DECLARATION

I, Ramatu Mustapha Dadzie, do hereby declare that except references to other people’s works which have been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of my own field investigation conducted under the supervision of Prof. Dan-Bright Senator Dzorgbo, Rev. Prof. Michael Perry Kwaku Okyerefo and Dr. James Dzisah, all of the Department of Sociology. I also declare that as far as I am aware, this thesis has not been presented in whole or in part for another degree elsewhere.

Finally, I declare that in spite of the diverse assistance received, I am solely responsible for my misrepresentation or interpretation of data that may occur in this thesis.

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10th July, 2017
DEDICATION
This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Mustapha Dadzie and Madam Maimouna Dadzie, to my husband, Mr. Shahadu Adam and my two children, Aiman Yumzaa Shahadu and Aisha Saha Shahadu
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The accomplishment of a task of this nature is only possible through the guidance of God Almighty and certain individuals. First and foremost, I acknowledge with thanks the protection, strength and wisdom from God Almighty with whose help I am able to do more than I could ever ask or imagine.

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iv
ABSTRACT

Social media has become common place in Ghana. The younger generation adopted the use of social media at the beginning of the millennium. Their usage habits characterised and dominated the social media-scape. However, due to the subsequent ubiquity and penetration of social media in Ghana there is an increased involvement of the older generation in the use of social media. Social media has become the central communication media for both the young and older generations as well as increasing mediated communication between the two generational cohorts.

With the two different generations intercommunicating with the media that has always been seen as the preserve of the younger generation, anecdotal evidences abound to suggest that there is miscommunication between the two generations when they intercommunicate as a result of the lack of understanding of each other’s communicative habits and usages. Such miscommunications sometimes degenerate into generational distancing, increasing the generational gap.

Using the mixed method approach, this study sets the overarching objective to explore the patterns of usage of social media between the two generational cohorts in Ghana and how the characteristics of their communicative practices on social media influence intergenerational communication. The purpose of this study is the illumination on the complexities of intergenerational communication through social media.

To achieve the overarching objective of the study,
The origin, growth and development of the media in Ghana is analysed from a historical perspective. The analysis reveals that the prevalence of social media is a reflection of the democratisation of the media landscape in Ghana.

The pattern of social media usage between the young and older generations is explored with the findings that social media usage is prevalent with both generational cohorts. However, there are significant variations in the patterns of usage in terms of, ownership of devices, site subscription, motives for subscription, activities undertaken and time spent connected to sites between the two generational cohorts. Education and financial capabilities are key factors that enable both generations to engage in social media usage.

The interactional experiences, perception and attitudes of the two generational cohorts in their use of social media are also explored. Based on participants’ experiences, DN and DI have different perceptions of the same concept of control, exposure, vulnerability and empowerment in using social media. At the same time, DI have the penchant to be more cautious while DN have an enthusiastic attitude towards social media in general.

The characteristics of their social media communicative practices and how they influence intergenerational communication is analysed. The analysis reveals that the characteristics of social media communicative practices of the two generational cohorts are predisposed towards generational perspectives as well as the nature of the social media as a technology. Social media, in spite of its multimodal means of communication than previous communication media, suffers from the lack of social cues that are needed to take into cognisance the cultural ambiences that surround intergenerational communication to ensure success.
The study concludes that, social media usage has brought DN and DI together through communication on similar networks, applications and platforms. However, the use of social media as the means of communication between the two generations accentuates generational communication gap because it lacks the required social cues to moderate the behavioural and cultural aspect of the communication processes. In other words, the underlying gap in intergenerational communication is not solely the result of generational differences and differentiated use but rather as a result of the use of the available cues left to the communicator using a medium with leaner social cues than could be found in face-to-face interaction.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ........................................................................................................................ ii
DEDICATION ........................................................................................................................ iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ......................................................................................................... iv
ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................... v
TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................................................................... viii
FIGURES ................................................................................................................................ xii
TABLES ................................................................................................................................ xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ............................................................................................... xiv

CHAPTER ONE ......................................................................................................................... 1
1.1. Background to the Study ............................................................................................. 1
1.2. Problem Statement ...................................................................................................... 7
1.3. Objectives of the Study ............................................................................................... 9
1.4. Significance of the Study ............................................................................................ 9
1.5. Limitation of the Study ............................................................................................. 12
1.6. Organisation of the Study ......................................................................................... 12
1.7. Definition of Key Concepts ...................................................................................... 13

CHAPTER TWO ...................................................................................................................... 18
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ........................................ 18
2.1. Introduction ............................................................................................................... 18
2.2. New Media Users ...................................................................................................... 19
2.3. The Young Generation and Social Media Use .......................................................... 23
   2.3.1. Uses and Gratification of Social Media ............................................................ 27
   2.3.2. Social Capital and Identity in Social Media Use .............................................. 29
2.4. Older Generation and New Media Use ..................................................................... 31
2.5. Intergenerational Communication and New Media .................................................. 33
2.6. Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 35
2.7. Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................. 36
   2.7.1. Introduction ....................................................................................................... 36
   2.7.2. Generational Theory of Belonging ................................................................. 37
   2.7.3. Computer Mediated communication and Generational Belonging ............... 39
2.8. Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 41

CHAPTER THREE ................................................................................................................. 43
METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................... 43
# Table of Contents

3.1. Introduction .................................................................................................................... 43  
3.2. The Research Design ..................................................................................................... 44  
  3.2.1. Target Population .................................................................................................... 48  
  3.2.2. Population Location and Sampling ......................................................................... 49  
  3.2.3. Sampling Procedure ............................................................................................. 50  
3.4. Data Collection .............................................................................................................. 53  
  3.4.1. Quantitative Data Collection ................................................................................... 53  
  3.4.2. Qualitative Data Collection ..................................................................................... 56  
3.5. Data Analysis ................................................................................................................. 58  
  3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis ..................................................................................... 58  
  3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis ....................................................................................... 60  
3.6. Ethical Considerations ................................................................................................... 62  

CHAPTER FOUR ..................................................................................................................... 64  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA IN GHANA: A HISTORICAL APPROACH ............... 64  
  4.1. Introduction ............................................................................................................... 64  
  4.2. The Origin of Media in Ghana .................................................................................. 65  
  4.3. State Ownership of the Media and Monopoly .......................................................... 67  
  4.4. Media Liberalisation and Diversity .......................................................................... 71  
  4.5. Information Communication Technology and New Media in Ghana ............... 77  
  4.6. Using Social Media in Ghana ................................................................................... 82  
  4.7. Attempts at Media Regulation .................................................................................. 89  
  4.7.1. Social Media Use and Regulations ................................................................... 92  
  4.8. Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 93  

CHAPTER FIVE ...................................................................................................................... 95  
PATTERN OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BETWEEN DIGITAL NATIVES AND DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS ......................................................................................................................... 95  
  5.1. Introduction ............................................................................................................... 95  
  5.2. Demographic Characteristics ................................................................................... 96  
  5.2.1. Gender Composition of Respondents ................................................................... 96  
  5.2.3. Educational Background of Respondents .............................................................. 99  
  5.2.4. Occupational Status of Respondents ................................................................... 103  
  5.3. Ownership of Social Media Supporting Devices ..................................................... 105  
  5.4. Usage of Social Media Devices ............................................................................... 109  
  5.5. Subscription to Social Media Sites .......................................................................... 112
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Motivation for Using Social Media</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Activities Performed on Social Media</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>The Nature of Interactions between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Intergroup Perceptions of Social Media Use</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1</td>
<td>The Perception of Exposure</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2</td>
<td>Perceived Loss of Identity Control</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.3</td>
<td>Perceived Vulnerability</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.4</td>
<td>The Tie That Binds - The Perception of Facebook as a Link-Up Place</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.5</td>
<td>Flexible Media</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.6</td>
<td>Social Media - A Distractive Culture</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.7</td>
<td>The Public/Private Dilemma</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Attitudes toward Social Media by Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1</td>
<td>Safety and Security</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2</td>
<td>The Next Big Thing</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.3</td>
<td>I Rather Would Get the Sure Thing – Safety in the Old</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.4</td>
<td>Going Viral – The Unintended Publicity</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Characteristics of Communicative Practices of the Two Generations</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.1</td>
<td>Choice of Communication Media</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2</td>
<td>Preference for In-Group over Inter-Group Interaction</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.3</td>
<td>Acronyms and Abbreviated Text for Communicating</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.4</td>
<td>Appropriate Communication</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.5</td>
<td>The Veil of Anonymity</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.6</td>
<td>The Sense of Status Equalisation</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Discussion: Intergenerational Communication and Social Media</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURES

Figure 5.1: Gender Composition of Respondents ..............................................97
Figure 5.2: Age Composition of Respondents ..................................................98
Figure 5.3: Gender Age Nexus of Respondents ...............................................98
Figure 5.4: Educational Background of Respondents ......................................99
Figure 5.5: Age and Educational Background Nexus of Respondents ..............101
Figure 5.6: Educational Background by Gender .............................................102
Figure 5.7: Occupational Status of Respondents .........................................103
Figure 5.8: Occupational Status of Young and Old ......................................105
Figure 5.9: Social Media Electronic Supporting Devices Owned by Respondents 106
Figure 5.10: Ownership of Social Media Supporting Devices by Age Group ......107
Figure 5.11: Ownership of Social Media Supporting Devices by Gender ..........109
Figure 5.12: Graph of Most Used Devices .....................................................110
Figure 5.13: Cross Tabulation of Age Against Usage of Media Devices ..........111
Figure 5.14: Usage of Social Media Devices by Gender .............................112
Figure 5.15: Graph of Social Media Site Subscription ....................................113
Figure 5.16: Social Media Site Subscription by Age Group ............................113
Figure 5.17: Social Media Site Subscription by Gender ................................114
Figure 5.18: Motives for Social Media Subscription .......................................115
Figure 5.19: Motives for Social Media Subscription by Age Group ...............116
Figure 5.20: Motives for Social Media Subscription by Gender ....................117
Figure 5.21: Activities Performed on Social Media Sites .............................118
Figure 5.22: Activities Performed on Social Media by Age Group .................119
Figure 5.23: Activities of Social Media by Gender .......................................121
Figure 5.24: Frequency in Usage of Social Media Among Respondents .........121
Figure 5.25: Frequency in Usage of Social Media by Age Group ..................122
Figure 5.26: Frequency in Usage of Social Media by Gender .......................123
Figure 5.27: Graph of Time Spent on Social Media on Daily Basis ...............124
Figure 5.28: Graph of Time Spent on Social Media by Age Group ...............125
Figure 5.29: Graph of Frequency of Access to Social Media Sites ..................125
Figure 5.30: Frequency of Access to Social Media Sites by Age Group ..........126
Figure 5.31: Frequency of Access to Social Media Sites by Gender .................127
TABLES

Table 5.1: Chi-Square of Association between Education and Age Group ........101
Table 5.2: Chi-Square of Association between Occupation Status and Age Group ...105
Table 5.3: Chi-Square Test in Usage of Social Media among Respondent ..........121
Table 5.4: Chi-Square Test of Time spent on Social Media Daily .................124
Table 6.1: Perceived Exposure of Facebook in Respondents ........................133
Table 6.2: Perceived Vulnerability Using Facebook by Respondents .............142
Table 7.1: Intergenerational Contact Through Social Media by Respondents ....155
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DN – Digital Native
DI – Digital Immigrant
CMC – Computer Mediated Communication
SPM – Social Presence Model
MRM – Media Richness Model
SIDE – Social Identification and Deindividuation Effect
SIM – Social Influence Model
ITU – International Telecommunication Union
ICT – Information Communication Technology
ICT4AD – Information Communication Technology For Accelerated Development
ACP – Accelerated Development Project
NCA – National Communication Authority
NMP – National Media Policy
GBC – Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background to the Study

“It all started about two years ago when my son travelled. He has to go to school in Germany and I was thinking about how to communicate with him because we have to be in touch. And you know IDD is expensive, I mean international calls like that. He introduced me to Viber because I wasn’t on WhatsApp, I wasn’t on Facebook, I wasn’t on any other social media but I got to know that it will be good to communicate on Viber. I got onto that and it’s been very useful. I choose to be on Viber and it’s cool for me. After awhile, I thought of going on the other social media platforms, like WhatsApp”. But with that, sometimes, I do not understand what he writes, with all those abbreviations and pictures! I was also a bit surprised when he will say, ‘hi, gd 9nt’! My son will never have said hi to me face to face!”

With the uptake of social media as the main means of communication between people of diverse orientations, the above narrative of miscommunication is a common occurrence. This form of miscommunication usually characterises intergenerational communication in Ghana between the youthful and older generations henceforth referred to as Digital Natives (DN) and Digital Immigrants (DI) respectively. This study is therefore about the dynamics that underlie intercommunication between DNs and DIs through the use of social media. The study focuses on how DNs and DIs negotiate intergenerational communication in the wake of new media technologies that have been branded to be the preserve of DNs. Yet still both generations are faced with the compelling need to intercommunicate.
Since the early 2000s, social media has moved from being a vision of new media technology developers to become a significant part of current digital life worldwide. Social media does not require special training to get involved. Thus the notion that the average person with no extraordinary resources, knowledge or political power could reach wide audiences, to the point of even sparking revolutions, through social media was novel to the world (Rheingold, 1993). It is largely argued that social media is now possible due to the largely self evolving and the bottom up development initiated from users rather than top-down centrally controlled change of new media (McNamara, 2010).

Social media finds its way into everyday life. Previous communication technologies have been designed to enable social interaction, but social media have been taken up around the globe at an unparalleled speed. This reveals the extraordinary nature of the social media phenomenon. The mission statement of Facebook’s starts with the claim that its purpose is “to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected” (Facebook.com). Social media has been adopted by most people unlike never before as means of communication and is seen as glue that connects people together. Among all communication technologies, it is the printing press that is said to rival social media in its speed of adoption and range of impact. Social media’s spread, just like the advent of the printing press, greatly enhances the convenience of the accessibility of information and the rate of its reproduction (Eisenstein, 1980). The fifteenth century saw a number of print masters in Europe improving upon printing techniques, notably, Johannes Gutenberg. The application of the movable type printing techniques where letters could be moved easily and arranged to form words, were
thought of as groundbreaking. The spread of the printing press facilitated the wide
circulation of information and ideas, acting as an “agent of change” through the
societies that it reached (Eisenstein, 1980). The growth of print media was attributed to
the rise in literacy. The rapid economic and socio-cultural development of late medieval
society in Europe created favourable intellectual and technological conditions for
Gutenberg's invention. Also, the entrepreneurial spirit of emerging capitalism
increasingly made its impact on medieval modes of production, promoting economic
thinking and improving the efficiency of traditional work-processes (Lucien and Henri-
Jean, 1997)

Likewise, many have commented on social media’s ability to transform business and
the broader economy, but perhaps an equally profound change is how social media is
transforming people’s life and interactions (Keegan, 2010). The central goal of social
media networking is to connect with people and share information. Social media has
proven to be a valuable communication channel for users of different backgrounds and
ages to communicate and speak with each other (Aarsand, 2007), and by that, offer its
users a social value of connectedness.

Social media is enabled by the internet. The term internet came into prominence during
the 1990s when it was constructed as a global, computer based “network of networks”
by the Department of Defence of the United States of America. The advancement of
the internet is related to the introduction of the World Wide Web (www). While at the
time, it is exclusively used within the domain of the US Army, technological
breakthroughs introduces simple and user-friendly interface with file transfer protocols
that are now common place with emerging internet names such as “dot.com”, and “dot.org”. These developments encourage the increase of internet service providers such as America Online (AOL) and CompuServe (Leiner, et al. 1999)

The internet makes available a 'space' in the form of a global web, in which many people virtually interact at any time and any place. Its description and interpretation is dependent upon how people perceive its importance and these are expressed in different ways. It is often referred to as 'the net' (Lister et al., 2009), even though in value, it is just one of many possible nets; as “the matrix” (Quarterman, 1997), which refers to the several ways in navigating around it; and as the “information superhighway” (Adamolekun, 2003), which makes reference to the speed at which information can be shared. The notion of “cyberspace” has also been attractive to others who invite minds to visualise its empty space. This is a direct reference to the cyberspace term defined and described in the novel “Neuromancer” in 1986 by William Gibson. Other works have continued to flare up the fanciful impressions of the internet space.

In his novel, Gibson (1986) describes cyberspace as an imaginary space, separate from the human world. Yet, the internet is not growing separately from the world, but is increasingly entrenched in it. The internet has become a social space where users interact with one another. The hallmark characteristic of the internet is that, personal messages can concurrently be delivered to an infinite number of people who in turn have mutual control over the content (Gerpott, et al., 2013). Moreover the internet is free from the linear restrictions of older formats of media such as newspapers, books or radio and television.
The discourses on the internet and its relation to society begin to flourish with the popularisation of the internet with descriptive writings on how to use and navigate the internet (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Early internet discourse either sees the internet as facilitating a dehumanised existence or advocating an impossibly ideal condition, especially in social organisation. Cultural critics, for example, blame the internet for declining literacy, political and economic estrangement, and social disintegration (Beavis & Donnelly, 1998). Others also suggest with a reminder that life in the real world is worth investing in as it is socially richer and interesting than anything generated through the computer (Wertheim, 2002).

Other outspoken groups of writers, investors, and politicians declare the internet as a new frontline of civilization, a digital domain which can fight against big businesses and bring them down, foster democratic participation, and end economic and social discriminations and injustice (Fisher, & Wright, 2001; Miller, & Slater, 1995). Such enthusiasts project a popular image of the internet as a place of uniracial existence, a place where gender does not matter, a place where there is no age and no disabilities (Gunkel, 1998). Here, the internet is viewed as the great socio-cultural intermediary, which levels the differences dividing and segregating human beings.

In spite of the numerous accounted social values of the internet, scholars grapple with the problem of the digital divide (Rushkoff, 2013). The digital divide is a term that describes the observed situation in which certain people use the internet more than others (DiMaggio et. al. 2001). Although access is defined differently by different studies, the fundamental similarity among these definitions is the dual peculiarity
between people who use the internet and its services and people who do not (DiMaggio et. al. 2001). However, most studies in digital media access indicate that digital divides have closed dramatically. For example, internet use between men and women essentially disappeared between 1994 and 2001 (Jung et al., 2001). Regional differences such as between the North and South as well as urban/rural differences also declined (Bikson and Panis 1999).

Age remains strongly associated with internet use and the most persistent social category of which the digital divide remains open (DiMaggio et. al. 2001). The divide between the younger and older generation is remarkable to the extent that the youth are referred to as Digital Natives, while the older generation is referred to as the Digital Immigrants in literature (Prensky, 2001). By these name tags lies the implication that access to the internet is no longer the course to the digital divide but by how each of the generational cohort relates to and uses the internet.

Supportive of this assertion is the emerging literature that suggests a significant increase in the use of social media by the older generation (Madden, 2010). Coupled with the high rate of adoption of social media, its preference as the means of communication in the society, places the highlight on the issue of intergeneration communication through social media (DeRidder, 2015). Given that both generations now take up the use of social media which previously was the preserve for the younger generation, intergenerational encounters in communication has now taken on new relevance.
Intergenerational communication is the communications between individuals from different age cohorts or age groups. The most common place to identify the occurrence of intergenerational communication is within the family structure where parent and child or grandparent and grandchild communication is a regularity (Donsbach, 2015), even though such interactions are prevalent in all other social situations. Through intergenerational communication is the recognition of the value of the older generation transmitting history and culture to the younger generation. It also gives the younger generation a sense of their place in a given time period and ensures the continuation of culture (Williams et al., 1997). Intergenerational communication empowers both young and old by promoting social cohesion and solidarity. When the unity of the generations is achieved, intergenerational collaboration is ensured. This also contributes to a culture of peace (Williams et al., 1997).

1.2. Problem Statement

Ghana is not isolated from the global social media phenomenon. Social media is taken up by diverse populations including both DNss and DIs alike in Ghana. This is because, while one estimate or another purports the popularity and penetration of social media use among the population in Ghana (ITU, 2016), the claims of the popularity and uses of social media do not disaggregate between the young and old. Moreover, the ubiquity of social media as the most predominant communication media demands that the two generations intercommunicate through social media.

Anecdotes and popular notions, often found in media and popular press implicate young social media users as careless and eager to express themselves, whereas older users are
generally seen as more restrained. Some anecdotal evidence even goes further to suggest that the way and manner young people use the social media tend to shy away prospective users coming from other generational cohorts. This generates an ‘us’ and ‘them’ stance in the discourses on social media usage in the popular press. Additionally, exclusive ways of communication on social media among the younger generations fuel the impression that their usage breaches social and cultural practices of communication. This amounts to reported cases of miscommunication between the two generations. Thus, the notion of the ‘us’ and ‘them’, coupled with the idea of miscommunication implies the creation of communication distancing between the two generation, with an increased potential of generational gap.

Several studies have emerged that examine the phenomenon of social media usage in Ghana. For example, Ocansey, Ametepey and Oduro’s (2016) study examines the impact of social media on the youth, with emphasis on the access and purposes for which the youth use social media. Markwei and Appiah (2016) similarly examines the impact of social media on Ghanaian youth, also focusing on the extent of use, purposes, access and challenges from particular underprivileged communities in Accra. Others such as Mingle, Adams and Adjei (2016) take the form of a comparative analysis of social media usage and academic performances of senior high school students.

While these studies provide empirical evidence of the impact of the pervasive use of social media in Ghana, the researchers have generally limit their study to the youthful population creating the impression that social media usage is a preserve for the younger generation alone. This is however, not the case.
As anecdotal evidences have suggested, there is an increasing participation of the older generation in the usage of social media, more so, when social media has become the generally preferred and the most available means of communication among the Ghanaian public which compels both generations to communicate through the same media.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Thus, the overarching objective of the study is to explore social media usage patterns of both the youth (Digital Natives) and older adult (Digital Immigrants) and how the characteristics of their communicative practices affect intergenerational communication. In order to achieve this objective, the study is guided by the following sub-objectives;

1. To analyse the origin, growth and development of media in Ghana from a historical perspective.
2. To explore the pattern of social media usage between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants.
3. To examine the interactional experiences, perception and attitudes of the two generational cohorts in their use of Social Media
4. To determine the characteristics of their social media communicative practices and how they influence intergenerational communication.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Digital communication is said to be the new normal and has come to stay. Given the acclaimed high patronage of social media by all in most societies, it is important to
know the patterns of usage and how these relate to intergenerational communication. Knowledge and understanding of the factors contributing to and or hampering effective and successful communication between the two generations will contribute to existing and the growing literature on intergenerational communication in the new media technological age. This study proves significant in contributing to the unfledged area of research related to the effect of social media usage on intergenerational communication between DNs and DIs and in posing copious and relevant questions to guide future research.

The main importance of this study lies in the fact that no existing studies have explored social media use and the effect of its communicative practices on intergenerational communication between DN and DI in Ghana. Knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting DNs’ and DIs’ use of social media and intergenerational communication may provide additional insight into generational similarities and differences in the new media environment. Most often, there is a tendency to focus on the youth or elderly people as exclusive entities for study. However, there has been a growing recognition for the need to understand the intergenerational use of social media, as well as how the two different generational cohorts negotiate the virtual domain in the wake of the rise in social media adoption by both generations. There is a renewed appreciation of the study of generation in view of the fact that both DN and DI are using social media. Therefore, the relational nature of these two categories of population makes it a necessity to focus on the intergenerational use of social media networking. This study is a contribution to that renewed appreciation of the fruitfulness
of such an endeavour. The study also offers a set of Ghanaian perspective on the issue of generational points of view on the use of social media.

Sociologically, the broader interrogations of the relationship between age, culture, ideology on one hand and social media on the other explored in the study, adds to the growing body of literature on the African and global context of social transformations.

Additionally, this study yields respectable results owing to the mixed methods research design. The need for both qualitative and quantitative research to understand the social media usage between DNs and DIs and intergenerational communication has been articulated in literature (De Saille, 2006; Sardar, 1993). This study makes the approach of combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches within one study (Creswell, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This integration provides a deeper insight into the issue of generational use of new media. first, it identifies the issues contributing to and or impeding either generation’s use of social media and second, explore their views regarding the statistical findings in more depth.

Methodologically, this study adds to mixed methods research by expounding on such applied issues of the sequential explanatory design, as linking the quantitative and qualitative data within a study and assimilating the results of the two sequential phases of the study.
1.5. Limitation of the Study

Respondents from which the data was collected were all Ghanaians with Ghanaian experiences. However, other locations and cultures can find the study relevant as the adoption and use of social media is a global phenomenon.

1.6. Organisation of the Study

This study is organised in eight chapters. Chapter one lays out the background to the research topic, the problem statement, research objectives, and the significance of the study. The definition of key concepts also forms part of this chapter. Chapter two reviews the related literature and the theoretical framework that informs the study. Chapter three is the methodological approach to writing the thesis. Chapter four provides a historical account and analytical discussion of the origin, growth and development of media in Ghana. The chapter traces the changes in the socio-political environment and how these relate to the nature of media from colonial times through to subsequent transformations in information and communication technologies. Chapter five explores the patterns of usage of social media between DIs and DNs. In furtherance to chapter four, chapter six is an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the two generational cohorts in their use of social media. Chapter seven determines the characteristics of communicative practices of the two generational cohorts in using social media and how these influence intergenerational communication. Finally, chapter eight concludes the study with summary of findings and reflections on the implications of computer-mediated communication in intergenerational communication.
1.7. Definition of Key Concepts

Digital

Digit literally means numbers which infers that digital is a term used to describe a technology built on the principle of numbers. The positive and negative are the two states of generation, storage and processing of data of the electronic technology of digital. The number one stands for positive and the number two stands for negative. To transmit data, a series of zeros and ones, form a bit which form into a byte. Analogue transmission preceded digital transmission. In analogue, electronic transmission conveys data as electronic signals of varying frequency or amplitude that are added to carrier waves of a given frequency (Feldman, 1997). Broadcast and phone transmission have previously used analogue technology. Digital technology is primarily used with new physical communications media, such as satellite and fibre optic transmission. According to Feldman (1997), the digital can be described as a means to a vast, diverse and flexible global way of transmitting ideas and information. Therefore, to be meaningful to this study the term digital is seen less as a thing and more of means and a way of doing things.

Digital Native

“Digital Native” is a term coined by Prensky (2001) to describe the generation that was born and grew up with new media technology. This generation continually use computers, videogames, digital music players, and cell/mobile phones and have become fundamental part of their lives. While they spend less time with traditional media, they spend much more time with digital or new media. Most of the Digital Native participants in this study were born in 1987 through to 1990. This is because the
internet was introduced in Ghana in 1998, become popular and affordable in the early 2000s due to the liberalisation of the telecommunication systems as well as improvement in telecommunication infrastructure. Social media networking becomes common place from the year 2004 onwards. So for the purposes of this study, a Digital Native is someone born in the years from 1987 onwards who has access to the internet. In this study, Digital Native and Digital Immigrants are referred to as DN and DI respectfully.

**Digital Immigrant**

On the other hand, a “Digital Immigrant” refers to those who are not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in their lives, adopted aspects of the new media technology. By not wholly adapting to their environment as suggested by Prensky (2001), means they retain their instinctive reference to traditional ways of doing things. White and Cornu (2011) propose “Visitors and Residents” as replacements for Prensky’s Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants. According to these writers, the “Visitors and Residents” range evolves out of the different ways with which people behave at using social media. These behaviours depends on what motivate them and in which context. This view eliminates the categorisation by age or social background. Feeney (2010) proposes the different ways that go together to describe a digital immigrant. A DI can be used to describe someone who has the willingness to use the technology but not yet familiar with it prospects. At the same time, this individual has the belief that the application of the use of the technology makes the execution of certain task possible. The individual has ether grown up alongside the technology or has adopted it later on in his or her life. Zur and Zur (2011) on the other hand, espouse a more sensitive classification of digital natives and digital immigrants.
These writers are of the view that, whatever categories there are, individual within each category will exhibit different levels of enthusiasm. On Digital Immigrants, the authors propose that some may be “avoiders”, “reluctant adopters” or “enthusiastic adopters”. Each sub-type is characterised by different attitudes towards digital technology. For the purposes of this study however, a Digital Immigrant refers to someone who is born before 1987 who gets to use new media or the internet later on in their working lives.

