraj (2013) in Indonesia, came out with a number of findings in relation to social network participation and academic performance. The results of the study indicated that there is a significant impact of social media usage and student’s academic performance. They stated that there is a correlation between late submission of assignments and time spent on social networking sites. They concluded that there is a significant negative impact of social network participation on students’ performance through the use of mobile technologies as these increases the frequency and flexibility of visits to these sites. According to Junco and Cotton (2011), “since multitasking can impede the learning process through a form of information overload, they explored the possible predictors of academic impairment due to multitasking on social networks”. Results of the study among students in the United States showed that college students use instant messaging at high levels on social networks, they multitask while using instant messaging, and over half reported that instant messaging has had an adverse effect on their academic work.

A number of studies also considered the medium through which these students participate on social media and how it affects their academic performance. Negussie and Ketema (2014), found out that the use of mobile phones in accessing social networks has a negative and significant relationship
with students GPA. This was also confirmed by Ellis, Daniels and Jauregui (2010), who also found
out that multitasking activities are negatively associated with students GPA. In other words, the
students with the use of smart phones may access and use these sites whiles reading and studying
and will result in divided attention. Gloub and Miloloza (2010), added that mobile phone Internet
users are vulnerable to multitasking, that is, Facebooking while studying or reading. Also, “multitasking activities not only affect study times but also reduces the brain’s ability to effectively retrieve information”.

Interestingly, social network participates has also developed in a form of communication that is
affecting linguistic habits of students. Words are used in their raw state as pronounced and this is
 transferred to the class room environment. A study conducted in Oman by Mehmood and Taswir
(2013), on how social network participation affects linguistics of students found out that many
students indicated there was a change in their linguistic habits as a result of their constant
communication on the social networks. Some of these students also indicated that they use slang
language in communicating on social networks and this adversely affects their writing skills in the
class room. This is also supported by Horton, Alloway, and Dawson (2012), whose study revealed
that the use of Facebook had an effect on the spelling of some of the students. Wood et al (2014),
in another study also noted that the use of texting language harms the grammatical understanding
of students.

An interesting aspect of social media which has come under intense scrutiny has to do with instant
messaging with the use of social networks such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Snap chats etc. Carnevale
(2006), indicated that instant messaging (IM) has become a significant part of the daily lives of
students, who now prefer it more than the traditional email system to stay connected with their friends. Researchers have found that between 59% and 75% of college-aged students use IM (Junco & Mastrodicasa (2007). “First-year college students spend an average of 16.3 hours per week chatting via IM versus only spending 3.9 hours using email” (Morgan & Cotten, 2003).

Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007), found that “75% of IM users reported chatting on IM while doing schoolwork. Given the ease with which students multitask while using IM, it is important to understand whether this kind of use is having an effect on their learning. We know that youth tend to not use this technology in isolation”. According to Grinter and Palen (2002) IM is become one of the most popular online multitasking activity for young people. Huang and Leung (2009), also found out that the level of IM use was related to academic impairment among students in school.

Mayer and Moreno’s (2003), “research-based cognitive theory of learning and information overload suggests that multitasking may also have a negative impact on learning. There are three kinds of attention demands during the learning process: essential processing refers to the basic attention processes required for learning (i.e., focusing on the information to be learned), incidental processing is not required for learning and instead refers to extraneous variables in the learning experience (for instance, adding music to a presentation the music is an extraneous variable that engages incidental processing), and representational holding, which is analogous to working memory (cognitive resources being used to remember information for the learning process)”.

Mayer and Moreno’s (2003), “integrated theory of learning states, and their research shows, that humans have a finite amount of cognitive processes available at any one time and that these
processes can be overloaded. Once these processes are overloaded, deeper processing and learning cannot occur”. This is an indication that the more students multitask while studying and using mobile phones on social networks, the more their ability to absorb whatever their learning reduces. This might result in irregular learning habits and will adversely affect their learning outcomes in examinations.

A study by Junco and Cotton (2011), in the US showed that “multitasking while instant messaging (IMing) was related to academic impairment at the bivariate level. Students who reported that they do schoolwork while IMing very frequently and somewhat frequently were more likely than those who do this sometimes, rarely, or never to report academic impairment due to IM use. Also, as students’ level of reporting that they did something else on the computer while IMing increased, so did their reports of academic impairment due to IM use. Similarly, students who reported doing other things, not on the computer, while IMing very frequently, somewhat frequently, and sometimes were more likely than those who did this rarely or never to report academic impairment as a result of IM use”.

In relation to the above, Junco and Cotton (2011), also indicated that “the greater the amount of time spent actively chatting via IM each day, the more likely students were to report impairment. Students who reported doing more multitasking by doing schoolwork while IMing and doing non-computer related tasks while IMing were more likely to report that their schoolwork had suffered”. In addition, experiment conducted by Sana, Weston and Cepeda (2013) in Canada among students found out that students “comprehension was impaired when they performed multiple tasks during learning, one being the secondary task of completing unrelated online tasks”.

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Rithika and Selvaraj (2013), posits that students who spend more time on social media may have difficulty balancing their online activities and their academic preparation. This will in turn affect their academic performance. They also indicated that “students and teenagers mostly use social networks for time killing and sake of enjoyment but it has been analyzed that internet use for education purpose and any appropriate task including online tutorials, online lectures and education material downloading is very good but use of internet for only social network is very useless perhaps dangerous”. Also, students who are most affected in the usage of social network sites from scientific studies are those who spend a lot of time on SNS’ and denying other important aspects time they deserve (Rowlands et al., 2011).

Also, “many academicians have a fear that time spent on social media is beyond the required time, and this may lead to plagiarism and privacy issues and in most cases contribute minimally to actual student learning outcomes. They often view the using social media as superfluous or simply not conducive for better learning outcomes” (Moran et al., 2012). A study by Oye, Mahamat and Rahim (2012), found out that the performance of some of the students was not hampered by participating on social networks because they limit the time they spend on the social networks. This implies that despite the positives on the usage of social media, the amount of time spent by a student on these platforms can in one way or the other impair their academic performance.

However, Oye, Mahamat and Rahim (2012), found two categories of students. That is, those who manage their time well and therefore are able to regulate their involvement on social networks and those who are naive and are not able to manage their time, hence over participation on social networks. This implies that high school students who manage their time well will be able to
regulate the way and manner in which they participate on social networks while those who cannot
manage their time well, will be overwhelm with the usage of social networks as these will take all
their time instead of studying.

Yeboah and Ewur (2014), conducted a study on the impact of WhatsApp messenger on students’
academic performance in tertiary institutions in Ghana. The study found out that “WhatsApp
instead of making communication easier and faster thereby enhancing effective flow of
information and idea sharing among students, rather has impacted negatively on the performance
of tertiary students in Ghana. The study among other things unveiled the following: WhatsApp
takes much of students study time, results in procrastination related problems, destroys students’
spellings and grammatical construction of sentences, leads to lack of concentration during lectures,
results in difficulty in balancing online activities (WhatsApp) and academic preparation and
distracts students from completing their assignments and adhering to their private studies time
table”.


References


the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona and Claremont Graduate University.


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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Kumekpor (2002), a method implies a way or a procedure of getting specific things done. It is the idea of a laid down or accepted or normally adopted way of getting specific procedures, techniques, ideas and thought processes followed in getting specific things done and or in achieving particular ends or objectives. The methodology covered the research design, selection of case study, population, sample size, sampling technique, data sources, instrumentation and method of data analysis and presentation of results.

3.2 Research Design

The study used the cross-sectional survey method to find out how social network participation affects academic performance of students in SHS. A survey design provides a quantitative description of some fraction of the population that is sampled through the data collection process (Frankel and Wallen, 1995). This method was applied in the collection of data from the field in order to answer research questions concerning social network participation and academic performance in SHS. The data collected enabled the researcher to generalize the findings from the sample response to the population.

The study adopted a mixed method approach to find out the social network participation and academic performance in SHS’. According to Bazeley (2002), “qualitative and quantitative
approaches have been distinguished (and thereby defined) on the basis of the type of data used (textual or numeric; structured or unstructured), the logic employed (inductive or deductive), the type of investigation (exploratory or confirmatory), the method of analysis (interpretive or statistical), the approach to explanation (variance theory or process theory), and for some, on the basis of the presumed underlying paradigm (positivist or interpretive/critical; rationalistic or naturalistic).” This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher used the questionnaire to acquire data from students which enabled the study to conduct a statistical analysis and comparism of the variables involved. Also, the semi structured interview schedule was used to solicit information base on the objectives of the study from some heads and assistant heads of the schools involved.

### 3.3 Selection of Case

Four Senior High Schools were selected for the study. These were St. Johns Grammar SHS, Tema SHS, Action SHS and Ideal College. St. Johns Grammar SHS and Tema SHS are public schools, whilst Action SHS and Ideal College fall into the private SHS category. Also, these schools are mixed schools with both day and boarding facilities. These provided a level ground for comparism in terms of how males and females participate on social networks and how it impacts their academic performance. Also, the researcher was able to analyse “day” and “boarding” students’ social network participation patterns and how it affects their academic performance. Action SHS and Ideal College also provided the study with more understanding of the subject as they both admit students who were not able to pass the SHS certificate examination (WASSCE).
3.4 Population

A population is the larger group to which one hopes to apply the results of a study (Frankel and Wallen, 1995). The population for the study were drawn from St. Johns Grammar SHS, Tema SHS, Action SHS and Ideal College. The total population for the study was Five Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Nine (5249), excluding Form 1s who just started their SHS education and had not written any formal examination as at the time of the study. This is depicted in Table 1.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Form 2</th>
<th>Form 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns Grammar</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>1610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>1461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>1078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2558</td>
<td>2691</td>
<td>5249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field work, 2014

3.5 Sample Size

Sampling involves the examination of a carefully selected proportion of the units of a phenomenon in order to help extend knowledge gained from the study of that part to the whole from which the part was selected. The main interest in sampling is to extend the results of analysis based on the sample to the population from which the sample was drawn. The characteristics of the sample must therefore, closely reflect those of the population (Kumekpor, 2002).
Table 3.2: Sample Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>SHS 2</th>
<th>SHS 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns Grammar</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>257</strong></td>
<td><strong>269</strong></td>
<td><strong>526</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field work, 2014

The total sample size for the study was 526 (10%) as depicted in the Table 1.2 above. Out of the total sample, 257 were in SHS 2 and 269 were in SHS 3. In relation to the schools, St. Johns Grammar had a sample size of 79 and 83 for SHS 2 and SHS 3 respectively. Also, Tema SHS had 71 for SHS 2 and 74 for SHS 3. Action SHS had 54 for SHS 2 and 57 for SHS 3. Ideal College had a sample size of 53 for SHS 2 and 55 for SHS 3. According to Neuman (2007), for a small population (under 1000), a researcher needs a larger sampling ratio. He continued that one principle of sample size is, the smaller the population, the bigger the sampling ratio has to be accurate. He said that larger populations permit smaller sampling ratios for equally good samples. This is because as the population grows, the returns in accuracy for sample size shrinks. This is backed by the assertion that the smaller the population, the bigger the sampling ratio has to be for an accurate sample (i.e. one with a high probability of yielding the same results as the entire population). Neuman further notes that for small samples, a small increase in sample size produce big gains in accuracy (Neuman, 2006).
3.6 Sampling Technique

The stratified sampling method was adopted for the study. The stratified sampling approach is a sampling type under the probability sampling method where the population is divided into strata. The stratified sampling method is used to divide the population into non-overlapping sub-groups called strata (Tagoe, 2009). Sample from each Senior High School, was divided into two strata, namely, form 2 and form 3. Only the form 2 students and form 3 students were selected because they had written senior high school exams as compared to the form 1s who are yet to write their terminal examination at the time of the study. Each stratum had the sample size as follows; form 2 students - 257, form 3 students – 269 totaling 526.

After the stratification, the researcher proceeded to the Head/Assistant Head’s office and officially received the list of the form 2 and form 3 students. A random selection was done in the target group to give each element in the register an equal chance of been selected. Kothari (2004) was of the view that “the usual method, for selection of items for the sample from each stratum, resorted to is that of simple random sampling”. The researcher also interviewed one head/assistant head from each of the schools. This was purposefully done because the information that was needed could be provided by any of the heads or assistant heads of the schools.

