

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

The crest of the University of Ghana is a shield-shaped emblem. The top section is light blue with three golden palm fronds. The middle section is light blue with a golden ornate design. The bottom section is light blue with a golden banner that reads "INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS".

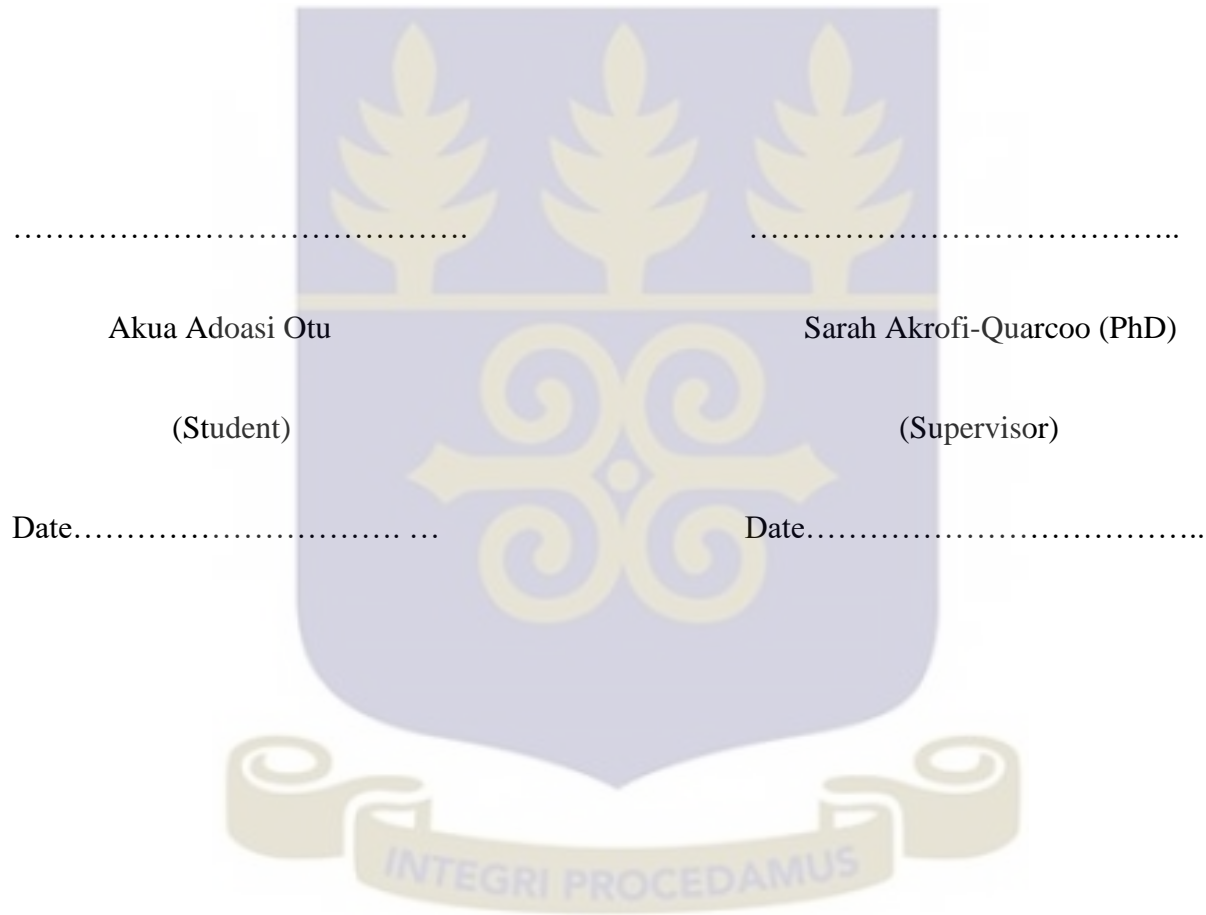
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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
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DECLARATION

I, Akua Adoasi Otu, declare that, except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this work is a result of my own research conducted at the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon under the supervision of Miss Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo.



ABSTRACT

This study is a quantitative analysis of the level of social media addiction among students of the University of Ghana. Using the Uses and Gratification theory and Media Systems Dependency theory as the theoretical framework, the study investigated the level of addiction to the various social media platforms among a sample of Students of the University of Ghana. The objective of the study was to see whether social media addiction existed among students and the extent to which they were addicted if in fact the phenomenon existed.

Two hundred students from the four colleges of the University of Ghana were sampled for this study. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires which was made up of 13 items from the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) which was developed by Dr Kimberly Young to measure the level of addiction to social media by students. The uses and gratifications and media Systems Dependency theories underpinned the study.

Findings show that while scores from almost 19% of the respondents are not within the social media addiction bracket, only 1% of the respondents is severely addicted. Scores from the remaining 80% of the respondents established that they are moderately and mildly addicted to social media.

Findings from the study also revealed that the most subscribed to and most used social media platform by students is WhatsApp and also a majority of the students use their social media accounts for entertainment.

DEDICATION

To the memory of my dear mother Gladys Akurang-Parry.

You are never over

- Akua



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The road has not been smooth throughout this journey but I give praise and thanks to the Almighty God who has been with me through it all.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background

The ease of internet access worldwide has made it one of the most popular medium of seeking information and for communication (Ramamohanarao et al, 2007). The internet is now very vital in the modern world. It has become an important instrument in education and social life such that it is gradually becoming indispensable in the daily life of many people (Pew Internet Research, 2004). The internet is a highly enlightening and entertaining medium, therefore people engage in several activities on it; some of which may be potentially addictive. One of such activities is the use of social media (Kuss & Griffiths 2011).

The introduction of social media in the last decade has largely attracted many people. This has therefore shifted their focus from mainly using just traditional media and traditional forms of social networking for social interaction (globalwebindex, 2015). The mass appeal of social media could be an issue of concern, especially with regards to the steady increase in the time users spend online. Also, the qualities of social media make it a desirable escape for many of these people increasing their dependency on it; thereby contributing to the growth of the social media addiction phenomenon worldwide (Brewer, 2013).

1.1.1 Overview of social media

Social media has become a global phenomenon and a very important means of communication among peers, families and all manner of persons.

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, instagram, LinkedIn and mobile instant messaging services (IM) such as WhatsApp, Viber and IMO and video calling services like Skype have become a popular means of communication in the past few years. Statistics show that active

social media users the world over are estimated at about two thousand two hundred and six billion, a global diffusion of 30% which is a rise in number of users by about one hundred and seventy-six Million users in the last year alone (www.socialmediatoday.com).

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social media as “a public web-based service that permits users to create a personal profile, identify other users with whom they can relate to or have a connection with, read and react to posts made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly.” Kuss and Griffiths (2011) also define Social media as “virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet other people based on shared interests.” Any website that enables social interaction by users is considered a social media site. Such sites are powered by web 2.0; an online technology with the ability to allow users to interact and share information online.

The increase in number of these social media sites, combined with the fast growth and advancement of mobile device technology in the last few years, coupled with the ease of access to broadband and mobile data services have created a major avenue for daily social interaction; encouraging regular profile updates and replies to comments and messages in real time.

People are now logging on to social media on mobile devices everywhere, at any time and on the go; making it a common everyday activity and this can be confirmed by statistics released by socialmediatoday.com which estimates that about 1.925 billion users of smartphones make use of their devices for Social Media.

The level of popularity and use of social media has increased greatly over the years since it was first introduced. In a survey carried out in September 2014, the Pew Research Centre found that the popularity of Facebook continues to grow as it is still the most popular social media site though there has been a slowdown in its growth. The number of engaged users on the platform

has however improved while other social media platforms such as Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram saw a substantial rise in usage.