**New Media**

The term new media explicitly or by default categorises other media as old media. Gitelman and Pingree (2003) describe new media as “media in transition”, placing it within the timeframe during which a medium is emerging and at the point of contrast to and competitor for the ‘old media’. Manovich (2001) simply defines new media as cultural objects for distributing and exhibition through the use of digital computer technology. Crosbie (1998) provides insightful explanation to the term new media. The hallmark characteristics of the new medium are that personalised messages can concurrently be delivered to an unlimited number of people and each of the people involved shares equal control over the content (Crosbie, 1998). The personal computer, the internet or the world-wide-web and social media platforms are all vehicles for conveying information within the new medium. Therefore adopting the explanation of Crosbie (1998) this study views new media as the use of the computer, the internet or worldwide web to carry digital information.

**Traditional or Old Media**
In the face of rapid technological changes, particularly in the field of communication technology, conventional means of mass communication of print, radio, television is now usually referred to as ‘traditional media’. The emergence of ‘new media’ involuntarily makes conventional media ‘old’. Traditional media rely upon the physical form of the medium to convey information. This study adopts the IGI Global’s\(^1\) definition of traditional media as any of the forms of mass communication available before the advent of digital media such as books, newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

**Social Media**

Social media has been defined severally as both tangible and intangible material for communication. Intangibly, social media is particularly described as information which is available upon request through the internet by digital devices with the added advantage of being participatory (Aitchison & Lewis, 2003). In tangible terms, it is described as the use of specific websites and applications for communication in both formal and informal ways. For this study, however, social media comprise of computer mediated tools which allow user interactions and the creation, sharing, and exchange of information among virtual communities and networks (Crosbie, 1998; Friedman et al., 1999; McNamara, 2010; Cree, 2012). For this study, the term social media is viewed singularly and refer to all network applications that ensure user interactions through any digital device. Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Imo and so forth are exclusive to the list of social media applications but not exhaustive.

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\(^1\) [www.igi-global.com](http://www.igi-global.com) accessed on 18\(^{th}\) April, 2017
Social Media Usage

The term social media usage is used in this study to mean the combination effect of age, education, ownership of social media supporting devices, use and rate of consumption, social media site subscription and motivations for the use of social media on the user.

Communication

Cuthbert and Davenport (1968) define communication as the “act of imparting or transmitting fact or information” (p. 201). This type of communication is only conditioned simply by the act of giving out information without necessarily expecting any feedback that would question the fact. However, this study shares the view of communication as proposed by Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson’s (2011). They define communication as a “unit of behaviour” (p. 50), which takes on the behavioural view. This definition implies that all behaviours are forms of communication.

Intergenerational Communication

Communication is not only or not so much – a transferral of information, but also the establishment of the essence and consciousness of social relationship where each of the communicants jointly construct an area of shared reality. Therefore, for this study, intergenerational communication is the reliance on shared meanings and the acknowledgement of the salient social membership of a fellow communicant. It also recognises the dynamic processes where each communicant’s cognitions, motivations and emotions influence the behaviour of the other communicant, resulting in a shared symbiotic communicative relationship.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

The emergence of new media and particularly, social media in the mid-1990s has caused a revolution in the realms of both communication technology and communication itself. Moreover, the speed at which communication technologies keep changing equally affect the nature of users and how the dynamics involved in using the medium. This problematic nature of the revolution has undoubtedly attracted the interest of scholars in the various sciences. In the social sciences, however, literature on the phenomenon is very respectable. In this chapter, the author reviews literature related to the focus of this study which is the dynamics involved in the use of social media to communicate between the young and old generations, otherwise referred to as “Digital Natives” and “Digital Immigrants’ (Prensky, 2001).

The chapter begins by discussing the changing status of the media consumer from being an audience in the mass media period to becoming the user in the new media ecology. The changed nature of the media consumer reflects the dimensions of studies in this area, where users have been segregated according to their abilities. This chapter reviews groups of users separately and how their affinity with new and social media affects their mediated practices. Following this, literature on intergroup communication practices is reviewed alongside the relevant theories that have emerged from these studies. The interrelated theories of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), particularly those relevant to the current study such as the Social Presence Model (SPM), Media Richness
Model (MRM), Social Identification and Deindividuation Model (SIDE), Social Information Processing Model (SIPM) and the Social Influence Model (SIM) are reviewed. The chapter concludes by identifying the gaps in the literature and how the current study fills the gap.

2.2. **New Media Users**

The internet has established itself as one of the most pervasive technology that touches on every aspect of peoples' lives. What people use it for has become the focus of research that has dominated new media research. The term new media is so closely related to the internet such that debates have been engaged to determine exactly what it means. The internet however in no uncertain terms, has brought about new media. Without the internet there will be no new media. The debates about new media argue as to what the ‘new’ may mean. While a definitive answer may not have been found, a general consensus in the literature suggests that the term ‘new’ connotes the existence of a previous media, which is described invariably as the traditional media.

The traditional media embody print, which has its receptors as readers, radio as listeners and broadcast as audience (McNamara, 2010). New media is a convergence of all these three attributes with elements of immediacy and interactivity (Crosbie, 1998). As such the dynamics of how people receive and consume media are changing. The current media consumer is described to be active, migratory and connected and not defined in relation to the media (Deuze, 2011). In the wake of the upsurge of the use of the internet, several writers have predicted the end of the media ‘audience’ with the rise of the media ‘user’ instead. The term ‘user’ has been critiqued on two fronts. First, the fallacy of the
fragility of the term ‘audience’ as against the strength of the term ‘user’, Butsch (2000) and second, the banality of the term ‘user’ as opposed to the term audience which has the property of collectivity and accrued power of analysis (Livingstone, 1999).

These critiques notwithstanding, the user of the internet, as an entity, has been the focus of most research in the social sciences, both as collective and on individual basis. On collective basis, studies focused on which groups of people have access to the internet and those which do not (DiMaggio et. al. 2001). Such research are structured along opposing social categorization of people, for example, between the young and old, regional differences between Northern and Southern countries, socio economic and cultural differences, between males and females and so forth (Hoffman and Novak, 1998; Goslee, & Conte, 1998; Strover, 1999).

The concept of the digital divide emerges when it is found out that, certain categories of people are not using the internet while others are not (DiMaggio et. al. 2001). Thus, access to the internet, becomes the area of interest to researchers. With continued improvements in information and communication technology worldwide, studies reveal that most digital divides have dramatically closed between several social categories particularly, between males and females, socioeconomic and cultural differences as well as regional differences (Bikson and Panis 1999). Even within the age category, internet use among several age brackets within the youthful population has improved whiles in the elderly population, those within the age brackets of fifty to sixty’s use of the internet has improved dramatically (Madden, 2010). However, the most persistent social category of which the digital divide remains is broadly between the youth and
elderly (DiMaggio, 2011). In other words, comparatively, more youths are engaged with the internet more than the elderly.

Extensive research has solely focused on the younger generation’s use of the internet and its emergent associated tools, such as social media (Roberts and Foehr, 2008; Rideout, 2011; Pea et. al, 2012; Chen, 2012). The interest of researchers on the younger generation’s use of the internet stems from one key issue: the extent of their immersion into the communicative possibilities offered by the internet, more than any generational cohort in the history of communication technologies. This is mainly attributed to the fact that the younger generation was born into the era of digital technologies and as such knows no other (Prensky, 2001). As a result, several terminologies have emerged describing their supposedly innate affinity with the internet and its associated digital tools. Some of the terms are the “generation next”, “google generation” (Helsper and Eynon, 2010), “born digital” (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008), “generation Y” (Perillo, 2007), “generation C” (Duncan-Howell and Lee, 2007), “homo-zappiens” (Veen and Vrakkning, 2006), “technological generation” (Monereo, 2004) and “net savvy youth” (Levin and Arafeh, 2002). Others are, “new millennium learners” (Pedró, 2007) “digital childhoods” (Vandewater et al., 2007) within “media families” (Rideout and Hammel, 2006). However, two of the most common terms in use are “net generation”, (Tapscott, 1998) and “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001).

Of interest to this study is Prensky’s (2001) term ‘digital natives’ because of its corresponding term ‘digital immigrants’. According to Prensky (2001), Digital Natives are members of the generation that was born and grew up with new technology and
explains that, this generation spends its whole life surrounded by new media technologies which has become fundamental part of its life. The other group of digital users, as described by Prensky, (2001) is, the Digital Immigrants. He describes this generational cohort, counting himself in, as,

“Those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology” (p. 2).

Such dichotomous positioning of the two generational cohorts has attracted several critical discourses, about the concerns of researchers on the over the hyping of the overwhelming division between the young and old in the use of new media technologies (Kennedy et al. 2007; Bennet, Maton and Kervin 2008), the social and political implication of the subtext of the use of the terms digital natives and digital immigrants (Bayne and Ross, 2011), to the socio cultural problem of integration, cultural appropriation of assimilation in the face of global migration crises (Brown and Czerniewicz, 2010). Besides, under such dichotomous positioning of new media users lies the tacit believe that the young are versatile and savvy in their use of new media technologies because they are simply comfortable with it (Hargittai, 2010), while the lack of older generation’s technological prowess results in their discomfort in using new media (Prensky, 2001). Likewise, the expansive research on new media users has been biased towards the younger generation. The effect of the use of new media on the youth dominates this area of research.
2.3. The Young Generation and Social Media Use

The exact relationship between the media and their users have been the subject of debate since the media were first seriously studied and emphasizes the importance of users and their relationship with the media. The theoretical underpinnings of media studies have long moved from the hypodermic effect of the media to a greater understanding of the role of the audience/user in the effects equation (Livingstone, 1999). The emergence of the internet technology has also made relevant the active user hypothesis where the interactive relationship between the user and the medium is at its highest compared to previous media technologies (Napoli, 2009). Prensky's (2001) work, has served as the basis for most research on internet and new media usage of the youth in the digital society and the competences of ‘digital natives’ since its publication, probably because of the titillating dichotomous relationship proposed to exist between the users of the media.

However, earlier forms of research have concerned themselves with the new forms of media, postulating the interest in the medium itself. For example, the emergence of the internet and social media was met with several studies trying to understand the medium. For instance, while Manovich, (2002) attempts to describe it as a cultural object for distribution and exhibition, Gitelman and Pingree, 2003, describes it as media in transition, in other words, a medium which is neither new nor old, but in constant evolution to define itself. Other writers such as Crosbie (1998), makes strenuous attempts to define and explain what new media is. However, by all indications, users of new media appear not to wait for the definition of the medium in order to continue its
use. As such, the ascendancy in use and the evolution of new media has attracted the interest of researchers. This area accumulates studies about the uses and the users of the medium, focusing on what uses users put the medium by different segments of members of the society, particularly the younger generation.

Some studies focus on mapping out young people’s media exposure and how they use the media (Roberts and Foehr, 2008; Rideout, 2011; Pea et. al, 2012; Chen, 2012), how their interactions with the media affects their sleep pattern (Stochat et al., 2010), their academic work (Levine et al, 2007) and their changing habits of information seeking (Rieh and Hillgross, 2008). Another aspect is the investigations of the social, psychological and physical effects of the medium and the gratification young people get when using social media (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007). Against the backdrop of physical and mental health, several research indicate a negative impact on length and quality of sleep of college students as a result of excessive use of social media (White, Bubolt and Igou, 2008; Pelling, & White 2009).

Studies on mapping out the youth’s use of social media, establish that the media is an indispensable part of everyday networked interaction in every part of the youth’s lives (Chen and Vromen, 2012), and in the process have established the growing phenomenon of ‘media multitasking’ that is, using several media concurrently. Findings in this area indicate that, even young children multitask.

The idea of multitasking suggests that the youth engage themselves with several activities in new media technology simultaneously. For example, an individual may be
texting while listening to music, watching audiovisuals and chatting with other people from their social media networks. This also goes without saying that, such activities take place on different new media gadgets and platforms such as, smartphones, tablets, computers and gaming devices. (Roberts and Foehr, 2008; Hofferth, 2009; Gentile, 2009). The most prevalent items of interest to researchers to be regarded to affect performances of the youth in college are social media networking and video gaming. Hofferth’s (2009) study reveals that video game playing is negatively associated with reading, study and outdoor activities. Cabral’s (2011) study, reveals that the relentless association with new media and its associated tools by the youth, renders them addicted to the media and by so doing the hypothesis of media displacement of other activities becomes the focus other writers in examining the embedment of social media in the lives of the youth (Hofferth, 2009; Gentile, 2009; Levine et al, 2007; Mesch, 2001).

In a cautionary way, however, Helsper and Enyon (2011) question the impact of multitasking aspect of young people’s use of technology, even though Hembrooke and Gay (2003) suggest that multitasking may have a negative impact on learning due to cognitive overload. Several studies have attempted to answer this question from college student populations. Some studies finds out that social media impacts negatively on the academic performance of college students (Junco, Helbergert and Loken, 2010). For example, in examining extreme video game use among youth ages 8 to 18, Gentile (2009), finds out that compulsive gamers show defects in paying attention to other things. Such obsession with new media significantly predicts poorer school performance even after variables such as sex and age,. Another study, which examines trends in media use among 8 to 18 year old American youths by Roberts and Foehr
(2008) finds out that media exposure, is negatively related to personal adjustment and school performance. In a study that examines the relationship between instant messaging and college students’ view of their own ability to focus on academic work, Levine, Waite and Bowman (2007) finds out that the more time they spend instant messaging translate in the difficulty at concentrating on less externally stimulating tasks, such as academic reading. However, there is always the other side of the coin.

Just as many studies have indicated negative effects of social media use on college students’ academic performance in particular, other studies, examining the same problem, tend to have findings that suggest that there is no connection between the use of social media and poor academic performance (Stollak et al, 2011), while others reveal that when social media use is structured to suit the purposes of school or college work, its impact becomes positive on the students’ academic performances (Junco, Helbergert and Loken, 2010). It is noteworthy that, similar concerns raised against the effects tradition on audiences of traditional media appear to be emerging in the effects of social media use. The problem of the total effect of use of media in general on users, have been criticized (Selwyn, 2009). Emerging literature counter the validity of blanket claims which argue that, the variables that determine an effect, for instance academic poor performance, may be more than just the use of social media, even though it may be a contributing factor (Junco, Helbergert and Loken, 2010; Ellore, Narajan and Brown III, 2014). These studies argue that to solely attribute poor performance to the use of social media may be false. Even when considered as a contributing factor, its measurability may be difficult to determine exactly.
2.3.1. Uses and Gratification of Social Media

Such criticisms lead to the proposition of the Uses and Gratification theory (U&G) in media studies (Blumler and Katz 1974), which is a reaction against the absolute effect of the media on audience. The U&G tradition focuses on researching individuals’ use of the media. Uses and gratification is a sub tradition of the effects theories but is one that explores more the interpersonal and qualitative aspect of mediated communication. Basically, uses and gratification explains what pulls young people towards a particular media and what holds them to those kinds of media and their contents thereof. In the occasion of researchers becoming interested in why audiences engage in various forms of media behaviour, several studies emerge within this tradition which examines the gratifications sought from radio programs (Cantril and Allport, 1935) on reading newspapers, (Waples, Berelson & Bradshaw, 1940), on listening to music (Schuman, 1942), among others. This tradition is met with criticisms with most researchers agreeing to the fact that U&G is characterized by theoretical incoherence, is behaviourist and individualistic in its methods (McQuail, 1994). Yet, there are calls to the effect that, the theoretical model of uses and gratification could well be suited to accommodate the interactivity of new media, where it allows the concept of the active user come into play fully.

As such emerging studies on new media, particularly, social media have embraced U&G to explain the uses and appeal of the myriad forms of social media networking platforms (Valenzuela, 2009; Loan, 2011). These studies identify the most or less used social media, the preferences for users or simply the appeal of social media. Furthermore, these studies formulate lists of functions the media serve its users or list of needs satisfied in the use of the media. The study on gratification gained in the use
of new media are aligned into two segments, those that broadly investigate the uses and gratifications gained in the use of the internet as a broad term and those that examine specifically the uses and gratification gained in social media use. In terms of the internet, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) identify the following five motives for internet use: interpersonal utility, pastime, information seeking, convenience and entertainment. Similarly, Song et al (2004), in examining internet gratifications of user, recognize six gratifications gained at using the internet: virtual community, information seeking, appealing experience, monetary reward, distraction and personal status gratification, while Choe and Hsiao (2000) find college students’ use of the internet as entertaining interesting, interactive and satisfactory.

Narrowing it down to social media use similar findings emerge. For example in a study to understand why people use social media, Whiting and Williams (2013), list uses of the social media as: for social interaction, information seeking, for past time, for entertainment and for relaxation while gratifications derived are communication utility, opportuneness, freedom of expression, information sharing and reconnaissance. Similarly, Shao’s (2009) findings suggest that the appeal of social media use lies in its fulfilling entertainment needs, information and mood management needs, enhancement of social connections, the provision and accessibility to virtual communities, forum for self-expression and actualization even though separate analytically, it is interdependent in reality. Not far from other studies, Park, Kee and Venlenzuela (2009) also finds out that social media use provides the satisfaction of socializing, entertainment, self-status and seeking of information.
Cognizant of the eclectic use of social media sites by the younger generation, several studies have gone further to investigate the motives of using one particular site over another. For example, Raacke and Raacke (2008) study, investigating two social media sites, MySpace and Facebook, found out that the use of Facebook provided the satisfaction of making new friends and locating old ones, while keeping touch with existing friends more than MySpace does. In most of such studies, Facebook seems to be the most preferred site as it provides the most satisfying motives for using social media (Bumgarner, 2007).

2.3.2. Social Capital and Identity in Social Media Use

Another two key areas where researchers have focused their interests after identifying the major motives for using social media by the younger generation are the benefits accrued at using social media and the issue of identity in social media use (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007; Valenzuela, Park and Lee, 2009). The idea that social media provides social capital has been of much interest to researchers. Social capital is defined generally in these studies to mean the resource available to users through networked friends and contacts a user connects to which provide a certain gain which one would not have had in an offline situation (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007). Fundamentally, these studies examine the extent, to which social media networking and use determines the loss or gains of social capital. Earlier studies on the use of media in general have indicated that intensive use of media in general causes tremendous loss of social capital (Kubey, 1986). Such studies suggest that, the more one uses the media, the less time one gets for real time friends and social interactions. Similarly earlier studies on social media have suggested, by their findings, that heavy Facebook users
are socially isolated and less connected than none or light users (Griffith and Wood, 2000).

However, when the lens of recent literature is focused on social media networking, findings suggest otherwise. For example, in Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe’s (2007) study, findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between use of Facebook and three types of social capital of “bonding”, “bridging” and “maintained” social capital. In other words, as users use Facebook for bonding, bridging and maintaining friends and contacts, there is the more likelihood of attaining psychological well being. Another study, Valenzuala, Park and Kee (2009), similarly finds out that the intensity of Facebook use was positively related to life satisfaction and social trust.

Recent literature on the concept of social capital in social media use is closely related to the identity and self esteem of users. These studies suggest that young people generally believe that social media networking either affects their self-esteem positively or negatively. Users’ comments on each other and the number of contacts and friends go to influence their self-concept (Vergeer and Pelzer, 2009). For example, on investigating the consequences of friend networking on young peoples’ self-esteem and wellbeing, Valkenburg, Peter and Schouten (2006) found out that the frequency with which young people use the sites has an indirect effect on their social self-esteem and wellbeing. The use of social media stimulated the number of relationships formed on the sites, the frequency with which they get feedback on their profiles as well as the tone of the feedback. Expectedly, the study indicates that positive feedback on the profiles enhances their social self-esteem and wellbeing whiles a negative feedback
decreased their self-esteem and wellbeing. On the other hand, Vergeer and Pelzer (2009) assert that online social capital augments that of offline social capital though online social capital does not have the benefit of social support for loneliness.

2.4. Older Generation and New Media Use

It must be noted that while most research on social media examines the relationship between the media and the younger generation, it does not suggest that the older generation do not use new media at all. However, studies on new media use by the older generation are informed by the digital divide phenomenon in which the older generation is marked out as the disadvantaged due to their weakened physiology, lack of access, social and psychological wellbeing (Nimrod, 2013). Even though research on new media usage of the older generation is relatively lower than that of the younger generation, researchers have interested themselves on three key issues. The first centres on the digital divide concept, mapping out those older people who are online and those offline (Kiel, 2005). Discussions within this area focus on access or the lack of it for the older generation and how they use the internet when online. Emailing emerges as the main and preferred means of communication in spite of the availability of other new digital media communication channels, suggesting older people’s underuse of new media technologies (Green and Rossall, 2013).

The second is the idea of barriers to access and usage limitations which are examined extensively, followed up by another group of studies suggesting interventions and possible effects. For example in examining the barriers to internet adoption, Jeong, Han and Lee (2013), find out that, the use of the internet is either intrinsically or extrinsically
motivated. The study further suggests that older people are “psychologically burdened” in using the internet. This serves as a barrier to its usage. Another study (Noval et al., 2011) also examines the lack of interest of older adults in the use of new media in spite of the perceived benefits associated with usage, such as increased social capital and community belonging. As these works enumerate the possible reasons why older people do not use the internet, other works emerge, proposing programs to mitigate the trend (Lehtinen, Jaana and Sarvas, 2009; Ahad, 2014). Further studies, exploring into what the older generation do with new media besides emailing, reveals that the internet is used as a source for information seeking of all sorts, entertainment, socializing and personal generation and publication of contents (Nimrod, 2013).

The third group of studies to examine the relationship between the older generation and new media builds upon the general belief that the internet enhances social connections which go to improve psychological wellbeing (Feist and McDougal, 2013). As such several studies indicate that, social isolation is markedly reduced when older people embark on the use of the internet and its associated tools. In view of these assertions, newer studies emerges, proposing interventive measures that enables older people to get interested in the use of new media and the internet. For example, internet application and game designers are encouraged to design their products that will appeal to all users and not the young generations alone (Opalinski, 2001), introductory programs oriented towards initiating the older generation into using new media (Henke, 1999). seeming like reactions to these calls, organizations set up community computer centres offering free tutorial services to the older generation (Shapira, Barak and Gal, 2007), all in a bid to involve older people in the use of the internet.
One of the associated tools of the internet to have attracted the interest of older people is social media. Madden (2010) indicates that, the number of social media users of age fifty and above have doubled over the past years, increasing exponentially almost every year. Emerging literature on older peoples’ use of social media investigates what older people do when social media networking and what their preferences are (Lehtinen, Nasanen and Sarvas, 2009). However, the area of interest to researchers on social media networking of older people is how privacy and security plays out in their networking activities. A lot of literature on privacy in online and social media interactions of older people emerges, exploring the privacy preserving actions regarding information sharing by older people (Chakraborty, Vishik and Rao 2013), skills development in terms of securing privacy (Pogue, 2011) and attitudes towards online privacy protection (Kang, 1998).

2.5. Intergenerational Communication and New Media

The immense possibilities of communication offered by new media technologies due to their immediate interactive feedback call the attention to writers to suggest that the improvement in new media and communication technologies may see the improvement in intergenerational communication (DeRidder, 2015). The impact of social and new media and intergenerational communication have been examined both within the home and workplace settings. Within the home settings, focus is placed on the different relationship the different generations have with the media (Fietkiewicz, 2017). Like most study findings on new media, younger generations spend more time with new media than interacting physically with other members of their families (Muia, Maina
and Mwangi, 2013). In the workplaces, confronted with the challenges of how different age groups use media technology differently, studies on intergenerational communication for effective delivery of work takes on a pacifist approach (Charness and Boot, 2009; Lee & Messerschmitt, 2012; Lonsberry, 2014). Mostly, these studies conclude with suggestions for reciprocal understandings of the characteristics peculiar to a generation. Personal inclinations and preconceived stereotypical notions are advised to be adjusted to accommodate each other’s differences to ensure communication success (Brewer, 1999). It must be noted however, that simply understanding and adjusting to the specific needs of persons or their generational idiosyncrasies, even though, helps in intergenerational communication, is most effective in face to face communication. The social cues that govern face-to-face communication is ever present.

Literature on intergenerational communication through social media is hardly available. The few literatures to have emerged look at how older people, in particular, have become interested and motivated to learn basic skills of web-based communication. By so doing, older people become more conscious of the opportunities to access their children’s or their younger generational counterparts’ online worlds in order to intervene their internet use (Livingstone & Haddon, 2009). The opportunity to trail the lives of their younger ones is usually viewed as the one of many motivating factors for older people to start learning and using web-based communication settings (Gonzalez, Jomhari, & Kurniawan, 2012). In fact, various studies (Smith, 2003; Tamme & Siibak, 2012) indicate that older members of families acknowledge that new media technologies or social media offer them the prospects to reach out to the young, who
otherwise seem to be out of reach. In other words, ICTs have become crucial features in bringing different generations together, which help to encourage and reinforce family ties and experiences (Tasker & Plude, 2011) and, hence, also aiding to expedite family relations (Mesch 2006).

2.6. Conclusion
The literature reviewed shows that one of the fundamental motives for using social media is communicating, with emphasis on social interaction and connectivity. Most literature, examines intra-generational use of the media, resulting in expansive knowledge in the hows and whys the younger generation is much more inclined to use the media. Literature skewing towards such angle creates the erroneous impression that social interaction takes place only among the youth and not between the young and old. Should literature keep up with this path, the dynamics that exist between the young and old in the use of social media for communication would not be understood, when empirical evidence suggest that older people are taking up the use of social media networking. Again, while the literature differs in many of its perspectives, it is, lamentably, more consistent in its geographical focus. Nearly all of the studies available are precisely from North American and European countries. A detailed outline of the literature clearly reveals this orientation towards the United States, Western Europe and other countries with high technological advancement, with very little studies with this focus coming from the developing world.

In filling this gap, the current study explores the patterns of social media usage of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants in Ghana, their interactional experiences and
the characteristics of their communicative practices and how these practices influence intergenerational communication. Generally, the study reveals how social media users create perceptions about the prospective and favoured uses of newer communication media such as social media applications and how this makes visible their weak and strong ties. In this regard, the use of computer mediated communication theories such as those mentioned above, to explain such phenomena proves useful as it also takes into cognizance, the combined effort of both technology and society in influencing relationships between technology and users as well as between and among users themselves.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

2.7.1. Introduction

This section discusses the theoretical framework for the study. The study explores the pattern of social media usage between two generational cohorts; Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants. While the generational theory fundamentally explains how generations form, computer mediated communication theory explains the relationship between users (both generations) and the technology and how the technology affects the communication process. While Manheim’s emphasises on the impact of historical events on the formation of a generation, Howe and Strauss (1997)’s generation is formed through “turning”. The concept of tuning explains cyclic conditions, which, at the collapse of a previous social and political order, a new social order turns up after which some decades later another cycle emerges. However, Manheim’s generational theory forms the basis of this study. Moreover, how generational attributes influence relationship between users and the media and vice versa is discussed with the theory of computer mediated communication.
2.7.2. Generational Theory of Belonging

The core assumption of the generational theory is that each generation is exposed to different influences shaped by history and existing values and beliefs. It is in this regard that Karl Marx has argued that men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered given and transmitted from the past.