3.7 Instrumentation

According to Kumekpor (2002), social investigation demands that information should be gathered from human beings and institutions on specifically defined topics. Information can be gathered through the use of interviews, questionnaires, observations etc. This study employed the
questionnaire and the interview method to collect data. Data was solicited from students with the questionnaire whiles the interview was used to collect data from Heads or Assistant Heads of the schools.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a document or form containing a number of questions on a particular theme, problem, issue or opinion to be investigated, (Kumekpor, 2002). According to Koul (1984), a questionnaire is a device consisting of a series of questions dealing with some psychological, social, educational, organizational etc. issues sent or given to an individual or group of individuals with the objective of obtaining data with regard to some issues under investigation. The questionnaire for the study contained questions meant to look at social network participation and academic performance in SHS’. The questionnaire was self-designed and included both close ended and open ended questions in order to get specific responses from them as well as enable them to air their views. The questions were structured and divided into five broad sections and contained twenty six items.

Section A dealt with the background data of respondents. This section asked questions about the background of the respondents, including gender, age, level, course, and electronic gadgets possessed. Section B also dealt specifically with the social networks and its usage among the students. Section C covered how students network and participate on social media networks. Section D sought to collect data on the amount of time spent in the students’ participation on social networks. Section E dealt with the effect of social media on students’ grammar and spelling in
their academic work. Section F, finally looked at the effect of social network participation on academic performance of the students.

3.7.2 Interview

The study adopted the interview method and specifically made use of the semi-structured interview approach. According to Kothari (2004), an “interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. This method can be used through personal interviews and, if possible, through telephone interviews”. Constantinos, Bloch, Seal (2011), adds that in semi structured interviews “interviewer works from a list of topics that need to be covered with each respondent, but the order and exact wording of questions is not important. Generally, such interviews gather qualitative data, although this can be coded into categories to be made amenable to statistical analysis”.

Constantinos, Bloch, and Seal (2011), continued that there are quite some numerous benefits of using the interview method. These include;

- The presence of an interviewer allows for complex questions to be explained, if necessary, to the interviewee.
- Interviews can generally be longer than when self-completion techniques are used as interviewees are less likely to be put off by the length or to give up halfway through.
- There is more scope to ask open questions since respondents do not have to write in their answer and the interviewer can pick up on non-verbal clues that indicate what is relevant to the interviewees and how they are responding to different questions.
• Visual aids can also be used in the face-to-face situation.
• The interviewer can control the context and the environment in which the interview takes place. For instance, the interviewer can make sure that the questions are asked and therefore answered in the correct order and that the interview takes place in an appropriate setting which is conducive to accurate responses.

The interview was conducted with the some of the Heads and Assistant Headmasters of the schools. Specifically, the researcher was able to interview the heads of the Action SHS, Tema SHS. The Assistant Heads of St. Johns Grammar and Ideal College were also interviewed. Questions were posed and responses were recorded for content analysis. The process lasted for about forty five (45) minutes on the average for each Head. The questions were pre-written, however, relevant issues that were not initially part of the interview guide were also touched on.

3.8 Mode of Data Collection

The researcher collected both primary and secondary data for the study. The primary data included the use of questionnaire and interview whiles the secondary data included research studies conducted in the area under study. According to Kothari (2004), “primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character. The secondary data, on the other hand, are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process”.

In this study, the collection of the data was made possible as a result of the letter of introduction from the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana introducing the researcher to
the various heads of the Senior High Schools. The questionnaires for the study were then administered within the months of January to March, 2015 with the help of the various heads of the schools.

The collection of data in research is very essential whether it is a primary or secondary data. According to Singh (2006), data is needed in a research work to serve important purposes. These include:

- Data as an essential element in any educational research because it provides a solid foundation for the study.
- Quality of data determines the quality of research.
- It provides a definite direction and definite answer to a research inquiry.
- The data are needed to substantiate the various arguments in research findings.
- The main purpose of data collection is to verify the hypotheses or the research questions.
- Data are also employed to ascertain the effectiveness of new device for its practical utility.
- Data are necessary to provide the solution of the problem.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Data analysis is an important aspect of the research process after data collection. Without the analysis of the data collected, whatever has been gathered will remain meaningless to the people it was intended to benefit. According to Singh (2006), the raw data are meaningless unless certain statistical treatment is given to them. Analysis of data means to make the raw data meaningful or to draw some results from the data after the proper treatment. Thus, the analysis of data serves the following main functions:
• To make the raw data meaningful,
• To test null hypothesis,
• To obtain the significant results,
• To draw some inferences or make generalization, and
• To estimate parameters.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected. The descriptive analysis tools in the SPSS were employed to develop tables and frequencies which was constructively analyzed. Data collected from the interview was also analyzed and organized under the objectives of the study. These were merged with related responses from the questionnaire during the analysis.

3.9.1 Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance

According to Legendre (2010), Kendall’s coefficient of concordance was proposed by Maurice G. Kendall and Bernard Babington Smith. “Kendall’s coefficient of concordance (W) is a measure of the agreement among several (m) quantitative or semi quantitative variables that are assessing a set of (n) objects of interest. The Kendall coefficient of concordance can be used to assess the degree to which a group of variables provides a common ranking for a set of objects. It should be used only to obtain a statement about variables that are all meant to measure the same general property of the objects”. Objective one was achieved by estimating the Kendall’s Concordance of Coefficient and also ranked all the individual rankings of the social networks by respondents. Additionally, descriptive statistics methods like, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis for how the students network and participate on social networks was also used to analyse the data.
3.9.2 Factor Analysis

Yong and Pearce (2013), observed that the “purpose of factor analysis is to summarize data so that relationships and patterns can be easily interpreted and understood. It is normally used to regroup variables into a limited set of clusters based on shared variance”. “Hence, it helps to isolate constructs and concepts. Factor analysis uses mathematical procedures for the simplification of interrelated measures to discover patterns in a set of variables” (Child, 2006). Factor analysis was employed to ascertain the effects of social media on students. The two tests Kaizer Meyer Oklin (KMO) and Bartlett’s Specificity tests measured the sampling adequacy and extent of variations in the data before the researcher proceeded to do the factor analysis. The factor analysis method grouped the variables into factors based on the nature of responses from the respondents. These included Performance, addiction, educational use, grammar, spelling and reading skills and examination questions.

The KMO statistic varies between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicated that the sum of partial correlations is largely relative to the sum of correlations, indicating diffusion in the pattern of correlations (hence, Factor Analysis is likely to be inappropriate). A value close to 1 indicated that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and so Factor Analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors. The data reported 0.625, therefore researcher was confident that Factor Analysis was appropriate for the data. Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was employed to test the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix. At 1% level of significance, the results show that the data is highly significant (p<0.001), and therefore Factor Analysis was appropriate.
3.10 Pre-Testing

A pre-testing was done before data was collected from the Senior High School. The pre-testing exercise was used to decide on the suitability and effectiveness of the research instrument. The pilot study was conducted using 25 students from the Presby Welfare College School. This was done to determine whether questions in the questionnaires are clear enough to elicit the appropriate responses. The pre-testing looked at the content of questions, length of questions, and procedure for administering. This enabled the researcher to make necessary changes in the questionnaires as some questions were found to be too long and repetitive. However, some were deemed unnecessary to change. After the pre-testing, the questionnaires were modified to give more clarity and reduced the length of time needed to administer them. This helped the researcher to ensure validity and reliability of the study. Trochim (2005) stated that “validity tries to address the extent or degree to which a research has measured what it has been purported to measure. In other words it reflects the extent to which the study measures what it claims to investigate and that there are no logical errors when drawing conclusions from the data” (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005).

3.10 Ethical Issues

The researcher followed some ethical approaches in order to conduct the research in the right way. The following were some of the ethical considerations that were followed;

a. A letter of Introduction from the Department of Information Studies was presented to each of the heads of the schools for permission to enable the study to be conducted.
b. Participation in the study by the students was voluntary without any compulsion. Each participant was made aware of the objectives of the study, what is required of them and what the data will be used for.

c. Participants were informed that data collected from them will be kept confidential and used for the purpose for which they were intended.

d. Secondary information that were gathered during the studies were duly acknowledged and references provided.

e. The researcher also adhered to the code of ethics as specified in the University of Ghana Handbook for Graduate Research.
References


CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data gathered during the survey. The study employed both the questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide as data gathering instruments. A total of 526 questionnaires were administered and all of them were returned. This was as result of approval of the heads/ assistant heads of the school and some teachers tasked to help administer questionnaires to students. Thus, the return rate of 100% which indicated an excellent response rate. As stated by Babbie and Mouton (2002), 70% response rate is considered as very good and therefore, the 100% responses rate is excellent. Despite the return rate of 100% not all questions were attempted by respondents. In addition, heads/assistant heads of the school were also interviewed.

The results have been presented in charts, graphs, and tables showing frequencies, and percentages of the responses given by students of the four Senior High Schools (SHS). These responses were also merged with the related responses from the interview of the heads/assistant heads of the schools. Other statistical tools such as cross tabulation, Factor Analysis and Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance were also employed. The analysis covered the background of the students, social network sites and usage among students, how students’ networked and participated on social media, time invested by students on social networks, effect of social network participation on students’ grammar and spelling as well as social network participation and academic performance.
4.2 Background of Respondents

To understand the proportion of male and female respondents, their ages, level and the electronic gadgets they possessed, the respondents were asked to state their age, gender, level, subject of study and electronic devices they used. The following section presents the background of the students in terms of age, gender, level and electronic devices used.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

This section presented gender of respondents in relation to their schools. This is depicted in Table 4.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Gender of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns</td>
<td>77 (31.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>64 (26.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>52 (21.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>51 (20.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>244 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015

From Table 4.1 above, majority of respondents (282) were females out of which 85 (30.1%) were from St. Johns, 81 (28.7%) from Tema SHS, 59 (20.9%) from Action SHS and 57 (20.2%) from Ideal College. However, 244 were male respondents and these included 77 (31.6%) from St. Johns, 64 (26.2%) from Tema SHS, 52 (21.3%) from Action SHS and 51 (20.9%) from Ideal College. Thus, the female respondents formed the majority of respondents in all the schools.
4.2.2 Age of Respondents

This section also sought to find out the age of respondents. A cross tabulation was done between the school of respondents and their ages. The results are reflected in Table 4.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Age of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>6 (26.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>5 (21.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>7 (30.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>5 (21.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Data 2015

From Table 4.2 above, out of the total of 526 responses, majority 226 (43.0%) by age were 17 year olds and these included 61 (27.0%) from St. Johns SHS, 63 (27.9%) from Tema SHS, 52 (23.0%) from Action SHS and 50 (22.1%) from Ideal College. The next highest was 121 (23.0%) respondents who were aged 18 and included 40 (33.1%) from St. Johns SHS, 31 (25.6%) from Tema SHS, 22 (18.2%) from Action SHS and 28 (23.1%) from Ideal College. In addition, 90 (17.1%) respondents which included 33 (36.7%) from St. Johns SHS, 28 (31.1%) from Tema SHS,
14 (15.6%) from Action SHS and 15 (16.7%) from Ideal College were 16 years of age. Thus, the majority of respondents 347 (66.0%) were between the ages of 16 and 18 years.

### 4.2.3 Course of Study

This section presented a cross tabulation between the school of respondents and course of study. In all, six courses were covered made up of Business, General Arts, General Science, Agricultural Science, Visual Arts and Home Economics as depicted in Table 4.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Course of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>48 (38.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>23 (18.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>29 (23.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>26 (20.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Data 2015

From Table 4.3 above, quite a high number of 178 (33.8%) out of the total responses of 526 were General Arts students. These included 68 (38.2%) from St. Johns SHS, 40 (22.5%) from Tema SHS, 36 (20.2%) from Action SHS and 34 (19.1%) from Ideal College. This was followed by Business 126 (24.0%) with 48 (38.1%) from St. Johns SHS, 23 (18.3%) from Tema SHS, 29
(23.0%) from Action SHS and 26 (20.6%) from Ideal College. In addition, 113 (21.5%) of the respondents were Home Economics students and included 21 (18.6%) from St. Johns SHS, 36 (31.9%) from Tema SHS, 29 (25.7%) from Action SHS and 27 (23.9%) from Ideal College.

4.2.4 Electronic Devices of Respondents

The study sought to find out the type of electronic devices owned or possessed by the respondents. The findings are summarized in Table 4.4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic Device Owned</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop Computer</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>526</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Data, 2015

From Table 4.4, majority of the respondents 502, representing 95.4% owned or possessed a phone. Others owned laptops 7 (1.3%), Tablet 6 (1.1%), Desktop Computer 11 (2.1%). The above data indicates that majority of the students’ owned or possessed phones which they used to participate on social media networks.