In Ghana too, the use of social media has risen considerably over the past few years. The growth in the rate of internet usage and in effect social media can be tied to the advancement of communication technology in Ghana i.e. the growth in the usage of smartphones and the ease of access to broadband and mobile Internet (BiztechAfrica.com).

1.1.2 Internet and social media use in Ghana

According to internetworldstats.com, there were 297,885,898 internet users in Africa which represents about 9.8% of the total population of internet users the world over as at June 2014. 5,171,993 of the 297,885,898 internet users in Africa as at Dec 31, 2014 were from Ghana representing 19.6% of the population. This is an improvement on statistics from June, 2012 when the number of Ghanaian users stood at 3,568,757(14.1%) according to data released by internetstats.com showing a significant increase in usage. Currently, it can be said that Ghana has over 1.6 million active Facebook subscribers as the number of users stood at 1,630,420 representing 6.4% of the total population of internet users in Ghana as at Dec 31, 2012 (www.internetworldstats.com). This has contributed in Facebook being the 3rd most visited website in Ghana. YouTube and Twitter follow as the 5th and 16th respectively (www.Alexa.com). Making them the top three most visited social media sites in Ghana. These three sites are amongst the most used social media sites worldwide (www.Alexa.com) therefore being ranked in the top twenty most visited sites in Ghana suggest a high rate of usage of social media in Ghana.

Students at the tertiary level may form a large chunk of social media users in Ghana as research has shown social media is largely used by young people between the ages of 18 - 34 (PEW research centre, 2014) and many students fall within this age bracket.

1.1.3. The social media addiction phenomenon

The magnitude of the use of these various platforms have become a cause for concern in recent times as this phenomenon has driven many researchers across the globe to undertake studies in the area both from the psychology point of view and the angle of communication studies. Like any other place in the world, users of social media in Ghana can be affected by the Social media addiction phenomenon.

Social media addiction is a term used to describe a situation where a user spends too much time on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, instagram) such that it negatively affects other aspects of his or her daily life like school, work or relationship with others (Walker, 2011). Addiction as described by the American Psychological Association refers to a compulsive behaviour that leads to negative effects. In other forms of addictions such as drugs, gambling, video gaming, overeating etc., people feel bound to particular activities such that they become harmful habits, which then obstructs other important activities in their lives and this can be said of people who use social media excessively.

According to Pavlicek (2013) a social media addict can be considered as one with an urge to use social media excessively. For instance, engaging in activities like “frequently checking status updates and posts or "stalking" the profiles of other users for many hours” and this behaviour or habit conflicts with his/her everyday responsibilities, such as family, school, work or other social obligations.

1.2 Statement of Problem

It is an undeniable fact that social media commands a significant number of users worldwide. It has transformed the way information is received and sent and has greatly bridged the geographical gap that exist between people. The situation is no different in Ghana, especially with the proliferation of smartphones, the number of social media users have increased significantly. Social media has produced a new type of communication among social network groups like family members, friends, acquaintances, school mates, work colleagues among others. It enables people to stay in touch and connect with people with similar interests and ideas. Social media may have an adverse effect on human behaviour because of gratifications derived from its use and studies in other parts of the world have shown that it is potentially addictive.

Many studies carried out in different parts of the world have confirmed the existence of the social media addiction phenomenon among users. Social media users utilize the various platforms for certain gratifications such that over a period of time they become dependent on these platforms.

As studies have proven the existence of social media addiction in other countries, there is a possibility for the phenomenon to exist in Ghana.

This study therefore sought to examine addiction among users of social media in Ghana by studying students of the University of Ghana. The study sought to find out the social media platforms they use, what they use social media for and to determine the extent or level to which students of University of Ghana are addicted to social media.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to find whether students of the University of Ghana are addicted to social media and the level of their addiction. The following objectives guided the study:

- To identify the social media platforms students use.
- To determine what they use these platforms for
- To find whether students of the University of Ghana are addicted to social media and the level of Social media addiction among them.

1.4 Research Questions

From the above listed objectives the following questions were constructed to address the research problem:

- RQ1. Which Social media platforms do students of the University of Ghana use the most?
- RQ2. What do students use these social media platforms they are on for?
- RQ3. Are students of the University of Ghana addicted to social media and to what extent?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Using Social media has become one of the main daily activities of people. Accordingly, there is an increasing interest in research on social media by scholars around the world. However, there is scanty literature on all aspects of social media with respect to Ghana. Most of the literature that the researcher came across that were related to Ghana in this field were non-scholarly articles mostly blog posts and opinion pieces without empirical studies backing conclusions that

were made. A number of studies have been carried out in other countries which have looked at not only internet addiction generally, but addiction to social media sites especially Facebook while very little has been done in Ghana. Finding literature on various aspects of the social media which is now an essential part of the lives of many people in Ghana is quite difficult. Therefore there is the need to build on the knowledge base of social media studies in Ghana for future reference and therefore this study is aimed at adding to the body of knowledge in this area.

1.6 Scope of the study

This research sought to find out the level of addiction to social media among students of the University of Ghana. It focused on 200 students drawn from the four colleges of the University of Ghana during the 2015/2016 academic year.

1.7 Operational Definition of terms

Social Media: Internet based application or sites used for social networking.

Social media addiction: Excessive use and dependency on social media for gratifications such that it interferes with other activities in a person's life.

1.8 Summary

This chapter introduced the study by giving a background to the study. It also looked at the problem addressed by the study, the research objectives and questions, the significance and the scope of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Framework and Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

Several theories have been used to interpret the use of social media and its outcomes. Some of these theories include the social cognitive theory of the internet which was derived from Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the Uses and Gratifications Theory which looks at people's choice of specific media to satisfy specific pleasures sought from the media they choose and the Media Systems Dependency Theory which says that the more a person relies on the media to fulfil his/her needs, the more the media will become relevant to the person.

The study was based on two theories; the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G) and the Media Systems Dependency Theory (MSD). These two theories together assume that users of media rely on it to fulfil specific needs and in the process develop preoccupations with it and will therefore help explain how students of the University of Ghana use social media and whether they have developed dependencies on the media they use.

2.1.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

According to (McQuail, 2005), the Uses and Gratification theory is generally seen as a theory that is closely linked to research on media effects. It is an approach to gaining insight on how and why people look for particular media to satisfy particular needs.

The theory of uses and gratifications was first introduced by an American sociologist Elihu Katz in 1959 in an article in which he explained that communication research was near extinction because researchers only focused on the effects the media had on people. He therefore suggested that researchers focus rather on how media is used (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

The theory basically has to do with what audiences do with the media. It explains users' motivation in choosing media and the behaviours associated with it. The theory postulates that "people are not passive receivers of media messages but active influencers of the effects of the messages the media communicates." In other terms, receivers of media content are at liberty in choosing and determining their use of media and how they are affected by it (Rae, 2011). Theorists have stated that users look for a media source that best satisfies their needs although they may have alternate choices that can meet their needs.

McQuail (2005), states that the theory "seeks to explain the uses of media and the satisfactions derived from them in terms of motives and self-perceived needs of audience members." As active influencers of the effect media has on them, users of media identify, choose, and retain media messages.

According to Ruggiero (2000), internet users choose activities online that satisfy needs like "entertainment, information and social interaction." Uses and Gratification theory therefore shows an affirmative relationship between the choice of using social media and the gratification users get when they use it.

Many studies carried out also have applied the Uses and Gratifications Theory to explain issues related to social media use and internet as a whole some of which are Charney & Greenberg (2001), Parker & Plank (2000), Papacharissi & Rubin (2000), Dimmick et al. (2000), LaRose, Mastro & Eastin (2001), Chou & Hsiao (2000), Stafford (2001), Song, LaRose, Lin & Eastin (2002), Ferguson & Perse (2000) and Flanagin & Metzger (2001); to cite a few.