The theory of generational belonging, however, is traced back to Karl Manheim in his seminal work, “The Problem of Generations” in 1923 as part of his discursive essays on the sociology of knowledge. In this theory, Manheim posits the view that a generation is a cohort or a group of people whose values, beliefs and attitudes have been influenced by significant historical events. Particularly, these events happen during the formative years of the generational cohort which becomes part of their life experiences. There are several generations of the same age range in different societies, but the use of “generational location” by Manheim suggest that, each generational cohort is defined by the particular culture and geographical locations within which the events might have occurred. As such, the same generational cohort from different societies and cultures may have different values, beliefs and attitudes. A society is made up of different generational cohorts. By the virtue of the fact that each generation has had different historical events to have helped in the formation of their cognitive and social orientations, their interpretation of events and experiences differ. For example, due to the intergenerational differences existing between DIs and DNs, the nature of the interaction between the two generational cohorts is marked by different
interpretation to each other’s communicative behaviour. DNs interpret DIs’ use of social media as new media technological incompetence while DIs interpret DN’s communicative techniques of social media use as inappropriate and bizarre. The kind of differing responses to the use of social media between the two generational cohorts emphasises their differences. This is in line with Manheim’s account that a generational cohort is more influenced by their times more than by their parents.

With the prevailing digitisation of the media in Ghana, the domestication of social media use by each of the generation is related according to their different media consumption and usage habits. For example, the DN generation in the current study have the penchant to own several and varied forms social media supporting devices while the DI generation tend to maintain only one device. Expectantly, DNs spend more time on social media than their DI counterparts. Besides the listing of devices, the study identifies that the collective responses to the accessibility to the myriad forms of social media contributes to generational identity as people belonging to the same generational cohort tend to have particular ways of media use. For example, the DN generation use social media for the attainment of their self interests, such as promotion of the self and self expression while the DI generational cohort are more inclined to use social media for altruistic purposes such as activism and initiations of social actions. There is also the exhibition of differences in linguistic and narrative behaviour between the two generations. DNs have the tendency for using short and conversational ways of communication in contrast to the long and narrative descriptions preferred by DIs.
2.7.3. Computer Mediated communication and Generational Belonging

Of all technologies, it is that of the media which have the special attraction of a generational attribute. In media studies, the idea of a “media generation” is popularized which escalates the fabrication of tags, based on supposed differences in the generational use of new media technologies. Silverstone (1994) provides an explanation which emphasizes the media’s twofold utility; as material technology and as symbolic content. While these utilities are inseparable their duality impacts enormously on the way media organize experiences, the writer argues. These experiences tend to serve as the “cultural glue” within generations. In other words, the nature of interactions developed through the use of the media becomes what connects people from within the same generational cohort. On the basis of such views on generations and media, the logical conclusion is that contemporary audiences are composed of people belonging to different generations and that each generation uses media differently and likewise the effect (Alasuutari, 1999). Wark (1993) extends this idea further by stating that “generations are not defined by war or depression any more. They are defined by media culture”. Exploring this idea further, Buckingham (2006) proposes that media is a signifier of generational affiliation. This goes to suggest that the affiliation with particular media determines one generational identity. This view is endorsed by the theories of computer mediated communication (CMC). These set of theories provide perspectives that explain the relational dynamics between computer-mediated communicators.

Computer mediated communication enhances connectivity among users by affording communicators the ability to be in touch with family and friends without the inhibiting
factors of distance and delay. This enabling facility of social media allows the sharing of memories among contacts, provides the opportunity to establish new friendships as well as the maintenance of old ones.

However, a prominent feature of CMC that has spawned several theories is that CMC makes the process of communication antisocial and impersonal (Short, Williams & Christie, 1979). The social presence model (Short Williams & Christie, 1979), explains that, a medium of communication has either a high or low “social presence”. For example, television has a high social presence because it is both visual and audio which makes it social, warm and personal. A medium with low social presence for example, radio is only audio and thus less personal. The writers define social presence as the “degree of salience”, i.e. the quality or state of being at a place, between or among communicators using the medium. By the social presence theory, the proposers suggest that CMC is anti-social and impersonal because there is a low degree to which individuals involved in the communication process perceive each other as being real and any interaction between them as a relationship. Thus, CMC is only good for task oriented communication and not for socializing. This view evolves from the cluelessness model in communication where the assumption is that limited visual and other social cues such as body gestures, facial expressions and other non-verbal languages in social interactions result in the “depersonalisation” of content. Furthermore it reduces the spontaneity of the interaction and makes interaction more a “task oriented” one. CMC thus offers the facility of anonymity. However, each generational cohort takes advantage of this facility in different ways.
Generational theory leans towards generational determinism where emphasis is placed upon generational influence as the sole determinant of individual’s relationship with the media. The generational theory makes absolute the agency of the individual. Such view would imply that should generational determinism be correct in claiming that age (with socio cultural influence) on the individual is the relevant factor in the relationship between media and generations, then it would mean that there is total correlation between technological usages and age. For example, all young people would be using new media such as social media and all old people would be using traditional media such as reading newspapers and listening to radio.

Computer mediated communication theories, on the other hand is of the standpoint that suggests technology as the determining factor in the individual’s relationship with the media. The centrality of CMC, anonymity, appears the controlling element around which users of new media organise their communication experiences. Here again, if the sole emphasis is placed on technology to be the absolute in determining the relationship between users and media, then the connection between media and age would be non-existent. It would mean that the predominant media technology would infiltrate into all generations equally.

2.8. Conclusion

This section examines the generational theory as the main theory underpinning intergenerational communication. The theory of computer mediated communication is also discussed as a supplementary theory that augments generational theory in
illuminating the relational dynamics of intergenerational communication through social media
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Methodology is the study of methods in research which are the systematic ways through which the result of a given problem is revealed. Understanding methodology also helps the researcher to have a relevant work plan for the study. Within the methodology are various methods with which the research is carried out. However, the choice of a method is dependent upon the nature of research question to be answered. To determine the right method means that the researcher should understand the approach to dealing with the kind of reality embedded in the research question.

The meaning of reality is a paradoxical one, yet in simple terms, its meaning projects the notion of what exists and can be seen and the experiences of occurrences in peoples’ lives. However, people interpret their experiences differently depending on their situations and positions. As such there is no universal interpretation of reality. Each individual has a different perception of what reality is. This study, fundamentally, looks at the communication between two generational cohorts in their use of the communication technology of social media.

In terms of reality, the researcher observes that social media as means of communication is visible on the one hand because one can see the people and all the hardware and applications such as, computers, tablets, smartphones, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp. On the other hand, the researcher observes that it is also impossible to see communication through social media. Even with the most common theoretical notions
such as contact, connect, interaction, communication flow, networks, decoding, encoding and so forth, one cannot see anything.

Communication through social media is consciously made by people. This type of communication activity is a construct created with a particular purpose in mind. It can conveniently be said that a special kind of reality is thus created, called social media communication, when people decide to engage in such activity. The researcher, thus observes that the study implies a mixed view of reality in which the reality of physical structures in communication and the reality of theoretical notions of intergenerational communication combine to provide a holistic view on the subject matter of intergenerational communication through social media. In other words, the existence and use of the physical properties of the communication activities such as computers, tablets, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and the people’s interpretations of a reality they are operating in during interactions through the use of these properties implies that a mixed method approach is best suited to answer the research questions.

3.2. The Research Design

This study thus used a mixed method research design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) which is the procedure for collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in order to understand the research problem more holistically (Creswell, 2002). The rationale for mixing the methods is that neither the quantitative nor qualitative methods, when used individually, in this particular study, are adequate by themselves to encapsulate the detailed nuances of the complex intercommunication processes of which Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants have in their interactions when using
social media or networking (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). When used in combination, however, the quantitative and qualitative methods complemented each other and allowed for more complete analysis and insight (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

In pursuit of the objectives, this study used one of the most popular mixed methods designs, sequential explanatory mixed methods design, which consists of two distinct phases, quantitative and qualitative (Creswell, 2002, 2003; Creswell et al., 2003).

In quantitative research, an investigator relies on numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002). The investigator uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge, such as cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables, hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories. A researcher isolates variables and causally relates them to determine the magnitude and frequency of relationships. In addition, a researcher determines which variables to investigate and chooses instruments, which will yield highly reliable and valid scores. Alternatively, qualitative research is “an inquiry process of understanding” where the researcher develops a “complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). In this approach, the researcher makes knowledge claims based on the constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) or advocacy/participatory (Mertens, 2003,) perspectives. In qualitative research, data is collected from those immersed in everyday life of the setting in which the study is framed. Data analysis is based on the values that these participants perceive for their world. Ultimately, it “produces an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors” (Miller, 2000).
In a mixed methods approach, the researcher builds the knowledge on pragmatic grounds (Creswell, 2003; Maxcy, 2003) asserting truth to be “what works” (Howe, 1988). The researcher chooses approaches, as well as variables and units of analysis, which are most appropriate for finding an answer to his or her research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). A major tenet of pragmatism is that quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible. Thus, both numerical and text data, collected sequentially or concurrently, can help better understand the research problem.

While designing a mixed methods study, three issues need consideration: priority, implementation, and integration (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Priority refers to which method, either quantitative or qualitative, is given more emphasis in the study. Implementation refers to whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis comes in sequence or in chronological stages, one following the other, or in parallel or concurrently. Integration refers to the phase in the research process where the mixing or connecting of quantitative and qualitative data occurs.

In this study and for the quantitative phase, data was collected using a paper-based survey. The rationale for this approach was that, in the absence of a credible empirical data on the usage of social media in Ghana, the goal of the quantitative segment was to provide a statistically descriptive pattern of usage of social media between the two generational cohorts. By obtaining this information, significant findings from this segment were further explored and examined using the qualitative phase. This also allowed for the purposefully selection of participants for the qualitative phase.
The qualitative component of the study is to be understood in the context of an overall sequential (quantitative followed by qualitative) mixed-methods research design (Kelle 2006) consisting of the large-scale survey of 300 respondents and a subsequent series of 30 qualitative interviews with selected respondents of the survey. The rationale behind the qualitative component of the study was to provide more in-depth and more contextualized insights into how the two generational cohorts of DN and DI negotiate intercommunication through social media.

Whereas the survey allowed for a statistically comparative discussion about the frequency of ownership of social media supporting devices, the usage of such devices, motivation, activities and consumption between the generational cohort, the qualitative interviews provided “rich” information about how social media interactions actually meant to the participants through their interactional experiences, perception and attitudes towards the use of social media. The qualitative analysis also drew out characteristics of participants’ social media communicative practices and how those practices influence their intergenerational communication.

In terms of research strategy, the qualitative interviews aimed at complementing the survey data by rich and unstandardized data and thereby obtaining an overall richer and more accurate picture of the participants’ interactions with social media. Incidentally, the interviews also allowed to grasp the different values associated with social media networking from the two different generational cohorts. This is particularly useful in the context of comparing the interactive habits of two different generational cohorts whose age grouping is defined by their differences in values and beliefs.
In the qualitative phase, data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews which helped to explore the experiences of the participants’ use of social media. The qualitative phase also built up further in-depth questions which expanded into relevant information needed for the study. Also, the qualitative analysis refined and explained some of the statistical results. Data from the two phases were integrated during the discussion of the outcomes of the whole study where necessary.

3.2.1. Target Population

The target population for this study were respondents from ages sixteen to seventy (16–70) years. Within this group of respondents are the required ages that define the Digital Immigrant and Native generational cohorts.

The interest to focus on the two different generational cohorts lies in the dynamics that underlie how the two groups negotiation communication in the wake of new media technologies that have been branded to favour one over the other, yet still, are faced with the compelling need to intercommunicate. The purpose for the choice of the age range selected for this study is to preserve an optimal diversity among the individual generational groupings of respondents for subsequent analysis (Creswell, 1996). Other criteria for selecting the participants for this study were that the respondents must hold account(s) in any of the social media network sites and must be active users of any social media network site(s). An active user for this study means that respondents should have had a social media account(s) for at least two years and over and must have been logging on to their networking platforms more than three times a week.
3.2.2. Population Location and Sampling

The population for this study is located within Ghana, but their activity is not necessarily located within any physical geographical space, but found within the digital domain of social media networks. Thus, all the respondents and participants used in this study were identified from social media networks groups in Ghana.

Other than conducting an institutional survey, determining the sample size of the population of social media users in probabilistic terms is often elusive and difficult (Pascoe, 1996). In other instances, several numbers have been estimated to be the total of social media users. It is estimated that there are two million, nine hundred thousand users of social media in Ghana (UNSD, 2017) while other sources also estimate within the ranges of five hundred to seven hundred thousand users (Socialbakers, 2016). The up to date status of these estimates is problematic as the rate of change of estimates of social media users is a regular affair. Thus, an estimate at any given time is outdated. However, Facebook users alone in Ghana are accounted to be one thousand and four hundred (Facebook.com). As such several studies assume that social media users in Ghana number about one thousand four hundred, excluding, those living outside Ghana, expatriates, young children up to the ages of 14 years (Social Ghana, 2014). This infers that the total number of Facebook users represents the total number of all social media users in Ghana. This is at best misleading as there are other social media applications equally gaining popularity (McNamara, 2010).

Therefore, in order to acquire a representative sample in the absence of a verified estimated and unknown number, the researcher decided to have a sample that has a
margin of error of +/-5 with a confidence interval of 95% and a .5 standard deviation. With the 95% confidence level meant a z score of 1.96. Thus, using the Slovin’s formular, the necessary sample size needed was \((Z\text{-score})^2 \times \text{StdDev} \times (1-\text{StdDev}) / (\text{margin of error})^2\). After calculating, the sample size of 384 respondents was derived.

3.2.3. Sampling Procedure

The multistage sampling procedure was used for the first quantitative phase of the study. The multistage sampling was used, first, because the population for the study is large, scattered and unstructured (Knottnerus, 2012). Second, this sampling procedure was used because it helped segment the population into smaller units until the researcher reached the desired size or number of the population.

In selecting the first sampling unit of population for the study, the random walk sampling (Klovdahl, 1977) procedure was used. Klovdahl (1977) suggested a method for sampling that has the potential to serve pragmatic purposes yet retain a probabilistic base. He suggested a modification of snowball sampling wherein one contact is chosen at random from those named at each stage of sampling (thus the notion of a random walk). He demonstrated the ability of this technique to identify important network relationships in a large urban environment (Klovdahl, 1989). Even though a formal mathematical relationships engendered by this sampling technique has not been elucidated, this study adopted this approach of sampling procedure from the perspective of selecting a sample from a population that is not fixed within any physical geographical space, but is located within the digital domain of social media networks.
The researcher, therefore, started by randomly approaching directly a respondent who fit the characteristics of any of the two distinct target populations after short enquiries about their networks. Instead of the researcher asking the respondent to identify another social media user in their networks, as would have been done in a snowball sampling procedure, the researcher requested for the total list of members in the Facebook network of this initial respondents. Within this group the researcher identified fifty members within the network who fit the criteria for each of the population. In order to maintain diversity, the researcher decided to use the number fifty as the limit for any networked members to be used for the study. The number fifty served as the limit for any network visited. Any network visited which did not have more than fifty network members was not included in the study. To give an equal chance for any member within the selected fifty to be selected the researcher picked every tenth person in the list. Thus, five Facebook users within every network visited established the number of Facebook users selected per network that is, only five respondents were selected from each network visited. The researcher used the same approach to select respondents from the digital native generation. A total of eighty networks were visited amounting to four hundred respondents. At this stage, the researcher has acquired a population of respondents who are into social media by their Facebook accounts Facebook served as the initial gateway to selecting respondents for the study because as indicated by an online survey of social media activities and tracking system (Social Ghana, 2014) 96% of all Ghanaian social media users have Facebook accounts. In this regard, by using Facebook, most of social media users were likely to be reached.
The second stage involved selecting the required age ranges for the study, that is, ages 16 to 30 and from 55 to 70 years from each of the networks. According to Holt, Rinehart and Winston, (1999) the difference between two generations is estimated to be 25 to 30 years. This informed the determination of the age ranges of the two generational cohorts. The researcher used their published birth dates on their profiles to determine their ages.

The third stage involved selecting those who belonged to any other social media networks other than Facebook and have been involved in active social media networking for two years and over were selected. Respondents were contacted through their published telephone numbers.

The fourth stage involved selecting the population who will agree to participate in the research project.

For the qualitative phase of the study, the purposive sampling was used (McMillan & Schumacher, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thirty participants, fifteen from each generational cohort were purposely selected from the respondents from the quantitative phase. These were respondents whose responses from their questionnaires showed remarkable indication of knowledge of the subject matter. These group of participants also involved those who volunteered to partake in the qualitative interviews when asked. Thirteen participants represented those within the ages 50 and 70 while seventeen from the 16 to 30 age population agreed to take part in the qualitative interview. This brought the total number of participants to thirty (30). This phase
allowed the researcher to present multiple perspectives of individuals to “represent the complexity of our world” (Creswell, 2002, p.194).

3.4. Data Collection

The two primary instruments for collecting the data for this study were the questionnaire (APPENDIX 2) and the interview guide (APENDIX 3). The quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire, while the qualitative data was collected using the interview guide.

3.4.1. Quantitative Data Collection

In order to maximise the response rate and to obtain accurate and relevant information from the questionnaire, the study was pilot-tested with a random selection of seven respondents from the age bracket of 50 to 70, and eight respondents from the age bracket of 16 to 30. This amounted to a total of 5% of the total number of participants interviewed for the actual study. The pilot study was used to secure the content validity of the questionnaire by estimating the time needed to complete the survey and to determine whether the questions were appropriate and would elicit the responses needed to answer the research questions. It also helped in determining whether the language used was simple and easy to be understood by both the DN and DI generational groups. The pilot study enabled the researcher to make necessary modifications to enhance clarity. It also helped the researcher to have an increased understanding of media use by both generations. The aspect for determining the time
needed to complete the survey was relevant in regards to interviewing the DI population. The researcher noted that, during the pilot study sessions, a lengthy survey was tiresome to most of them in particular.

The participants in the pilot study were excluded from the subsequent actual study. Out of the 384 questionnaires, a total of 300 were used for a 78.125% response rate. One hundred and fifty respondents represented the DN population while another one hundred and fifty represented the DI population in order to ensure a fair distribution of respondents. Three major reasons accounted for the questionnaire mortality. First, upon follow up calls, the researcher realised that some questionnaires were not completed by those to whom the questionnaires were given. The forms were completed mostly by youngsters below the minimum age range selected for the study. These questionnaires were considered invalid. Second, some questionnaires were not properly answered as the questionnaire was not suitable to some respondents. These respondents could not respond to the questionnaire properly because of reading in English skills problem. Third, some respondent preferred to qualify their responses beyond the limits of the questionnaire. However, while this particular group did not complete the questionnaire appropriately, they were readily available for the qualitative session of the data collection.

The questionnaire was administered through face to face and telephone interviewing. Respondents were initially contacted through their virtual domains. The other means of contact were through telephone numbers listed on their online profiles. The second possible line of contact was calling respondents through their mobile phones and
requesting for an interview. Most respondents preferred face-to-face interviewing, even though interview with some respondents started with the telephone but was eventually completed through face-to-face. This came up when respondents had limited time to talk over the phone to complete the questionnaire. In other instances, the respondents got distracted with other things around them while talking on the phone. Moreover, mobile network distraction was a key factor in the inability to do a telephone interview to completion.

The researcher booked appointment dates with prospective participants mostly through the telephone. In order to further decrease non-response rate and solicit a relatively high response rate from the questionnaire, the researcher adopted a three phase follow-up sequence (Dillman, 2000). Respondents, who had not yet agreed on a date for interview five days after the initial telephone call, were called as a reminder. This was done for every five days’ interval for three times over, and stating the importance of the participant’s input for the study. When a date was secured, the researcher then discussed with the participants to agree to meet at a place convenient to the respondent or participant. Most elderly respondents preferred to meet at their places of residence. Even though it was a quantitative questionnaire where the respondents had to tick the appropriate answer or answers, warming up to the respondent was key to the successful completion of the questionnaire. Interview with elderly respondents took more time than with the younger generation as the researcher had to explain some terms or had to put the question in a situational form to elicit understanding from the respondents.
An informed consent form was attached to the opening page of the survey. Participants were made to sign in their signature at the bottom end of the form, expressing their willingness to participate in the study and complete the survey.

3.4.2. Qualitative Data Collection

The second, qualitative phase of the study focused on providing more in-depth and contextualized insights into how the two generational cohorts of DN and DI negotiate intercommunication through social media.

The survey questionnaire included a question asking whether the respondent would be willing to be contacted for a longer interview at some later point. Of the total 300 respondents 15 per cent accepted to be contacted. Of these, 10 percent, that is 30 participants were finally interviewed some weeks after the survey, either face-to-face or over the phone, and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. All interviews were audio-taped.

The researcher also purposefully selected participants from the respondents who reflected a unique way of interacting with social media in terms of gender, age, level of education and occupational status. As expected, the respondents from the different generational groupings made slightly different choices, however the overall resulting sample of interviewees for each of the groups was overall quite similar in structure to the quantitative survey samples, especially in terms of gender (about half of the participants were women). Compared to the survey sample, the qualitative sample had
a higher proportion of “active” users (i.e. people who have used social media for two years and more.

The final composition of the group of interviewees was not completely under the control of the researcher entirely, as many of the respondents to the survey who had stated their readiness to be interviewed finally did not make themselves available after all. Some did not respond at all to the e-mail inviting them for an interview, whereas others declined the invitation. Among the older generation, finding enough interviewees was a real challenge whiles among the younger generation finding a sufficient number of participants was not a problem, but certain categories of potential respondents were particularly hard to mobilise. Where a purposive sampling strategy was not entirely successful, the researcher pragmatically resorted to a strategy of opportunistic sampling.

The researcher also collected data through observing the participants sometimes on how they used their devices. In other instances, participants were observed as they accessed their social media platforms and browsed through their social media networks. These observations were made to validate the information obtained during the interviews. The researcher however, asked their consent to observe and have access to their social networking sites. The interview guide included ten to fifteen open-ended questions, and was also pilot tested. The content of the interview guide was informed by the results of the statistical results between the two generational cohorts on ownership, motivation, usage and consumption of social media. The questions focused on the issues on the relationship between digital native/digital immigrant statuses of individuals and the
displayed levels of motivation, usage and consumption as well as the details of these relationships.

The interviews followed the logic of the semi-structured interview (Arksey & Knight 1999): the topic guide served as a general guideline, but the question wording and sequence could be handled flexibly by the researcher. Additional questions could be asked as necessary. More generally, the researcher had a leeway to add or reformulate questions, or drop questions, if an answer had already been provided spontaneously, for instance. Overall the researcher mostly respected the general structure of the interview guide.

The interview guide was pilot tested on six participants, three young people and three elderly people selected from the same target populations, but then excluded from the full study. Debriefing with the participants was conducted to obtain information on the clarity of the interview questions and their relevance to the study aim. The participants received the interview guides prior to the scheduled calling time, and were informed the interview was to be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were given the opportunity to review and, if necessary, correct the contents of the interview after it was transcribed.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The use of descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to describe, present, summarize and organize data either through numerical calculations or graphs or tables (Jonker &
Pennink, 2010). It also allowed the researcher to characterize data based on its properties. The researcher opted for one of the four major types of descriptive statistics, measures of frequency. Under this type of analysis, the researcher focused on the count, percentages and frequency of the data and how often something occurs. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics generated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The data analysis was meant to provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures of frequency. The measures were illustrated with simple graphic analysis describing what the data showed. The descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to summarise the large data to enable comparisons between the two generational cohorts (Jonker & Pennink, 2010).

The analysis of the data was broken down into three phases. First, the analysis of the demographic characteristics of the two generational cohorts under the headings; gender, age, educational background and occupational status of respondents. The analysis looked at the ages in percentage for each of the generational cohorts. Likewise, the gender, educational backgrounds and occupational statuses of the respondents.

The second was the analysis of the data on how the two age groupings, that is, the DN and the DI perform under the thematic headings of ownership of social media supporting devices, usage of social media devices, subscription of social media sites,
motives for social media subscription, activities performed on social media and the consumption of social media. Comparisons were made between the two generational cohorts under each of the thematic headings.

The third analysis was the comparisons of the gender compositions within the two groups and how each gender groupings performed under the mentioned thematic headings.

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The aim of the qualitative data analysis was to illustrate and complement the results of the statistical analyses. Data from the qualitative interviews were transcribed verbatim. The data was analysed with QRS NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The qualitative analysis focused on the interactional experiences, perception and attitudes of the two generational cohorts in their use of social media and characteristics of their social media communicative practices. The analysis further teased out how these practices influence the intergenerational communication between the two groups.

The researcher analysed what participants reported about their participation in social media interaction, both among their generational cohorts as well as intergenerational, about their experiences in social media interactions and networking on their lives. The researcher wanted to know how participation in social media interactions influenced participants’ attitudes, perceptions and self-concepts about social media interactions.
and usage. Through the analysis, the researcher further deduced the communication practices of the two generational cohorts and how those practices influence their intergenerational communication through social media.

The transcribed interview data was analysed on the basis of a systematic coding, following the approach suggested by Saldaña (2012). This type of analysis consists of a systematic coding, that is breakdown of data according to a code system in such a way as to identify practically and theoretically, relevant patterns. The coded segments were then grouped and synthesized into categories, which in turn got linked to more general themes and (theoretical) concepts.

### 3.5.2.1. Code System and Test Coding

The analysis was carried out stage-wise, using a combination of deductive and inductive coding also called "hybrid" coding, (cf. Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006). The code system and the categories and themes that were developed on the basis of the coding process was developed gradually. The concepts of ‘interactional experiences in social media networking’ and ‘intergenerational communication through social media’ were used to which the codes, categories and themes finally were linked, were given from the start and developed on theoretical grounds. The final code system had the following main categories (i) interactional experience through social media networking (ii) perception of and attitude towards social media and (iii) characteristics of social media communicative practices.
Each of these categories had a number of subcategories and codes. These were the most important categories. Other categories developed were less central and served the purpose of collection additional information that could help interpret the information coded under the main three categories.

Throughout the coding process analytic memos and written field observations were used to analyse coding divergences and open questions and to keep track of assumptions or hints for the interpretation of the data. All coding was carried out by researcher and counter-checked by trusted fellow colleague researchers to assure the robustness and internal validity of the coding.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues in research concern beliefs about what is wrong and what is right from a moral perspective in the conduct of research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Research ethics therefore imply compliance with acceptable research norms, morals, standards and principles. To conform and comply with the University’s research ethical codes, guidelines, protocols and practices, this research was forwarded for approval to the body responsible for ethical issues of the University.

In line with the principle of “informed consent” the researcher explained honestly and openly to all participants about the nature, aims, purpose and academic benefits of the study and further elaborated to participants that participation in the current research was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the study at any time. The
participants signed the Participant Information and Informed Consent, the Interview Consent and the Recording Consent forms. All these forms were translated into the appropriate languages of the participants were it became necessary. The forms had the researchers 24-hour contact telephone numbers as well as those of the researcher’s supervisors. Prior voluntary consent was secured before audio recording and interviewing the participants.

The researcher also complied strictly with ethical issues of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. To ensure confidentiality, names of the interviewees was not disclosed in the final report and analysis. The data gathered for the study would solely and strictly be used for the purposes of this research project.

During and after completion of the study, the raw research data was appropriately stored by the researcher under lock and key. Such confidentiality initiatives and data storage measures were all in the interest of ensuring and protecting the privacy and anonymity of the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) and Neuman (2006) agree that guaranteeing privacy, anonymity and confidentiality means that access to participants’ responses, behaviour and information is restricted to the researcher and kept secret from the public. Thus, the researcher made all the necessary effort and commitments to ensure and uphold both the informants’ privacy and research ethics principles during the fieldwork and in the compilation of the thesis.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA IN GHANA: A HISTORICAL APPROACH

4.1. Introduction

The use of social media is a recent phenomenon, long after the introduction of the internet in the country. It has become one of the most commonly used media among the young and old as a personal media for daily interactions, though radio, television and the internet still play their relevant roles. As personal media, its pervasiveness in the Ghanaian public domain deserves serious attention. As such, this study explores the patterns of social media usage between DNs and DIs and how their communicative practices influence intergenerational communication.

This chapter however, presents a historical analysis on the media development in the country. This is to put into perspective the conditions that brought about the rise of social media usage into prominence and how the different generations in Ghana relates with the new media.