4.3 Social Network Sites and Usage among Students

This section of the study sought to find out the various social network sites that students participate on and the extent of usage of these sites.
4.3.1 Preferred Social Network Sites

All respondents (100%) indicated that they participate on social networks in one way or the other. Respondents were therefore asked to rank the social media networks in the order of usage and importance to them. The results is presented in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 below

Table 4.5: Ranking of social media usage among students of secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Networks</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whatsapp</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myspace</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015

From Table 4.5, Whatsapp had the highest ranking with a mean rank of 1.40, followed by Facebook with mean rank of 1.96. Twitter was ranked 3rd with a mean rank of 3.21 and the least ranked was Myspace with mean rank of 7.62. It can be inferred from the data in Table 4.5 that the social network sites with the highest number of usage were Whatsapp and Facebook.

Table 4.6: Test statistics of Kendall’s coefficient of concordance

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of observation</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendall's W</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>3122.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of freedom</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymptotic Significance</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015
In relation to the above, the test statistics shown in Table 4.6 reveals that the Kendall’s coefficient of concordance is 0.848. This suggests that there was 85% agreement in the rankings of the usage of social media networks. The asymptotic significance value of 0.00 indicates that the level of agreement between the rankings of the various social media platforms by the respondents is valid at 99% level of accuracy.

4.3.2 Rate of Usage of Social Network Sites
This section sought to find out from respondents the rate of usage of some of the social media networks. As a result of the high ranking for Whatsapp and Facebook, the researcher decided to present their rate of usage for the study.

4.3.2.1 Rate of Whatsapp Usage by Respondents

This section analysed responses with a cross tabulation between school and rate of Whatsapp usage. These included a total of 503 respondents who indicated that they used Whatsapp social network. The results are shown in Table 4.7 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Usage of Whatsapp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>9 (56.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>4 (25.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>1 (6.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015 $\chi^2 = 42.700a$ df = 9 p-value = 0.00
From Table 4.7, out of the total responses of 503, majority 358 (71.2%) stated that they used Whatsapp very often and these included 95 (26.5%) from St. Johns SHS, 109 (30.44%) from Tema SHS, 69 (19.3%) from Action SHS and 85 (23.7%) from Ideal College. Furthermore, 77 (15.3%) respondents made up of 18 (23.4%) from St. Johns SHS, 9 (11.7%) from Tema SHS, 69 (19.3%) from Action SHS and 85 (23.7%) from Ideal College indicated that they often used Whatsapp. In addition, 52 (10.3%) which included 23 (44.2%) from St. Johns SHS, 17 (32.7%) from Tema SHS, 10 (19.2%) from Action SHS and 2 (3.8%) from Ideal College did not used Whatsapp often. Lastly, 16 (3.2%) indicated they did not used Whatsapp during the period of the study. The level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01) which indicated a significant relationship between school and rate of Whatsapp usage. Thus, a high proportion of respondents used Whatsapp regularly although respondents in the private schools used it more than their counterparts in the public schools.

4.3.2.2 Rate of Facebook Usage by Respondents

This section analysed responses with a cross tabulation between school and rate of Facebook usage. These also included a total 515 respondents who also indicated that they used Facebook social network. From Table 4.8 below, out of the total responses of 515, majority of respondents 324 (62.9%) stated that they used Facebook very often and these included 67 (20.7%) from St. Johns SHS, 101 (31.2%) from Tema SHS, 68 (21.0%) from Action SHS and 88 (27.2%) from Ideal College. Also, 106 (20.6%) respondents made up of 40 (37.7%) from St. Johns SHS, 14 (13.2%) from Tema SHS, 34 (32.1%) from Action SHS and 18 (17.0%) from Ideal College. Moreover, 71 (13.5%) which included 38 (53.5%) from St. Johns SHS, 24 (33.8%) from Tema SHS, 7 (10.0%) from Action SHS and 2 (2.8%) from Ideal College did not used Facebook often. Finally, 14 (2.7%) did not find it applicable as they were not using it at the time of the study. The
level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01) which indicated a significant relationship between school and Facebook usage. Thus, a high proportion of respondents from the private schools used Facebook more often as compared to the public school respondents as shown in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Responses of School and Rate of Facebook Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Please rate the usage of Facebook</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>9 (64.3%)</td>
<td>38 (53.5%)</td>
<td>40 (37.7%)</td>
<td>67 (20.7%)</td>
<td>154 (29.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>3 (21.4%)</td>
<td>24 (33.8%)</td>
<td>14 (13.2%)</td>
<td>101 (31.2%)</td>
<td>142 (27.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>2 (14.3%)</td>
<td>7 (10.0%)</td>
<td>34 (32.1%)</td>
<td>68 (21.0%)</td>
<td>111 (21.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (2.8%)</td>
<td>18 (17.0%)</td>
<td>88 (27.2%)</td>
<td>108 (21.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14 (100%)</td>
<td>71 (100%)</td>
<td>106 (100%)</td>
<td>324 (100%)</td>
<td>515 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015  \( \chi^2 = 71.979 \)  \( \text{df} = 9 \)  p-value = 0.00

4.3.3 Reasons for Usage of Social Network Sites

This section also sought to find out the reasons why respondents used the social networks very often. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses for reasons for using social media platforms. From Table 4.9 below, 348 (45.7%) and 364 (45.3%) respondents indicated that they used Facebook and WhatsApp respectively because most of their friends also used them. Also, 354 (46.6%) respondents indicated that they found Facebook to be cheap and 354 (44.1%) respondents also found WhatsApp to be cheaper. Other reasons also include, easy interaction Facebook – 16 (2.1%), WhatsApp – 23 (2.9%), ability to chat with multiple friends at the same time Facebook – 42 (5.5%), and WhatsApp – 64 (8.0%).
Table 4.9: Reasons for Frequent Use of Social Media Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Usage</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>WhatsApp</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most of my friends use it</td>
<td>348 (45.7%)</td>
<td>364 (45.3%)</td>
<td>1 (7.7%)</td>
<td>2 (25.0%)</td>
<td>12 (54.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper</td>
<td>354 (46.6%)</td>
<td>354 (44.1%)</td>
<td>1 (7.7%)</td>
<td>2 (25.0%)</td>
<td>4 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy interaction</td>
<td>16 (2.1%)</td>
<td>23 (2.9%)</td>
<td>7 (53.8%)</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat with multiple friends at a time</td>
<td>42 (5.5%)</td>
<td>64 (8.0%)</td>
<td>4 (30.8%)</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
<td>3 (13.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

4.4 Participation and Networking on Social Media

One of the main objectives of the study was to find out how students networked and participated on social media networks. This section sought to find out how students networked and the kind of activities they engaged in on these social networks.

4.4.1 Learning about Social Media Networks

This section sought to find out how respondents learnt or became aware of social media networks. From Table 4.10 below, 356 (67.7%) respondents learnt about social networks from friends whiles 160 (31.0%) learnt about it from the Internet. In addition, 6 (1.1%) respondents learnt about social media networks from television. In conclusion, it can be deduced that friends were the main conduit through which students became aware of social networks.
Table 4.10: Learning about Social Media Networks by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>526</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

4.4.2 Subscription to Social Media Networks

The study tried to find out how respondents subscribed or signed up to participate on social media networks. From Figure 4.1 below, out of the total valid responses from 526, 441 representing 83.8% indicated that they signup or registered themselves. Also, 79 representing 15.0% indicated that they were registered by their friends while only 6 representing 1.1% indicated that they received friend requests from these social network sites. It can therefore be concluded that majority of the students joined these networks by registering themselves.

Figure 4.1: Subscription to Social Media Networks

Source: Survey data 2015
4.4.3 Friends Online

This section was devoted to the number of friends respondents had on social media networks. A further cross tabulation analysis was done to differentiate between schools and number of friends they had. These included a total of 526 valid responses from respondents.

Table 4.11: Social Media Network Friends of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Number of Friends on Social Networks</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-200</td>
<td>201-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(38.2%)</td>
<td>(39.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14.7%)</td>
<td>(28.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.5%)</td>
<td>(19.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.5%)</td>
<td>(13.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015  \(\chi^2 = 25.5922^a\)  df= 12  p-value = 0.012

From Table 4.11 above, majority of the respondents 294 (55.9%) had between 601 - 800 friends online. These included 77 (26.2%) from St. Johns SHS, 87 (29.6%) from Tema SHS, 66 (22.4%) from Action SHS and 64 (21.8%) from Ideal College. Furthermore, 103 (19.6%) had 801 and above friends online. These also included, 34 (33.0%) from St. Johns SHS, 31 (30.1%) from Tema SHS, 22 (21.4%) from Ideal College and 16 (15.5%) from Action SHS. In addition, 77 (14.6%) respondents had a friendship network of 201 to 400. These also included 30 (39.0%) from St. Johns SHS, 22 (28.6%) from Tema SHS, 15 (19.5%) from Action SHS and 10 (13.0%) from Ideal College. The level of significance was 0.01 (p≤0.01) and indicated a significant relationship between school of respondents and number of friends online. Nevertheless, the high number of
friends online indicates how immensely involved the students are on social networks and the amount of time invested.

4.4.4 Gender and Number of Friends on Social Network Sites

A further cross tabulation analysis was done to bring clarity to the number of friends online across gender lines.

Table 4.12: Gender of Respondents and Number of Friends Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Online Friends</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–200</td>
<td>17 (6.8%)</td>
<td>17 (6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201–400</td>
<td>15 (6.0%)</td>
<td>63 (22.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401–600</td>
<td>13 (5.2%)</td>
<td>6 (2.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601–800</td>
<td>180 (72.3%)</td>
<td>108 (39.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801 and above</td>
<td>24 (9.6%)</td>
<td>83 (30.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>249 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>277 (100%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

\[ \chi^2 = 75.895^a \]

From Table 4.12 above, 17 (6.8%) males and 17 (6.1%) female respondents had friends between 1–200. Furthermore, 15 (6.0%) males and 63 (22.7%) female respondents had between 201–400 friends. Again, 13 (5.2%) males and 6 (2.2%) female respondents had between 401–600 friends. In addition, 180 (72.3%) males and 108 (39.0%) female respondents had between 600–800 friends. Finally, 24 (9.6%) males and 83 (30.0%) female respondents had 800 and above friends on social network sites. Although majority of the respondents had online friends above 600, a significant
A relationship (p<0.01) existed between gender and number of friends online. That is, more females had more friends than their male counterparts but this may be as a result of the number of female respondents who were more than their male counterparts.

### 4.4.5 Respondents Gender and Selection of Social Network Friends

This section did a further analysis to determine how friends were made along gender lines. A cross tabulation analysis was done on gender and how social media friends were made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection of Friends</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Search</td>
<td>81 (33.3%)</td>
<td>79 (28.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or Peer Requests</td>
<td>138 (56.8%)</td>
<td>163 (57.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Friend Requests</td>
<td>23 (9.5%)</td>
<td>37 (13.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>3 (1.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>243 (100%)</td>
<td>282 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.13 above, 81 (33.3%) males and 79 (28.0%) female respondents found their friends via personal search. In addition, 138 (56.8%) males and 163 (57.8%) female respondents found friends on social media through requests from their peers. Moreover, through unknown friend requests, 23 (9.5%) males and 37 (13.1%) female respondents found friends on social networks. The level of significance was 0.325 (p>0.01) which indicated a non-significant relationship between gender and how friends were made.
4.4.6 Purpose for Using Social Networks

This section dealt with the purpose for which respondents used social media networks. The researcher allowed multiple responses to the question because respondents could find themselves in one or two of the situations. Out of the total valid responses, 132 (12.3%) respondents indicated that they used social networks for entertainment while 170 (15.8%) respondents indicated that they used social media networks for discussions with friends on school matters. In addition, 329 (30.5%) respondents claimed that they used social media networks for chatting while 446 (41.4%) indicated that they used social media networks for making friends. Friendship making was therefore identified as the main purpose for which students used social media networks. This is depicted in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Purpose for using social networks

Source: Survey data, 2015
4.4.7 Activities Performed on Social Media Networks

The study was also interested in the kind of activities respondents performed on social network sites. Students were therefore asked to state the kind of activities they engaged in on social media networks. Multiple responses were permitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching photos/Videos</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating Posts</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Games</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Participation/Discussion</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

From Table 4.14 above, 453 (46%) respondents stated that they watched photos or pictures and videos on social media networks while 319 (32%) respondents indicated that they updated their posts on social media networks. Furthermore, 114 (11%) respondents indicated that they played games on social media networks while 111 (11%) respondents indicated that they participated in groups and discussions. In conclusion, it has being identified that majority of respondents watched photos/pictures and videos as well as updating posts on social media network sites.