According to Rice and Williams (1995) “*the new media provide fertile test beds for many of our theories and models.*” They also state that the uses and gratifications theory is a good way of analysing new media such as the Internet and in essence social media since it is a subset of the internet. The Uses and Gratification theory has been used as a frontline theoretical method in analysis whenever there is a new mass communication medium. An instance can be cited as the times during which radio, television, and most recently the Internet were introduced (Ruggerio, 2000). Ruggerio again states that the Uses and Gratification theory is important for internet related research because of its ability to examine new technologies with regards to its strengths in evaluating new media because of their characteristics. This assertion is backed by Severin & Tankard (2001) who admit that the uses and gratifications theory is extremely effective as technology moves the universe into the electronic information age.

Based on this, the researcher chose to apply this theory to study the use of social media among students of the University of Ghana.

2.1.2 Media Systems Dependency Theory

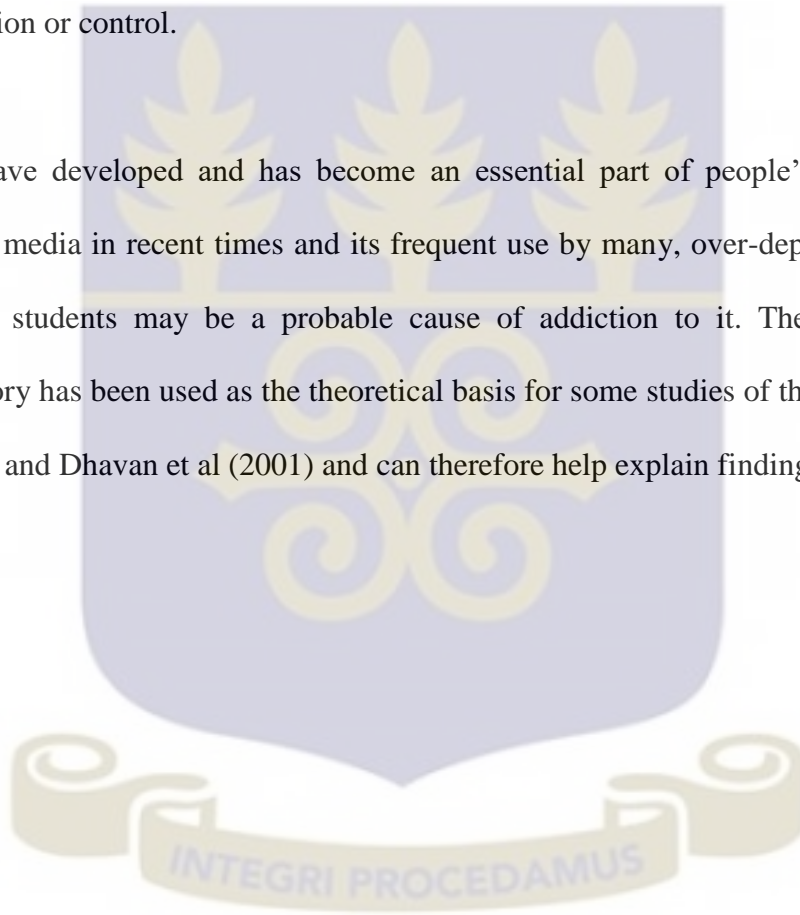
Since its introduction, the Media Systems Dependency theory (MSD) has served as a theoretical foundation for analysing the relationship between people and the choice and use of media.

The Media Systems Dependency theory was proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976 in an article that sought to describe why media could have cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on different people in different ways. Media Systems Dependency theory regards audience as an active part in the communication process.

The theory posits that, individuals have a goal when choosing the media they use and are active in the making of this decision. It also suggests that the more a person relies on a specific media

to satisfy his or her needs, the more the media will become significant to him/her (Encyclopaedia of communication theory, 2009). This therefore shows an affirmative connection between the need for gratification and dependency. According to (LaRose & Eastin, 2002) internet addictions are generally “habits” that are initiated when the “gratification sought”, starts to have an effect on users which may lead to preoccupation with it. With repetitive use and engagement in favourite online activities, it gradually becomes a habitual behaviour that may be triggered with little or no intention or control.

Digital media have developed and has become an essential part of people’s lives. With the growth of social media in recent times and its frequent use by many, over-dependency on it for media needs by students may be a probable cause of addiction to it. The Media Systems Dependency theory has been used as the theoretical basis for some studies of the Internet such as Jung et al (2001) and Dhavan et al (2001) and can therefore help explain findings of this study.



Literature Review

2.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature that is directly linked to the current study. The Review of related literature has to do with the identification and analysis of past studies or in general, documents that contain information related to the research problem of a study to be carried out. The review usually describes, sums up, assesses and explains related literature and it also helps in choosing a theory to back the research and helps to define the nature of the study to be undertaken (Kirby, S., Greaves, L. & Reid, C., 2006).

2.2.2 Social media use

There are many reasons why students use social media. Nyland (2007) identified the five motives of using social media as “meeting new people, entertainment, maintaining relationships, social events and media creation.” These motives are amongst common engagement of university students who use social media as findings of some studies show. A study by Hinson (2011) revealed that postgraduate students of the University of Ghana’s social use of the Internet include “sending and receiving email, socializing through social media (mostly Facebook), chatting, and making new friends.” Another study carried out in the University of Education, Winneba in 2013 identified that students use social media for “connecting with old friends and family members, finding new friends, obtaining or sharing learning materials, receiving update of events, posting information and whiling away time.”

The socialisation feature of these platforms which enables interactive exchange with others in real time and the ability to get close to popular people they adore mostly in entertainment may contribute to their choice and use of social media. Some of these identified motives people

engage in on social media have been described as potentially addictive and may therefore lead to social media addiction (Nyland, 2007).

Li & Chung (2006) state that the “Internet in itself is not addictive; instead, the social functions, self-expression, communication, and building of personal ties on the Internet are what is addictive.” Since these are common features of social media there is a very high likelihood that many users are addicted to it.

The objectives of a study by Omekwu et al (2014) was to find out the different categories of social media sites Undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka use, to find out the extent to which they use it, to examine why they use social media, to find out what gratification they get from using it, to find the risks involved in social networking and to offer solutions to deal with such risks. The researcher surveyed a sample of 150 undergraduate students and data was collected using a questionnaire. Respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Findings of the study revealed that almost all students use social media to interact with friends, connect with their classmates for studies online, for discussing national issues and entertainment.

In another study carried out by Appeanti & Danso (2003) titled “*Students’ Use of Social Media in Higher Education in Ghana,*” they examined social media use among university students using an online survey. Three hundred and eleven sandwich students in the University of Education, Winneba were randomly sampled to participate in the study. Their findings showed that majority of the students were aware of the existence of social media and they used it for various reasons such as connecting with family members and old friends, making new friends,

sharing or getting learning materials, getting updates on events, sharing information and whiling away time.

2.2.3 Social Media Addiction

In the last few years, scholars from different parts of the world have begun giving attention to the internet based addiction phenomenon (social media addiction) and have undertaken various studies in this area. However, majority of these studies focus on the true aspects of addiction in relation to psychology with introductory ones mainly assessing whether internet addiction actually exists (Nauert, 2010) and subsequent ones looking into other forms of internet addiction such as social media addiction. Communication scholars have also started giving attention to this area of research. Although there is literature on this area of study, research on it in Africa is scanty especially in Ghana. However it has caught the attention of some researchers in Nigeria and a few studies could be found from there.

A review of a few of the studies carried out on the phenomenon of social media addiction follows.