Ghanaians’ communication needs have shifted from the reliance on traditional media to the reliance on social media. Such a shift does not take place in a historical vacuum. Certain socio-political and cultural ideas and developments have to occur to make the current communication media environment possible. It is unmistakably difficult to understand the emphasis and implications of the current media landscape without some awareness of the historical events that helped shape them.
4.2. The Origin of Media in Ghana

The history of the media in Ghana is closely related to the political history of the country. The media plays key roles in the body politic of Ghana, as such, in analysing the development of media in Ghana, the political environment is a key determinant. The development of the media in Ghana cannot be discussed without the impetus of politics. The history of the media in Ghana has four distinct epochs and these epochs are synonymous with the political conditions of the country: media in the colonial era, the era immediately after independence, the military era and the constitutional era. While these epochs, particularly, the military and the constitutional eras have crossed each other at certain times; each era has distinct view of the media and ways of using them. In the simplest terms, the relationship between the media and body politic has been one of confrontation or mutual respect for or against the media. This has been the case since the origin of media in Ghana.

The origin of media in Ghana is traced back to Sir General Charles McCarthy, the first Crown Governor of Gold Coast. At Cape Coast, the Governor founded the first newspaper ever in the Gold Coast, named *The Royal Gold Coast Gazette* in 1822. The newspaper served as the medium with which the colonialists informed themselves about the activities of Imperial rule in other parts of their colonies including the Gold Coast (Jones-Quartey, 1974)

After the death of the Governor, in 1824, other newspapers were published but were not sustainable until 1885 when Charles Bannerman, a native of Cape Coast published newspaper called *The Accra Herald* or *The West African Herald*. This was the means through which the educated natives could write about their social, economic and
cultural opinions and hopes to reach a wider readership. Much of these newspapers, including *The West African Herald* did not direct their attention to political issues except the *Gold Coast Times*. This newspaper was fully local, owned and produced in the country (Jones-Quartey, 1974)

Other newspapers emerged such as *The Western Echo, The Gold Coast Methodist, The Gold Coast Chronicle, The Gold Coast People, the Gold Coast Independent and The Gold Coast Leader*, to demand, in diverse ways in writing, the freedom and independence of the Gold Coast people. The newspapers were used to advocate for the liberation of the country from colonialism and misrule of the people. It is worth noting that, the effectiveness of the media to reach large numbers of people at one given time and their ability to influence thinking were what the indigenous people observed about the media. Thus, used it to promote their self rule agenda against the rulership of the colonial government.

This is what Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah may have taken note. After attaining the independence from the British, Dr Kwame Nkrumah channelled the effort of the media towards the development of the society and Ghana as a nation. In so doing, clamped down any other media voice that was not singing the same tune with his vision of the newly independent country. Prior to the declaration of independence in 1957, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah established the *Accra Evening News* newspaper as the mouthpiece of the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) of which he was the leader. This newspaper launched in September 1948 was an invaluable instrument in the fight against colonialism. The newspaper was equally instrumental in the attainment of independence. However, after gaining independence, Dr. Kwame Nkruma maintained
the hold of media just like the colonialist had done, albeit with a nationalist objective to build the society. This was much to the chagrin of the other writers and freedom fighters.

The media remained government controlled towards the effort at nation building, integration and social cohesion. These same ideas were what guided the vision of the military rulers, such as General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, with his Union Government, Lt. General Akuffo and later Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings with his Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). To maintain their nation building agenda, military regimes kept a strict media control and suppressed opposition media outlets, even though the temperance of media control among these military rulers differed (Asante, 1996).

4.3. State Ownership of the Media and Monopoly

Ghana has a lively media that plays important roles in political dialogue, national identity and general culture. Ghana’s media emerged from the nineteenth century. The news media in particular was active and promoted the popular campaigns for independence, the call for national unity and identity, socio-cultural development and democracy through to the twentieth century. This initial image of the media created a distinguished history of political activism for journalism in Ghana..

Accounts of the history of media in Ghana indicate that, after several failed attempts by private entrepreneurs at establishing long standing business of printing presses, it was not until the early 1950s when the monopoly of private ownership of newspaper
publishing was ruined by the introduction of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Sunday Mirror* in 1953 by the *London Mirror Company*, which were owned by the British state and colonialists. This new monopoly enjoyed by the colonialists was thought to be as a result of their superiority at business management, financial and human resource capital as well as the ownership of better technology (Karikari and Kyeremeh, 1998). State intervention in press ownership continued when the Convention People’s Party (CPP) government bought the Graphic Company and its newspapers in 1964. But prior to this purchase, the ruling CPP government had established the *Guinea Press* and its newspapers - *The Guinea Times*, later *The Ghana Times*, then again *The Ghanaian Times* and *The Spectator* among others earlier in 1958 (Hasty, 2005).

Broadcasting started with radio which was introduced into the Gold Coast in 1935. The colonial governor set it up as a small wired relay station named ZOY, transmitting British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) programs to the few colonial inhabitants and influential local elites (Jones-Quartey, 1974). Service was afterwards extended to Kumasi, Sekondi, Koforidua and Cape Coast. The British radio provided information and entertainment as well as served as the means for contradicting the anti-colonial campaigns of the press (Kyeremeh and Karikari, 1998). In 1954, Gold Coast Broadcasting System was established, later becoming Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) after independence.

Taking into cognisance that its main model was the BBC, the public service model was adopted from the onset, but maintained its state institutional status at the same time, as it is owned by the state. The GBC, then, provided two domestic radio services, Radio
1, and Radio 2, broadcasting from Accra. Radio 1 was devoted to local programs, broadcasting in Akan, Ga, Ewe, Nzema, Dagbani, Hausa and English. Radio 2 transmitted in English. Both stations operated for 15 and one-fifth hours on weekdays and 17 and half hours on weekends. However, the wireless Radio 3 was later suspended. Supported by the German government, the GBC began broadcasting in VHF-FM in the Accra-Tema metropolitan area in 1886. By way of expansion, the GBC, set up new FM stations in the regions and districts of Ghana in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Radio GAR now Unique FM, operated in Accra, Garden City Radio in Kumasi, Twin City FM in Sekondi-Takoradi, and Volta Star Radio in Ho. The Corporation maintained ownership of monopoly in a public service broadcasting from independence in 1957 through to the introduction of the television service in 1965.

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) Television Service was launched on 31 July 1965, in collaboration with Sanyo of Japan. The Sanyo Company had set up in Tema and to support its own television assembly plant, planned to promote television in Ghana. At the inauguration of Ghana Television, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah stated that television was not to be used to “cater for cheap entertainment” or “commercialism”. Its paramount objective would be “education in its purest sense and assist in the socialist transformation of Ghana”. He stresses that “television service should be African in its outlook”; and in its content even though, may express and “reflect outside and foreign experiences”, should remain geared towards the “needs of Ghana and Africa”. It must “reflect and promote the national ideals and ideology of the society” (Obeng, 1997, p. 21).
The then, GBC was the only electronic media service in Ghana. The GBC decree of 1968 changed the service into a public corporation. The decree did not clearly prohibit private broadcasting. However, frequencies were not allocated to private or individual applicants. Broadcasting in Ghana continued in a monopolistic state for almost 40 years after independence.

One of the main significant observed features of the media in Ghana during the era of monopoly of state owned media was the lack of freedom of expression especially in the one party state or military regimes. The lack of freedom of expression translates, most significantly, into suppression of the independence and freedom of media and practitioners to collect, process and disseminates information and ideas without governmental or external controls and often under censorship or self-censorship. Kyeremeh and Karikari (1998) posit the view that, the suppression of press freedom is always the symptom of larger suppression of freedom of speech and expression in the entire society. In other words, there is very little self-expression by members of the public and not by journalists and media practitioners alone. As such, the periodic popular demands for democratic governance, often simplified as a multi-party rule, features very prominently in the demands for press freedom.

As expected the media is perceived as more of a government mouthpiece than an instrument of the people. The stringent control of information through the media to the public resulted in the lack of diversity of opinions and issues. While there seemed to be several radio stations dotted in all the regions, the relay stations relayed the same information from a central point to all other areas. The lack of diversity was also
perceived to result in the lack of creativity because the same of the few people who had the opportunity to create programs over a period of time regurgitated the same old ideas repeatedly (NMP, 2005). Such characteristics affected efficiency through the stagnation of creativity, the repression of freedom of expression and causing institutional decay (NMP, 2005). Thus for a larger part of the early years of Ghana’s post-independence years, the GBC operated not differently from how the colonialists did.

However, these concerns notwithstanding, the GBC, as the national media, took seriously its responsibilities and discharged them credibly as a national, educational and development tool, especially in the forst ten years just after independence (NMP, 2005). This is mainly in the aspects of nationalism and the emphasised importance for the public good displayed by some media practitioners and in the use of media for national integration, social cohesion, socio economic development and education.

4.4. Media Liberalisation and Diversity

The reinstatement of Constitutional rule in 1992 paved way for the liberalization of the media within the context of a democracy and a free market economy. However, the government of the day, the Peoples National Defence Committee (PNDC) held on to granting licenses or allocation of frequencies to private radio stations until the mid-nineties, maintaining a monopoly on radio with the state-owned GBC (Kyeremeh and Karikari, 1998).

Such attitude from the ruling government was met with resistance Some individuals in 1994, protested this policy with a series of pirate broadcasts, for example, the Radio
Eye incident with Charles Wireku-Brobbey. Though, the government pressed for criminal prosecution of Wireku-Brobbey and impounded his equipment, the government, after this incident, allowed private FM stations to operate (Kyeremeh and Karikari, 1998).

In 1995, the government began allocating licences and frequencies through the Frequency Registration and Control Board, now National Communication Authority. The first FM licence was granted to Radio Universe, a small university station produced at the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana in Accra. The Ministry of Information, in preparation for the advent of deregulation, commissioned a committee to develop the needed guidelines on independent broadcasting in 1995. These guidelines were not implemented as the necessary laws to back the implementation and enforcement was not passed into a bill. However, the actual introduction of private broadcasting was long underway. Nevertheless, an Act, regularising the technicalities, was subsequently passed by parliament in 1996. The National Communication Authority Act covers all technical communication infrastructures, including broadcasting.

In 1996, in accordance with the appropriate facility of the constitution of the fourth republic, authorization was given to a number of privately owned FM radio stations, free to air television stations and cable television services in Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani, and Sekondi -Tarkoradi. A year later authorization is given to a number of privately owned radio stations to operate from rural areas.
Broadcast media has seen tremendous growth since 1996. Authorised FM radio stations in Ghana as at the first quarter of 2015 are in a total number of 390. 273 are commercially run, 17 are campus radio, 63 are community radio and 37 are public radio. Authorised television stations in Ghana, registered with the National Communication Authority as at the second quarter of 2015 are in total number of 58.

The mid 1990s onwards see significant changes in the media activities in the Ghanaian society. This period of media diversity becomes critical times in the rapid development of media systems. Cable television, expanded forms of broadcast television, videocassette recorders, direct broadcast satellites, view-data and tele-text all enters into the competition with the existing media – print, radio and television- for attention, time and money (Frempong, 2007).

To further the liberalisation and the extension of diversity of media and their contents as well as the enhancement of accessibility to media in Ghana, is the movement from analogue to digital media systems in 2014. Ghana signs the Geneva 2006 Agreement, establishing the Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting Plan at the Regional Radio Communications Conference that set June 17, 2015 as the deadline to end international protection for analogue broadcasting transmissions (Frempong, 2007).

Ghana is of the view that, migrating from analogue to digital television broadcasting would have an impact on the country by enhancing speedy publication of information. Subscribers may also find it more convenient in accessing information quicker and conveniently from other digital devices at lesser cost. The convergent ability of ICTs
that has enabled the accessibility of digital contents on all digital platforms is considered a digital dividend where it is believed that the benefit of digitisation outweighs otherwise.

Some of the benefits of digitisation are to bridge gaps in terms of time, money and access of information when networked on digital platforms. Due to these developments both radio and television signals can be received through the same frequency as well as the same medium at a very reduced cost where the mounting of a transmitter is not needed as it is in the analogue system. The liberalisation of media further enhances digitisation. It is celebrated as progress in the development of democracy and as means to promote political participation by citizens and the opportunity for the representation and production of local culture. Thus, with such high expectations of the media to express freedom in a responsible manner, a former President of the Republic of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufour in the year 2000 stated that,

“Set free, I have no doubt our media will play their honourable role with a heightened sense of responsibility. Our desire is to make freedom, in whatever respect and form, appreciable to Ghanaians”


Besides favourable policies and the provision of infrastructures that enhance access to media diversification, the production of media content becomes one of the main concerns of both popular writers and academics. The touting of the benefits and importance of media diversification, digitisation and liberalisation is met with an equal
measure of criticisms of its impact on society. Most argue that, in as much as the media space is opened to divergent views, the process is being abused in a manner to serve the parochial interests of individuals who can afford to own media to advance their particular political agenda. This has the tendency to threaten social cohesion (NMP, 2005).

The media is also accused of ‘poor performance’, a problem termed as a grim destruction of the country’s culture by the continuous use of ill-mannered language on the airwaves and unsubstantiated allegations (GNA, 2010). With the increasing unfettered access to the airwaves, critics complain that people without the requisite insight into cultural, economic or political issues can now be heard directing the government and other entities in the position of responsibilities on what they believe is feasible for the country’s development. Phone-in programs, both on television and radio have become the norm for contributing to on-air programs that dominate the airwaves. These programs, mostly on politics, are accused of suffering from poor moderation with many contributors maligning each other with socially unacceptable language. This compels media watchers to call for proper moderation of phone-in programs.

The cultural role of the media also comes under attack. The broadcast media in particular is again accused of promoting foreign programs which contain obscenity and pro-West values that does not reflect or promote the culture of the country (GNA, 2010). This view of the mass media is centred on the debate of globalisation of culture where the entire world is seen to be moulded in the image of West, particularly,
American culture as a result of the steady flow of transnational images that connects audiences worldwide (Thussu, 1997). Thus, several television programs are seen to project values that are out of context to the notion of a Ghanaian culture while the sense of community and a collective well-being is compromised, making audience lose their sense of Ghanaian culture.

The theorisations of the impact of media in society, both in their states of monopoly and diversity are situated within the framework of nation-states and international corporate media as the actors (Croteau and Hoynes, 2007). This way of institutionalising the media makes it simple to assume the impact of media in the society. Ideas of globalisation of culture and cultural imperialism are based on the foundational theories of the hypodermic needle or magic bullet effects where media users are perceived as passive consumers in their interaction with the media and lack the agency to determine the extent to which the media influence their actions and beliefs. Subsequent theories come up to disclaim the passiveness of the consumer proposing that, media consumers are not to be assumed as passive but rather active in their interaction with the media (Morley, 1997). This position assumes that media consumers are selective of the contents received from the media as they impute meaning to the messages they receive according their diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. However, the concept of the active consumer adopts a different facet, meaning and implications in the advent of the rapid development of information communication technologies, in Ghana and elsewhere.
4.5. Information Communication Technology and New Media in Ghana

The expansive changes underlying media diversity are made possible through the ongoing developments of Information Communication Technology. ICT is an expansive term that emphasizes the role of the convergent nature of the means of communication and the integration of telecommunications, computers as well as the necessary applications and software with instant retrieval and storage features, and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information (ITU, 2015).

However, ICT has not got a common definition, as the concepts, methods and applications involved in ICT are constantly changing on an almost daily basis. The breadth of ICT covers any product that stocks, recovers, controls, conveys or receives information electronically in a digital form, e.g. personal computers, digital television, email and the likes. (ITU, 2015). It is a given, that in the contemporary world, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are critical to the global socio-economic systems which support the world’s business, administrative, governmental and social organizations. It becomes imperative that, governments of both developed and developing countries are compelled to thrust the development of this sector. The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, which is based on a free market approach, has promoted new media use.

Literature on ICT is filled with discussions of the potential contribution of ICT to good education, democratic governance, health, environment, commerce, economic growth and social development. Ghana is one of the first countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to
have internet access. Ghana developed policies and programs to exploit effectively the prospects of ICTs. This was in accordance to worldwide reform policies for media liberalisation of the global ICT market and the utilisation of its services in the late 1980s and 1990s. In Ghana, reform of the sector started in the early 1990s.

To further take advantage of the potential benefits of these reforms, Ghana introduced a five year Accelerated Development Program (ADP) in 1994 with an overall aim to increase telephone coverage in the country. This allowed private participation in all segment of the industry. The fundamental logic of such reform was to enable the subscriber to afford a wider, better, new and less costly services (Wellenius, 1997).

Furthermore, Ghana put in place the necessary frameworks to boost ICT development in the country. Ghana has an ICT policy named Information Communication Technology for Accelerated Development (ICT4AD). This is enlarged by the National Telecommunication Policy. Also, two regulatory authorities, by names the National Communications Authority and the National Media Commission, are also established by the National Communications Authority Act 524 of 1996 and the National Media Commission Act 449 of 1993. These are the authority bodies to regulate the different segments of the ICT market.

As a result of these developments the ICT landscape in Ghana is now characterized by the proliferation of services such as cellular phones, pagers, cable TV, internet and its
ancillary services and of a numerous print and electronic media operators, all trying to utilise niches in the market.

Ghana has six telecommunication companies registered with the National Communication Authority. They are Expresso, Millicom (Tigo), Scancom (MTN), GT/Vodafone, Airtel and Glo. In addition, in 2005 there are 29 companies actively providing internet services out of 163 registered, 25 public/corporate data operators, 57 VSAT operators (Frempong, 2007). The key internet operators are Africa Online, Internet Ghana, Network Computer Systems and Intercom Digital Network, among others. With the introduction of broadband services, most of these operators are migrating to the provision of such service.

These developments provide prospects for increased permeation of ICT services, increased competition with the aim of price reduction at the same time with the improvement of quality yet abundant of services. These developments are also aimed at the utilization of ICT to enhance good democratic governance in the country. However, with Ghana’s high illiteracy rate of 38.1% this seems to pose an obstacle to the adoption of ICT by the population as a whole (Frempong, 2007) It is well noted in literature that ICT is knowledge-intensive. This suggests that Ghana needs a literate public to enable to the utilisation of the technologies to effectively enhance their socio-economic and political activities.

The government of Ghana’s intervention to this problem is the enhancement of ICT training in second cycle schools and the provision of laptops to bridge the digital gap.
deficit in the country (Frempong, 2007). As of January 2016, about 5.24 million people or about 19% of the population use the Internet in Ghana (Un Census Bureau, 2016). At the beginning and according to the Household and Individual ICT Access and Usage Survey (Vallejo, 2014), the bulk of people who had access to the internet received it through the internet cafés, the workplace or schools. Only a small proportion had residential access. Yet, in spite of the limited number of the population which had access to the internet and new media, users’ interaction with new media, has been duly researched, even though scant.

Researchers and scholars have divergent opinions of the impacts of new media technology on the world today. Their opinions are expressed as either good or bad and cover all aspects of life of which the technology is used. Utopians appreciate social media as potentially an enormous tool for good, citing positive possibilities from their uses which include supporting the practice of democracy, human interactions, concerted political action, education, etc (LaRose, et al., 2001). For most countries from Africa, deliberations of new media technologies are positioned within the discourse on digital divides and socioeconomic and political development (Fuchs, & Horak, 2008).

In Ghana, there is seemingly articulated political desire to facilitate human development through information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as the aim to become the digital technology nucleus of the West African region (Jalulah, 2008; Odame, 2008). Accordingly, the nation’s ICT for Accelerated Development Policy states its objective;
“To accelerate Ghana’s socio-economic development process towards the realization of the vision to transform Ghana into a high income economy and society that is predominantly information-rich and knowledge based within the next two to three decades or less” (Republic of Ghana, 2003, p. 14).

However, the high cost of owning ICT devices and gaining access to the internet characterises how users use new media (Sey, 2011). Due to the very small proportion of users who has residential access to the internet due to its high cost of acquisition, most of the population resort to accessing the internet through internet cafes dotted around most of the cities in the country, particularly in the capital, Accra. Notwithstanding, the low access levels of the internet, when compared with other countries, with reports pointing to an active business for internet café owners (Sey, 2011).

Cyber fraud, known locally as “sakawa” or “419” became pervasive and particularly problematic when in 2010, Ghana was ranked the number two in notoriety after Nigeria (Sey, 2011). Fraudulent acts include the use of stolen credit cards for purchases, conducting fake online dating tricks, and the invitation of contacts to trick them into non-existent beneficial business transactions. (Sey, 2011). Anecdotal evidences suggest that the perpetrators of internet scams are usually young men between the ages of seven and thirty, typically known as “cafe boys”. However, Sey (2011) is of the view that, the actual and potential benefits of the internet, users acquire include the development of
computer skills and stabilisation of the local currency as a result of remittances. Again, the use of the internet has resulted in fewer youth engaging in criminal activities on the streets, and the redistribution of wealth and patronage of internet cafe and ISP services.

4.6. Using Social Media in Ghana

Due to the internet connective abilities of mobile phones and portable internet modem technologies, most people have internet connectivity through their mobile phones in recent times. In Ghana, social networking applications have also become popular platforms among Ghanaians for information dissemination. Now, means of communication is not about use of the device, but it is all about the use of the social media applications for networking. All applications, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp and BBM are available on mobile phone devices commonly referred to as smart phones. They are also on other portable new media gadgets such as i-pads, tablets and personal computers.

The social media’s influence generate several reactions from different people. These reactions range from naïve optimism to scepticism. However it is received, the fact that it has led to intense shifts in areas interpersonal interaction, work culture, relations to time, speed and convenience, networking between individuals and groups, and even use of language, cannot be ignored.

In Ghana, social media is recognised as powerful and important tools that give citizens platforms to express their thoughts on important developmental issues and set the agenda. For instance, social media was used to promote the need for political change in
the Arab world which brought about the Arab Spring (Howard et al., 2011). Similarly, political demonstrations, coded “OccupyFlagStaffHouse” and “RedFriday” were put to social media for concerted political action to draw the attention of the public to what the organisers believe was persistent economic challenges in Ghana. The events are campaigned and organised through the social media as the primary vehicle to press on a campaign of civic engagement and mobilization to enhance the quality of political discourse in Ghana.

The business sector too, recognises the importance of social media. Business executives challenge Ghanaian businesses to take advantage of internet social media penetration in the country to enhance their sales and marketing activities. They advise that it is prudent for people to tap into the huge market and business opportunities afforded by the high number of users of mobile-phone and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in Ghana (GNA, 2016).

Motivational and inspirational groups abound on social media platforms offering intellectual and social support to members of different platforms and networks. Social media has also become the first point of call which sets the schema by breaking the news and giving leads to traditional media to verify and refine the news. In this instance the role of traditional media to inform, educate and entertain shifts to simply serving the needs of advertisers. This is deemed to compromise ethical standards in journalism indirectly (BFT, 2013).
Just as the emergence of any media in society is met with both adulations and criticisms (Dominick, 2006), the seemingly abuse and misuse of the use of social media in Ghana has not gone unnoticed. Several anecdotal evidences direct that the misuse and its effect are particularly prevalent among the young people in Ghana. It is recognised that social media is helpful when it comes to communicating among friends and families. Educationists have observed however, that the advent of social media is negatively affecting both the verbal and written grammar of the English language among students in the country. It is believed that many are deviating from correct spelling and grammar usage. Moreover students are reassigning their ways of writing on social media platforms and the way they speak into the examination rooms.

A survey (Brandwatch, 2013) indicates that social media networks transforms modern day English, with Twitter presenting the greatest threat. Per the survey, total of 0.56 per cent of words posted on the micro-blogging site were either misspelt or unofficial.

The misuse of social media has also been seen to extend to the workforce where it is noted by the former a former Minister of Labour and Employment, Mr. Haruna Iddrisu who bemoans the abuse of social media by Ghanaians. He insists that those platforms are being wrongly applied in many instances as they attract the valuable time of some young workers, at the expense of productivity.

“Ghanaians romanticism with social media; whether Facebook or WhatsApp or Twitter, is beginning to affect productivity. The amounts of attention young people give to social media and the purposes for which you use
them, I do not think are in many respects desirable”

(Graphic online, 2016 )

In his opinion, the positive intent and effect behind the creation of social media are being eroded in the Ghanaian context by what he terms as ‘unfortunate trend’. A trend that leaves many virtually addicted to their phones and tablets and other sophisticated gadgets. There is the opinion that social media platforms have become outlets of ‘insults, vilification and abuse’ of public officials and other members of society. This should not characterise the usage of social media.

The essence of social media is for people to be able to share vital information to elicit appropriate responses for the good and benefit of society. Generally, it is claimed that such behaviours are not known to Ghanaian the culture, nor is it known to be of Ghanaian values (Daily Graphic, 2016).

Viewing the issue of social media misuse from a professional perspective too, both the academic and professional fraternities call for ethical journalism in the wake of social media proliferation. Recognising the value of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp as integral in news gathering operations, they also warn of its potential for the publication of offensive and obscene materials. In their opinion, social media can fairly be regulated if people begin to pay attention to what they ingest, who to follow, blocking of undesirable persons, comments and publications from their virtual spaces.
Equally are cautionary tales made in the public arena urging parents to introduce regulation of the use of social media to protect children. This concern targets the perceived offensive and criminal behaviour such as pornography’s prevalence on social media, a situation which could harm children. The unfolding events of social media use and their perceived consequences on individuals and on the Ghanaian society at large creates a form of moral panic where concerned citizens fear that the use of social media is threatening societal values and interest.

Stanley Cohen (1972) is of the view that, moral panic is an event or a situation that poses as a menace to societal values and interest. Human beings can also pose such threats. In everyday usage, moral panic refers to the hyperbolic social reaction triggered by the activities of particular groups and or individuals. Such activities are seen at the time of happenings, as major social concerns which are normally amplified by the media. Thus, the media becomes the key facilitator of spiralling the idea of moral panic, in that, by amplification of what societal values deem deviant, the persons of acts involved are vied by the general public as the source of moral decline and societal disintegration. McRobbie and Thornton (1995) argue that moral panics are no longer the occasional and emergency interventional mechanism to draw the public’s attention to deviant behaviour by the media, but rather has become the day to day presentation of events which has become the standard or normative ways of drawing attention to the public.

Thus, the authors view moral panic as acting on behalf of the dominant social order. Moral panics are a means of devising consensus by actively interfering in the space of public opinion and social consciousness through the use of highly emotive and
bombastic language which has the effect of demanding that “something be done about it”. McRobbie and Thornton’s (1995) description of moral panic aptly places the unfolding observations of social media usage in the Ghanaian society within context.

Some views held by the Ghanaian society on the use of such social media make social media culpable as sources of moral decline and social disintegration. The blame of students’ poor WASSCE performance on social media usage addiction, the un-mindfulness of obscenity and respect for a person’s dignity and right to privacy in their usage of social media are some of the inappropriate ways with which the media are used. Others include: the offensive and criminal behaviour perpetrated with the use of social media such as pornography, the unethical publication of offensive and obscene materials and the self-righteous condemnation of members of the public. Worse still, further accounts of unregulated activities are the sharing of sensitive and horrid photos of unfortunate events. The abuse, the insults, the vilification, the untruth publication of public officials and other members of society is said to characterise the generation of social media use in Ghana. The understanding of social media use among the public, thus lies at the moral boundary of the Ghanaian society, making it even more problematic.

McRobbie and Thornton (1995) argue that although the original model of moral panic is an exemplary intervention in its time, it is impossible to rely on the old model with its stages and cycles, univocal media, uniform societal and dominant reactions. They posit the view that, the explosion and disintegration of mass, niche and micro-media and the array of voices, which contend and challenge the meaning of the issues subject
to moral panic, suggest that the model of moral panic cannot possibly take account of
the labyrinth interconnectedness determining relations which now exists between
social groups and the media, the reality and what is represented.