4.5 Time Invested on Social Network Sites

The study also sought to find out the amount of time invested by students on social media networks. This involved the number of hours spent on social media networks and how it affected other academic activities in the students’ life.
4.5.1 School and Number of Hours Spent Online Daily

This section also sought to find out from the analysis the number of hours respondents spent online as well as the correlation between school attended and number of hours spent online daily.

Table 4.15: Number of Hours Spent Online Daily by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>1-2 hours</th>
<th>3-5 hours</th>
<th>6-7 hours</th>
<th>8-12 hours</th>
<th>Always online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns</td>
<td>78 (57.8%)</td>
<td>24 (21.8%)</td>
<td>8 (10.5%)</td>
<td>16 (19.3%)</td>
<td>34 (28.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>37 (27.4%)</td>
<td>26 (23.6%)</td>
<td>20 (26.3%)</td>
<td>27 (32.5%)</td>
<td>35 (29.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>8 (5.9%)</td>
<td>31 (28.2%)</td>
<td>27 (35.5%)</td>
<td>19 (22.9%)</td>
<td>26 (21.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>12 (8.9%)</td>
<td>29 (26.4%)</td>
<td>21 (27.6%)</td>
<td>21 (25.3%)</td>
<td>25 (20.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>135 (100%)</td>
<td>110 (100%)</td>
<td>76 (100%)</td>
<td>83 (100%)</td>
<td>120 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015 \( \chi^2 = 89.988^a \) \( df = 9 \) \( p\text{-value} = 0.00 \)

From Table 4.15 above, a high number of respondents 203 (38.7%) spent over 8 hours on social media networks daily. These included 135 (25.8%) respondents spent 1-2 hours daily on social media networks and they included, 78 (57.8%) from St. Johns, 37 (27.4%) from Tema SHS, 8 (5.9%) from Action SHS and 12 (8.9%) from Ideal College. Also, 120 (38.7%) respondents who were always online, and included 34 (28.3%) from St. Johns, 35 (29.2%) from Tema SHS, 26 (21.7%) from Action SHS, and 25 (20.8%) from Ideal College. Furthermore, out of the 110 (21.0%) students who spent 3-5 hours daily on social media networks, 24 (21.8%) from St. Johns, 26 (23.6%) from Tema SHS, 31 (28.2%) from Action SHS and 29 (26.4%) from Ideal College. Finally, 83 (15.8%) and 76 (14.5%) of respondents spent between 8-12 hours and 6-7 hours respectively. Further analysis revealed a significant relationship in the number of hours
respondents spent on social media networks the school attended. The level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01), which indicated a significant relationship between the number of hours spent on social media networks by students and school attended. That is, the proportion of respondents from the private schools who were always online was higher than their counterparts in the public schools.

Interview with the various heads/assistants heads indicated that there were regulations in all the schools in relation to the usage of electronic communication devices such as mobile phones and tablets. Students were not allowed to use these devices in school. It was therefore against school rules to participate on social networks during school hours because electronic devices used for communicating were not allowed to be used in the schools. Unfortunately, there is a challenge in preventing students in using these devices in the schools. For the private schools it was more challenging because of the nature of the schools, because students have more freedom as compared to students from other public schools where regulations are adhered to strictly.

### 4.5.2 Social Media and School Hours

The study went further to find out from respondents if they participated on social networks during school hours. From Table 4.16 below, respondents were asked if they participated on social media networks during school hours. Out of the total of 520, 199 (38%) answered in the affirmative while 277 (53%) answered in the negative. Also, 44 (9%) stated that they participated on social networks ‘sometimes’ during school hours. In can be inferred from the data that the number of students who participated on social media networks during school hours was almost at par with the number of
students who did not participate on social media during school hours considering the 9% of respondents who participated ‘sometimes’ during school hours.

Table 4.16: Social Network Participation during School Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

In relation to the above, the researcher sought to find out from respondents (243) who participated on social media networks during school hours the time they used. In response, 132 (54.3%) respondents indicated that they participated on these networks during break time at school while 41 (16.9%) respondents stated that they used social media during classes’ hours. Also, 70 (28.8%) respondents indicated that they participated on social media networks during free times in between classes hours. The data shows that majority of the respondents participated on social media networks during break time in school.

4.5.3 Social Media and Study Time

The researcher also sought to find out from the respondents if the use of social media networks affected the time they used to study. From Table 4.17 below, out of the total valid responses of 526, majority of respondents 370 (70.3%) indicated that social network participation affected the time they used to study. These included 100 (27.5%) from St. Johns SHS, 94 (25.4%) from Action SHS, 92 (45.9%) from Ideal College and 84 (22.7%) from Tema SHS. In addition, 156 (29.7%) made up of 60 (38.5%) from St. Johns SHS, 55 (35.3%) from Tema SHS, 22 (14.1%) from Action
SHS and 19 (12.2%) from Ideal College indicated in the negative that social media network participation had not affected their time they used to study. It can be inferred that majority of respondents 370 (70.3%) study time was negatively affected. The level of significance of 0.00 (p<0.01) indicated a significant relationship between school and whether social network participation affected time of study. Thus, the study time of respondents from the private schools time for study was negatively affected more than their counterparts in the public schools.

Table 4.17 Effect of Social Media on Study Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Effect of Social Media on Study Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>100 (27.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>84 (22.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>94 (25.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>92 (45.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>370 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015  \( \chi^2 = 25.664a \)  \( df = 3 \)  p-value = 0.00

One of the major challenges with the participation of students on social media networks that was identified from all the interviews indicated that these networks caused a lot of distraction among students. Sometimes students were found in groups or isolated using their phones in chatting and participating on social media. Some had been caught watching pictures/photos and videos together during school hours. Also, it affected the concentration of some of the students in class. Most of the students in the hostels sometimes used all their time during the night Whatsapping and Facebooking instead of sleeping or learning.
4.5.4 Social Media and Submission of Assignments

The study also sought to find out from respondents if the use of social media affected the submission of assignments in school. A question was posed if the use of social media affected the submission of assignments in school. The responses are depicted in Figure 4.3 below.

**Figure 4.3: Effects of Social Media Use on Submission of School Assignments**

![Pie chart showing responses to the question about the impact of social media on assignment submission.](image)

Source: Survey data, 2015

From Figure 4.3 above, 372 (71.5%) respondents indicated that the use of social media affected the time for submission of school assignments while 56 (10.8%) respondents answered in the negative. Furthermore, 92 (17.7%) respondents stated that the use of social networks sometimes affected their submission of assignments in school. Thus, the usage of social media networks affect the time school assignments are submitted by students.

Furthermore, the researcher sought to find out reasons why the submission of assignments were affected by participation of students on social media networks. Out of the total responses of 464 (89.2%), 274 (59%) respondents indicated that the use of social networks caused them to procrastinate in doing their assignments while 129 (28%) added that social networks distracted them from doing their assignments and lastly, 61 (13%) respondents also indicated that they spent
little time in doing their assignments because of the participation on social networks. We can therefore infer from the data that social media usage propels students to procrastinate on school assignments and other academic activities. This is illustrated in Figure 4.4 below.

**Figure 4.4: Reasons why Social Media Affected the Submission of Assignments**

Source: Survey data, 2015

### 4.6 Effect of Social Media on English Language Grammar and Spelling

One of the main objectives of the study was also to ascertain whether the participation of students on social media networks affected their grammar and spelling in the usage of the English language. This section therefore presents responses in relation to social media network participation and its effect on English language, grammar and spelling.

#### 4.6.1 Social Network Participation and English Language Usage

The study sought to find out from respondents if their participation on social media networks affected usage of English language negatively. From Table 4.18 below, it can be observed that majority of respondents had indicated that social media network participation affected their
English language usage. These included 51 (23.9%) from St. Johns SHS, 53 (24.9%) from Tema SHS, 56 (26.3%) from Action SHS and 53 (24.9%) from Ideal College. Also, 81 respondents which included 33 (40.7%) from St. Johns SHS, 26 (32.1%) from Tema SHS, 12 (14.8%) from Action SHS and 10 (12.3%) from Ideal College strongly disagreed with that assertion. Furthermore, 97 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion that social media use affected their English language usage. These included 30 (30.9%) from St. Johns SHS, 29 (29.9%) from Tema SHS, 22 (2.7%) from Action SHS and 16 (16.5%) from Ideal College. The level of significance was 0.064 (p>0.01) which indicated that there was no significant relationship between school attended and effect of social media participation on English language usage. Thus, social media participation affects one’s English language usage notwithstanding the school attended.

Table 4.18: Negative Effect of Social Media on Respondents English Language Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Social Media affects my English Language usage negatively</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>29 (33.0%)</td>
<td>51 (23.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>22 (25.0%)</td>
<td>53 (24.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>16 (18.2%)</td>
<td>56 (26.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>21 (23.9%)</td>
<td>53 (24.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>88 (100%)</td>
<td>213 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015 \( \chi^2 = 24.050 \) \( df = 15 \) \( p\)-value = 0.064

In relation to the above, the researcher went further to find out how their communication in English language have been affected as a result of their participation on social media networks. A summary of reasons from respondents included; the fact that on social network platforms attention is not
paid to grammar and spelling, the use of wrongly constructed sentences and Pidgin English, pronunciation of words as they sound, use of shorthand words etc. which affected their English language usage.

The interviews with the heads/assistant heads also indicated that the use of social networks made students lazy in spelling correctly and using grammar in the English language and these affected them negatively. Most students had become addicted to short hand writing and they displayed this during examinations. There had been a lot of complaints from teachers over the use of shorthand writing in examinations. Other students were also used to Pidgin language during their discourse with peers on social media networks and these affected the quality of English language being used.

### 4.6.2 Effects of Social Media on Grammar and Spelling

This section sought to find out if the use of social media affects the grammar and spelling of respondents in the English language usage. Out of the total respondents of 520, 323 (62%) respondents indicated that the use of social media had affected their grammar and spelling in the English language while 197 (38%) respondents answered in the negative, that the use of social media had not affected their grammar and spelling in the English language.

In relation to the above, the respondents were asked how the usage of social media affected their grammar and spelling in the English language. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer to this question. From Figure 4.5 below, 343 (48.9%) respondents indicated that they have become addicted to shorthand writing while 287 (40.9%) respondents cannot write their notes
without the use of shorthand. Also, 71 (10.1%) respondents claimed that they spelt the words just the way they sounded when communicating on any of the social media networks.

**Figure 4.5: Effect of Social Network Participation on Grammar and Spelling of Respondents**

Source: Survey data, 2015

### 4.7.3 Social Network Participation and Reading

This section dealt with the issue of whether participation on social media networks affected the amount of time students spent reading their books. Out of the total responses of 526, 215 (64.6%) respondents answered in the affirmative that social network participation had affected their reading habits whiles 118 (35.4%) respondents also indicated that the participation on social networks had not affected their reading in any way.

In relation to the above, the study went further to find out reasons why participation on social media networks affected the time they used to read their books. A summary of reasons why participation of social media networks affected the time of study included; replying messages when reading, giving more attention to social media than studies, it is fun and makes one forget to study,
multitasking while studying thereby affecting concentration, laziness in studying as a result of time spent participating on social media networks.

Results from the interview with the heads/assistant heads indicated that social networks affected the reading habits of the students depending on the student. They indicated that these networks caused distraction when reading and could prevent students from concentrating on whatever they were reading because they kept following chats on their mobile phones while reading their books. However, a positive impact that was stated was that social network usage among students helped them to learn new words.

4.7.4 Negative Consequences of Social Network Participation

This section sought to find out from respondents whether they were aware of the negative effects of social media network participation. A majority of 488 (92.8%) respondents indicated that they were aware of the negative consequences of social network participation while 38 (7.2%) respondents also stated that they were not aware of any negative consequences of social media network participation.

In relation to the above, the researcher sought to find out from the respondents who indicated that they were aware of the negative consequences to state some of the consequences they were aware of. In response, they stated; watching of pornography videos and pictures/photos, less time for studies, spelling mistakes in examinations, shorthand writing, playing unproductive games, addiction, low academic performance, lack of learning, short concentration, eye defects, keeping bad friends, meeting abusive strangers etc. as some of the consequences of social media usage.
Also, from the interviews it became clear that the participation of students on social networks robbed them of the time to concentrate on their books and studies. Many students spent so much time on these networks and this affected their educational outcomes as a result.