In a study titled “*The Facebook Addiction Test: A New Tool to Study Facebook Usage*” the researchers sought to find out the impact of Facebook obsession on its users. They chose to focus on only Facebook for their study because Facebook was the leading social media site according to a 2010 edition of “*The Economist*” magazine, because it is ubiquitous and also because researchers had a specific focus for their study. They identified that different scales for measuring Facebook addiction have been developed and tested. Their study was built on work done by Young, (1996) on Internet addiction, but with an important difference i.e. they were interested in the identifying consumers of Facebook who were obsessed with its usage and also

to explore the impact this obsession has on the way they behave on Facebook rather than the diagnosis of addiction in a clinical context. They developed and used the Facebook Addiction test (FAT) to carry out their research which was an adaptation of Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT). They believed the FAT had the advantage of focusing on one activity. A total of 1,438 people were surveyed on their usage of this social media site. Invitations of participation were sent by e-mail and consumers completed the survey online. To help increase generalizability of the results, probability sampling was used. Their studies found that Facebook Addiction is different from internet addiction. However, like Internet addiction, Facebook addiction appears to be closely linked to interactivity and ease of interaction. They also found that the FAT is able to classify consumers with different usage profiles but most importantly, the FAT can be used to identify consumers with different attitudes and usage of Facebook.

In another study, Alabi (2012) sought to find out the level of Facebook Addiction among a selection of Nigerian University Undergraduates. The study surveyed the level of addiction to Facebook among selected undergraduate students of these universities. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting 1000 undergraduate students from four universities in South-western Nigeria - two private institutions and the other two; public. Data was collected using the Facebook Addiction Symptoms Scale (FASS) in the form of a questionnaire. Findings from the study revealed a low level of addiction particularly among university undergraduates in private universities mainly due to internet access in those institutions.

Dau (2015) also investigated the impact of social media addiction among the students of tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria and the level at which the students are addicted. He also examined the various social media sites used by students the most and the frequency at which

they use them using the survey method. Five (5) tertiary institutions in Katsina state were selected out of which 800 students were sampled. Data gathered was analysed using frequency count and simple percentages. Findings from the study showed that majority of the respondents use almost all popular social media platforms with Facebook having the largest number of users. He also found that majority of the respondents use these social media platforms mainly for social needs such as friendship and dating.

A study by Al-Menayes (2015) aimed to examine dimensions of social media addiction in university students in Kuwait. The study was based on the Internet addiction scale developed by Young in 1996 from which questionnaires were designed and distributed to 1327 undergraduate students. The researcher employed the cross-sectional survey methodology. Findings from data collected showed that social media addiction has three independent dimensions i.e. the users experience with social media, time spent using social media and satisfaction derived from them. He also found that social media addiction was a negative predictor of academic performance as measured by a student's GPA.

Cabral (2010) in a study observed Generation Y's addiction to social media with a specific look at Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Myspace. She operationalized Generation Y, as "people who have grown up understanding the power of the Internet". Addiction was interpreted using Griffiths' six components of behavioural addiction: "salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse." The problem of this study was to determine whether Generation Y was addicted to social media because of their need to maintain relationships with their peers. Results from the study pointed out that Generation Y suffers from three out of the six components identified by Griffiths and they are tolerance, salience and relapse. Limitations to

the study were the use a convenience sample instead of a random sample which could not allow for generalization of findings.

All the above literature reviews suggest that social media addiction exists however most of the studies that have been carried out on social media addiction have used mostly Facebook in its analysis and not much has been done with other Social media sites. The review also revealed that various scales for measuring addiction to internet and certain social media platforms especially Facebook exist and have been used in measuring addiction in other studies in other parts of the world. It should be possible to develop similar addiction measures for analysing other social media sites or a general instrument.

Also having reviewed literature on social media addiction, it appears that in Ghana the social media addiction phenomenon has not been explored therefore this study will look at social media addiction in Ghana. The study will focus on the level of addiction to social media among students of the University of Ghana, determine the social media platforms they use and why they use them.

2.3 Summary

This chapter looked at the theoretical underpinnings of this study and its relevance to the study. The two theories, the media systems dependency theory and the uses and gratifications theory posited that users of media play an active role in choosing the media they use and then rely on it to gratify certain needs and in the process develop dependencies on the media. The chapter also looked at some literature that is related to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines in detail the methodology used in carrying out the study. It covers the following aspects: research design, Population and Sampling Procedure, Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis and Presentation. The researcher has discussed these aspects by highlighting the reasons why some techniques were selected for the research design.

3.1.1 Research Design

The study employed the quantitative methodology of research under which a descriptive survey was used to investigate the phenomenon of social media addiction among students of the University of Ghana. According to Orodho (2003), a study that seeks to acquire information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to respondents is a descriptive survey.

3.1.2 Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study is students of the University of Ghana. Since all units in the chosen population could not be observed because of factors such as time limitation and financial constraints, a section of the population was selected as a sample from the entire population to represent the whole. According to Saravannel (1991), a sample consists of “a fraction or part of the total number of elements or units in a defined population.” A sample is derived from the population. For this study, the sample size was 200, made up of students from the four colleges of the university namely the College of Education, College of Basic and Applied Sciences, College of Humanities and the College of Health Sciences.

Probability sampling was used for this study and under this method; the Stratified sampling technique was used to divide students into strata after which the simple random sampling was used to select participants in the survey.

Under the stratified sampling technique, all members of the population are put into strata and a specific number are subsequently drawn from each stratum to represent the whole. In the case of this study, the stratum represents each college in the University of Ghana namely the College of Education, College of Humanities, College of Basic and Applied Science and the College of Health Sciences. This means that, out of every college, a specific number of respondents were selected to participate in the study. This was to give all subsets of the sample frame equal probabilities of selection.

To allow for equal representation of students from each stratum, a formula was used to select the specific number of respondents:

$$n_h = (N_h / N) * n$$

Where n_h is the sample size for stratum h , N_h is the population size for stratum h , N is total population size, and n is total sample size (www.stat Trek.com).

According to data on student enrolment in the 2014/2015 academic year obtained from the Planning and Management Information Services Directorate (PIMSD) of the University of Ghana (the body responsible for compiling students' statistics for the University of Ghana), the total student population for the university as at 2014 stood at 37851 with the breakdown by college as follows:

- College of Education - 783
- College of Humanities - 28413

- College of Basic And Applied Science - 5621
- College of Health Sciences – 3034

Applying the sampling formula, 30 students were sampled from the College of Basic And Applied Science, 150 from the College of Humanities, 4 from the College of Education and 16 from the College of Health Sciences.

3.1.3 Data Collection Procedure

The Survey method was employed in collecting quantitative data in this study. A survey is a systematic way by which people volunteer information about their attitudes, behaviours, opinions and beliefs. It is a commonly used research methodology design in social science research to collect data from a defined population and the instruments that are often used are questionnaires and interviews. The survey method was employed because it is a proven way of effectively answering research questions and it is also an inexpensive way of achieving that goal. For this study the researcher collected the data with assistance from two other people with each administering questionnaires in one college. One college (College of Humanities) had a large number of the sample therefore all three people helped in collecting the data for that college.

3.1.4 Instrument

For this study, data was collected through self-administered questionnaires made up of 20 questions in two sections; A and B where Section A covered questions under social media use and the internet Addiction test and Section B covered Personal information of respondents.

The questionnaire was partly modelled after the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Dr Kimberly Young to enable the researcher test for the level of addiction among students. It consists of 20 items that measures mild, moderate and severe levels of Internet Addiction.

However the researcher did not use all the 20 items. The scale has been tested for validity and reliability in different parts of the world in studies carried out by Ferraro, G. et al., (2007) & Khazaal, Y. et al. (2008).