Simply put, moral panics, as some have suggested, are not the key to understanding
fears and anxieties about social media usage in Ghana. Just as well, the expected effect
of requiring that “something be done about it” from the moral panic episodes seem to
spark the call for self-regulation as a way of managing the use of social media in Ghana.
But the call for self-imposed ethical standards and behaviour online has been an
ongoing response to managing the use of the internet and social media networking
globally. The concept of net etiquette popularly called “Netiquette” is introduced,
referring to rules of behaviour on the Web. Netiquette is proposed and formally
approved in 1995 by “request for comments” RFC No. 1855 (Hambridge, 1996) which
are documents containing technical specifications, standards and rules, widely applied
on the Internet. These documents formulate the rules that are recognized as the chief
ethical code of the Web. One of the most important rules in RFC No. 1855 is: “Be
conservative in what you send and liberal in what you receive.”

However, the relevance and effectiveness of the application of self-regulation to the use
of social media is untenable. Mueller, (2002) explains that, self-censorship using the
internet and the application of ethical norms in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s
were possible due to the fact that, by then the internet was not a common phenomenon
as such few people who used it were those with high levels of education. Their use
of the internet was purposive. They used it to enhance their knowledge base, conduct
research, as well as holding scientific discussions. Such people Mueller (2002) argue had the presence of mind to independently create and respect civilized rules for using internet services.

Disciplined use of the internet, however, seemed to fall apart as the number of internet users began to grow in geometrical progression. Mueller, (2002) is of the opinion that, for many people it was a new form of entertainment as well as satisfying their new needs which often created conditions for violating national legislation and public morals. The question therefore arises of the duties not only of parents and teachers but also the state to protect the vulnerable from information harmful to them which calls for a stricter state regulation. However, Chin (2013), says self-regulation is an ideal model but in some places including Britain, it does not work very well. Chin (2013) is of the view that, social media is not media, but life and it is not possible to regulate life. Therefore, regulations, if there should be any at all, must be supported by human rights standards and only be regulated when necessary.

4.7. Attempts at Media Regulation

In 1979, the government of Ghana establishes an independent Press Commission to protect both state and private media from state control while serving as a shield between the state and the state media in particular. The Constitution is suspended in 1981 and the state asserts control again over the state media, driving private media into near extinction. In 1992, democratisation reintroduces the Press Commission, renamed the National Media Commission (NMC) in the new constitution. The NMC is charged with promoting freedom and independence of media, ensuring maintenance of professional
standards, protecting the state media from government control, appointing members of the Boards of Directors, or governing bodies of the state media and regulating the registration of newspaper.

A new Legislative Instrument (LI 2224) is passed by Parliament to empower the National Media Commission (NMC) to sanitise the airwaves. The purpose of the regulations is to establish and maintain standards in the content of public electronic communications network, public electronic communications service and broadcasting services. The law allows the NMC to establish and maintain standards in the distribution of the content of public electronic communication and broadcasting services. The LI, Content Standards Regulations 2015, passed by Parliament on December 9, 2015, also empowers the NMC to grant content authorisation to an operator or revoke same, if an operator, comprising mainstream radio and television broadcasters, telecommunications operators or their agents, or any company that distributes electronic content, contravenes the regulations. Regulation 3 (1) of the law says that,

“An operator shall not convey or permit to be carried, content on a public electronic communications service or a broadcasting service without obtaining a content authorisation from the Commission”.

The NMC takes cognisance of the fact that there are now emergent platforms for the distribution of content other than the traditional electronic services such as the radio, television and the Internet. Some of those platforms provide various content services
offered by the various telecommunications operators to their subscribers. To this end, the NMC deems it important as to why contents need some guidelines or standards. The regulations are also aimed at ensuring the accurate and impartial reporting and presentation of news and making sure that electronic programmes were not harmful to audiences.

However, these directives from the NMC are met with resistance with the invocation of Ghana’s Constitution, especially the Article that states that the media is not to be controlled. The NMC on the other hand argues that broadcasting is regulated because the electromagnetic spectrum which carries broadcasting is a finite public resource which is allocated to companies on trust. The holders of the spectrum licence are accountable to the public. Furthermore, broadcasting is an intrusive medium and can affect people whether they choose to listen/watch or not. It is for this reason that regulators often need to protect consumers, especially children, from certain types of possible abuse.

Individuals and representatives of organisations express their concerns in strong language; some even claiming that the NMC intend to return Ghana to the old days of censorship and criminal libel laws. These concerns have been strongly expressed in spite of the fact that the constitution gives the NMC the power to enact laws that are realistically required in the interest of national security, public order, public morality and for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons.
4.7.1. Social Media Use and Regulations

Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution guarantees the freedom and independence of the media. Article 2 explicitly prohibits censorship, while Article 3 pre-empts any licensing requirements for mass media. Editors and publishers are shielded from government control, interference, or harassment. When the content of mass media stigmatises any particular individual or group, the media are obliged to publish any rejoinder from the stigmatised party. Journalists and the general public welcomed the liberal provisions of the constitution, hailing the new era of free expression in Ghana.

However, the onset of social media which is characterised by convergence, participation, openness and transcendence of national borders, pose challenges to traditional media policies and regulations. Social media allows everyone to take part in “the dialogue,” more than ever before. Media freedom and freedom of speech today means giving everyone, not just the few people who own or control traditional tools of mass communication, the chance to talk and share information. Everyone with a computer or a mobile phone and an internet connection can publish worldwide. It must be recognised that, upholding media standards under situations where the boundary between public and private communication is difficult to identify than in the past. This is challenge is particular to social media, which serve as means of personal communication as well as a means of dissemination and publication.

Ghana, just like any other country in the world, finds itself confronted with the ubiquitous use of social media yet bewildered in the wake of their seemingly negative application at regulating it. This bewildering state of the Ghanaian public seems to
come from the views held about traditional media and their institutional roles in society, which are to maintain order and seek the interest of the public, to serve as a tool for national integration and social cohesion, and to serve as ways through which the appreciation of the freedom of speech could be achieved.

These roles however, seem to be expected of social media. Yet, the highly personalised and open content creation and consumption afforded by social media by its multimodal nature, refuses such restrictions to be imposed upon it. The instrumentalities of these proposals come from the older generation whiles the non-adherence of these media codes of operation are laid at the door step of the younger generation.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter provides a historical analysis of the development of media in Ghana from the pre-colonial period through to the present times of information and communication technology and the emergence of social media. This analysis reveals some distinct ways through which the development of the media affects the Ghanaian society.

It reveals that, changes in the media landscape directly links to the socio-political environment of the country. Also, the more democratised the media is, the more there is the demand for the expression of speech. Furthermore, the change from monopolistic ownership of media to a more divers and fragmented media is matched up with society grappling with the problem of active mobilisation and integrating people around national cultural values. There is also a rapidly growing degree of mobility of contents, increasing the individuals’ information reach. With new technologies completely
restructuring the media landscape, traditional regulatory expectations have been called into question and, in many cases, existing rules have become counterproductive.

Most importantly, unlike previous communication media practices in Ghana, the use of social media calls attention to generational awareness. The young generation is seen eager to express themselves while the older generation is seen to be more restrained. On the other hand, in the current social media practices in Ghana, boundaries of what constitute appropriate for consumption by old and young people are disappearing. This implies that distinct media worlds for each separate generation is diminishing and being reinforced simultaneously. The next chapters explore how each generation relates to social media and how intergenerational communication manifest through social media in Ghana.
CHAPTER FIVE

PATTERN OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BETWEEN DIGITAL NATIVES AND DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses findings from the research survey which sought to unravel the pattern of social media adoption between the youth, which this study defines as the Digital Natives (DN) and the older population as the Digital Immigrants (DI). Findings are discussed under various thematic headings beginning with the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The study then analyzed the ownership of social media devices, usage of such devices for social media activities, predominant social media sites engaged by respondents, the motives for the subscription of these social media sites and how the two groups consume or spend time on social media.

The analysis compares between the two generational cohorts as to which cohort owns which device(s) and how they use the device(s). From the use of devices, the chapter further explores which social media site respondents subscribe to and what the motivational factors are that drive respondents from the two generational cohort towards social media. The activities performed on social media by the two groups and the time spent on these activities are further discussed between the two groups.
The analysis in this chapter is broken down into two phases, first, how the two age
groups, that is the DN and the DI perform under the thematic headings and further by
the gender composition within these two groups.

To achieve the aim of exploring the pattern of social media usage between the two
generational cohorts, with a population size of 300, the researcher adopts descriptive
statistics to describe the basic features of the data. This chapter provide simple
summaries about the sample and the measures, together with simple graphics analysis.
In other words, this chapter simply describes what the data shows. The descriptive
statistics allowed the researcher to summarise the large data to enable comparisons
between the two generational cohorts. In doing this, the researcher run the risk of losing
important details such as the reasons behind the choices, attitudes and perceptions of
the usage of social media between the two generational cohorts. However, this
limitation is addressed through qualitative data and analysis in the subsequent chapters.

5.2. Demographic Characteristics

5.2.1. Gender Composition of Respondents

The survey recorded a hundred percent response rate where the estimated sampled sizes
of 300 individuals were successful interviewed. The gender composition is fairly
represented, and this is demonstrated in Figure 5.1. Out of the 95 percent individuals
who indicated their sex, females relatively dominated the survey with a percentage
composition of 48 percent while as Male constituted 47 percent of the respondents. Five
percent of the respondents however failed in indicating their gender (Figure 5.1). Issues of confidentiality and oversight on both the part of the respondents and interviewer accounted for this.

**Figure 5.1: Gender Composition of Respondent**

![Gender Composition of Respondent](image)

Source: Author’s Survey 2016

### 5.2.2 Age Composition of Respondents

Illustrated in Figure 5.2 is the age composition of the respondents. It shows that, about 5.33 percent of respondent failed in revealing their ages, hence hindering the ability to categories these respondents. Issues of confidentiality and unwillingness on the part of some respondents in disclosing their ages accounted for this observation. Despite this however, the majority (94.67%) of the respondents willingly indicated their ages hence, making it possible to classify them as either “Digital Immigrants” or “Digital Natives”. In other words, sorting the respondents as either adults or young respectively for better understanding of the dynamics existing across these respondents. Digital Immigrants constituted most of the respondents with percentage composition of 47.67 percent. The
Digital Natives constituted the remaining 47 percent of the total sampled size used for the study.

**Figure 5.2 Age composition of the Respondents by Age Group**

![Age Composition Chart](data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAnAAAAAeCAYAAAAwegLqAAAgAElEQVR42m3bMgQ2wT2fP5A+KrH0xV...

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

The study proceeded to unveil the gender composition within these groups. This is to better understand which gender seems to drive the research objective most. Figure 5.3 thus illustrates the gender composition with both the DN and DI. Among the DN, females accounted for most of the respondents with 53.19 percent composition of the entire sampled population. Males on the other hand, accounted for the remaining 46.81 percent. In the case of the DI, males constituted the majority with 51.75 percent share as against females having 48.25 percent composition of the group.

**Figure 5.3 Gender Age Nexus of Respondents**

![Gender Age Nexus Chart](data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAnAAAAAeCAYAAAAwegLqAAAgAElEQVR42m3bMgQ2wT2fP5A+KrH0xV...

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
5.2.3. Educational Background of Respondents

To better understand the motives, usage and consumption of social media across the two groups, it is paramount to unravel the educational background of the respondents to ascertain whether it brings any variation within the respondents. Figure 5.3 illustrates the educational background of the 300 sampled respondents. It is evident that about 45 percent of the respondents have either attained or are in the process of attaining a degree or its equivalent. Respondents that do have secondary and graduate educational background also constituted 21.3 percent and 19 percent respectively. A total of 9.0 percent of the respondents had educational background below the secondary school education with those dropping out after middle school constituting the majority. A total of 8.3 percent had middle school education as their highest educational background. Respondents with basic educational background also constituted 0.7 percent of the total selected sampled population. Non-respondents, that is, people who refused in answering their highest educational background were about 2 percent.

Figure 5.4: Education background of Respondents

Survey: Author’s Survey, 2016
The study further teases out the nature of the educational background within the two-age groupings. This is to understand which respondent age group has the highest or lowest educational background and how it is likely to affect motives, usage and consumption of social media. Illustrated in Figure 5.4 is the educational background of the two population with the red legend depicting educational status of the DI whereas the blue legend shows that of the DN. As observed in Figure 5.4 above, the dominant educational background of the respondents of the study was the first degree (45%). Out of the respondents who have first degree as their highest educational background, the DIs constituted the highest as they accounted for 53.54 percent. The DN who have first degree as their highest educational background on the other hand, constituted the remaining 46.46 percent.

The group of respondents which has the secondary education as its highest educational background was highly skewed to the DN as they accounted for 62.05 percent of the total 21.3 percent of the entire respondents who have this educational background. The DI with secondary school education on the other hand were only 37.95 percent. Among those with graduate education (see Figure 5.4) were mainly the DNs as they accounted for 58.51 percent of those with this educational background. Respondents with middle and basic school educational certificates were largely the DI population as they accounted for 87.64 percent and 100 percent with these academic qualifications respectively (Figure 5.4; Figure 5.5).
From the foregoing analysis of Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5, it can be deduced that the DI are less educated as they generally constituted the minority within higher educational qualifications but the majority under lower educational qualifications. This observation has high statistical inference as confirmed by the chi-square test, with probability value of 0.00 less than an alpha value of 0.05 percent.

**Figure 5.5: Age and Educational Background Nexus of Respondents**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1 Chi-Square Test of Association between Education and Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chi-Square Tests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

On the Gender dynamics, DN females dominate in almost every cycle of the educational ladder except for Graduates studies and Basic Education. This dispersion
could be explained by recent efforts tailored at promoting girl child education to bridge the long existing gap in Ghana’s education. Despite the positive impacts of these programs in the education level of females, males largely dominate at the graduate studies, partly attributed to obstacles of marriage and child bearing on females as against their male counter parts (Tanye, 2008). Other educational backgrounds such as professional studies also have high proportion of DN females who have this qualification than their male counter parts.

In the case of the DI, males predominately dominate in higher qualifications whereas females constitute the majority among those with lower educational backgrounds. From Figure 5.6 males constitute the majority among the DIs with bachelor’s degree or its equivalent. Females on the other hand were the majority with those with Basic Education, Middle School and Secondary School qualifications (ibid).

**Figure 5.6 Educational Background by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Adult Gender Male</th>
<th>Adult Gender Female</th>
<th>Young Gender Male</th>
<th>Young Gender Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school education</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
<td>35.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school education</td>
<td>47.46%</td>
<td>52.54%</td>
<td>47.46%</td>
<td>52.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree or equivalent</td>
<td>58.06%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>58.82%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>58.06%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>58.82%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
5.2.4. Occupational Status of Respondents

Understanding further the dynamics of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the study ascertains the current occupational statuses of the respondents. This is illustrated in Figure 5.7 below. It is evident that most of the respondents are engaged in one form of livelihood activity or another. This is because only 14 percent of respondents were students and 3.4 percent engaged in other working activities. Out of those who indicated other working status, only one person, representing less than 0.001, was unemployed. Among those who engaged in livelihood activities, Civil and Public servants’ workers dominate the survey as they are about 22 percent.

Respondents engaged in National Service are the second highest, as they account for 21.3 percent of the entire sample size. Educationists and Health professionals account for 11 percent and 6 percent respectively. Self-employment and entrepreneurship are all well represented. Jointly, they account for about 20.3 percent of the sample size but individually accounted for 13.3 percent and 7 percent respectively. About 2 percent of the respondents however failed to state their occupational status.

Figure 5.7 Occupation statuses of Respondents

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
Figure 5.8 presents the age group composition within each of the occupational status indicated in Figure 5.7 above. From the figure Civil/Public Servant occupation were mainly dominated by the adult respondent as they accounted for 98.27 percent of the total 22 percent respondents with this occupational status. Entrepreneurship and Health Professionals were also mainly engaged by the digital immigrants with the entire 7 percent and 6 percent with these occupation statuses been the digital immigrants. Those working as educationist were mainly the digital immigrants, accounting for 81.42 percent of the total 11 percent respondents engaged in this job role.

Respondents with occupational statuses in Studentship and National Service are however, mainly from the DN population. This is much expected due to the age of the DI respondents. Ideally someone of age 55 plus is expected to be either retired from active work or be at the verge of retiring in Ghana. All the 21.3 percent of the respondents undertaking National Service are the DNs with none as DI. The 11 percent with studentship occupational status has 92.09 percent as DN and the remaining 7.91 percent as DI.

Figure 5.8 also shows that among those engaged is self-employment are mostly from the DN population (92.25%). This observation ascribes to the growing unemployment challenges in the country and Government’s effort of providing funds in support of growing small to medium scale businesses (Owusu-Ansah, 2012; Baah-Boateng, 2013).
### Figure 5.8 Occupation statuses of Young and Old Respondents

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

### Table 5.2 Chi-Square Test of Association between Occupation Status and Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>89.863</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>108.114</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>56.155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

### 5.3. Ownership of Social Media Supporting Devices

To effectively ascertain the motives, usage and consumption of social media among different segments of the population it becomes paramount that ownership of electronic supporting devices is known. This is shown in Figure 5.9 below. In the exception of the 0.3 percent of the respondents who do not have any of the social media supporting electronic devices, almost all the respondents have at least one or more of such devices
(Figure 5.9). Figure 5.9 further demonstrates that smartphones is the commonest of such devices owned by the respondents as many of the respondents have it either alone or in addition with other devices. Those with smartphones alone are 36.1 percent, while those who have it together with computers constitute 32.3 percent. Those who own all the three social media supporting electronic devices, namely smartphones, computer and tablets are 16.3 percent. Respondents with only computers and tablets are 6.3 percent and 8.8 percent respectively.

**Figure 5.9: Social Media supporting electronic devices owned by Respondents**

![Bar chart showing ownership of electronic devices](chart.png)

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

From the foregoing observation, majority of the respondent do have smart phones making them likely to use this device for social media activities. Others either have this in combination with other devices or use other devices besides the smart phones. In understanding the dynamics within the DI and DN populations, in depth analysis is presented in Figure 5.10 below. Out of those who own all devices (smartphones, tablets and computers) DNs account for close to 80 percent with the remaining accounted by the DI. Due to this observation, it is logical to see that ownership of single devices is dominated by the DI population, as most of the DN have multiple devices. Out of the 6.3 percent respondents that have computers only, the DI respondents are about 58
percent vis-à-vis 42 percent being the DN respondents. The 36.1 percent respondents that have smartphones only, DI respondents dominate with a percentage composition of 54 percent. Ownership of ‘smartphones and computers only’ is also dominated by the DI respondents accounting for 61.25 percent with the remaining 38.78 percent accounted by DNs.

Ownership of Tablets on the other hand is slightly higher for the DNs than their DI counterparts. Out of the 8.8 percent who have tablet only, DNs constitute 53.84 percent and the remaining percentage of 46.16 percent accounted by the DI. In summary, findings from Figure 5.10 shows higher ownership of social media devices among the DNs than their counterparts, the DIs. This variation in ownership of the social media supporting devices can be ascribed to the educational background differences as majority of the DI group are less educated as the case of the DNs. Hence, the ownership of multiple devices may be considered less priority among this group.

**Figure 5.10 Ownership of social media supporting devices Across Age Group**

![Graph showing ownership of social media supporting devices across age groups]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devices</th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>46.43%</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP &amp; Comp</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
<td>46.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>38.78%</td>
<td>61.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>79.17%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
Illustrated in Figure 5.11 below is the gender ownership of the social media supporting devices within the age groupings. Within the DNs, females have higher ownership of social media supporting devices than their male counterparts. Out of the 79.17 percent of DN respondents who have all the social media supporting devices (Figure 5.11), females constitute 63.16 percent whereas the males account for the remaining 36.84 percent. As a result, females’ possession of unit social media supporting devices appear lower than their male counters except for the ownership of tablets where they own 73.33 percent among the total DN population who have tablets only.

Findings within the DI population however, differ from the case of the DNs. Possession of multiple social media supporting devices are predominant among males with females dominating in the ownership of single devices. Among the DIs who have all the three social media supporting devices, males are about 80 percent as against 20 percent females. Those who jointly have computers and smart phones, are also dominated by the males with a share composition of 63.33 percent. Females however have more of the "computers only", "smart phones only" and "tablets only" in the respective percentage of 54.55 percent, 63.33 percent and 76.92 percent.

In summary, findings from Figure 5.9 to Figure 5.11 shows high patronage of social media supporting devices but very predominant among the DNs than the DIs. Within these groups, DN females have higher interest in ownership of social media supporting devices than their male counterparts. In the case of the DI, males however tend to possess multiple social media supporting devices than the females.
5.4. Usage of Social Media Devices

After unearthing the ownership of social media supporting devices, the study deems it necessary to establish whether these devices indeed are used for social media activities. Presented in Figure 5.12 shows that the respondents truly use these devices for social media activities since less than one percent of the population does not use these devices for social media. The device predominantly used for social media activities is the smartphone with 58.25 percent of the respondents using this for social media. The next most used devices after the smartphone are the joint use of smartphones and computers as they constitute 19 percent. The device with the least usage was tablet with only 4.7 percent of the respondents using this device. The observed usage is highly attributed to the ownership of these devices as discussed in the preceding sessions. The high ownership of smart phones reflects it as the predominant device used for social media activities.
From Figure 5.13, respondents belonging to the DNs dominate in the usage of these devices for social media. This harmonizes the high degree of ownership of these devices by this age group than their DIs counterparts (see Figure 5.10). Out of the 9.43 percent of the respondents using all three social media supporting devices, the majority are DNs constituting 96 percent. DIs on the other hand dominate single social media supporting devices except for tablets. Among the 8.42 percent of the respondents using computers only, 52.17 percent are the DI population. Similarly, DIs constitute 51.20 percent of those who use only smart phones for social media activities. Respondents using both computers and smart phones are also mainly the from the DI group as most of the DNs do use multiple devices. Tablets usage however, differ with the most active users being the DNs due to the high sophistication of this device. Out of the 4.71 percent, the DN users are 57.14 percent.

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
Emerging from the ongoing discussion, usage of social media supporting devices for social media turns to be very much common with the DNs than the Dis. This is largely due to growing technology and the affinity to changing trends of communication technology of the DNs than the Dis. This contributes to their high level of ownership of these devices. In understanding, the gender dynamics within the various age groupings, the study presents, in Figure 5.14, how females and males differs in the usage of these devices within the groups.

In the DN respondents, those using all the three electronic devices for social media activities are slightly dominated by females (54.17%) and in the males (45.83%). Usage of smart phones and tablets for social media are also dominated by females. Females using smart phones and tablets for social media are about 55.56 percent and 100 percent respectively. DN males however, lead in the usage of "computers only" and the joint usage of smart phones and computers. Out of the 47.83 percent and 29.63 percent using these devices for social media (Figure 5.13), males constitute 72.73 percent and 68.75 percent respectively (Figure 5.14).
Within the DI, the 4.0 percent respondents who concomitantly use the three devices for social media are all males with no female. On the back drop of this, females dominate in the usage of smart phone only and tablets only. Out of the 51.20 percent and 42.86 percent using smart phones only and tablets only, females are 51.76 percent and 66.67 percent respectively. Among the 0.67 percent of the respondents using none of these social media supportive devices are all females within the two age groups.

**Figure 5.14 Usage of social media devices by Gender**

![Figure 5.14 Usage of social media devices by Gender](source: Author’s Survey, 2016)

**5.5. Subscription to Social Media Sites**

After ascertaining that the ownership of these devices are indeed used for social media, the study desired to know which social media sites are actively engaged in by the respondents. This is presented in Figure 5.15. Facebook is the commonest social media site used. It has the highest subscription among the respondents used for the study (41.68%). This is followed up by Twitter with 16.64 percent of the respondents who have subscription accounts. WhatsApp and Google plus are the third and fourth most social media sites used with subscription of 11.84 percent and 10.29 percent
respectively. The least subscribed social media site is Myspace with only 4.29 percent of the respondents who have accounts.

**Figure 5.15: Graph of social media sites subscription**

![Graph of social media sites subscription](image)

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Across the two age groupings, DNs have the highest subscriptions for most of the common social media sites used by the respondents. Out of the 41.68 percent who have Facebook subscriptions, 64.77 percent are the DNs with only 35.23 percent being the DIs. The 16.64 percent with Twitter subscriptions, 64.77 percent are the DNs vis-à-vis 35.23 for DIs. Similar dominant trends are observed in social media sites like Myspace, LinkedIn and YouTube. WhatsApp and google plus subscriptions are much more predominant among the DI population than the DNs (Figure 5.15).

**Figure 5.16: Social Media Sites subscriptions by Age Groups**

![Social Media Sites subscriptions by Age Groups](image)

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
DN males have more twitter, Myspace, Google Plus, LinkedIn and YouTube subscriptions accounts than their female counterparts (Figure 5.16). Out of the respondents with subscriptions in twitter, Myspace, Google Plus, LinkedIn and YouTube over fifty percent are males. Facebook (53.08%) and WhatsApp (65.22%) subscriptions however, is dominated by females.

Unlike the case of DNs, gender composition of the social media sites subscription is predominantly dominated by the males, apart from those with Myspace subscriptions, YouTube and LinkedIn which records equal interest. In summary, majority of the respondents have Facebook accounts with sizable proportion of the respondents with Twitter and WhatsApp accounts. The DNs are the most users of these popular social media sites but with varied variation within the group.

**Figure 5.17: Social Media Sites Subscriptions by Gender**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

### 5.6. Motivation for Using Social Media

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that majority of the respondents do have social media subscription accounts. This section discloses the driving factor for which respondents have such social media account subscriptions. Presented in Figure 5.18
shows how the respondents join social media sites. Many of the respondents join or subscribe to these social media sites by the self-interest of keeping up. About 36.08 percent of the respondents subscribe to social media sites for this reason. A high proportion of the respondents subscribe or join the social media sites by either being invited by friends (28.14%) or persuaded by family and relatives (21.34%). Thus, 49.48 percent join social media sites through influence which comes from invitation or by persuasion. A total of 12.37 percent of the respondents however, join out of curiosity and the remaining 2.06 percent of the respondents cite “other” factors as their driving motivation.

**Figure 5.18: Motives for Social Media Subscription**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you join social media sites?</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitations from friends requests</td>
<td>28.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in keeping up</td>
<td>36.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasions from friends and family</td>
<td>21.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>12.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors Survey, 2016

Out of the 36.08 percent who join or subscribe to social media sites based on their personal interest of keeping up, are predominately, the DNs as they constitute 55.34 percent (Figure 5.19). Majority of the DIs however, join social media sites mainly by recommendation. Out of the 28.14 percent who are invited by friends and the 21.34 percent who are persuaded by friends and relatives, are mainly the DIs consisting of 55 percent and 56.14 percent respectively (Figure 5.19). Those who subscribe to the
various social media sites out of curiosity are mainly the DNs as these group of respondents are adventurous and very likely to adapt to changing developments. Out of the 12.37 percent who are curious, the DNs constitute 64.71 percent. Respondents citing other reasons are all from the DI population who possibly joined social media sites because of requirements at the work places among other factors.

**Figure 5.19 Motives for Social Media Subscription by Age Group**

DN females are identified to be more curious, interested in keeping up with changing developments and are mostly influenced by friends’ invitation than their male counterparts. This is indicated by their dominancy in Figure 5.20 below. DN males however, are much persuaded by friends and relatives in subscribing to social media sites than their female counterparts. In the case of the dynamics within the DIs, males dominate in all the reasons for social media subscription except for reasons categorized as others. They are more curious, influenced by others and interested in keeping up than their female counterparts.