4.8 Social Network Participation and Academic Performance

One of the objective of the study was to find out if social network participation affected the academic performance of students. A number of questions were posed in relation to the usage of social media networks and their effect on academic performance using a five point Likert scale with closed ended responses. The Likert scale helped in analyzing the data using Factor Analysis. The factor analysis is an exploratory approach to reduce large variables into components or factors which groups the groups based on common patterns of responses (Thompson, 2004).

4.8.1 Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin and Bartlett’s Test

In order to analyse the data in relation to social media network and academic performance, the researcher measured the responses using Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin test to make sure the sample was adequate to proceed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity is presented in Table 4.19 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMO and Bartlett’s Test</th>
<th>KMO and Bartlett's Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</td>
<td>0.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</td>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1774.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determinant = 0.032
The KMO statistic varies between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicated that the sum of partial correlations is largely relative to the sum of correlations, indicating diffusion in the pattern of correlations (hence, Factor Analysis is likely to be inappropriate). A value close to 1 indicated that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and so Factor Analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors. Kaiser (1974), recommends that values greater than 0.5 are acceptable and appropriate. Values below 0.5 should lead to either collecting more data or rethink which variables to include. Since the data reported 0.625, the researcher was confident that Factor Analysis was appropriate for this data. Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was employed to test the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix. At 1% level of significance, the results show that the data is highly significant (p<0.001), and therefore Factor Analysis is appropriate.

**4.8.2 Academic Performance**

This section presents results on how participation on social media networks affects the academic performance of students. Variables with loadings greater than 0.4 are considered to be highly loaded and important to interpret that particular factor. Details of variable groupings under each factor is summarised in Table 4.20 below. Each factor is assigned a common name based on the variables that fall in that category. These include performance, addiction, educational use, grammar, spelling and reading, and examination questions.
Table 4.20: Effect of Social Network Participation on Academic Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rotated Component Matrix(^a)</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparing my grades before and after participating on social media networks and I experienced drop in my academic performance as a result</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During vacation I spend a lot of time participating on social media than reading my books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These networking sites influence my academic performance negatively, because they distract me from my studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.674</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding it hard concentrating on my study knowing that I can play online games and visit these sites just by logging into them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media use has affected my spelling when writing examination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>0.441</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addiction to social media is a problematic issue that affects my academic life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addicted to social media networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My grades will improve if I stop participating on social networks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do examination discussions with my friends on social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network sites are personal/ social and cannot be used for educational purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media has improved my reading skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>0.540</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media affects my English Language usage negatively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive examination questions and papers through social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

4.8.2.1 Performance

The first factor (factor 1) was labelled as ‘performance’ and measured time spent on studies and grades. A high score for this factor indicated that social media networks affected students’
academic performance adversely. This performance factor looked at the comparism of grades before and after social media network participation, time spent on social networks during vacation and effect of social media networks on academic performance. From Table 4.20 above, there was a high loading (0.814) when respondents compared their grades before they started participating on social networks and when they started participating on social networks. This meant that majority of the respondents indicated that their grades dropped when they began participating on social networks.

Furthermore, the use of social media during vacation also loaded very high (0.719) which also meant that majority of the respondents spend most of their time during vacation participating on social media networks rather than reading their books. In addition, there was a high loading (0.674) with respect to respondents who indicated that social networking sites affected their academic performance negatively because they were distracted from their studies. This also meant that most respondents affirmed that social networks distracted them from their studies thereby affecting their academic performance negatively.

In relation to the above, the Likert scale also confirmed that majority of respondents affirmed that their grades had dropped as a result of their participation on social media networks. These included, 62 (11.8%) respondents who strongly agreed that their grades had dropped whilst 255 (48.5%) agreed. In addition, 60 (11.4%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion that their grades had dropped. Nevertheless, 43 (8.2%) and 106 (20.2%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that their grades had dropped. This is depicted in Table 4.21 below
### Table 20:21 Grade Comparism before and after Social Media Network Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>526</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, 2015

#### 4.8.2.2 Addiction

The second factor was labelled as ‘addiction’ which measured the level of addiction of social media usage. A high score for this factor indicated that there is high level of addiction to social media networks. From Table 4.20, there was a significant loading (0.415) for respondents who indicated that they found it hard concentrating on their studies when they knew they could play games and chat just by logging in. This meant that majority of the respondents found it hard concentrating on their studies because they chatted when they had the least opportunity to participate on social media networks. Also, there was a high loading for addiction to social media networks (0.736) and addiction being a problematic issue affecting academic life (0.823). It also meant that majority of the respondents felt addicted to social networks which they indicated affected their academic life negatively. Lastly, majority of the respondents indicated that their grades would improve if they stopped participating on social media networks with a loading of 0.518. Thus, the study has revealed that most students were addicted to the use of social media networks.
4.8.2.3 Educational Use of Social Networks

The third factor was labelled as ‘educational’ use which measured benefits of social media to education. A high score for this factor indicated that social media is beneficial to education. In relation to examination from Table 4.20 above, there was a high loading (0.758) of respondents doing examination discussions with friends on social media networks. This implied that majority of the students used social media networks for discussion on examinations. In relation to the above, there was also a high loading (0.695) for respondents who believed that social media networks were personal and social, and therefore could not be used for educational purposes. This also indicated that most respondents did not agree with the fact that social networks could be used for educational purposes.

Responses from the interviewees indicated that there were some positive outcomes in relation to the usage of social media networks. These included improvement and learning of new words, working on assignments and research works and discussion of questions after class hours to share ideas. Also, a lot of the respondents were able to exchange and share examination questions from each of their schools on these networks.

4.8.2.4 Grammar, Spelling and Reading Skills of Respondents

The fourth factor was labelled as ‘grammar, spelling and reading skills’. This factor only applies to English language. A high score for this factor indicates that social media affects negatively the grammar and spelling of the students whilst it improves the reading skills. From Table 4.20 above, there was a relatively low factor loading (0.441) for respondents who indicated that their spelling
of words had been affected negatively during examinations. Thus, most respondents attested to the fact that their spelling of words have been negatively affected as a result of their participation on social media networks. Secondly, some respondents also stated that their reading skills have improved with a relatively low factor loading of 0.540. Finally, there was also a high loading (0.814) of respondents who indicated that their English language usage had been affected negatively as a result of their participation on social media networks. Data from the above indicates that even though social networks improved the reading skills of the respondents it had affected their spelling and English language usage negatively.

4.8.2.5 Examination Questions

The fifth and last factor was labelled as examination questions. A high score for this factor indicated that social media is used more often to share examinations questions among students. From Table 4.20 above, most of the respondents (with factor loading of 0.748) indicated that they shared examination questions on social media networks. Therefore, social networks have become one of the main channels through which respondents shared questions on examinations with their peers in other schools.

4.8.3 School, Gender and Grade Comparism

The study sought to also find out the comparism between school, gender and how their grades have been affected after participation on social media networks.
4.8.3.1 School and Grade Comparism

This section also sought to find out how grades of respondents were affected after participating on social media networks according to their schools. From the Table 4.22 below, majority of the respondents indicated that they agreed with the assertion that their grades had dropped as a result of their participation on social media networks. These included 43 (16.9%) from St Johns, 66 (25.9%) from Tema SHS, 78 (30.6%) from Action SHS and 68 (26.7%) from Ideal College. Furthermore, a sizeable proportion also indicated that they strongly disagreed with the assertion that their grades had dropped after participating on social media networks. These included 44 (41.5%) from St. Johns SHS, 31 (29.2%) from Tema SHS, 19 (17.9%) from Action SHS and 12 (11.3%) from Ideal College.

Table 4.22: School and Grade Comparism before and after Participation on Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>I Experienced Drop in my Grades after Participating on Social Media Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>20 (32.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>15 (24.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>10 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>17 (27.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015 \( \chi^2 = 85.28 \) df= 12 p-value = 0.00

The level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01) which indicated a significant relationship between school of study and drop in grade after participation on social media network. That is, a higher proportion of students in the private schools had dropped in grades after social media network participation as compared to their counterparts in the public schools.
4.8.3.2 Gender and Grade Comparism

This section presented the relationship between gender and comparism of grades before and after social media network participation.

Table 4.23: Gender and Grades Comparism before and after Social Network Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Respondent</th>
<th>I Experienced Drop in my Grades after Participating on Social Media Network by Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24 (38.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38 (61.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015  \( \chi^2 = 52.61252.68 \)  df= 4  p-value = 0.00

From Table 4.23 above, out of the 62 respondents who strongly agreed that their grades have been affected after participation on social networks, 24 (38.7%) were males and 38 (61.3%) were females. Furthermore, out of the 255 respondents who agreed, 110 (43.1%) were males and 145 (56.9%) were females. Again, 60 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and these included 30 (50.0%) males and 30 (50.0%) females. In addition, 11 (25.6%) male and 32 (74.4%) female students disagreed whiles 69 (65.1%) male and 37 (34.9%) female respondents strongly disagreed that the use of social networks had caused a drop in their grades. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship (p<0.01) between gender and those who agreed that their grades had fallen after participating on social media networks. That is a significant number of female respondents experienced drop in grades as compared to their male respondents. This is depicted in Table 4.23 above.
4.8.4 School and Effect of Social Network on Spelling during Examination

The section also sought to find out from respondents if social media network affected their spelling during examination as this could have impacted on their performance.

Table 4.24: Effect of Social Media on Spelling during Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Social Media use has affected my spelling when writing examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>20 (32.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>14 (22.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>13 (21.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>15 (24.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015  \(\chi^2 = 34.302a\)  df= 12  p-value = 0.001

From Table 4.24 above, it can be observed that majority of respondents indicated that their participation on social media networks affected their spelling during examinations. These included 33 (19.5%) from St. Johns SHS, 40 (23.7%) from Tema SHS, 47 (27.8%) from Action SHS and 49 (29.0%) from Ideal College. Also, a high proportion of 128 neither agreed nor disagreed with that assertion and these included 43 (33.6%) from St. Johns SHS, 38 (29.7%) from Tema SHS, 26 (20.3%) from Action SHS and 21 (16.4%) from Ideal College. The level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01) which indicated a significant relationship between school of study and social media affecting spelling during examinations. Thus, even though majority of students agreed to social media affecting their spelling during examination, a study of the data indicates majority of the
students from the two private schools were affected more as compared to their counterparts in the two public schools.

4.8.5 School, Gender and Addiction to Social Media Networks

The study also sought to find out the addiction of students to social media networks. This section presents a cross tabulation between school and addiction as well as gender and addiction.

4.8.5.1 School and Addiction to Social Media Networks

This section sought to find out the addiction of respondents in relation to the school they attended.

Table 4.25: School and Addiction to Social Media Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Addiction to Social Media Affected my Academic Life Negatively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>22 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>13 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>13 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>18 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015  \( \chi^2 = 52.610a \)  df= 12  p-value = 0.00

From Table 4.25 above, a high number of respondents 205 (39.0%) agreed to the assertion that addiction to social media affected their academic life negatively. These included 39 (19.0%) from St. Johns SHS, 52 (25.4%) from Tema SHS, 60 (29.3%) from Action SHS and 54 (26.3%) from Ideal College. Also, 29 (32.6%) from St. Johns SHS, 31 (34.8%), 16 (19.0%) from Action SHS and 13 (14.6%) from Ideal College disagreed with the assertion that addiction to social media was
a problematic issue that affected their academic life. The level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01) which indicated a significant relationship between school and addiction to social media that affected academic life. That is, a high proportion of respondents from the private schools were addicted to social media networks that affected their academic life as compared to the number of respondents from the public schools.

4.8.5.2 Gender and Addiction

This section presents further analysis on the relationship between gender and addiction to social media networks.

Table 4.26: Gender and Addiction to Social Media Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of respondent</th>
<th>Addiction to Social Media Affect my Academic Life Negatively by Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43 (65.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23 (34.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015

\[ \chi^2 = 59.855^{a} \quad df= 4 \quad p\text{-value} = 0.00 \]

From Table 4.26 above, the 66 students who strongly agreed that they were addicted to social media networks, 43 (65.2%) were males and 23 (34.8%) were females. Also, out of 205 students who also agreed on addiction to social media networks, 110 (53.6%) were males and 95 (46.3%) were females. Out of the 86 students who neither agreed nor disagreed, 20 (23.3%) were males and 95 (76.7%) were females. In addition, out of the 89 students who disagreed, 21 (23.6%) were males and 68 (76.4%) were females while 79 respondents who strongly disagreed, 50 (63.3%) were males and 29 (36.7%) were females.
were males and 29 (36.7%) were females. There was a significant relationship (p<0.01) between gender and addiction. That is, a high proportion of males were addicted than the females.