The IAT was chosen because social media is a subtype of the internet (Turel, O. & Serenko, A., 2010) and the items it has for measuring addiction covers all sites unlike the other scales that have been modelled for specific sites like the Facebook Addiction Symptoms Scale (FASS) and Facebook Addiction test (FAT) for Facebook.

For this study, the researcher used 13 out of the 20 items from the IAT due to the relevance of the items to respondents and also because of its relativity to the setting of the study. Each of the 13 items was answered using a scale:

0 = Not Applicable

1 = Rarely

2 = Occasionally

3 = Frequently

4 = Often

5 = Always

To find the level of addiction to social media among students, individual scores for each item on the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), which was administered to each respondent as part of the questionnaire, were summed up and the total score for each respondent was grouped according to the range of points in which they fall. Scores were ranged between:

0 – 14 points: None

15 – 29 points: Mild

30 – 59 points: Moderate

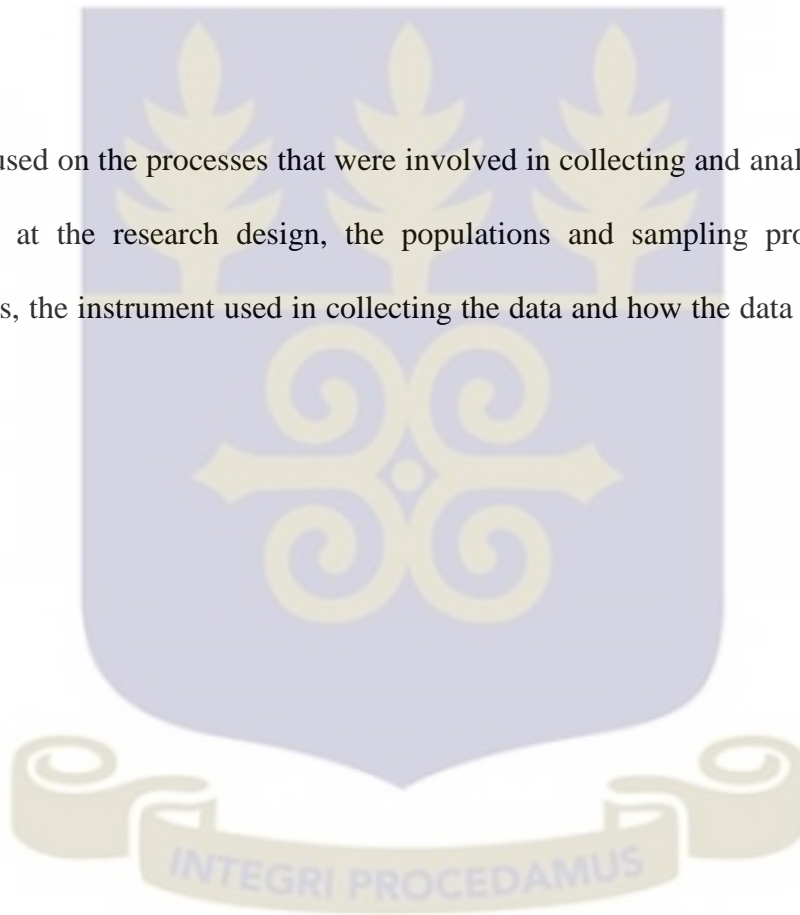
60– 80 points: Severe

3.1.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data obtained from the field were inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 which is a software designed for analysis of social science research data to translate the raw data into frequencies and percentages to help present the data in the form of tables and charts which were then analysed based on the research questions and later discussed to arrive at conclusions.

3.2 Summary

This chapter focused on the processes that were involved in collecting and analysing data for the study. It looked at the research design, the populations and sampling procedure, the data collection process, the instrument used in collecting the data and how the data was analysed and presented.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected from 200 students of the University of Ghana to find out their usage of social media and to test their level of addiction to it. A 20 item questionnaire was administered to respondents and a 100% response rate was achieved. Using frequency tables and charts, the research questions and objectives of the study have been discussed below in detail.

4.1.1 Profile of respondents

The sample for the study was made up of fifty-six percent males and forty-four percent females which is an exact reflection of the current student population of the University of Ghana by gender (Source: Student Enrolment 2014/2015 by Gender – PIMSD).

Majority of the respondents for the study fall between the ages of 18 – 30 years while only a tenth of them are between the ages of 31 – 40 with the remaining being above 40. This also reflects findings of studies by the Pew Internet Research Center which found that majority of social media users in Ghana fall between the ages of 18 – 30.

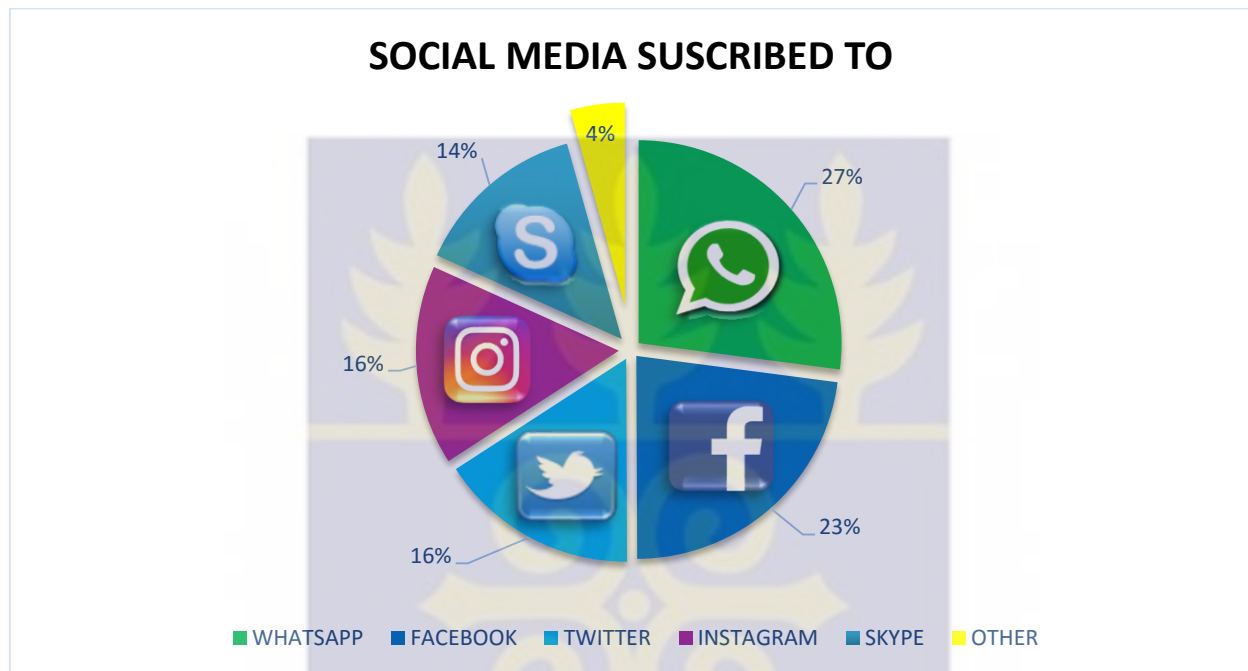
Respondents were drawn from all year groups with the exception of level 100 because at the time of the study the admission process to admit freshmen was still on going.

4.2 Findings related to research questions

4.2.1 Social media use among University of Ghana students

RQ.1 Which Social media platforms do students of the University of Ghana use the most?