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

DN females are identified to be more curious, interested in keeping up with changing developments and are mostly influenced by friends’ invitation than their male counterparts. This is indicated by their dominancy in Figure 5.20 below. DN males however, are much persuaded by friends and relatives in subscribing to social media sites than their female counterparts. In the case of the dynamics within the DIs, males dominate in all the reasons for social media subscription except for reasons categorized as others. They are more curious, influenced by others and interested in keeping up than their female counterparts.
Figure 5.20: Motives for Social Media Subscription by Gender

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Generally, the quest of keeping up with new happenings and recommendations either in the form of invitation or persuasion are the main motives or reasons for social media subscription among the respondents. This however, differs among the various age groups with most of the DNIs citing the formal factor and curiosity as their driving motives for subscriptions to social media as against DIs subscribing out of recommendations. DN females are more adventurous than their male counterparts as they are more curious and show high interest in keeping up with changing phenomenon on social media. Across the other age group, DI males are very responsive to all the factors than their female counterparts except for reasons categorized as “other”.

5.7. Activities Performed on Social Media

From Figure 5.18, the study establishes the driving factor for the various social media site subscriptions among the respondents and unearthing the homogenous and heterogeneous dynamics across the various age groupings and gender, the study proceeds towards knowing what the respondents use the social media sites for. In other
words, identifying the predominant activity on social media by the respondents. Findings are presented in Figure 5.21 below. The most common usage of the social media sites is for respondents to establish contact online with friends and relatives (44.44%). This is followed by the making of friends (20.18%) and for business networking (16.67%). Very few of the respondents do use the social media sites for following celebrities; and other activities like increasing connection or increase counts/visibility on the social media pages.

**Figure 5.21: Activities performed on Social Media Sites**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of activities on social media sites]

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

From Figure 5.22, it suggests that those who use social media for the purposes of contacting family and friends, knowing other people, building business network and knowing peoples’ connections are mainly the DIs. Out of the 44.44 percent of respondents who use social media for family and friends, 64.38 percent of them are DIs. In a similar vein, the 20.18 percent of the respondents using social media for knowing persons in real life are the DI population constituting 51.56 percent. Likewise, building business network and knowing peoples’ connection, DI account for 53.89
percent and 56 percent respectively. Following the high penchant for information communication technology and curiosity of DN respondents (see Figure 5.22) it is not surprising for their high dominancy in the usage of social media sites for viewing pictures, following celebrities, and increasing their connections. Out of the 5.85 percent using social media in viewing pictures, as high as 94.34 percent are the DNs. The DNs also constitute 82.35 percent and 58.49 percent of those who use social media for following celebrities and increasing their personal connections respectively.

**Figure 5.22: Activities performed on Social Media Sites by Age Group**

Within the DN cohort, males dominate in the use of social media for activities such as viewing profile pictures, tracking developments on celebrities’ status and increasing their visibilities on the social media. Out of the 94.34 percent of the DNs using social media for picture viewing, 85.71 percent are males with the remaining 14.28 percent are females (Figure 5.23). Similarly, the 82.35 percent and 58.49 percent DNs using social media for checking and following celebrities and increasing their visibilities on the social media, 77.78 percent and 70.00 percent are males respectively. Females on the other hand are predominant in the usage of social media for knowing "person's number of connections" than their DN counterparts. The usage of social media for
activities such as "knowing person in real life" and "family and friends" are however, fairly represented by both DN males and females.

This dissimilarity in usage of social media activities however, differ with the case of the DI population. DI females constitute most users of social media for activities such as increasing connection (71.43%), knowing person’s number of connections (100%), picture viewing (100%) and business networking (65.52%). Males however, slightly outperformed their female counterparts for activities such as family and friends and knowing person in real life. Following celebrities were equally done by both DI females and males.

**Figure 5.23: Activities Performed on Social Media by Gender**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

5.8. Consumption

In this subsection, frequency in undertaking the discussed social media activities is presented in Figure 5.24. Most of the social media activities are undertake on daily
basis. A total of 80.47 percent of the respondents do undertake these activities every day. This is statistically significant under the chi-square test of association, hence implying that social media activities are usually undertaken on daily basis (Table 5.3). Very few of respondents access social media sites for their activities on weekly, monthly and on occasional basis. Those who use social media on weekly basis are 9.43 percent and a total of 5.05 percent of the respondents access it on monthly basis. Occasionally, a total of 4.38 percent of the respondents do use social media for various activities.

Figure 5.24: Frequency in usage of social media among respondents

![Graph showing frequency of social media usage](http://ugspace.ug.edu/gh)

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Table 5.3 Chi-square test of frequency in usage of social media among respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>65.508a</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>52.511</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Among the 80.47 percent of respondents engaged in social media activities on daily basis are mainly the DIs as they constitute 51.77 percent (Figure 5.24). This observation deviates from the expectation of the researcher and findings by Boyd (2007) and who...
on the contrary finds out that young people spend more time on social media than their adult counterparts. This contrary observation is ascribed to the educational levels and employment status of the DNs who are likely to be in school or actively on the move searching for job, hence reducing the time spent on social media activities as reported in the study of Boyd (2007). The occasional users of media devices are also dominated by DIs. Out of the 4.38 percent of the respondents using social media occasionally, 69.2 percent are DIs. The DNs however dominate in the category of respondents who engage in social media activities on weekly and monthly basis. About 52 and 80 percent of respondents who use media devices once a week and once a month respectively are the DNs. This can be accounted by the observed high number of DNs being students hence reducing their frequency in accessing the social media sites.

**Figure 5.25 Frequency in usage of social media by Age Group**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Within the DNs, those who engage in social media activities on daily basis are mostly the females (Figure 5.25). Out of the 48.23 percent of the DNs who use social media every day, females constitute the majority with a share composition of 55.96 percent. DN males on the other hand, largely use social media on weekly and monthly basis. The 51.85 percent and 80 percent of the DNs engaged in social media activities on
weekly and monthly basis, males constitute 64.29 percent and 5.33 percent respectively. Those who occasionally use social media are the same between the genders.

The DI males constitute most of the respondents who use social media a lot. Among those using social media every day, males are about 52.99 percent as against 47.01 percent for the females. On weekly basis, out of the 4.15 percent of DIs using social media, males are about 53.85 percent. DI females use less of social media as they tend to engage in social media activities on monthly and occasional basis. Out of the 20 percent and 69.23 percent of the DIs engaged in social media on monthly and occasionally basis, females are the majority with 66.67 percent and 55.56 percent respectively.

**Figure 5.26: Frequency in Usage of Social Media by Gender.**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Actual time spent on social media in a day is presented in Figure 5.27. Majority of the respondents (56.43%) do spend between 10-30 minutes on social media. Despite this high number of respondents accessing social media within this time frame, the chi
square test shows that it cannot be used for inferential purposes since it rejects the null hypothesis at an alpha value of 5 percent (Table 5.4). Also, from the Figure 5.26, about 20.36 percent and 17.50 percent of the respondents spend an hour and 2 hours or more on social media every day. Less than 6 percent of respondents spend less than 10 minutes on social media on daily basis.

Figure 5.27: Graph of time spent on social media on daily basis

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Table 5.4 Chi-square test of time spent on social media within a day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>44.306a</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>45.704</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>1.088</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>269</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DNs spend more time on social media on daily basis than their DI counterparts. Those who spend 2 hours and more on daily basis on social media sites, DN constitute 51.06 percent with the rest accounted by the DI group. Respondents spending up to one hour on social media are dominated by the DI who have 51.79 percent. A fairly representation is observed within those spending between 10 to 30 minutes with both
the DN and DI with 50 percent representations of 56.43 percent of the total population spending 10-30 minutes. On the other hand, the 5.71 percent of the respondents spending less than 10 minutes per day on social media sites are mainly the DNs.

**Figure 5.28: Graph of time spent on social media sites by Age Group**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Social media is observed to be daily used by the respondents with the majority spending close to 30 minutes on social media in a day. Illustrated in Figure 5.28 shows how respondents log onto the social media sites to spend up to the 30 minutes indicated in the preceding section on daily basis. It is evident that majority of respondents access social media sites several times in a day. About 70 percent of respondents access social media sites several times in a day with the remaining 30 percent logging in once during the day.

**Figure 5.29: Graph of frequency of access to social media sites**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016
Out of the total respondents assessing social media several times for a total 30 minutes login, was equally represented by both the DNs and DIs. Those who login once in a day for social media activities lasting for 30 minutes are mainly the DIs (see Figure 5.30).

**Figure 5.30: Frequency of access to social media sites by Age Group**

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

DN females make several logins within the day than their male counterparts (Figure 5.31). Out of the 50 percent of DNs who do several logins within the day for 30 minutes, females are 54.95 percent. Males account for the 45.05 percent of the respondents who do multiple login attempts. Those with a single login attempt are the males as they account for 57.58 percent of the total 47.14 percent DNs with login attempt of once.

Unlike the case of the DNs, within the DIs, those those who do login attempts for more than once in a day are the males accounting for 52.94 percent. Females however, dominate in the DI cohort who spend close to 30 minutes on social media with just one login attempt.
5.9. Conclusion

Social media usage is highly accepted among Ghanaians as they are used for several reasons ranging from informal interactions to business networking. This chapter has unearthed several interesting findings. With ownership of social media supporting devices, the most common device used for social media is the smart phone but with most of the DNs owning multiples devices. Females DNs appear to have higher ownership than their male counterparts whereas male DIs have more ownership than their female counterparts.

Ownership of these social media supporting devices are indeed identified in this chapter to be used for social media activities with the most common sites visited or subscribed to be Facebook, followed by Twitter. DNs have the highest subscription for these sites but gender variations vary across the age groupings. Motives or reason for the subscription of the social media are personal interest and recommendations by friends & family members. DNs show high level of personal interest in social media as against the DIs who use social media based on recommendations.
Predominant activities performed on social media are interactional activities with few business related activities. The DIs dominate in these areas of activities, but DNs largely engage in other activities such as increasing their visibility on social media, viewing pictures and following celebrities.

Social media accessibility is done mainly on daily basis with most of the respondents spending close to 30 minutes. DNs spend more time on social media than their counterparts and accessing and usage of social media are carried out for several times during the day. Thus the performance of social media activities within a day is not done on a one-off basis.

In conclusion, education and financial capability are key factors that enable both generations to engage in social media. Both generations have the penchant to use the smartphone as the main device for accessing social media. DNs however, tend to own several devices at any given time than their DI counterparts. Facebook is the major social media site subscribed even though, DIs are more inclined to use WhatsApp more than their DN counterparts. Social media is mostly used to get in touch with family and friends and to establish contact with new friends. DNs in particular also use it as a business networking tool, while DI use it particularly to keep up with times. Even though there are variations as to the time spent on social media between DNs and DIs social media is a daily activity among all respondents.

It is noteworthy that the pattern of social media usage of Digital Immigrant males is quite similar to the pattern of usage of Digital Native females.
CHAPTER SIX
SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING AND INTERACTIONAL EXPERIENCES

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the patterns of social media usage between the two generations. In so doing, it revealed who owns which device(s), which sites are subscribed to, what activities are undertaken, the motivation for undertaking such activities and the time spent engaged to social media between the two generational cohorts.

This chapter therefore, explores the experiences of their encounters during the communication processes between the two generations on social media. The chapter analyses the nature of the interactions as well as perceptions and attitudes derived from the experiences.

6.2. The Nature of Interactions between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants

As indicated from the previous chapter, between the two generational cohorts, DIs mostly use social media to contact family and friends and use it to know other peoples’ connections. For example, one DI, a 65-year-old counsellor and a mother, reports of being ‘happy’ when she is able to communicate with her children through social media.

“In the beginning I was happy, my nieces and nephews from USA, everybody was in touch, and then something happened and then I said no, this thing must stop”.

129
Another, DI, also reports that the ability to communicate with younger people and share ideas makes him happy until he lost interest:

“In fact it was a great delight to me because I was getting any information I wanted and then exchanging views and ideas with younger people so I liked it honestly until all of a sudden I lost interest in it”.

This suggests that, DIs lose interest soon after joining the networks and establishing communications. Further enquires reveal that DIs share the opinion that DNs have a way of using social media to say ‘something strange’ of which they apologise afterwards. Even though they have apologised, they know precisely what they are doing. The problem of doing and saying something strange becomes the bane of otherwise an enjoyable experience in their intergenerational communications. For example in a classical case where a 62 year old DI, who is also an undergraduate student at a university, has to communicate and share information though social media with other DNs, reports of her experience thus,

“And if you see some of the rubbish, if it were not to be group- work, I would have stopped it because the jazz they drop on the site, it’s so annoying I don’t have time so I don’t like wasting my time”

Another DI, a 60 year old retired educationist expresses opinion about how young people’s communication habits on the platforms necessitate the prevention of others using the media.

“It is the way some younger people use it that bars other people from getting on it. Frankly, I have seen other
young peoples’ Facebook pages. I have been privy to
their pages on Facebook and the way they put out stuff
there, I am not interested in doing that. I mean their
whole life is on Facebook”.

DIs interprete the acts of DNs expression of themselves on social media platforms as
inappropriate communication of information.

DNs tend to have paternalistic and condescending approach to interactions they have
with DIs. In most instances, DN view themselves as knowledgeable in digital and social
media, as such determine how applications should be or not to be used. However, when
DNs use social media applications in ways that do not fit within the allowable range of
proper conduct, DIs lose interest in the mediation. For example, one 25-year-old DN
woman reports, thus;

“The last time when my mum called, I was with my
friends in a pub and my phone rang and its Imo. All my
friends were like, ‘Your mum is on calling you on Imo?
So it was like if I don’t answer it will probably be rude,
so I just answered and she was just lying down and she
was like, “I just wanted to see if it working”. It is not
done. So for her to do it, it’s like she hasn’t gotten the
rules and regulations for using the media”

This suggests that the general feeling DNs have about DIs in their interactions is that
DIs are yet to understand the intricacies of using the media. It is not so much as bad
use but the incompetence of mastering and negotiation the use of social media.
The interpretation of each other’s communicative habits is a reflection of their generational differences in their psychological and philosophical perspectives. There are two major societal value orientations that guide human behaviour: the hierarchical and egalitarian world views (Aalbers, 2006). Those with the hierarchical or vertical world views presuppose that people are different and should be treated differently according to their differences. The adherence to concepts of class, status, titles and so forth are important to those with such views. Social differentiation is the guiding principle to their human relations. People must, therefore, be treated according to their different categorisations. Relatedly, individuals with such views believe in the adherence to strict chain of command and submission to authority. Such adherence to rules and structure are meant to maximise the common good (Denton, 2002).

Those with egalitarian or horizontal worldview on the other hand believe in relating people on equal terms, implying that each person is equal to the other in all respects. Equality is the basic assumption of horizontal world view. This group tends to depend on each other. They emphasise team work as well as sociability (Denton, 2002).

These world views are explicit in the interpretations of each generational cohort. How each generation thinks and feels about each other’s communication behaviour correlates with the two world views mentioned. While DIs relate to the hierarchical worldview, DNs relates with the egalitarian or horizontal worldviews. This is evidenced in how each generational cohort perceives communication on social media and the
resultant attitudes towards interacting on social media. The following analysis speaks to that effect.

6.3. Intergroup Perceptions of Social Media Use

From the interactive experiences of using social media between DNs and DIs, particular sub-themes are identified under the main theme of perception. The sub-themes include exposure, link up place, place for self-expression, flexibility, and companionship. These sub-themes are the perceived natures of social media borne out of encounters in the use of and interaction on social media by DN and DIs.

6.3.1. The Perception of Exposure

99.8 percent of DN respondents and 99.7 percent of DI respondents strongly agree that Facebook provided high exposure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is Facebook exposing?</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Natives</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Immigrants</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both generations’ description of experiences on social media reveals strongly the perception that Facebook in particular is exposing. While all participants report of the exposing nature of Facebook, each generation experience the exposition differently.
DIs perceive exposition as something negative and not a welcoming feature of Facebook. For example a DI expresses this opinion, thus;

“I somehow feel that with the Facebook, you are naked, because people will get to know you, they get your pictures and everything. In this case, sometimes it is not good because at least, to some extent, you must be secretive and guard some information. But Facebook is too open”.

The ‘openness’ of Facebook renders some DIs to play dormant in their social media interactions. For example one DI says,

“I realized that the exposure was so much and then I decided to stop using it. So with Facebook, even though I am there and was seeing a lot of people, I don’t correspond with anybody because it is like you are too exposed”.

DNs, on the other hand, perceive the expositional nature of Facebook as something positive. To this end they strive to attain large social media contact base with which they get connected to. DNs have about six hundred to two thousand ‘friends’ in their social media networks, yet most do not deem this as anything huge. One DN, says this about the number of friends he has on social media,

“It is just a good feeling to have lots of friends and know people”

Being connected and exposed to a large number of people, to the DNs, bring the necessary exposure which they express in different dimensions. The dimensions of exposure as perceived by DNs are the promotion of the self, self expression and promotion of business. The exposure Facebook provides, for DNs makes it the
appropriate platform upon which they can exhibit themselves, their feelings and businesses. In the promotion of the self, DN post and publish information and images of themselves. With the excuse that traditional media is beyond their reach in terms of cost and finance. Social media becomes the cheapest option to gain attention. One DN says of the experience,

“I can go to the extent of posting my nudity and stuff, and you know people would lambast nudity while other people too will appreciate it. So, I can get a lot of audience, and trust me those are the things that are even viewed the most”

Thus, for the DN, the promotion of the self is governed by neither condemnation nor appreciation, but rather the object is to become popular. The advantage of the perceived exposing nature of social media, particularly Facebook, is its use for self expression. DNs tend to rely on social media to express their innermost emotions, without inhibitions as to whether it is appropriate or not. The majority of DN respondents give reasons for using Facebook as self expression. According to them, many people often get emotionally affected such as ‘feeling neglected’ getting ‘excited about things’ which they cannot “confront anyone with” or have people to share with them in real life. Perhaps they cannot also reach their close friends or people who means so much to them to share these moments with, so the only means they can shed their frustrations and joys is to put it on social media. So DNs have the perception that Facebook is the platform where they do not have anyone particular person listening to them, but rather have everybody listening and whoever wants to share in their problems and joys. DNs, therefore, take advantage of the anonymity feature of Computer Mediated
Communication (CMC) in feeling the release from societal surveillance as well as a platform for seeking solace and acceptance.

Using social media networking to advertise and promote businesses are other dimensions of exposure which DNs take advantage of. With the perceived premise that by using Facebook in conjunction with other applications, they feel they have a voice that sounds across the whole world (particularly, if they ‘want to show something to the whole world), DNs perceive the exposure afforded by Facebook as a means to promote their respective businesses. This perception about Facebook creates the need to be on Facebook and other applications at the same time. A DN says,

“You would have to be there because it promotes events for the job, you promote events, you promote TV programs because the more you kind of tag people, meaning, people are going to see it and want to watch it or people are going to participate’, ‘You can also use it for planning events and functions and programs’. We can promote our businesses on it, find clients, and find investors even”.

The advertising platform which DNs perceive Facebook to be, thus require the need for a large number of friends and contacts because the bigger the audience the more they are able to spread across and sell their product or content. In this instance, due to the lack of social cues in respect of developing relationship through communication, DNs do not have much emotional attachment to their contacts and connections such that they readily identify them as ‘audiences’ or ‘customers’.

136
On the other hand, DIs describe exposure in terms of disclosure of personal background and family information, divulging of secrets and examination of one’s past, exposure of location and exposure to unwanted people. For example, on exposure of personal background and family information, a DI reported, thus:

“And then when you get too involved, (in Facebook) you expose your private life and everyone gets to know how many children you have, your wife, and where you live”.

Other DIs also believe that Facebook reveals ones secrets and too much of one’s personal information to the general public because of the process of sharing in social media. For Digital Immigrants, the possibility that the indiscrete use by users of known information about other users’ past is a major worry. According to them, the divulging of information that is better forgotten has the possibility of being posted on social media by others users. Citing a typical example, one DI says:

‘I think I began warning some links and relations not to post my old pictures on this because you just can’t have the right to do this, because you can’t just take an old picture of mine and say ‘oh look at me when he was fifteen. I say that is my prerogative’.

So by being on Facebook, DIs believe that one presents oneself to the public to start examining one’s past. What is even more worrying is the fact that it is not even the owner of the information who would post the story onto the network but other people.
who would do so to be reminded of one’s past. This, they think is a loss of control of the user.

Similar to the findings of the current study, the concept of exposure is related to ideas of privacy, risk, self esteem and narcissism in the body literature of social media use. An exposure-enabled social media platform such as Facebook, for instance has been the focus of such studies. Some of these studies suggest that excessive self exposure, which means becoming aware of the self through viewing of oneself through one’s own Facebook profile, can either negatively or positively affect the users self esteem. A user experiences low or high self esteem depending on the nature of comments communicated back to the user about the posted images of themselves (Shaw & Grant, 2002; Baker, 2009). However, the CMC model of Hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996) suggests that interpersonal communication mediated by the computer can exceed that of face-to-face. This view is supported by studies on selected presentation, where users pick and choose the images and information about themselves they wish to publicise (Schumaker, 2013).

These positions notwithstanding, the desire to expose ones’ self to the online world is generally seen to relate to the two activities of ‘sharing’ and ‘liking’, afforded by social media, Facebook in particular (John and Sutzl, 2015). Sharing and liking of personal images and information is a characteristic that leads to the behavioural theory of narcissism, a personality trait that focuses excessively on the self (Raskin & Terry, 1988). People with such traits tend to have escalated ideas of themselves and do most things to attract attention (Campbel & Foster, 2007). Narcissistic users therefore focus
on disseminating information about themselves. As this study’s finding suggests, DNs behaviour and attitudes correlates with the personality trait of narcissism more than their DI counterparts. Smith and Mendez’s (2008) study confirm with findings that suggest that younger users have greater risk of exposure compared to older users. They are more likely to share and post images of themselves on their social media platforms than older users.

6.3.2. Perceived Loss of Identity Control

DIs describe Facebook as ‘gone wild’, ‘gone out of control’; “Facebook has no parameters”. The perception that Facebook renders the user to lose of control over their personal information is entirely expressed by the DIs. The freedom allowed on Facebook to post and retrieve information about others without their permission and not necessarily by themselves on their own terms to other people, is perceived by Digital Immigrants as a loss of control. One DI describes the view of the loss of control succinctly with the following statements:

“What is happening now is that, you don’t have control over it, you will be there and someone will post to you just anything without your permission”.

Unrestricted access to personal information of other users of Facebook is perceived by DI as another form of loss control where they view themselves helpless at protecting their personal information from unknown persons. DIs perceive that the nature of Facebook is “something you cannot control, but you are there”. Digital Immigrants therefore express their desires, as one DI reports:

“I always want to control where I am, where I want to be and what I want to do. I want to have that control. But
with Facebook I can’t control that. I don’t know whether that can be done but when you make a posting others can repost and it goes on and on and on”.

Digital Immigrants’ perception of Facebook as means of losing control over personal information is expressed in different dimensions. Losing oneself to Facebook and the feeling of vulnerability are two main dimensions of loss of control as perceived by DI. In the case of losing one self to Facebook, they perceive that social media creates its own value system where users getting into it, cannot apply their own value systems but rather go into it based on the values Facebook has created. Facebook is thus entrenched by creating its own cultural system. Therefore the belief is that when users get onto Facebook, they then have to conform to the rules and regulations that govern it. Thus the loss of oneself to Facebook is concisely put in the following words by one respondent DI5:

“You become it, rather it becoming you. You immerse yourself into it, like falling into the sea. It engulfs you”.

This means that with Facebook, the user is assimilated to conform to the characteristic features of communication of Facebook. The user’s personal values are lost under the influence of Facebook.

The loss of oneself is also described on the occasion where users post things but while not knowing how to manage information, get themselves trapped in an exchange with other users. In the process, DIs believe that such users lose their self-awareness by giving themselves up for certain image which puts them in certain lights which they may probably not be. For example, one DI says;
“I have had the occasion where people will post information that is entirely inappropriate. In such instances you will know that they didn’t know how to respond to a provocation and they get trapped in the give and take. They don’t know they were giving themselves up to a certain characterisation or putting themselves in certain lights that they are not”.

However DNs, on the other hand perceive the use of social media as a means of gaining control over what, when and how to consume any media and their contents. By using social media, the participant perceives gaining a certain sense of independence and control as opposed to the use of traditional media such as the television. DN reports,

“If you are at home and you all have to watch TV as a family, you don’t have your privacy as a child. But for a computer, it’s just you and your computer, you have your privacy. For, TV in our home the older you are the more respect we have for you so if my mum wants to watch any channel, once she is around she has the say, if she is not around my older brother, if he’s not around I am. I am the youngest, and I have no say unless everybody is out of the house”.

This sense of independence reflects a sense of gaining control of oneself from the structured way of watching television with the family. In this sense the participant feels free to choose and watch whatever program the participant desires without the restrictions and imposed conditions from other members of his family.
6.3.3. Perceived Vulnerability

Form the Table 4, 85 percent of DI population strongly agrees with the perception that using Facebook makes the user vulnerable. Only 25% of DNs, however strongly agree with the perception that using Facebook makes the user vulnerable while another 25% disagrees. Half of the DN population i.e., 50%, agrees to the perception that using Facebook makes the user vulnerable.

Table 6.2: Perceived Vulnerability Using Facebook by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does using Social Media makes you feel vulnerable?</th>
<th>I strongly agree</th>
<th>I agree</th>
<th>I disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Natives</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Immigrants</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey, 2016

Both DIs and DNs associate vulnerability with the perception of loss of control in the usage of social media. Digital Immigrants perceive that the loss of control of users as well as over their personal information when using Facebook render them vulnerable. They cite instances of some users they would rather not meet in real life, but by being on Facebook they end up meeting such people. For example a DI blocks her Facebook account because,

“The friends’ requests were becoming too many, some of them you don’t even know and I cannot be friends with just anybody”.

While DNs do not report of feeling vulnerable when using social media, particularly Facebook, some occurrences, similar to those experienced by DIs in their experiences at using Facebook creates the perception of vulnerability. For DNs this perceived vulnerability shows in the instance where they are confronted with people they would prefer not to meet and when they receive, unsolicited information. In this regard one DN reports,

“There have been cases where prostitutes try to get to me through Facebook and also pornographic materials have been posted to me. So you actually have to have the will to know what’s right and what’s bad because there is no one controlling you there”.

The emergence of this perceived vulnerability is even more pronounced when DNs report of encountering other users from different cultures, religions and lifestyles who project their views to them. The temptation to emulate these different lifestyles from ones owe is quite challenging. One DN says,

“When I read their opinions and their lifestyles, it actually make me want to start to alternate or question my real life. They post all their values and morals and I read them and sometimes they make sense and it starts getting to me. But I ask myself ‘am I doing myself any good?, But I tap into it and I realize, no this is not me, and even I tell myself this is not the environment for this kind of lifestyle”.
6.3.4. The Tie That Binds - The Perception of Facebook as a Link-Up Place

Both DNs and DIs perceive Facebook as a linking up platform. Linking up is described variously as ‘linking people together’, ‘link with the world’ ‘networking people, ‘connects you to anybody’, ‘contact with old friends’, ‘connect you to the world’, ‘meeting with people’, ‘bringing old friends together’, ‘meeting new friends’.

One of the key dimensions of linking-up view of Facebook is the idea of finding, making new friends and sharing memories. Both DN and DI participants report that the ‘linking up’ ability of Facebook, offers them the opportunity to get in touch with long lost friends. For DIs, the opportunity to connect with the younger members of their families –the DNs, is a welcome development. This perception seems to play well with DIs such that, it becomes one of the key reasons for which they stay on social media.

For example a DI, reports that,

“I stayed with Facebook for the simple reason that I am able to connect with my nephews and nieces who live abroad as well as my children who live in other parts of the country working”.

The opportunity to make new friends by linking up is mostly reported by DNs. For them, linking up on Facebook allows them to feel part of the global village as through that, they are able to make friends outside the boundaries of Ghana. One DN, reports,

“I mean it’s not only giving you the platform to befriend someone you know already but it gives you the opportunity to befriend new people from different parts of the world”.