4.8.6 School and Reading Skills

This section further sought to also find out if the participation of students on social media networks improves their reading skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Social Media has Improved my Reading Skills</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Johns SHS</td>
<td>35 (42.2%)</td>
<td>26 (16.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema SHS</td>
<td>21 (25.3%)</td>
<td>40 (26.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action SHS</td>
<td>14 (16.9%)</td>
<td>43 (28.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal College</td>
<td>13 (15.7%)</td>
<td>45 (29.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>83 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>154 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data 2015  \( \chi^2 = 39.483a \)  \( df = 12 \)  \( p-value = 0.00 \)

From Table 4.27 above, out of the total responses of 524, 154 (29.4%) agreed that social media usage had improved their reading skills. These included 26 (16.9%) from St. Johns SHS, 40 9 (26.0%) from Tema SHS, 43 (28.0%) from Action SHS and 45 (29.2%) from Ideal College. Also, 135 (25.7%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and they included 35 (26.0%) from St. Johns SHS, 39 (28.9%) from Tema SHS, 32 (23.7%) from Action SHS and 29 (21.5%) from Ideal College. In addition, 87 and 83 disagreed and strongly agreed respectively that social media
networks had improved their reading skills. It can be observed from the analysis that majority of respondents 237 (45.2%) reported an improvement in their reading skills.

The level of significance was 0.00 (p<0.01) which indicated a significant relationship between school and improvement in reading skills. Although majority had indicated a significant improvement in their reading skills as a result of social media participation, a high proportion of respondents from the two public schools disagreed with that assertion as compared to those in the private schools. Thus, a higher percentage of respondents from the private schools experienced an improvement in their reading skills because they participated more on social media networks as compared to the respondents from the public schools, hence their disagreement with the notion of improvement in reading skills.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the study as per the objectives of the study. The purpose of a discussion is to explain the meaning of the findings or results to the reader (Hess, 2004). The objectives of the study were to identify the various social network sites and how students in SHS’ used them, how the students networked and participated on social media networks, the amount of time invested by the students on social media networks, the effects of social network participation on student’s grammar and spelling as well as the effect of social network participation on academic performance of the students. To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were posed:

a. What were the various social network sites and how do students in SHS’ used them?

b. How did SHS students network and participate on social media?

c. What was the time invested by SHS students on social media networks?

d. What were the effects of social network participation on students’ grammar and spelling?

e. What were the effects of social network participation on academic performance of the students?

The discussion was done under the following headings in answering the research questions that were posed.

a. Social Media Networks and Usage Among Students

b. Students’ Networking and Participation on Social Networks

c. Time Investment of Students on Social Media Networks
d. Social Media, Grammar and Spelling

e. Social Network Participation and Academic Performance

5.2 Background of Respondents

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were females (282) as compared to their male counterparts who were 244. The difference in the gender of respondents did not in any way impact on the outcome of the study. In relation to age, majority of the respondents were between the ages of 16 and 18 years which was a normal school going age for Senior High School students in Ghana. Also, the age range depicts the peak of teenage years which was a stage of exploration and shaping in their education.

In relation to the course of study, majority of students who participated in the study were General Arts students 178 (33.8%) followed by Business 126 (24.0%) and Home Economics 113 (21.5%) across all the schools that were involved in the study.

5.3 Social Media Networks and Usage among Respondents

Davis et al (2012), refer to social media technology (SMT) as “web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication”. Popular social network platforms on mobile and web applications include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Whatsapp, Instagram, snap chat, Google Plus etc. As indicated by the UGT, people choose the kind of media they use for various reasons and gratification. Therefore, the study sought to identify various social media networks available to these students and their usage among them. It was also
the intention of the researcher to ascertain the social networks with the highest usage among students and the reasons for their usage.

The findings of the study showed that Whatsapp and Facebook had the highest number of users among the respondents with a mean rank of 1.40 and 1.96 respectively. It was also revealed from the statistical analysis performed with the Kendall’s coefficient of concordance that there was 85% level of agreement in the rankings of the use of social networks. In addition, a cross tabulation analysis between the respondents’ schools and rate of Facebook and Whatsapp usage revealed a significant relationship between the two schools. That is, a high proportion of private students used Facebook and Whatsapp more often than their counterparts in the public schools. This was at 0.00 (p<0.01) significance level. Church and Oliveira (2013) as well as Haq and Chand (2012) back this assertion that Whatsapp and Facebook are the most popular and largest social network sites used by students. This is also supported by Amofa-Serwa and Dadzie (2015), who found Facebook as mostly used among pupils in school. Hargittai (2008), studied a sample of 1,060 students and found that overall 88% of the students used social network sites and found Facebook as the most popular service among these students, with almost four in five using it, and over half of the overall sample doing so repeatedly.

It was also revealed from the findings of the study that the major reasons why most students used Whatsapp and Facebook was because most of their friends used it, they were cheaper and they could as well chat with multiple friends at the same time. This was consistent with the assertion made by Marion and Omotayo (2011) that “Facebook is a great way to meet friends and keep up
on what they are doing. Once you add a friend to your Facebook friend list you will always know
when they are adding things to their blog or updating their profile”. In addition, Church and
Oliveira (2013), also indicates that “Whatsapp is a mobile instant messaging application for
smartphones which allows users to send and receive images, video, audio and location-based
messages to individuals or groups of friends using your pre-existing data plan”. Therefore the
ability of Whatsapp and Facebook to allow students to meet and chat with their friends in multiples
makes them the preferred choice.

5.3 Respondents’ Networking and Participation on Social Media Networks

Social networks have become an integral part of students’ social life (Deng Tavares, 2013). These
networks have become important as they serve as platforms for users to interact and relate with
their peers. Therefore, the study sought to find out how students networked on social media
networks and what they used these networks for. Further, the study sought to identify how students
made friends on these social media networks and the kind of activities they engaged in.

5.3.1 Electronic Devices Used by Respondents

In order to get an understanding of how students network and participate on social media networks,
the researcher earlier sought to find out if they owned any electronic device that could help them
participate on these social networks. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the
respondents used mobile phones to access social media networks. This confirms a study conducted
by Negussie and Ketema (2014) in Jima University in Ethiopia, which revealed that most students
use their personal laptops and smart phones to access social network sites such as Facebook. A
study by Ahmed and Qazi (2011), in the United States backs this assertion that most students use their smart phones to access and participate on social media networks. According to Mehmood and Taswir (2013), 80% of the students they surveyed in their study in Oman, reported using their mobile phones to access social media networks. They indicated that the mobile phone helped increase their access to peers and had the flexibility of staying in touch with them. The nature of smart phones has made it a lot easier for many young people especially students to participate on social media with ease because a simple installation of mobile applications such as Whatsapp and Facebook will give them access to these platforms.

5.3.2 Networking on Social Media

To achieve the objective of finding out how students’ network on social media networks a cross tabulation analysis was done on gender and how social media friends were found. It was revealed from the study that majority of students 301 (57.2%) found friends on social media networks via request from peers. Gender wise it included 138 (26.2%) males and 163 (31.0%) females. In addition, others also found friends through friendship and unknown friend requests from these sites. Leng, et al. (2011) “claim that SNSs allow users to meet friends and strangers resulting in connections between individuals that would not otherwise have been made”. Through these social network platforms a lot of connections are created among these students and their peers. This is because social media networks make available people one may or may not know and whom one may want to connect with. Interestingly, this allows students to make friends in that regard as they are seen by their peers without their knowledge, thereby initiating friendship requests.
5.3.3 Number of Online Friends

The study also conducted a cross tabulation analysis between school and number of online friends, and gender and number of online friends. It was revealed from the cross tabulation analysis that there was a significant level (p<0.01) of relationship between school and number of friends online. The proportion of respondents from the private schools with friends above 600 was higher than their counterparts in the public schools. Also, the findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents 395 (75.5%) had more than 600 friends on social media networks. Gender wise, there were 204 (38.8%) males who had friends above 600 and 191 (36.3%) females who had friends above 600 on social media networks. This gender disparity in friendship numbers indicates how males are more likely to send friend requests than their female counterparts on social media networks. This is backed by Haq and Chand (2012), who indicated that male students generally have lesser social restrictions on having social interaction so they can meet their friends around while females are restricted socially by their parents. Therefore, male students spend a lot of time more on social media networks such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram etc. Tufekci’s (2008), raised another dimension which indicates that females are more likely to use social networks to keep in touch with friends either living nearby or in other schools. This implies that whiles females are more concerned with making friends and maintaining them, the male counterparts are interested in expanding their friendship net.

5.3.4 Purpose for Participation on Social Media Networks

Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013), state that “social media has become one of the most important communication means in recent times. However, social networking exist so as to provide communication among people regardless of the distance, making it open for people to easily share
information, files and pictures/photos and videos, create blogs and send messages, and conduct real-time conversations or chats. These systems are referred to as social, simply because they allow communication with buddies and co-workers so easily and effectively. These websites and social forums are ways of communication directly with other people socially and in media”. The study revealed that the main purpose for participation on social networks was to make friends 446 (41.4%) and chat with them 329 (30.5%). This was affirmed by Lenhart and Madden (2007), who found out that majority of youngsters use social networks for the creation and the maintenance of friendships. Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010), stated categorically that social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting.

Notley (2009), also noted that SNS platforms allow for the extension of learning discussion outside the class room, which in turn promotes deeper learning as young people not only engage with class notes but are more likely to relate to it and incorporate it into their everyday lives. Also, a significant number of the students indicated that they used these sites for discussions 170 (15.8%) and entertainment 132 (12.3%). According to Tavares (2013) social networks have become an integral part of student life as these networks serve as platforms for users to interact and relate with their peers. Al-Tarawneh (2014), also posits that social media networks have become a major tool for entertainment. Social media networks are therefore reflecting the traditional features of our society (Haq and Chand, 2012) where students meet to discuss issues that relate from the class room to their social world as well as entertain themselves through various means on these platforms.
According to Ahn (2011), current tools by which young people like teens communicate with each other go by peculiar set of names, which include wall posts, status, updates, activity feeds, thumbs ups and profiles. He indicated that these tools are features of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Whatsapp etc. It was also found in the study that respondents performed various activities on these social media sites. The significant of them was the viewing of pictures/photos and videos 453 (46%) as well as the updating of posts 319 (32%). Other students also engaged in group participation/discussion and playing of games. As indicated earlier by Ahn (2011), young people communicate with each other through these various activities as confirmed in the study. Cain (2008), also adds that it is easier connecting with one another on social network sites which does not come at a cost and after connecting one can post news, materials, videos and pictures etc. Social the learning theory indicates that the individual learner chooses the situations (social networks) with which he or she interacts with peers and these includes the various purposes and activities stated above. These in turn could affect the learning outcome negatively or positively for the individual learner (Bandura, 1997).

5.4 Time Invested on Social Media Networks by Respondents

The issue of time on social media networks has been one of the most controversial ones as many researchers have given various views on the subject. One of the main objectives of the study was to find out the amount of time invested by respondents on social network sites as these could influence the amount of time they had for their studies.
Rithika and Selvaraj (2013), posit that students who spend more time on social media may have difficulty balancing their online activities and their academic preparation. This will in turn affect their academic performance. The study found majority of respondents 203 (38.7%) who spent over 8 hours daily on social networks which was quite disturbing. In addition, a combined total of the 186 (35.5%) respondents also spent between 3 and 7 hours on social networks per day.

Furthermore, a cross tabulation analysis between school and number of hours spent online revealed a significant relationship of 0.00 (p<0.01), which indicated that the proportion of respondents who spent more hours online was higher among the respondents in the private schools than the public schools. This was confirmed in the interview which revealed that school rules in relation to electronic devices usage are not applied strictly as compared to the public schools. Lenhart and Madden (2007), have stated that this amount of time spent by these young people on social networks robs them of enough time for productive academic activities. Iorliam and Ode (2014), also confirmed that majority of the students are always active online and this was made possible by the sophisticated handheld devices that are connected to the Internet 24 hours a day.