Figure 1: Social media sites respondents are subscribed to



f = 735

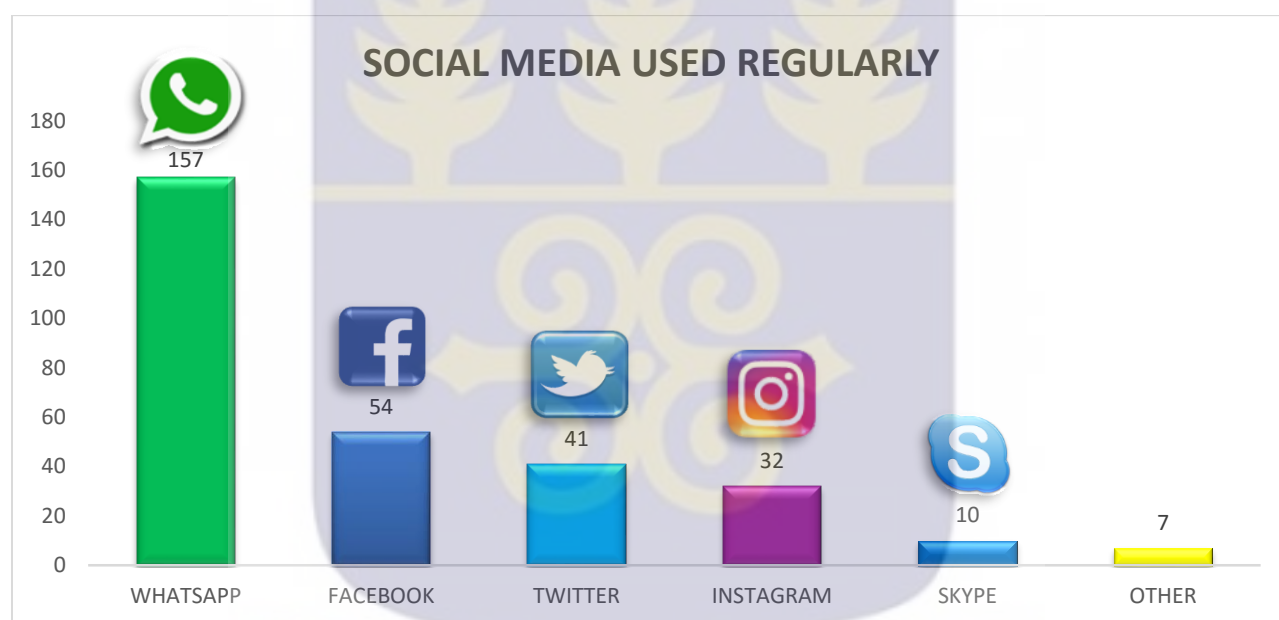
Figure 1 above shows the various social media sites that students are subscribed to. The question posed was a multiple response question hence the total frequency exceeds the total number of respondents which is 200. Respondents were allowed to choose as many social networks they subscribe to from a list provided and also mention any other they were subscribed to which was not included in the list.

Findings show that all but one of the respondents were subscribed to WhatsApp while over three-quarters of them are subscribed to Facebook. Twitter and instagram each are subscribed by 117 respondents while Skype has been subscribed to by 102 of the respondents. The remaining 4.4% of respondents (32 respondents) mentioned that they were subscribed to other social media

platforms which were not included in the list to be chosen from and these include Snapchat, LinkedIn, Telegram, IMO, kik, google+ and WeChat with Snapchat being the most mentioned.

Respondents were also asked to choose the social media platform they used regularly based on the ones they said they were subscribed to. This was an open ended question and respondents were allowed to choose as many as applied which resulted in the total number of respondents being more than the 200 used for the study.

Figure 2: Social media respondents use regularly



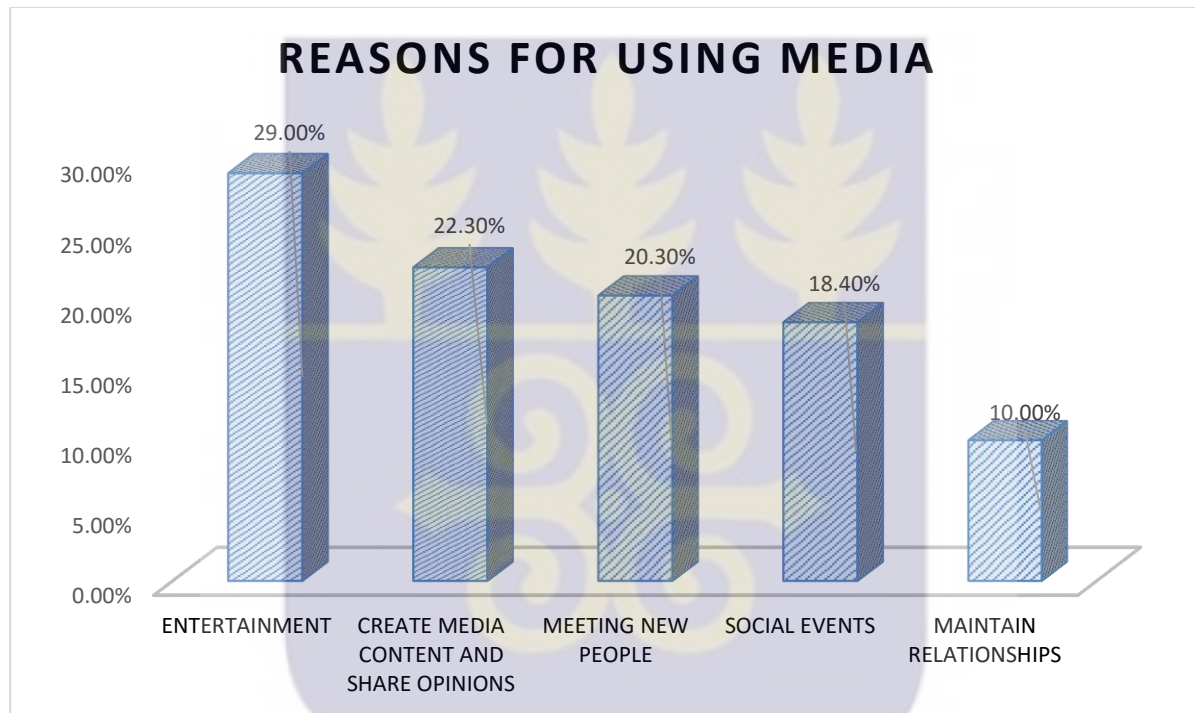
f = 301

More than half of the respondents said they use WhatsApp on a regular basis followed by Facebook which has over a quarter of the respondents using it regularly. Just a little over a fifth of the respondents said they use twitter regularly and 32 (10.6%) others said it was instagram they used more often. Ten (3.3%) respondents chose Skype as the media they use regularly while the remaining 7 (2.3%) who responded to the question mentioned other social media platforms which were not included in the list provided to choose from.

RQ2. What do students use these social media platforms they are on for?

Variables for this question were derived from Nyland’s (2007) five motives for which people use social media. The five motives are entertainment, creating media content and sharing opinions, meeting new people, for social events and maintaining relationships.