144
Another dimension is the notion of keeping respondents socially active. DI participants in particular indicate that they ‘link up’ to keep themselves socially alive by exchanging ideas with their mates and generating discussions on current events and happenings. What is more, it provides them with a sense of companionship. For example one DI exuberantly reports thus;

“No matter where you may be, you do not feel that loneliness anymore if you are only able to buy your credit and get in touch. People may think that probably, physical presence may be necessary, but you see, the social media platform, when you start communicating with that, you feel the person’s presence. And you are able to express yourself even more”.

6.3.5. Flexible Media

For DNs in particular, the perception that Facebook provides a flexible means of communication through linking up with their friends and contacts are expressed. This is the ability of Facebook to allow friends from different locations all over the world to converge on the platform at the same time to communicate. One DN describes the experience as thus:

“Most of my friends are not even in Accra, they are in Koforidua, and some are in Kumasi so we need to create that special time to meet. Facebook creates that chance”
By the spread of the communication network, social media provides the avenue to have access to motivational and inspirational messages from other users. This is mostly reported by DNs.

6.3.6. Social Media - A Distractive Culture

Most DIs have the perception that social media in general, Facebook notwithstanding, is simply a waste of time. Time spent communicating on the network is not worth spending. To the DIs, the idea of spending longer hours chatting with contacts in networks prevents one from achieving anything that one wants to achieve offline. For example DI says,

“I think it takes too much of peoples time and the truth is if you are really focused and you want to achieve something those things can take too much of your time. Social media in general, it is very time consuming and wastes time”.

DIs therefore perceive social media as something distractive which in itself creates what one DI refers to as ‘distractive culture’. DIs believe that the approach to the use of social media is dependent on the already existing personal values one has imbibed. To them, multitasking is not a skill they appreciate. They focus on what is at hand and necessary. They believe that by doing so many things at the same time DNs lose an in-depth understanding to issues. They skim over issues without delving for deeper understanding.
These findings are similar to the idea of multitasking in literature. Tokan & Mattila’s (2011) exploratory study on audiences’ media multitasking and multiple media use behaviours suggest that the youth do several things at the same time when they are engaged with the media. They divide their massive media time among countless activities such as social networking, viewing audio-visuals, texting, sharing images and information, listening to music and playing game often simultaneously.

DNs disagree with this view and argue that both online and offline friends require time and attention but it is more convenient being online with friends. A DN participant, deliberating on time spent on social media responds:

“If I say I want more physical friends I need time for them, if you need more virtual friends too you need more time for them. But in the virtual world I control when and how to communicate with my friends. But unlike the real world if you have more friends and they come and visit you, you need to be there”.

Both groups perceive that social media enables connectivity among people. However, DIs maintain a negative perception of social media while DN maintain a much positive outlook towards the use of social media. This finding is in line with that of another study (Lehtinen, Näsänen, & Sarvas, 2009) which found that social networking sites are perceived by older adults as “places of socially unacceptable behaviour” (p.45). These similar findings support the generalisation of these types of perceptions across diverse populations of older adults.
6.3.7. The Public/Private Dilemma

DIs perceive communicating over social media platforms as a private arena. Information sent across the platforms must remain between and among the people for whom the information is sent. DIs therefore most often than not use the media for certain things they would prefer it remains a private affair. For example one DI, reports:

“A young woman I know sent me a video of herself. Should the public get to know this, I am finished. She now sells her pornographic images of herself to a white man so that the white man gives her money and he will also send his”.

Being a young person, she may not have any qualms regarding the publicity of the recorded material. It is rather something she deems complimentary to share around. That may be the reason for recording the event in the first place. Moreover, DNs do not separate their public lives from their personal ones in their social media use. For example a Digital Natives says this of the experience on social media networking.

“If I get any comment on social media I don’t take it personal, because it’s not a personal life, social media is not a private arena. If the person is in front of me and says it in my face then I take it personal, but with social media I just take it as it and move on”

DNs therefore perceive that social media networking is neither personal nor private, but rather a public place where the boundary of what means to be private and public is blurred.
6.4. Attitudes toward Social Media by Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants

6.4.1. Safety and Security

DNs tend to have an overcoming attitude towards the challenges they face particularly with Facebook. Acknowledging the fact that they cannot wean themselves from using social media, they report that the ability to overcome challenges they face is the reliance on the trust that the designers of whatever social media application they use, particularly, Facebook upgrades and improves upon security features of the application to enable safe use. One DN reports thus:

“Users are protected with the ability to block off unwanted people. I think most social media sites are also tightening their security features. Social media will be safer places to go in future”.

Embracing the permanence of social media in their lives DNs are of the view that being on social media means one has to do some regular reality checks to remain safe.

“It helps to do some kind of reality check once in a while, because now it’s everywhere so it’s hard to say you’re going to detach yourself completely from it”.

Convinced that their challenges could easily be taken care of, DNs remain confident in the terrain of social media networking. Their confidence is as a result of their long experience using social media. For example one DN reports that, as a result of taking part in cyber fraud activities, he is quite savvy with security issues on the net and social media with which he protects himself.
“When I started, there were things that we used to do which were illegal. Now that I am grown up I may not do that again, I may be doing a good thing but I know that there are other people who are there and can fake my account and then use it for something bad. So in joining any platform I am always conscious and set”.

By equating the online world to the offline world DN tend to accept the challenges they face in their social media networking as something to be expected and to be dealt with. They affirm that when one approaches social media with that perspective, one would always win against the odds.

6.4.2. The Next Big Thing

Considering that, in future, people will be finding new ways of getting closer and connecting with other people, DNs believe that the growth of social media is assured. Several DNs report of this hopeful sentiment with statements like, “It’s gonna be awesome”, “It’s gonna be good”, “It’s gonna be big”, “It’s going to be much better” and “and in the next ten years, it will be massive”. They also project that the importance of social media in the future could well be equated to the necessity of electricity to human kind as well as its expansion to absorb their ever increasing entrepreneurial initiates. One DN, asserts,

“I think in ten years time social media will be like a necessity… like how electricity is a necessity”
6.4.3. I Rather Would Get the Sure Thing – Safety in the Old

DIs tend to have a conservative attitude towards social media, particularly, Facebook. For example one DI, says,

“I am not that adventurous. You know, my problem is that I just get the information that I need and that is it. I don’t want to go any further until I need to go further. I will rather not, if I can avoid social media. I rather would get the sure thing”.

The ‘sure thing’ is reported to mean the use of conventional communication media such as the telephone and emails in particular. Some DIs also attribute their conservative attitude to their nature. One DI explains thus:

“I am a background person. I don’t like divulging things about myself. So because of this nature I see Facebook as something that opens you up out there, you probably wouldn’t have control over”.

6.4.4. Going Viral – The Unintended Publicity

Cautiousness is another significant attitude of DIs towards social media. This group of respondents are torn between the unencumbered sense of freedom afforded by social media communication and their own self-imposed or socially imposed regulatory conduct. This generational self awareness acts as censorship in the expression of themselves as the media’s capability offers. Cautiousness is therefore attempt at balancing their readiness to use the media and the full capabilities of the media at their disposal. Here, the central feature of CMC, which is anonymity, becomes an advantage
and disadvantage at the same time. DIs use the anonymity offered by CMC when they need to ‘protect’ themselves from the control of social media. One DI, says,

“I am protecting myself against that invasion. It’s an invasion into your privacy somehow because I want that freedom to show people my identity if I want to, I don’t want a social media trend to show my identity to people”.

In the same vein the anonymity offered by CMC is a disadvantage to the DIs who are of the opinion that communication over social media platforms with another user must be guided by identifying in person who exactly one is in contact with. For example one DI reports,

“I should have to know the type of people I am relating to using the social media. I don’t just use it with anybody at all. I select my people”.

The probable course of leaking unintended information to the general public and going viral is seen by DIs as the result of interacting with unknown individuals. This seems a big threat to comfortable networking interactions for DIs. For example one DI expresses the fear of going viral with possible false information,

“What if it goes viral? This is the fear. The fear that the conversations you make on this platform may go viral. How do I get it back? With this social media, within two seconds, you are destroyed with a false story”.

152
The communicative phenomenon of ‘going viral’ in CMC, is the cumulative individual activities of ‘liking’ and ‘sharing’ within a network by user members that generates a spreadability of information in an astronomical speed and scope (Valis and Blommaert, 2015). Depending upon the content of the information, it either damages or hype individuals involved. While DNs latch onto the concept of virality, to attain popularity and fame, DIs are more restrained and cautious towards the option of virality.

### 6.5. Conclusion

It is well noted in literature that intergroup communication is a dynamic process where the driving force of each communicant, cognitions, and emotions influence communication behaviour in interactions. Due to the generational differences between DN and DIs, the nature of the interaction between the two generations is marked by different interpretation to each other’s communication behaviour. DNs sometimes interpret DIs use of social media as incompetent. Therefore in the interaction between the two generation, DNs tend to be paternalistic and condescending. DIs, on the other hand, interpret DNs use of social media as inappropriate and bizarre. In their view DNs are not selective of information they put across the media neither are they selective of whom to share particular information with or not. DNs are open and unrestrictive in sharing information. They do not express much difference between professional and personal communication, whereas DIs place much emphasis on the difference between personal and professional communication.

Furthermore, social media interactions between the two generational cohorts reveal that, DNs perceive social media as liberating, and granting of unlimited access to the
world through linking up with contacts globally. The perception of social media as the avenue to achieve one's entrepreneurial and creative potential is also strongly held by DNs. DIs on the other hand, perceive the latent ability of social media to make one lose the individuality and the self, which renders the individual vulnerable. DIs also perceive social media as creating a distractive culture where individuals are drawn away from actual and offline activities.

DNs attitude towards the use of social media is hopeful. They believe that social media will take up most of their business and work life with success. They see less risk in communicating through social media with expectations of it becoming the predominant feature in their lives. DIs, on the other hand tend to have a cautious and conservative attitude for social media use. The long relationship established with the use of traditional media provides a sense of security whereas the uncertainty of social media use creates the sense of caution and conservative towards social media.
CHAPTER SEVEN
INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

7.1. Introduction

Chapters four and five explore the patterns and experiences of social media usages of DN s and DI s. Certain commonalities as well as differences are established in the patterns of the usage of the two generations. Fundamentally most differentiated use, motivations and choices come about mainly as results of their generational differences. These generational differences also reflect in their experiences in using social media which also influence their perceptions, attitudes and preferences for both usage and applications.

There is quite remarkable contact between DN s and DI s through social media. The Table 5 below indicates that, 85% of DN population is in contact with DI quite often while only 15% percent indicate that they rarely are in contact. 90% of the DI population says they are in contact with their DN counterpart whiles only 10 % indicate that they rarely do. None of the respondents indicated the ‘Not at all’ response.

| Table 7.1: Intergenerational Contact through Social Media by Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| How often do you contact people from the other generation through social media? | Quite Often | Rarely | Not at all |
| Digital Natives | 85% | 15% | 0 |
| Digital Immigrants | 90% | 10% | 0 |

Source: Authors Survey, 2016
Previous literature in CMC has suggested that with the growth in the technologies of computer mediated communication, intergenerational communication is likely to improve (DeRider, 2015). With the ubiquity of social media usage in Ghana emerges the frequency of contact through network connections between the two generations through social media. These contacts and connectedness are however, characterised by particular salient communicative practices.

These practices are peculiar to CMC which are also embedded between the natures of the media as well as the ingenious ways with which users use the media to maximise their potentials. As such, this chapter examines the characteristics of the communicative practices of social media use of the two generations and how these influence intergenerational communications.

7.2. Characteristics of Communicative Practices of the Two Generations

7.2.1. Choice of Communication Media

Social media is made up of myriad forms of applications that are available on smartphones for free. Each of these is easily accessible and downloadable. Even some are originally embedded in the smartphone by default. Users are therefore spoilt for choice. It is therefore not a surprise that the choice of communication media differs between DN and DI. DIs’ prefer and use WhatsApp social media application more than Facebook. Their inclination towards the WhatsApp application is as a result of the sense of security, privacy and convenience it provides. They have a sense of belonging when using WhatsApp because people of the same interest and obviously age cohort can form groups to which they belong.
These appealing features of WhatsApp are what DIs claim to lack in Facebook application. DNs on the other hand have more preference for Facebook than WhatsApp, even though they do subscribe to and use WhatsApp application. For the DNs, Facebook offers them greater opportunities for self-expression and a much needed exposure to the world. DI and DNs have different choices for social media platforms for communicating.

Media choice becomes problematic for intergenerational communication when one generation has a habitual preference for a specific communication medium (Yang and Jolly, 2008). It is problematic when an interacting generational partner is not familiar or comfortable with the medium or chooses not to use it. For example one DN, comments on how problematic it is for him when his mother cannot be in touch with him because they prefer to use different communication media.

“It’s a big problem because it’s affecting a lot of relationships. Me for instance, I use WhatsApp because of my mother. I am not as active on it as I am on Facebook. I put off the WhatsApp for several days. At the same time too my mother would be trying to reach me. Her only means is WhatsApp. Then she is in trouble because she will only get me occasionally. She sends me messages for a number of days and I have not replied she may think that I may be neglecting her or something”.

157
Such differentiated use of the media emerges from the differentiated professed usefulness and ease of use between the two generations. The technology acceptance model (TAM) suggests that when users are confronted with the options of new different technologies for use certain factors influence their decisions about how and when to use it. The two key factors they would consider are the technology’s “perceived usefulness” and its “perceived ease of use”. As has been analysed in chapter four, WhatsApp is the preferred social media platform for DIs while Facebook and other applications are preferred by DNs. The fundamental reasons being that DIs find WhatsApp to be user friendly because it is convenient and quicker to get access. DNs on the other hand, spread their preference over a number of applications, even though Facebook leads in their preferences. DNs believe that it is more useful for their purposes to subscribe to several applications.

7.2.2. Preference for In-Group over Inter-Group Interaction

Social media networking between DNs and DIs is characterised by preference for in-group interactions over inter-group communication. In as much as DNs are the dominant group that invite and persuade DIs to join their social media networking, it becomes evidently clear that after initial contact, DIs would not prefer to interact with their DN counterparts because of the different purposes for which each group uses social media. DIs believe that social media must be used for the purpose for which it is designed, particularly for contacting with friends and family and for the promotion of constructive social intervention programs and activism. For example, a DI emphatically reports;
“I stayed with Facebook for the simple reason that I am able to meet others that for probably for so many years I may not have been in contact. After making that initial contact on Facebook, the Facebook become useless. It is for initial contact. Period!”

Another DI’s report explains thus:

“Social media should be used as a campaign platform and when you’ve got serious message to share. I am an activist for the passing of the Right to Information Bill and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. It is also for getting connected to friends. Just that! But if it goes beyond that, it defeats the purpose for which it was made. But these young ones anything goes!!”

Even though, DNs have an eclectic approach to their use of social media, there are salient activities that pre-dominate the myriad activities they engage with on social media. For example, it is evident that DNs join social media due to personal factors such as self-interest and curiosity than their DI folks (refer to Figure 5.19). Out of the 36.08 percent of respondents who actually join social media due to self-interest, DN respondents constitute 55.34 percent. For DNs self-interest stands for using social media to exhibit themselves and their businesses.
This activity is embodied in the act of ‘selfie’, which is an activity of self-taking pictures to post them online. The behavioural concept of narcissism posits the view that, such actions are purely out of self-love and self-centeredness (Livingstone, 2008). Then again the desire to present the self in social media networking through photos is seen as an act to become popular by whatever means possible. The purposes for which social media is used between the two generations are different, in that, while DIs tend to have a sense of altruism towards the use of social media, DNs have a sense of narcissism.

7.2.3. Acronyms and Abbreviated Text for Communicating

Araba: “Tee”
Terrence: “Sup?”
Araba : “U Good?”
Terence: “Sup bae”
Araba: “Wht a u up 2?”
Terence: “Waguan ?”
Araba: “LOL”
Terence: “ Lol, What's going on, waguan”
Araba: “Nm, Just home”
Terence: “Ayd ... home based too”
Araba: ... “imu”
Terence: “Tho”
Araba: “Ikr, “Me 2”
Terence: “WTG boo boo, You berra”
Araba:” Brb”
Terence: “Oi”
Araba :” Yo”
Terence:” Whr 2?”

Araba:” Bae”

Convenience, immediacy and speed in communication afforded by social media calls for the minimalist use of words and alphabets in conveying information. To achieve the speed and immediacy during the act of conversation and networking, users develop acronyms and abbreviate text for communicating. This form of communication shortens otherwise long sentences in normal written texts. Complicated thoughts are simplified through the combination of both letters and numerals. In this way, communication and response time are speeded up and the flow of conversation is simulated. This form of communication is very spontaneous and acronyms are invented to suit what is intended to be communicated as the conversation goes along. These forms of writing are only useful when it is familiar to both communicants. However, this form of writing is peculiar to DNs and quite unfamiliar to DIs. It therefore becomes troublesome when used between the two groups of persons in communication for example, a DI reports:

“As for me, when I chat with my daughters on social media, I tell them when you send me anything using short hand you are in trouble because it has to be official, I want you to speak the British English otherwise don’t speak English send it to me in Twi. Because if you send me “kk” I will ask you where is the “o”? Because “ok” and “kk” aren’t they the same two letters? Do you understand? You don’t write that one to me! It’s out!”

161
7.2.3.1. Emoticons and Smileys

Another way communication takes place on social media is the use of what are referred to as “emoticons, emoticons or smileys” (Connolly et al, 1990). These are graphic images of facial or bodily expressions used to indicate the expressions of emotions. These images look quite playful and according to Derks, Bos and Crumbkow (2007) these emoticons are normally used among friends to express humorous emotions. DIs however, finds them difficult to decipher their meanings and do not find it playful at all. For example, a DI reports: “I get these drawings, and I can’t understand. Even up till now there are some that I still don’t know, they type it and I ask them, what is that?”

7.2.3.2. Paralanguage

Another form of expression used by social media users is the “paralanguage” (Lea and Spears, 1992). Expressions such as ‘...hmmm’, or ‘ahh’ are commonly used during conversational exchanges to show exhaustion or disgust between two communicants. These type of expressions are normally expressed verbally and are not written. However, such expressions are everyday occurrence in the lexicon of social media interactions. Like the acronyms and abbreviations, it is only familiar to those who have been using it over time together. These paralanguage forms can be subtle to the extent its meaning is easily missed by those who are not familiar with the terms. While DNs use these to communicate among themselves most often, DIs rarely use them. They deem such written expressions as wrong usage of English. For instance, one DI says;
“This thing is now moulding us. We are finding a different language for it without knowing that this social media is giving us a language. Like how many people are there who can write correct English these days?” DI

7.2.4. Appropriate Communication

The suitability, applicability and satisfaction gained in a communication process is what is referred to appropriate communication (Burgoon & Walther, 1990). In a behavioural engagement such as communicating, implicit or explicit references to politeness or accepted social norms for communication are expected. However, the question of appropriateness characterises the use of social media between DNs and DIs among the respondents in this study. Informal communication is one aspect. By informal communication, it is meant that, users adopt a casual attitude to communicating with other users irrespective of the nature of the interaction. For example, a DI explains how salutations are expressed on social media.

“On Social media, you can say ‘what’s up?’ and it’s not rude. You can text ‘what’s up’ to an elderly person, whereas you won’t just meet an elderly person and say ‘what’s up?’. You would say ‘Good morning Ma’, ‘Good morning Da’. Now it’s just ‘hi’ and it’s ok. The person can just respond back.”

Traditionally, communication between elderly and younger persons either at work, school or at home takes on a formal or cultural approach (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010;
Communication follows an established hierarchy, held together by procedures and focuses on following very specific behaviours. The language is formal, official and in accord with established forms. Most often than not, it is well structured and planned. This form of communication is mostly upheld by DI. DNs’ way of communicating across social media platforms on the other hand is informal without any ceremonies. It is not organised, not structured or planned. It is casual and for the most part completely unofficial. To the DN social media affords unfettered freedom of expression.

7.2.5. The Veil of Anonymity

Another salient characteristic of social media usage is the ability of the user to remain anonymous in communication. While this anonymity seems an opportunity for others, particularly DNs, it serves to create mistrust among certain users particularly, DIs. A DN reports thus:

“Interestingly I have hidden my identity. I have assumed the name ‘creative minds don’t sleep’. That’s my name there so you can’t really make it out whether it me unless I tell you who I am.”

DIs are of the opinion that the anonymity afforded by social media allows people to fake identities which compromises on sincere relationship and trustworthiness.

“People assume characters that they are not because they think that they are not face to face with you. And so they fake it and there is a lot of faking with social media. So because of that, sometimes you don’t
know who you are dealing with, whether it is the real person or a faked up person”.

Most respondents believe that the anonymity afforded by social media interaction allows the ability to express opinions without fear or favour, unlike in a face to face interaction. For example, one DN reports;

“There are people that I can’t even look into their eyes and say certain things but I can say it freely on social media because am hiding behind a machine, and it happens all the time on social media

By and large, the anonymity in social media either liberating or limiting the communication experience. Interaction limits the quality of communication by reducing the amount of socially recognised cues. The social value embedded in the context of communicating is lost. While the veil of anonymity may allow the expression of one’s true mind, it may also make it easier for deviant activities to flourish.

7.2.6. The Sense of Status Equalisation

Due to the choice of remaining anonymous in an interaction in social media networking, it creates difficulty in identifying the particular individuals a user may be interacting with. Appropriating information to suit individual interest and personalities is almost impossible. This becomes troublesome in communication. For example one DN recognises that, social media makes it easy to broadcast anything, send messages to thousands of people in a second, yet not be aware of the structure of those receivers such as their ages, tastes and limits. As such being protected by the barriers of distance, time and place, there is less inclination to give in to societal values and norms. In so
doing, the respect traditionally accorded to elderly persons by addressing them by their
titles is jeopardised in the milieu of the informal tactics of communication employed
mostly by DN on social media. To be addressed in a casual manner as is done on social
media communication is rejected by DIs. Disheartened, one DI reports thus:

“Yes, and you see in our situation because of our
cultural upbringing an elderly person is an elderly
person it doesn’t matter whether he is called John, you
have to call him Uncle John or Mr. John. Those things
have to come, I mean those titles are very important
to us. So you put them in a particular place where they
are. I mean they are statuses, but we don’t look at that
when we come to social media. You should see our
platform, everybody can say anything. You think the
people you taught could have spoken to you in that
manner”.

7.3. Discussion: Intergenerational Communication and Social Media

Theories of computer mediated communication have been used to explain and predict
the effect of using computers to communicate with each other. Several benefits of using
the computer to communicate has been documented, of most importance are the effects
it has on how people communicate with each other on face-to-face bases. Comparing it
with face to face, several theories have emerged over the years to explain how it affects
relationships, both interpersonal and intergroup. In the face of social changes of all
sorts, the reliance on CMC to bridge the intergenerational gap in digital communication has grown.

The challenge of attaining effective communication through CMC is derived from the richness of face to face communication where all the types of expressions are employed to attain complete information sharing as well as meaning making. Somehow, CMC, due to the mediation of the computer or internet enabling devices, limits the array of means of communication afforded by face to face. These notwithstanding the limiting feature of CMC have been noted to promote unprecedented interconnection among and between different kinds and groups of people unlike never before promoting the idea that intergeneration communication gap would close. For example, several studies have identified that, CMC breaks down barriers by freeing users from any restricting social values as well as being free from group or societal influences.

Thus, in the communication process each of the communicants treats each other as equals. In this way the enrichment of diversity and democracy is encouraged and experienced. Moreover, the impact of status differentiation is dramatically reduced allowing users to express their true intentions and minds without inhibitions from societal backlash. Consequently, the freedom to express one’s self without fear or favour boosts creative and productive endeavours.

In exploring the experiences of social media usage of DN and DI respondents, the current study identifies six characteristics of communicative practices that are prevalent to the experience of using social media. These characteristics also fall within the
purview of CMC. Several CMC theories explain the underlying principles of outcomes in CMC. However, the effects of these outcomes or characteristics do not encourage inter-generational communication, but rather favours communication between individuals or groups of individuals of the same kind, given the fact that successful intergenerational communication relies on shared meanings and the acknowledgement of the salient social membership of a fellow communicant (Giles, 2012).

Moreover a successful intergenerational communication hinges on the dynamic processes where each communicant’s cognitions, motivations and emotions influence the behaviour of the other communicant (Giles, 2012), resulting in a shared symbiotic communicative relationship.

The social presence theory (Short, Williams & Christie, 1979) posits the view that numerous communication media differ in their capacities to convey cues of nonverbal communication as well as verbal context. The theory explains that, the fewer the number of cue systems a medium can support, the less the cordial and involvement users get with each other. Hiltz, Johnson & Agle (1978) as well as Rice & Case (1993) used the model to predict that CMC renders less socio-emotional content than other multimodal forms of communication, with particular reference to face-to-face communication. This means that with CMC, the social cues that serve as markers to how one behaves in the communication process are removed. As CMC focuses on the individual’s maximum benefit in CMC, this view implies that the absence of socially constructed communication cues tend to liberate users from the strictures of social
values. This enables users to communicate with each other freely without any inhibition. Thus emerges the central tenet of CMC; the idea of remaining anonymous.

The characteristic feature of preference for intra-generational over inter-generation, as noted in this study, on face value appear to be the attribute of generational differences where worldviews differ according to different formative experiences which may drive preferences for particular media. Conversely, it is rather DIs’ awareness of the anonymity feature of social media which they believe makes it an appropriate tool for only sharing information they deem for public consumption and not for the publicising of personal information. The lack of social context cue in social media rids messages of their necessary nuances that that are needed to define the message for particular receiver or formulating messages for specific users. DNs on the other hand, have their interests served by the anonymity of social media use where they can reach anybody and be reached by all and yet not necessarily being known to all. With this underlying logic, intergenerational communication between the two generations suffers a setback because without using the same communication media, the chance of communicating is limited or nonexistent at all.

It must be noted that being anonymous in communication has exhilarating effects. This is documented in CMC research by several writers (Spears and Lea 1994; Lister et al, 2009). However, its tendency to inhibit or disrupts intergenerational communication is palpable as this chapter explains. Remaining anonymous means that one may exercise the choice to consciously disregard socio-cultural norms that govern intergenerational communication. As indicated by the responses from the DIs in the current study, the
idea of anonymity creates mistrust as one may not be sure of whom one is dealing with. The challenge of not knowing who is on the other side of the communication channel problematise imaginary-free interaction.

In attempt to explain how users attune their communication to suit a correspondence on the other side of the communication channel and reduce their imaginations about the other user, the Social Identification and Deindividuation Effect (SIDE) model proposes the view that, when communicants cannot see each other during communication, they do not simply attune to each other based on their individual differences but rather the absence of any visual identification or anonymity leads to deindividuation. Deindividuation means that users lose the self awareness and their communication counterparts’ individualities. Users then tend to identify themselves as part of an imagined group. Therefore when such social identification occurs, users relate with each other with the same imagined in-group dynamics. This imaginary classification therefore drives users’ perception of each other, either in similarity or attraction. In other words the unified perception is based on whether online communicants belong to the same group that is significant to the user.

By and large, the core of this model suggests that, continued interactions with one another online help create the impressions about each other with which the group will be perceived. This argument favours a group of people who share similar interests, values, believes and communication style. This attraction to each other must be there for a continued communication to allow impression formation. People from different generations by default do not share such similarities and attractions towards each other
and as such would fall out from a group in networked communication if their formation is as a result of processes in conformity.

The best to happen in such instance is, as is evidenced in this study, each generational cohort prefers to communicate with users from its own generation, creating preference for in-group rather than intergroup communication. Obviously and in definite terms, this does not encourage intergenerational communication, but rather perpetuate it.

The Social Influence Theory (Fulk, 1987), is then proposed to suggest that the nature of the media and their capabilities are socially constructed and the richness and utility of the medium are affected by interaction with other individuals in one’s social network. This means that as to whether a medium is rich or not is determined by how users chose to see it and the perception of the richness of the medium depends on the strength of the relationship or ties with the group or individual. So in effect Fulk (1987) envisages that one’s strong ties have more influence in one’s perception of CMC richness than their weak ties. This supports the finding in the current study indicating that DIs and DNs have different choices of communication media. Each generational cohort chooses the media that best serve its perceived interest and allow senses of belongingness among themselves.