In relation to the above, a high proportion respondents 243 (46.7%) participated on social media networks during school hours. These included 132 (54.3%) who used social media during break time, 41 (16.9%) during classes’ hours and 70 (28.8%) during free periods in between teaching. As confirmed by Rithika and Selvaraj (2013), students’ find it difficult balancing their online activities and academic preparation and this was evident in the findings of the study which also revealed that majority 370 (70.3%) of the respondents indicated that their study time was affected
as a result of their participation on social media networks. A cross analysis breakdown of the majority and their schools also revealed a significant relationship of 0.00 (p<0.01) between school and social media affecting time to study. That is, a high proportion of respondents from the private schools were affected more as compared to public school counterparts. This is because public schools are stricter in their day and boarding school hours in the use of electronic devices as compared to the private school students who mostly resided in private hostels without any serious supervision as revealed in the interview. Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007), also confirm that students’ learning was affected when using social media and learning. In addition, Huang and Leung (2009), also found out that the level of instant messaging use was related to academic impairment among students in school. Therefore, it was evident from the research data that the more time students spent participating on social media networks, the more their academic works were impaired. It is therefore important to note that the use of social media be measured in order for it not to affect the academic life negatively and for that matter academic outcomes.

A study by Rithika and Selvaraj (2013) in Indonesia, came out with a number of findings in relation to social network participation and academic performance. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant impact of social media usage on student’s academic performance. The authors stated that there is a correlation between late submission of assignments and time spent on social networking sites. They concluded that there is a significant negative impact of social network participation on students’ performance through the use of mobile technologies as these increases the frequency and flexibility of visits to these sites. In addition, the study further revealed that most of the students’ 372 (71.5%) time for submitting assignment was affected due to the use of social media. Majority 274 (59%) added that this was as a result of the distraction caused by
social media and which in turn made them to procrastinate on their assignments. This was backed by Kubey, Lavin, and Barrows (2001), who found a number of issues such as psychological dependence, and academic impairment as some of the resultant effects with the use of the Internet and social media. They also indicated that students who use the Internet and participate on social networks more often reported that their schoolwork has been hurt. This was also confirmed by Yeboah and Ewur (2014), who indicated that social networks take away the time of students and tend to lead to procrastination of school academic works.

A study conducted in Ghana by Yeboah and Ewur (2014), revealed how distractive social media networks are when it comes to academics. They indicated that social media networks such as Whatsapp distracts students’ academic life and affects their concentration during classes. This study confirmed the findings of the Yeboah and Ewur (2014) that some of the students 199 (38%) participate on social media networks during school hours and majority did that during break time 132 (54.3%) and free times between periods 70 (28.7%) while a few during classes hours 41 (16.9%). Wade and Renata’s (2011) study in Utah confirmed the above which also revealed that about two-thirds of the students in the study reported using electronic media while in class, studying, or doing homework. They indicated that multitasking is likely to increased distraction, something prior research has shown to be detrimental to student performance.

A further analysis revealed a significant relationship between school attended and number of hour spent online (P<0.01). The study found out that students in the private schools spent more hours online a day as compared to the students in the public schools. This was also confirmed from the interview with some of the heads who indicated that it was challenging regulating students in using.
mobile phones in schools but more challenging in the private schools as a result of the nature of the private schools.

5.5 Social Media, Grammar, Spelling and Reading Skills

Interestingly, social network participation has also developed a form of communication that is affecting linguistic habits of students. Words are used in their raw state as pronounced and this is transferred to the classroom environment. A study conducted in Oman by Mehmood and Taswir (2013), on how social network participation affects linguistics of students found out that many students indicated there was a change in their linguistic habits as a result of their constant communication on the social networks. Some of these students also indicated that they used slang language in communicating on social networks and this adversely affects their writing skills in the classroom. This study revealed that majority of the respondents 323 (62%) grammar and spelling have been affected negatively as a result of their participation on social networks. On how they had been affected, they stated addiction to shorthand writing 343 (48.9%) respondents, writing notes with shorthand 287 (40.9%) and spelling of the words the same way they sound 71 (10.1%) as reasons for negatively being affected. As confirmed by Yeboah and Ewur (2014), social network participation destroys students spelling and grammatical construction of sentences. This is also supported by Horton, Alloway, and Dawson (2012), whose study revealed that the use of Facebook had an effect on the spelling of some of the students. Wood et al (2014), in another study also noted that the use of texting language harms the grammatical understanding of students.
5.5.1 Social Media and English Language Usage

In relation to the above, the study also revealed that majority of the students 301 (57.4%) had been affected negatively in the use of English language during their discourse with their peers. These included the usage of Pidgin language, construction of wrong sentences, shorthand writing and the lack of attention paid to grammar and spelling on social media networks. It was further revealed from the interviews that these social networks have made students lazy in using correct grammar and spelling in the English language. These the heads indicated are evident in examination scripts. This was confirmed by Mehmood and Taswir (2013), who indicated that slang language and Pidgin English are affecting the speaking and writing of English language. According to Srivastava (2012), “the popularity of social media and the speed at which information is published, has created a lax attitude towards proper spelling and grammar”. A further analysis using cross tabulation revealed a significance level of 0.064, which indicated that was no significant relationship between school attended and the effect of social media network on English language. That is, social media participation could affect any student who does not use it wisely notwithstanding the school attended by the student.

5.5.2 Social Media and Reading

Reading is an important part of student life, which may include both academic and non-academic books and resources. The researcher tried to ascertain the effect of social media participation on students’ time to read. The study revealed that respondents spent more time on social media networks than reading their books. This was affirmed by 215 (64.6%) of the respondents. They indicated that this occurred because they gave more attention to their phones than their books, they multitasked by shuffling between their phones and books, and sometimes the chatting turned out
to be fun and made them to forget about what they were reading. According to Junco and Cotton (2011), multitasking can impede the learning process of students as a result of information overload. Their study revealed over half of respondents reporting to have been affected adversely because they multitasked while learning with instant messaging. A study conducted by Lenhart and Madden (2007), in the United States also saw majority of young people spending several times in the day on social media networks and they used them to make new friends and stay in touch with existing ones.

5.5.3 Social Media and Reading Skills

The study also revealed an improvement in the reading skills of the students who participated on social media networks. This was confirmed by a high number of respondents 237 (45.1%). The analysis further revealed a significant relationship between school attended and reading skills. That is, a high proportion of respondents from the private schools experienced an improvement in their reading skills as compared to the public school respondents. This was as a result of their private school respondents participating more on social media networks than their public school counterparts. As stated by Yunus et al. (2012), students gained more vocabulary and improved their writing skills as a result of their participation on social networks and this in turn improved on their reading skills.

5.6 Social Network Participation and Academic Performance

There has been a lot of debates over the effect of social network participation on learning outcomes of students especially in the area of academic performance. While some scholars believe that social
network participation had a positive impact on students’ academic performance (Roberts and Foehr, 2008; Mehmood and Tawir, 2013), others also think it is rather having a negative impact on their academic performance (Gordon, Juang, and Syed, 2007; Kuppuswamy and Shankar, 2010; Junco, 2012; Haq and Chand 2012).

5.6.1 Academic Performance

Findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents saw a drop in their grades when they started participating on social networks. That is, when they compared their grades before and after participating on social media networks, they saw a drop in their performance. This was confirmed with a high loading of 0.814 of factor analysis. Majority of respondents (loading of 0.674) also added that their performance had been negatively affected as a result of their participation on social networks. This was supported by the study of Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), who found a “significant negative relationship between Facebook use and academic performance. Users of social media networks such as Facebook reported lower mean GPAs and also reported spending fewer hours per week studying on average than Facebook nonusers.” Further, a high number of respondents (0.518) also confirmed that their grades could improve if they stopped participating on social media networks. Malaney (2005), found that 8.9% of students in 2000, and 4.4% in 2003, reported that their grades had suffered as a result of too much time spent on the Internet as well as on social media networks.

A cross tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship (p<0.01) between school of respondents and drop in grades. That is, a high proportion of respondents from the private schools
173 (32.9%) affirmed drops in grades after participation on social media networks as compared to their colleagues 144 (27.4%) in the public schools. This is in line with the social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1997), who stated that the individual learner’s situations (social media networks) could affect his or her learning outcome depending on the individual learner. Therefore, a lot of time invested by students making friends and chatting robbed them of their time to study and this in turn affected their academic performance.

5.6.2 Gender

A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship between drop in grades after social media network participation and gender (p<0.01). That is, more females affirmed drops in grades after social network participation than their male counterparts. This finding was in disagreement with the study conducted by Haq and Chand (2012) about the opinion of students on usage of social networks and their academic performance. Their study revealed that social network participation adversely affected the male students more than the female students’ academic performance. Results of the study showed that many of the students 317 (60.3%) believed that use of social media networks adversely affects their academic performance. However, participation on social media adversely affected more of the female respondents 183 (34.8%), than the male respondents 134 (25.5%). The findings of Haq and Chand (2012), stem from the fact that the male had more friends as compared to the females. This study however, found the opposite where the female students had more friends than the male students. Therefore, the more friends one tended to have, the higher the level of engagement and participation on social media networks and its resultant effect on academic performance.
5.6.3 Vacation Period

This study revealed a high loading of 0.719 that shows that majority of respondents spent most of their time on social networks during vacation. According to Yeboah and Ewur (2014), students find it difficult in balancing online activities and adhering to their private studies time table. Since school restrictions are not used in the home as indicated in the interview, students spent all their time participating on social networks. According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) “social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting”. Hamat, et al. (2012) added that “SNS users spend more time for socializing rather than learning. This indicates that excessive use of SNSs reduces student’s academic performance since time meant for studies is used on non-academic issues like chatting and making friends”.

5.7 Social Media Networks and Addiction

Also, a study by Oye, Mahamat and Rahim (2012), in Malaysia, revealed that most students unconsciously get addicted to the use of social media networks and get obsessed with them. The participants indicated that they always intended to spend few minutes but always ends up spending hours surfing and updating profiles as well as viewing photos. This was also confirmed in this study. It was revealed that there was a high rate of addiction (0.736) to social media networks. The students indicated that they found it hard concentrating on their studies when they knew they could play games and chat with their friends.

A cross tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship (p<0.01) between school attended and addiction to social media networks. That is, the proportion of students from the two private
schools was higher than that of the respondents from the two public schools. A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship between addiction to social media networks and gender. This revealed that more males were addicted to social media networks than their female counterparts. This was confirmed by Haq and Chand (2012), who indicated that males have lesser restrictions on social interactions as compared to females and thereby spend more time online as compared to their female counterparts and this in turn causes a higher addiction rate.

5.8 Educational Use of Social Media Networks

The study revealed that students used social networks in sharing education materials and discussing examination questions. The interview also revealed that students made use of these sites for sharing ideas, and exchange of examination questions. Also, “the ability to explore unasked questions inside a less formal atmosphere, getting a strong voice through web technology, and getting a location to go over issues within an open, public format are other provisions of social media” (Al-Rahmi et al., 2014; Kirkup, 2010). In effect, the social network platforms provide students with an environment to share and exchange information such as ideas, examinations questions etc. Tiene (2000), also adds that “written communication on cyberspace enables students to take part in discussions at a time convenient to them and articulate their ideas in more carefully thought-out and structured ways. Salvation and Adzharuddin (2014), conclude that students are able to formulate group discussions to exchange ideas and communicate to their teachers as well as appeal to their friends about assignments on SNSs.
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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study in relation to the objectives and draws a conclusion based on the findings of the study. The researcher has also made some recommendations based on the findings of the study.

6.2 Summary of Findings

6.2.1 Introduction

The study sought to find out how students networked and participated on social media networks and its resultant effect on academic performance. The study adopted Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Katz’s Use and Gratification theory (KUGT). According to Bandura (1997), the learning outcome of students are affected by three elements, which includes individual learners, peers and situations. In addition, KUGT theory posits that the individual student is responsible for the kind of media he or she chooses to satisfy a particular need and this in turn competes with other sources of information for gratification (Katz et al., 1974). The objectives of the study included:

a. Identify social network sites and their usage among students
b. To find out how SHS students networked and participated on social media
c. To ascertain the amount of time invested by students on social networks
d. To ascertain the effect of social media on students grammar and spelling in academic work
e. To find out the effects of social network participation on the students academic performance
6.2.2 Social Media Networks

The study revealed that majority of the students used Whatsapp and Facebook. This is because many of their friends were on these platforms, the platforms are less costly to use and they were able to chat with multiple friends at the same time. Whatsapp and Facebook are two social media networks that run on mobile applications which makes it a lot easier for the students to use because they all owned mobile phones.

A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship between school and rate of Whatsapp and Facebook usage. That is, a higher proportion of students in the private schools rated a higher usage of Facebook and Whatsapp as compared to their counterparts from the public schools.

6.2.3 Networking and Participation on Social Networks

The study sought to find out how students networked and participated on these networks. It was revealed that most of the students’ networked by receiving friend requests from their friends and peers while a few also received friend requests from strangers.