Figure 3: Reasons for using social media respondents are subscribed to

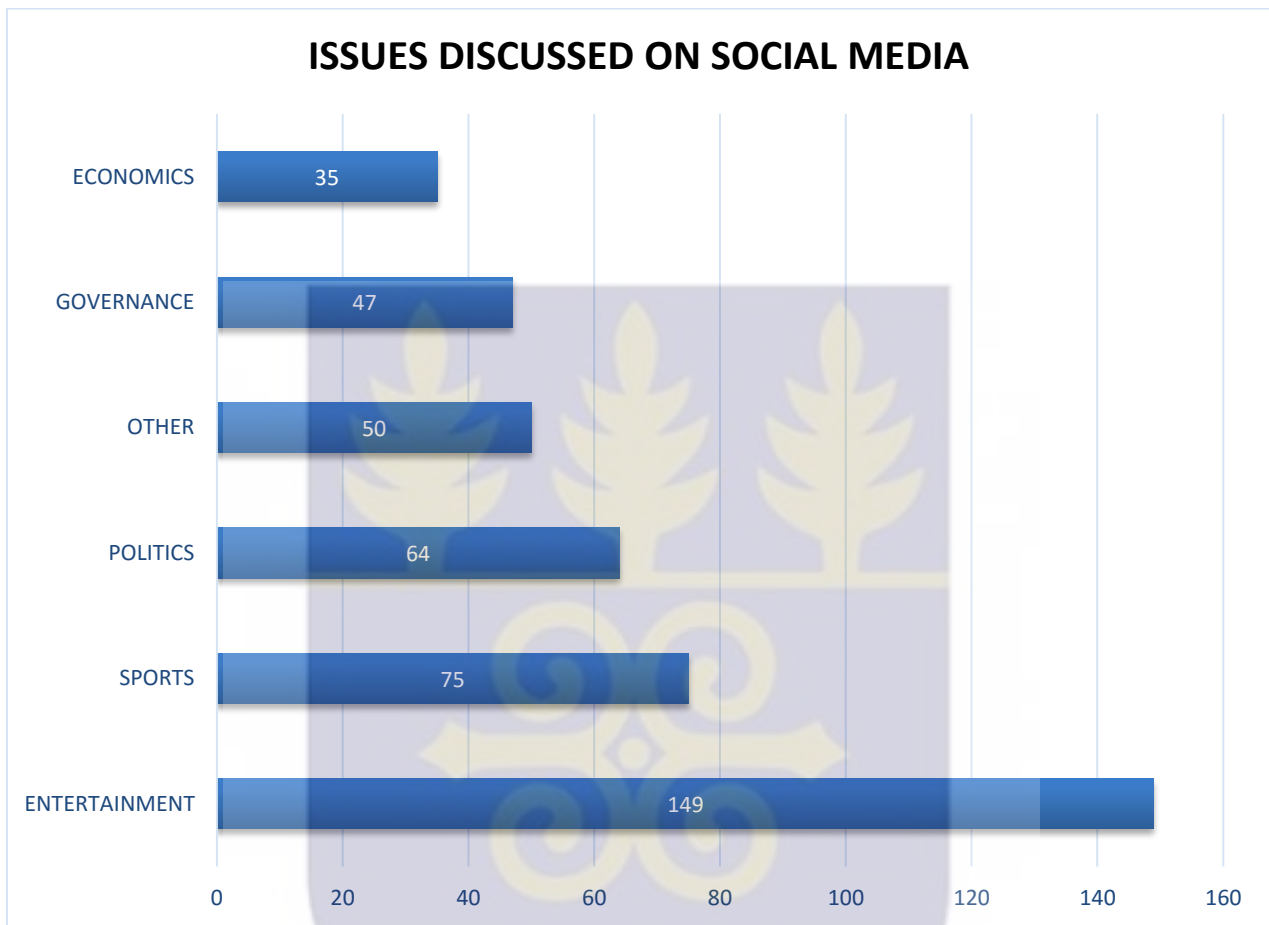


f = 548

The results show that majority of the respondents use their social media account for entertainment, followed by 22.3% who use social media for creating media content and sharing opinions while 20.3% said they use social media to meet new people. A little above half of the 200 respondents said they use it to for social events and about a fourth said they use it to maintain relationships.

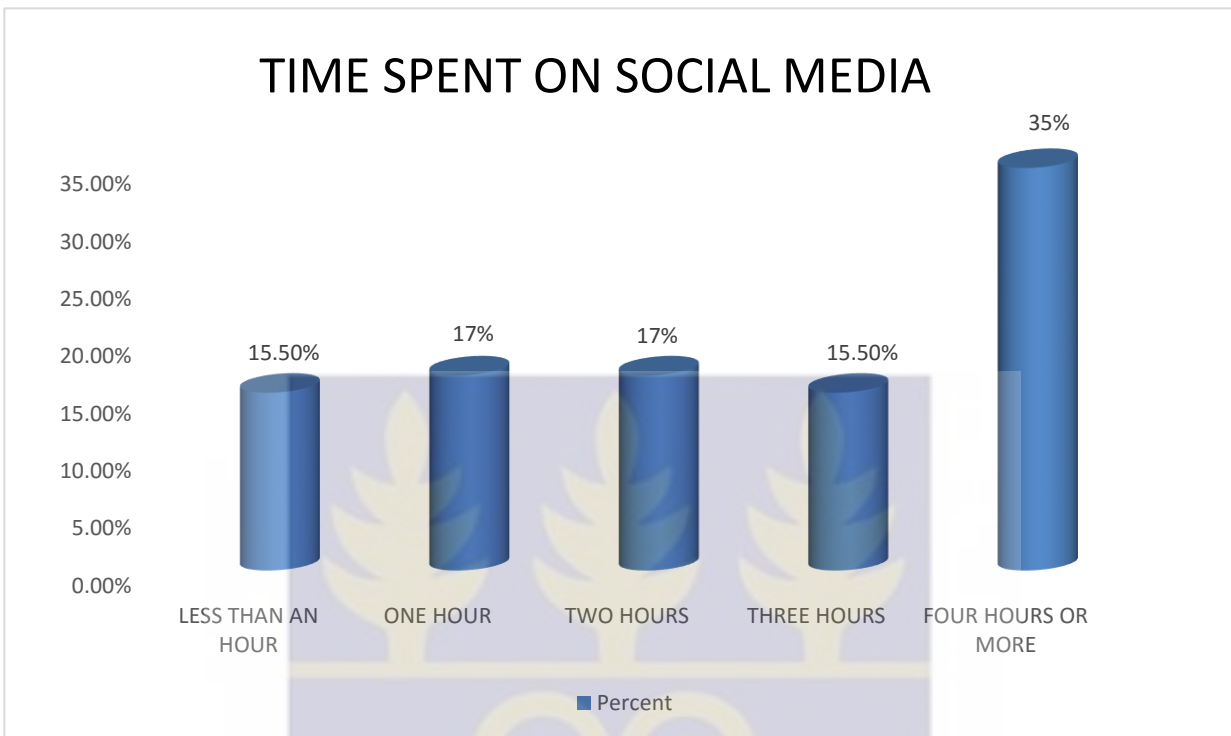
From the data, majority of students of University of Ghana use social media for entertainment more than any other reasons for using social media.

Figure 4: Issues discussed on social media



f = 420

Respondents were asked what they discuss on the social media platforms they are subscribed to. Most of the respondents said they discussed issues pertaining to entertainment, followed by sports, and then politics. A little over a fifth of them said they gave attention to issues concerning governance while a little under a fifth said their interest was with economic issues. A fourth of the respondents said they discussed other issues such as business, fashion, academics, general issues, religious matters, health and humanitarian issues.

Figure 5: Average time spent on social media daily

f = 200

Figure 5 shows the time respondents spend on social media daily. A majority of the respondents (35%) said they spend four or more hours on social media daily. Other respondents (17%) said they spent two hours on social media a day, another 17% of the respondents also said they spend one hour on social media daily. Three hours is spent on social media by 15.5% of the respondents daily, while the other remaining 15.5% said they spend less than an hour on social media a day.

As reviewed in related literature earlier, a study by Al-Menayes (2015) identified time spent using social media as one of the dimensions of social media addiction because it was clearly linked to all the identified factors of the phenomenon. This implies that, the more time spent using social media, the higher probability for social media addiction to exist. As the results have shown that majority of University of Ghana students spend more than four hours daily on social

media, it further supports other findings from this study that show the existence of addiction among students.