However, it goes without saying that when seeking for intergenerational communication, media choice problematises the situation. When one generation has habitual preference for a specific communication medium, the interacting generational partner is not familiar or comfortable with that medium or chooses not to use it.
CMC’s core property is that it limits the nature of communication by reducing the amount of social context information such as other non-verbal forms of communication that enriches interaction, especially, in a face-to-face encounter. Regardless of the centricity of this feature in CMC, the Social Information Processing (SIP) theory enunciates the supposition that communicators are inspired to develop interpersonal impressions and kinship regardless of the medium. It further proposes that when nonverbal cues are missing communicators adapt their communicative practices to whatever cues remain available through the channel they are using.

In this model the communicator is called upon to be ingenious at finding ways through which to make the communication processes as much enriching as it is allowed to be.

The use of emoticons and smileys, as found in this study is a typical example. In the absence of social context cue in social media interactions, communicators resort to the use of these graphic images of facial and bodily expressions. This implies that, and as the theory suggests, communicators will employ whatever means available to them from the medium to communicate to achieve maximum interactions.

Again, to achieve the natural flair of face-to-face conversation in CMC, communicators chose to use abbreviated texts and acronyms to convey information. While these efforts are commendable and prescribes to the idea of innovations in itself, it does no good to the effort at achieving intergenerational cohesiveness in communication. Findings of
the study point to the fact that the use of these graphic images and acronyms as well as abbreviated texts by its nature is group or culture specific.

Most DIs find it culturally unacceptable to use such wording to communicate. To them it represents a sense of disrespect and the abuse of accepted Standard English language. Moreover, they simply do not understand. On the hand, these forms of writing are the main stay of DN's means of communicating. While this also goes a long way to perpetuate intra generational communication it douches the spirit of inter generational communication as DIs may not be able to decode such messages encoded by their DN counterparts.

To still emphasis the richness of CMC and its ability to generate appreciable levels of emotional and other social context cues, Walther (1996) proposes the theory of Hyperpersonal Communication which suggests that emotions and levels of affection developed through CMC can sometimes surpass those developed through offline interactions. However, it is already established that the central feature of CMC, anonymity, has the tendency to promote deviant behaviours online, such as, which is noted in this study, faking of identities. The successful conditions to such development of intimacy as proposed by Walther (1996), involves the sender, the message, attributes of the channel and feedback.

However, all these elements are not in any way capable of substantiating true identities. For example, research on deceptive self presentation in online dating finds out that, people misrepresent their age, height, occupations, weight online. These actions have
been attributed to CMC’s facility of anonymity. This suggests that when people tend to have emotions and levels of affection which are higher than those acquired through an offline relationship, then it implies that the information sent across by the sender to the receiver, such as photos, videos, audio and written forms may have been tempered with CMC’s facility for selective self representation and editing under asynchronous communication conditions (Toma et al., 2008; Hall et al., 2010).

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter identifies certain salient communicative practices that are prevalent to both DNs and DIs in their use of social media. These communicative practices, however, do not encourage or promote intergenerational communication. Social media, in spite of it multimodal means of communication than previous communication media, still suffers from the lack of social cues that are needed to take into cognisance the cultural ambiances that surround intergenerational communication.

Innovative ways with which to reduce lack of social cues are also more of intra-group centred or culturally situated such that its familiarity is only known to selected few who are mostly of the DN generational cohort. The theories of CMC centre on the individual’s interaction with CMC and not so much of a group. At best, CMC is more favourable to intra-generational rather than inter-generational.

In conclusion, the underlying problem of intergenerational communication is not solely the result of generational differences and differentiated use but rather as a result of the application of the available cues left to the communicator in the face of a medium with
leaner social cues than could be found in face-to-face interaction. Moreover, CMC accentuate the problem of generational gap in information communication technology.
CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1. Introduction

The study set out the overarching objective to explore the social media usage patterns between DNs and DIs and how the characteristics of their communicative practices affect intergenerational communication. The purpose for this study was to illuminate on how the two generational cohorts negotiate intercommunication in the wake of social media technologies that have been branded to favour one over the other, yet still, these two generations are faced with the compelling need to intercommunicate through these media.

To achieve the overarching objective, the following goals guided the study: (1) An analyses of the origin, growth and development of media in Ghana from a historical perspective, (2) Exploration of the patterns of social media usage between DIs and DNs, (3) Exploration into the interactional experiences, perception and attitudes of the two generational cohorts in their use of social media and (4) The analyses of the characteristics of their social media communicative practices and how they influence intergenerational communication.

The study applied a mixed method approach in order to capture the details and complex nuances of the patterns of generational use of social media. The use of the combined method complemented each other and allowed for complete analysis of the data. The researcher used two information gathering instruments to collect the data – a semi open ended questionnaire and a face-to-face and telephone interview using an interview
guide. For the qualitative study out of the 384 questionnaires sent out, a total of 300 were returned for a 78.124% response rate. One hundred and fifty respondents represented the Digital Native population while another one hundred and fifty represented the Digital Immigrant population. This ensured a fair distribution of respondents.

Data collected from the questionnaires was tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics generated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of the results outlined the pattern of social media usage of two generational cohort respondents. The researcher then used some relevant key findings in the pattern of usage of social media to explore the interactional experiences of the two generational groupings in their social media usages for the qualitative phase of the study. The primary technique for the second qualitative phase involved the conducting of in-depth semi-structured face to face interviews with thirty participants, seventeen from the DN population and thirteen from the DI population using an interview guide. Data from the qualitative interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed with QRS NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

8.2. Summary of Findings

- The First Objective: The analyses of the origin, growth and development of media in Ghana from a historical perspective.

In this analysis, it emerges that, changes in the media landscape directly links to the socio-political and cultural environment of the country. The more democratised the
media, the more there is the demand for the expression of speech. The democratised media in Ghana reflects the ability of media consumers to become producers at the same time, dismantling structured information flow from organised media outlets. Audience on the spot contribution to news broadcast by institutionalised media houses is one of the prevalent practices in the media industry. This enables diversity to prevail in the media industry. However, the diversity enabled media creates fragmented audience where different segment of the populations are targeted with specific information for specific needs.

The change from monopolistic ownership of media to a more divers and fragmented media is matched up with society grappling with the problem of active mobilisation and integrating people around national cultural values. Ghana’s media, when solely under state ownership, garnered cultural values of the country and presented them as one Ghanaian culture and values. However under liberalisation policy, mobilising and integrating people on national identity and cultures is problematic due to the fragmentation of information.

There is also a rapidly growing degree of itinerant contents, increasing peoples’ information reach, making it difficult to implement control measures. New and advancement in media communication technologies are drastically changing the media landscape and those it serves. This makes the implementation of existing rules and regulation much counterproductive.

Unlike previous communication media practices in Ghana, the uses of social media perpetuate what seem like generational consciousness. First, the young generation is seen eager to express themselves while the older generation is seen to be more restrained. Second, in the current social media practices in Ghana, boundaries of what
constitute appropriate for consumption by old and young people are disappearing. This implies that distinct media worlds for each separate generation is diminishing and being reinforced simultaneously.

- The Second Objective: Exploring the patterns of social media usage between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants

Exploring the patterns of social media usage between DIs and DNs reveal interesting set of dynamics. Under demographic characteristics, it is revealed that gender was fairly distributed with a slight domination over the males. While among the DN females accounted for most of respondents, males dominated among the DI population. Under educational background it was also revealed that more DNs have high level of education than the DIs. Within the DI group, however, the DI males have higher qualification while most of the females have low level of education. Under occupational status of respondents, there was a general indication that most respondents were engaged in one form of livelihood activity or the other. While most DIs are found to be in the formal sector, most DNs while being students were also National Service persons engaged in some form of entrepreneurial activities.

Ownership of social media supporting devices of the respondents also revealed that the most common device used by most of the respondents was smartphone. However, there are variations of the ownership of devices between the two generational cohorts. Of most significant is that while DN tend to own several devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers, the DIs tend to own one particular device at a time. On the other hand, among the DN group, more females tend to own more devices than their DN male counterparts. The DI males also tend to own more than one device than their female counterparts.
The most predominant device used for social media activities by most of the respondents was the smartphone. The device with the least usage was the tablet. Thus the high ownership of the smartphone reflects its predominant use among the respondents. However, among the DNs, there is a high usage of all the devices for social media than among the DIs. DNs use more tablets than the DIs. Again female DNs dominate in the usage of all devices than their male counterpart. On the other hand, males of DI respondents use more than one device while their female counterparts stick to only one particular device.

The social media site of which most respondents subscribe to is Facebook. This is followed up by Twitter, followed up by WhatsApp and then Google Plus. While both generational groupings heavily subscribe to Facebook, the DNs have the highest subscription to Facebook and Twitter while the DI population tend to have high subscription to WhatsApp and Google Plus.

In disclosing the motivation or the driving force underlying the subscription to social media sites, it is revealed that most respondents subscribe out of the interest to keep up with times. The second most predominant reason was the invitations by friends and persuasions from family and relatives. The DN group predominantly motivated by the interest to keep up with times, while the DI group join social media from recommendations from family and friends. DN females tend to subscribe to social media out of curiosity, the interest to keep up with times and are the most influenced by friends’ invitations than their DN male counterpart. In the case of DIs, males dominated in their motivation to subscribe to social media through the influence of family and friends as well as the interest to keep up with times.
The predominant activity respondents undertake on social media sites of their choices is the establishing of contact online with friends and relatives. The second most predominant activity was to make friends, followed up by business networking. Between the two generational cohorts, DI’s mostly contact family and friends and use it to know other peoples’ connections. Most DN group on the other hand are motivated to use social media to follow celebrities, increase connections and for establishing business connection.

All respondents access their social media on a daily basis. Respondents spend between 10-30 minutes on social media per log in. However, more of DI respondents indicated a daily networking activity more than the DNs. Among the DNs, however, more females engage in social media activities daily than their male counterpart. Again, DI males constituted most of the respondents who use social media daily more than their female counterparts.

- The Third Objective: Exploring the interactional experiences, perception and attitudes of the two generational cohorts in their use of social media

The nature of the interaction between the two generations is marked by different interpretation to each other’s communication behaviour. Based on participants’ experiences, DN and DI have different perceptions of the same concept of control, exposure, vulnerability and empowerment in using social media. At the same time, DI have the penchant to be more cautious while DN have an enthusiastic attitude towards social media in general.

In the view of DI, DNs are not selective of information they put across the media neither are they selective of whom to share particular information with or not. DNs are open
and unrestrictive in sharing information. They do not express much difference between professional and personal communication, whereas DIs place much emphasis on the difference between personal and professional communication.

Furthermore, social media interactions between the two generational cohorts reveal that, DNs perceive social media as liberating, and granting of unlimited access to the world through linking up with contacts globally. The perception of social media as the avenue to achieve one’s entrepreneurial and creative potential is also strongly held by DNs. DIs on the other hand, perceive the latent ability of social media to make one lose the individuality and the self, which renders the individual vulnerable. DIs also perceive social media as creating a distractive culture where individuals are drawn away from actual and offline activities.

DNs attitude towards the use of social media is enthusiastic. They believe that social media will take up most of their business and work life with success. They see less risk in communicating through social media with expectations of it becoming the predominant feature in their lives. DIs, on the other hand tend to have a cautious and conservative attitude for social media use. Their long relationship established with the use of traditional media provides a sense of security whereas the uncertainty of social media use creates the sense of caution and conservative towards social media.

- The Fourth Objective: The analyses of the characteristics of the two generations’ social media communicative practices and how they influence intergenerational communication.
• In this analysis, certain salient communicative practices are identified that are prevalent to both DNs and DIs in their use of social media. The analysis reveals that the characteristics of social media communicative practices of the two generational cohorts are predisposed towards generational perspectives as well as the nature of the social media as a technology. Social media, in spite of it multimodal means of communication than previous communication media, suffers from the lack of social cues that are needed to take into cognisance the cultural ambiences that surround intergenerational communication to ensure success.

8.3. Conclusion

There is much intergenerational connectedness with social media. Within this connectedness, however, lies an illusion of closeness. The underlying gap in intergenerational communication is not solely the result of generational differences and differentiated use but rather as a result of the application of the available cues left to the communicator using a medium with leaner social cues than could be found in face-to-face interaction. Moreover, CMC accentuate the problem of generational gap in information communication technology.

The study concludes that, social media usage has brought DN and DI together through communicating on similar networks, applications and platforms. However, the use of social media as the means of communication between the two generations accentuates generational communication gap because it lacks the required social cues to moderate the behavioural and cultural aspect of the communication processes. In other words, the underlying gap in intergenerational communication is not solely the result of...
generational differences and differentiated use but rather as a result of the use of the available cues left to the communicator using a medium with leaner social cues than could be found in face-to-face interaction.

8.4. Reflections: Implications of Findings

The sheer flexibility, convenience, availability, not to mention speed and immediacy afforded by social media interaction makes it one of the most adopted media for communication. Social media enjoys widespread adoption and takes care of most people’s communicative needs. However, on face value, the effect of this familiarity and ubiquity of social media use makes it unremarkable and normal in the everyday social networked activities of users. Nevertheless, social media use refuses to be mundane, routine and ordinary when viewed as a force in human interaction. Interaction is identified as a central human behaviour and the foundation of culture and community. Social media has changed the way people communicate and interact. Fundamentally, it is changing human behaviour as well as the foundations of culture and community. These changes understandably, have qualitative implications for society.

For example, to generalise, Ghanaian culture stresses respect towards elders, age-based hierarchy and the importance of consensus. The ubiquitous use of CMC such as social media, with its accompanied tenet of anonymity makes it easy to get away from the strictures of social conformity. This has the tendency to undermine and subvert cultural norms.
Moreover, most cultures in Ghana are relationship oriented. Continuous use of social media in the way established by the current study implies the possibility of distance between the two generations. The consequences of this distancing are profound. Less connection means that the two generations are not able to build relationships as strong as they should neither are they able to maintain them as well. As a result, each generation will feel less familiarity, will be uncomfortable with each other, the feeling of suspicion and insecurity and, most importantly, less understanding from each other. There will also bring about less sharing which means that Digital Immigrants may know less about what is going on in their Digital Native counterparts’ lives and, consequently, have less intergenerational relationship. Digital Immigrants are also less able to not only offer appropriate supervision and leadership, but, at a more basic level, they are less able to share positive values, culture and tradition.

There is the profusion of CMC literature, suggesting an idealised impact of computer mediated communication on society. The development of CMC purports a point of view, indicative of immense possibilities through the acts of anonymity of individuals. The potential for the formulation of new group identities sparks a lot of interest in CMC research. Popular understanding about group identity formation online was based on the idea that online communities or grouping are antidotes to the social fragmentation and iniquities of the real world (Rheingold 1993). Others also saw it as a revival of a new public sphere (Poster1997; Kellner 2001). With such ideas of a renewed community, suggestions that CMS may have the ability to bring together different generations to discuss topics of mutual interest became rife. Others hopefully suggested that as digital media platforms continued to evolve, the potentials of intercultural and
intergenerational communication would improve and continue to grow (DeRider, 2015).

CMC in fact, has enabled contacts between groups of people who otherwise would not have met. However, CMC predominantly, focuses on the individual needs of the user, taking cognisance of how the individual feel, gain, benefit or looses when interacting with others. It is unable to identify and promote the social cues relevant for communication between people of different worldviews. In CMC an individual chooses or not to recognise the privilege for interacting with others. This also depends on the individuals own moral boundaries and personal idiosyncrasies. In general, CMC focuses on the individual 'user' of a computer and disregards the essential social processes of an integrative community and development.

Generally, DNs have the penchant to care only about themselves and their interest when social networking as is evidenced in this study. The tendency to pay attention to their needs and the immediate benefits thereof dominates their attention and this attitude is augmented be CMC.

However, in the broader social and cultural context, communication is an essential attempt to achieving shared values. The need for shared values and norms are the requirement for a cohesive society which is one of the many objectives of the United Nations (UN). The UN refers social cohesion “to the elements that bring and hold people together in society” (DESA, 2009). This could be achieved when individuals have the willingness to defer to the common good and to conform to the widespread
social norms and values. The absence of these is what Durkheim (1952) describes as ‘anomie’ in society.

The hope for interconnectedness that actually results in communication of sharing meanings in mutual understanding cannot be expected of CMC only. Nevertheless, in a symbiotic process a user would be mindful of the limitations of the medium and take cognisance of the rights and privileges of the other communicant. This would ensure for a sincere and successful communication experience between the two generations.

This study has placed the searchlight on intergenerational communication through CMC. The unmaking of a good intergenerational communication, on face value seems like it is determined by the driving force of CMC’s anonymity alone. However, while anonymity is a standard feature of CMC, it is taken advantage of by users to satisfy their communication needs. Anonymity, therefore, becomes the trump card and at the same time the bane of CMC in the dynamics of communication. The onus therefore lies with the agency of users to negotiate around this dynamic means of communication to achieve the best result possible.

Understanding the requirements for kinship, aptitude, and independence must inspire members from the different generations. Considerations for such needs at social media networking, could be the secret recipe to a heart-warming and endearing engagement. Eventually this greater engagement would heighten the sense of community among users rather than create or increase gaps between them.
The condition of the Ghanaian modern society is nostalgically compared to the periods when F-t-F communication dominated interactions. During these times, collective values and norms were easily monitored and adhered to. However, the speed at which social media is taking precedence in communication and entrenching itself as the sole means for communication has deeper implication for society.

Much sociality is taking place on social media. The sheer affordances of the media and the seamlessness with which users attune themselves to them, and the speed at which they are changing interactions as they were known before would require a new kind of “sociological imagination” (Mills, 2000). Societies that resembled those proposed by Durkheim and Parsons may not be there anymore. This does not suggest that there will be no more societies but the mechanisms of social connection provided by the internet and the evolution of social media applications may potentially influence the facts about social cohesion in societies to come.

8.5. Recommendation

This study therefore, recommends that, broader interrogations of the relationship between age, culture, belief systems and the influence of social media need to be explored further.

The study also recommends that participants in social media networks for interactions should attune to each other's communication needs and style and give a sense of reciprocity or optimal convergence. This, however, may involve amending communication style and content.
It again recommends that, the development of mediated communication systems such as social media applications and its related technologies should integrate social functionality within these applications to improve mediated intergenerational communications.
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209


# Bio

1. **Are you** Male? [ ] or Female? [ ]
   
2. **Which category below includes your age?**
   - 50 - 55 [ ]
   - 56 - 60 [ ]
   - 61 - 65 [ ]
   - 66 - 70 [ ]
   - 16 - 20 [ ]
   - 20 - 24 [ ]
   - 25 - 30 [ ]

3. **What is the highest level of school you have completed?**
   - Basic Education [ ]
   - Middle School Education [ ]
   - Secondary School Education [ ]
   - Bachelor Degree or Equivalent [ ]
   - Graduate Degree [ ]
   - Other (s) (please specify) ........................................................

4. **What is your professional or occupational status?**
   - Educationist [ ]
   - Health Professional [ ]
   - Civil Servant [ ]
   - Entrepreneur [ ]
   - Other (s) (please specify) ........................................................
5. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Employed
- Self Employed
- Retired
- Not employed
- Other (s) (please specify) ..............................................

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**MOTIVATION**

6. Please which of the following device(s) do you own?

- Computer
- Smartphone
- Tablet
- Smartphone and Computer
- All of the above
- None of the above
- Other(s) (please specify).............................................

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7. Please which of the following device(s) do you use most often?

- Computer
- Smartphone
- Tablet

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8. What keeps you connect with others on social media?

- Knowing person in real life
- Family and Friends
- Access to business network
- Quality of profile picture
- Celebrity status of others
- Person’s number of connections
- Want to increase connection count
- Other (s) (please specify) .............................................

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9. Initially, what was your general feeling about participating in social media networking?

- Excited
- Indifferent
- Happy
10. Currently, what is your general feeling about participating in social networking?

- Excited
- Indifferent
- Happy
- Energised
- Sad
- Wasted time
- Overwhelmed
- Other(s) (please specify) .................................................................

11. How did you join social media site(s)?

- Invitations from friends requests
- Interested in keeping up
- Persuasions from friends and family
- Curiosity
- Other(s) (please specify) .................................................................

### USAGE

12. Do you have an account on a social media networking site, like Facebook or WhatsApp?

- Yes
- No

13. Which social media site(s) are you subscribed to?

- Facebook
- MySpace
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Google Plus
- You-Tube
- Other(s) (please specify) .................................................................
14. **Which social media site(s) do you use most often?**

- Facebook
- MySpace
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Google Plus
- You-Tube
- Other(s) (please specify)

15. **How do you connect to social media site(s)?**

- Through my Mobile/Smartphone
- Through my Desktop/Laptop Computer
- Through my Smartphone and computer

16. **Where do you normally connect to these site(s)?**

- In my home
- In a friend’s or a relative’s place
- At the workplace
- At the internet cafe
- Other(s) (please specify)

17. **What do you do often when you are connected to social media site(s)?**

- Chat with friends
- Play games
- Looking for dates
- Like/follow groups and fun clubs
- Like/follow news organisations
- Sharing experiences
- Commenting on postings
- Sharing videos and music
- Other(s) (please specify)

**CONSUMPTION**

18. **How often do you use your device(s)?**

- Everyday
- Once a week
- Once a month
Occasionally
Other(s) (please specify)

19. On the average, what time do you spend on your Mobile/Smartphone?
- 10 minutes
- 30 minutes
- One hour
- Two Hours
- Less than 10 minutes
- Other(s) (please specify)

20. On the average, what time do you spend on your Computer/Laptop?
- 10 minutes
- 30 minutes
- One hour
- Two hours
- Less than 10 minutes
- Other(s) (please specify)

21. How often do you access your social media site(s)?
- Less than 10 minutes
- 30 minutes
- One hour
- Several hours
- Other(s) (please specify)

22. How much time, within a day do you spend connected to these site(s)?
- Less than 10 minutes
- 30 minutes
- One hour
- Several hours
- Other(s) (please specify)

23. Does using Facebook makes you feel exposed?
- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I disagree
<table>
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<tr>
<th>24.</th>
<th>How often do you communicate with users from the other generation?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quite often</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
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APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW GUIDE

How did you get into using social media?

How long have you been using the social media?

When did you start using the internet?

Where did you gain your first experience at the internet?

How did that influence your experience?

What are some of your experiences when networking on social media?

What were your initial expectations when you started using social media?

What discourages you from using social media?

What encourages you into going on social media?

When you encounter someone from the other generation on social media, what comes to your mind?

How do you relate with the other generation on social media?

What are your hopes for social media interactions in the future?
APPENDIX THREE: LEVELS OF SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE MULTISTAGE SAMPLING PROCEDURE FOR THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO. OF NETWORKS VISITED</th>
<th>TOTAL OF CONTACTS IN THE NETWORK</th>
<th>NO. OF PERSONS OF AGES 55-70</th>
<th>PERSONS WITH MORE THAN ONE PLATFORM</th>
<th>ACTIVE USERS OF MORE THAN TWO YEARS</th>
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APPENDIX FOUR: SAMPLE PAGE OF NVIVO ANALYSIS

Name: Nodes\WhatsApp\Digital Natives & Immigrants\Views on WhatsApp\Private

Reference 1 - 0.68% Coverage

WhatsApp, they are on one to one basis.

Reference 2 - 1.53% Coverage

I am a little bit cautious when I am on facebook. But on the WhatsApp I feel so free.

Reference 3 - 1.12% Coverage

...until this what's App came but as for that one I feel more comfortable because it is between whoever you are talking to.

Reference 4 - 1.51% Coverage

I feel what's App is more one on one so whatever I want to share with you the jokes and all the nasty things I just... nobody else sees it but just the two of us... so I think I prefer that one I use it a lot and I use it to do my campaigns you know I am an intern for right information common wealth human rights initiative... so the right information... so I have been sending... that too is a very good platform... then it goes viral...

Reference 5 - 0.62% Coverage

...yes but I think I feel more... very comfortable with that... its like people you want to get close to you and people you want to pour your heart to or share whatever you have I think I prefer that.

Reference 6 - 0.62% Coverage

we have a community radio family so if you get information you just drop it and everybody get it on the What's App, we have a group. So whatever you want to share once you get it on the what's App the whole group gets it... so I think for me what's App is ok.

WhatsApp is a chat platform and people reach you with a phone number so it is selective.

Reference 1 - 1.75% Coverage
APPENDIX FIVE: SAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)

PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

Section A - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Study:</th>
<th>The Perception of Social Media and its Usage Among the Aged</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator:</td>
<td>Ramatu Mustapha Dadzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Protocol Number</td>
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Section B – CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

General Information about Research
The purposes for this study are twofold: the first is to satisfy the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and the second is to provide some new reliable and relevant data to expand on prior research on how the aged perceive and use social media. This is to provide and promote a realistic understanding of aged people and digital technology with a view to supporting digital media content producers and social media platform developers in playing useful and meaningful roles in supporting the aged generation.

The duration expected of participants in this study will be a maximum of one year from the initial date of contact to participate in the study. This study will use both focus group discussions and individual in-depth interview methods to collect the data. In the focus group, participants of the group will meet at a location that will be convenient to all participants and during discussions, individual participants will be given the chance to express themselves within the issue being discussed.

Benefits/Risk of the study
The anticipated benefit associated with this study is that participants will have the singular opportunity to partake in an exercise that will promote knowledge about the habits and media usage of the aged population in Ghana. As far as the researcher is concerned, there is no physical, social or psychological risk involved in the study.

**Confidentiality**

To ensure confidentiality, names of the interviewees will not be disclosed. The data gathered in this exercise will be solely and strictly used for the purpose of this research project. During and after completion of the study the raw research data will be appropriately stored by the researcher under lock and key. Such confidentiality initiatives and data storage measures are all in the interest of ensuring and protecting the privacy and anonymity of participants. Those who may come into direct contact to research records are primarily the supervisors of this study and research assistants working on the project. Their contact is basically for academic purposes. These groups will be required to sign or thump print to be authorized access.

**Compensation**

There will not be any express compensation to participants of this study. However, the researcher intends to provide refreshment to participants when the need arises.

**Withdrawal from Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty. The participant will not be adversely affected if he/she declines to participate or later stops participating. The participant or the participant's legal representative will be informed in a timely manner if information becomes available that may be relevant to the participant's willingness to continue participation or withdraw.

**Contact for Additional Information**

Please contact the following for answers to any questions about the research and in case of research related injury:

Ramatu M. Dadzie  
Tel: 0201877729  
Email: ramatudadzie@yahoo.com or ramatudadzie@gmail.com

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study you may contact the Administrator of the Ethics Committee for Humanities, ISSER, University of Ghana at ech@isser.edu.gh / dopai-tetteh@ug.edu.gh or 00233- 303-933-866.
"I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records."

________________________________________________
Name of Volunteer

________________________________________________
Signature or mark of volunteer     Date

If volunteers cannot read the form themselves, a witness must sign here:

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

________________________________________________
Name of witness

________________________________________________
Signature of witness       Date

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

________________________________________________
Name of Person who Obtained Consent

________________________________________________
Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent     Date
APPENDIX SIX: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)
P.O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No. __________________________  15th February, 2017

Ms. Ramatu Mustapha Dadzie
Department of Sociology
University of Ghana
Legon

Dear Ms. Dadzie,

ECH 012/15-16: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONG THE YOUNG AND ELDERLY IN GHANA

This is to advise you that the above reference study has been presented to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities for renewal and the following actions taken subject to the conditions and explanation provided below:

Expiry Date: 11/02/18
On Agenda for: Renewal
Date of Submission: 13/12/17
ECH Action: Approved
Reporting: Bi-Annually

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

[Signature]

Rev. Prof. J. D. Y. Mante
ECH Chair

CC: Rev Prof. M. P. K. Okyerefo, Department of Sociology, University of Ghana.