6.2.3 Number of Online Friends on Social Media Networks

The study also revealed that majority of the students 397 (75.5%) had over 600 friends online. In addition, a cross tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship between school attended and number of friends online at a significance level of 0.01. That is, there was a higher proportion of students in the private schools who had more friends online as compared to their colleagues in the public schools.
A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship (p<0.01) between gender and number of friends online. That is, the female respondents had more friends as compared to their male counterparts.

6.2.4 Purpose for Usage of Social Media Networks

The main purpose for which students used social media networks was to make friends and chat with peers. This was confirmed by 446 (41.4%) students who indicated that they used social media for making friends and 329 (30.5%) also added that they used it for chatting with friends and peers. Also, a number of these students used these social network sites for discussion and entertainment.

It was revealed from the studies that most of the students used social media networks for watching pictures/photos and videos 453 (46%) and updating of their posts 319 (32%).

6.2.5 Time Investment of Students on Social Media Networks

The study tried to find out the amount of time used by students on social media networks. It was revealed at the end of the study that majority of the students 279 (53.2%) spent over 6 hours daily on social media networks.

6.2.6 Social Media Networks and Study Time

Majority of the students 370 (70.3%) also revealed that the amount of time they invested in social media networks affected the time they used to study. This in turn, impacted negatively on their academics. They also indicated that their participation on social media networks also affected the time they used to submit their assignments because social networks caused a lot of distraction to their studies.
A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship ($p<0.01$) between study time affected as a result of social media usage and school. That is, a higher proportion of students in the private schools agreed to that fact that social media had affected their time of studies as compared to the public school respondents.

### 6.2.7 Social Media Usage during School Hours

The study also revealed that some of the students 199 (38%) confirmed that they participated on social media networks during school hours and mostly during break time in school.

### 6.2.8 School and Number of Hours Spent Online Daily

The study also sought to find out the number of hours spent online daily by students and school attended. The cross tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship ($p<0.01$) between the schools attended and number of hours spent online daily. That is, there was a higher proportion of students who spent more than 6 hours a day in the private schools as compared to their colleagues in their public schools. This was further confirmed through the interview that supervision in the private schools is lower and challenging as compared to the public schools.

### 6.2.9 Submission of Assignments

In relation to assignments, 372 (71.5%) of respondents indicated that the submission of assignments were affected as a result of their participation on social media networks. They stated procrastination, distraction and spending of little time with their assignments as reasons for the late submission of assignments in school.
6.2.10 Social Media, Grammar and Spelling

The study sought to find out if in any the way the use of social media could affect the grammar and spelling of students. The study revealed that social network participation affected the grammar and spelling of students negatively. This was confirmed by 323 (62%) of the respondents in the study. This was associated with the use of slang language, popularly known as Pidgin English and the use of short hand writing during their discourse with their peers on social media networks.

A cross tabulation analysis also revealed as significant relationship (p<0.01) between school attended and effect of social media network on spelling during examination. That is, there was a high proportion of students in private schools as compared to public schools who whose spelling were affected during examination.

A further analysis revealed that there was no relationship (0.064) between school attended and social media affecting English language negatively. Which simply means, social media participation affects students English language usage notwithstanding the school attended. They stated the lack of non-attention to grammar and spelling on social media, use of wrong construct sentences, pidgin English, mentioning of words as they sound, shorthand writing etc. as reasons why their English language was affected negatively because of social media network participation.

6.2.11 Social Media Networks and Academic Performance

One of the main objectives of the study was to find out if the participation of students on social media networks affected their academic performance. Results of the study revealed that majority of the students have been affected negatively in relation to their academic performance as a result of their participation on social media network. This was confirmed with a high loading of 0.814 during the factor analysis. The Likert scale also confirmed the high loading with 62 (11.8%) and
255 (48.5%) respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively that their grades had dropped as a result of participating on social media networks.

A cross tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship (p<0.01) between school attended and dropping of grades after social media network participation. This indicated a higher proportion of students in the private schools experiencing drop in grades as compared to their counterparts in the public schools. A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship between drop in grades and gender (p<0.01). That is, more females confirmed that they had drop in their grades as compared to their male counterparts.

### 6.2.12 Social Media Networks and Addiction

The study revealed a high addiction rate through the factor analysis with a high loading of 0.736 among students in relation to social network participation. Also, there was a significant relationship between addiction and gender (p<0.01). That is, more of the males were addicted to social media as compared to their female counterparts.

A further analysis also revealed a significant relationship (p<0.01) between school attended and addiction to social media networks. That is, there was a higher proportion of students in private schools who were addicted as compared to their counterparts in the public schools.

### 6.2.13 Reading Skills

Quite high number of respondents 237 (45.2%) indicated an improvement in their reading skills as a result of their participation on social media networks. A further analysis per school also revealed a significant relationship (p<0.01) between school attended and improvement in reading skills. A higher proportion of students in the private schools reported improvement in reading skills as compared to their counterparts in the public schools.
6.2.14 Social Media and Information Exchange

Finally, the study also revealed that students used social media networks in sharing and exchanging information. This took the form of discussion groups, sharing examination questions and ideas among their friends and peers.

6.3 Conclusion

The study has revealed that despite the benefits that come with the participation of students on social media networks, it could impact negatively on their academic performance if not used properly. A lot of benefits abound in the use of social media networks such as sharing information and ideas, improving reading skills etc. Despite the benefits that come with the participation of students on social media networks, its misuse could affect the academic life of the student and thereby their performance. As stated by Katz et al. (1974) in their gratification theory, that the media chosen by people would compete with other sources of information. Therefore, social media networks compete with academic work for students’ attention. It is therefore the responsibility of the student to make the right decision in relation to the use of social media networks. Also, Bandura’s (1997) social learning theory states that as the learning outcomes of students are influenced by the students decision on his choice of situation (social media networks and participation) and peers (friendship networks) they could make the right decision in the usage of these media to bring about the positive outcome (academic performance) that is desired.
6.4 **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

6.4.1 **Education/Awareness**

The researcher recommends education for all stakeholders in the use of social networks by students. This should also include the benefits and effects of social networks on students’ academic performance. Parents of students should also be educated on the use of social media by their wards to control them at home as most parents are not really aware of the pros and cons of social media usage.

6.4.2 **Enforcement of Rules in Schools**

The study recommends the strict enforcement of the regulation that pertains to the use of electronic gadgets in Senior High Schools especially in the private institutions.

6.4.3 **Promotion of Social Media for Academic Purposes**

The study recommends the promotion of the use of social media networks by teachers and educators for academic purposes. This should highlight the benefits of social networks with regard to education and how students can use them for such purposes.

6.4.4 **Counselling for Addiction**

The study recommends regular counselling by school authorities and parents for students who participate on social media networks and are addicted to it. This will help the students overcome the addiction and use these platforms wisely that will benefit their learning outcomes.
6.4.6 Grammar and Spelling

The researcher recommends the encouragement of students by teachers to use the right grammar and correct spelling of words even when participating on social networks to help stop the negative trend.

6.5 Further Studies

The researcher makes recommendations for further studies in the area of social network participation. They include:

a. A further research on what type of social network could be used for academic purposes

b. How social network participation affect students, parents and teachers relationships

c. Social network participation, home restrictions and how that affects academic performance.
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APPENDIX 1
SOCIAL NETWORK PARTICIPATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

I am conducting a study on social network participation and academic performance in Senior High Schools. This study is purely academic and it is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of MPhil in Information Studies. This is an academic research which is being undertaken by a student named Jeffrey Mingle of Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. The information provided shall be treated with absolute anonymity and confidentiality.

Kindly answer the questions below. Thank you

Section A: Background Information

1. Age………………………
2. Gender a. Male b. Female
3. Form a. Form 2 b. Form 3
4. Course/subject of study……………………………….
5. Do you own or possess any of the following electronic devices? Phone b. Laptop
c. Tablet
d. Desktop Computer e. Others (specify)……………………………………

Section B: Social Networks and Usage among Students

6. Do you participate on Social Media Networks?
a. Yes b. No
7. Which of the following do you use to access or participate on these social media networks?

You can choose more than one answer

a. Phone   b. Laptop   c. Tablet   d. Desktop Computer   e. Other

8. Please rank the following social media platforms in order of usage? (where 1 is the most used platform and the highest numeric the least used platform)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Myspace</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Please rate the level of usage of each social media platform as applicable to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Not Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
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<td>YouTube</td>
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<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myspace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
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<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

10. Which of the above do you prefer most?

a. Facebook   b. Twitter   c. WhatsApp   d. Instagram   e. Others (specify)
11. Why do you prefer that most? You can choose more than one option. a. It is faster b. Most of my friends are there c. It is cheaper d. It is easier interacting there e. I can chat with multiple friends at a time f. Other ……………………

12. For what purpose do you use these sites? You can choose more than one answer

13. What are some of the activities you perform on social media networks? You can choose more than one answer. a. Updating posts b. Group participation c. posting and watching pictures/photos and videos d. Playing games e. Other (specify) ……………………

Section C: How SHS students network and participate on Social Media

14. How did you learn about social media networks?
a. Friends b. Radio c. Internet d. Television e. Other ……………………

15. How did you join these networks?
a. Registered by myself/signup b. Registered by a Friend c. I received friend request d. Other ……………………

16. How many friends do you have on social networks? a. 1-200 b. 201-400 c. 401-600 d. 601-800 e. 801 and above

17. How did you find the above number of friends on social media?
a. Friend search b. Request from peers c. Unknown friend requests d. Others (specify) ……………………

18. Indicate the level of agreement to the following questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I make friends on social networks by searching for them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media for making new friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go on social media to meet new friends and peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I go on social media to have discussions about class work with my friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>I receive a lot of friend requests from strangers</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not accept friend requests from strangers</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in groups such as school mates group, interest groups etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>I go on social media to get more help for my school assignments</td>
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</table>

Section D: Amount of time spent by students on social media networks

19. How often do you participate on social media networks?

20. How many hours do you spend online daily?
   a. 1-2 hours   b. 3-5 hours   c. 6-7 hours   d. Always online   e. Others (specify)...

21. Does the use of social networks affect the time you use to study?
   a. Yes   b. No   c. Not Sure

22. If Yes, how……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

23. Does the use of social networks affect the submission of your assignments?
   a. Yes   b. No   c. Sometimes
24. If Yes why?  
   a. It makes me procrastinate in doing my assignment  
   b. It distracts my attention  
   c. I spend little time on my assignment  
   d. Other .................................................................

25. Does the use of social networks affect the amount of time you use to read?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No

26. If Yes, how? ........................................................................................................................................

27. Do you use social media during school hours?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No  
   c. sometimes

28. If Yes or Sometimes, at what time of school hours? You can choose more than one answer  
   a. Break Time  
   b. During Classes  
   c. Free Times between teaching periods  
   d. Other (Specify) .................................................................

Section E: Effect of social media on students’ grammar and spelling in academic work

29. Has the use of social media affected your spelling in the English Language?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No

30. If yes, how has it affected your spelling in the English language? You can choose more than one option  
   a. I have become addicted to short hand writing  
   b. I cannot write my note without shorthand  
   c. I normally spell words just the way they sound  
   d. Others (Specify) .................................................................

31. Has the use of social media affected the amount of time you use in reading your books?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No

32. Has the use of social networks affected negatively your use of English language?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No

33. If Yes, how? ........................................................................................................................................

34. What are some of the words you have learnt and used to communicate on social networks?  
   ..........................................................................................................................

35. Do you find it hard to read lengthy or long passages as a result of constant reading on social media?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No
36. Are you aware of the negative consequences of social media participation?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

37. If Yes, state some of those negative consequences?  ………………………………………

**Section F: Effect of social network participation on student academic performance**

38. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using social media require spending money and wastage of time and by this way it will affect my academic life negatively</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am addicted to social media networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addiction to social media is problematic issue that affects my academic life</td>
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<td>I find it hard concentrating on my study knowing that I can play online games and visit these sites just by logging into them</td>
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<td>I compare my grades before I begun to participate on social media and after and I see a drop in my academic performance as result</td>
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<td>My grades will improve if I stop participating on social networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social network sites are personal/ social and cannot be used for educational purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>These networking sites influence my academic performance negatively, because they distract me from my studies</td>
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<td>During vacation I spend a lot of time participating on social media than reading my books</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do examination discussion with my friends on social media</td>
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<tr>
<td>I receive examination questions and papers through social media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media affect my English Language usage negatively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media use has affected my spelling when writing examination</td>
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<td>Social Media has improved my reading skills</td>
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</table>

39. Any comments worth sharing that will improve this research?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………