4.2.2 Internet Addiction Test

This section analyses the 13 items derived from the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Dr Kimberly young used in this study. These 13 items are questions that were based on what studies have shown to be the factors that determine whether one is addicted to internet use or in the case of this study, social media or not. There are six factors that determine addiction and they include: Salience, Excessive use, neglect of responsibilities, anticipation, Neglect of social life and lack of self-control.

Answers to the questions were in the form of a 5-point Likert scale and respondents selected their responses to each question based on the one that best applied to the frequency of the behaviour described in the question.

Responses for each of the 13 items are represented in the tables below.

Table 1: How often do you find that you stay online longer than you intended?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	8	4%
RARELY	39	19.5%
OCCASIONALLY	50	25%
FREQUENTLY	46	23%
OFTEN	33	16.5%
ALWAYS	24	12%
Total	200	100%

A quarter of the respondents said they occasionally stay online longer than they intend to, while 23% of them admitted to frequently staying online longer than they intend to. Rarely, 19.5% of them stay online longer than they intended to and another 16.5% said they often stay online

longer than they intend to when they log on. Other respondents (12%), said they always stay online longer than they intended while the remaining 4% said the question does not apply to them.

Table 2: How often do you form new relationships with fellow online users?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	7	3.5%
RARELY	64	32%
OCCASIONALLY	61	30.5%
FREQUENTLY	37	18.5%
OFTEN	20	10%
ALWAYS	11	5.5%
Total	200	100%

When asked how often respondents form new relationships with fellow online users, 32% of the respondents said that happened rarely and 30.5% said they occasionally form new relationships with other users, 18.5% said they frequently did, while a tenth said it was often the case. Some other 5.5% of the respondents said they always form new relationships with other online users while the remaining 3.5% said the question did not apply to them.

Table 3: How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend online?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	36	18%
RARELY	63	31.50%
OCCASIONALLY	27	13.50%
FREQUENTLY	26	13%
OFTEN	23	11.50%
ALWAYS	25	12.50%
Total	200	100%

Majority of the respondents (31.5%) said people in their lives rarely complained about the amount of time they spend online, 18% of them said people occasionally complained about the amount of time they spend online, Others (13%) said it was frequently the case, 11.5% also said people often complained about the amount of time they spend using social media, 12.5% of the

respondents said there was always a complaint about the time they spend online but the remaining 18% respondents however said this did not apply to them.

Table 4: How often do your grades suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	80	40%
RARELY	77	38.5%
OCCASIONALLY	18	9%
FREQUENTLY	10	5%
OFTEN	11	5.5%
ALWAYS	4	2%
Total	200	100%

According to Table 4, 40% of the respondents said their grades are never affected by the amount of time they spend online and another 38.5% said their grades were rarely affected. Nine per cent (9%) agreed that their grades were occasionally affected by the amount of time they spent online, another 5.5% said it was often the case and 5% said their grades were frequently affected and the remaining 2% said their grades were always affected by the number of time they spent online.

Table 5: How often do you check your social media accounts before something else you need to do?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	13	6.5%
RARELY	29	14.5%
OCCASIONALLY	43	21.5%
FREQUENTLY	47	23.5%
OFTEN	43	21.5%
ALWAYS	25	12.5%
Total	200	100%

From the table above it can be said that 23.5% respondents said they frequently check their social media accounts before something else they needed to do while 21.5% said they occasionally did. Another 21.5% said they did that often while 14.5% of the respondents too said they rarely checked their accounts before doing something else they needed to do and 12.5%

said they did that all the time while the remaining 6.5% of the respondents said it did not apply to them.

Table 6: How often do you block disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the social media?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	32	16%
RARELY	56	28%
OCCASIONALLY	34	17%
FREQUENTLY	23	11.5%
OFTEN	35	17.5%
ALWAYS	20	10%
Total	200	100%

The table shows that 56 respondents rarely block disturbing thoughts about their life with soothing thoughts of social media, while 35 said they often did that. Thirty-four respondents said they occasionally blocked disturbing thoughts with social media, twenty-three others said they did that frequently, while 20 of them said that was the case all the time. The remaining 32 respondents however said this did not apply to them.

Table 7: How often do you fear that life without social media would be boring, empty and joyless?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	29	14.5%
RARELY	48	24%
OCCASIONALLY	37	18.5%
FREQUENTLY	22	11%
OFTEN	22	11%
ALWAYS	42	21%
Total	200	100%

It can be deduced from this table that, apart from 29 of the respondents (14.5%) who said that they did not fear that life without social media would be boring, empty and joyless, 24% said they rarely felt that way and 21% of them said they always feared, while 18.5% of the respondents said they occasionally feared that that would happen. Of the remaining respondents,

11% each said they frequently and often feared life without social media would be boring, empty and joyless.

Table 8: How often do you lose sleep due to late-night social media use?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	33	16.5%
RARELY	51	25.5%
OCCASIONALLY	41	20.5%
FREQUENTLY	29	14.5%
OFTEN	39	19.5%
ALWAYS	7	3.5%
Total	200	100%

This table shows responses participants gave when they were asked how often they lost sleep due to using social media at the night.

A few of the respondents (3.5%) said they always lost sleeping time due to late night social media use, while just a little over a quarter of the respondents said they rarely lost sleep. 20.5% said they occasionally lost sleep. 39 of the total number of respondents said they often lost sleep, 29 said they frequently did, while 33 (16.5%) said they never lost sleeping time because they used their social media accounts during late nights.

Table 9: How often do you fantasize about being online?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	51	25.5%
RARELY	46	23%
OCCASIONALLY	26	13%
FREQUENTLY	46	23%
OFTEN	27	13.5%
ALWAYS	4	2%
Total	200	100%

Table 9 shows that over a quarter of the respondents said they never fantasised about being online while a little under a quarter of the respondents said they rarely fantasised about being online. Another group of 23% of the respondents said they frequently fantasised about being

online while 13.5% said they often did. Occasionally, 13% of the respondents fantasise about being online and only 2% fantasise about being online all the time.

Table 10: How often do you find yourself saying "just a few minutes" when online?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	22	11%
RARELY	45	22.5%
OCCASIONALLY	25	12.5%
FREQUENTLY	32	16%
OFTEN	52	26%
ALWAYS	24	12%
Total	200	100%

More than a quarter of the respondents said they often experienced this, 45 (22.5%) of them said it rarely happened while 32 (16%) said they experienced this frequently. One-eighth of the respondents, 25, representing 12.5% said they occasionally said that, 24 (12%) of them said it always happened while the remaining 22 (11%) said it does not apply to them.

Table 11: How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	34	17%
RARELY	52	26%
OCCASIONALLY	35	17.5%
FREQUENTLY	31	15.5%
OFTEN	38	19%
ALWAYS	10	5%
Total	200	100%

Respondents were asked how often they try to cut down the amount of time they spend online and fail and their responses revealed that majority of them (26%) rarely failed in trying to cut down the amount of time they spend online while 17% of them never failed in their quest as they said it did not apply to them. 19% of the respondents often failed, 17.5% also said they failed occasionally and 15.5% said they frequently failed. Very few of them (5%) said they always failed in attempting to cut down the amount of time they spend online.

Table 12: How often do you choose to spend more time online over going out with others?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	40	20%
RARELY	66	33%
OCCASIONALLY	25	12.5%
FREQUENTLY	18	9%
OFTEN	37	18.5%
ALWAYS	14	7%
Total	200	100%

A third of the respondents said they rarely choose to spend more time online over going out with others, one-eighth of them said they occasionally did while 37 of them said they often spent time online instead of going out with others, 25 occasionally and 18 frequently. However, a fifth of the total number of respondents said they never choose to spend more time online over going out with others.

Table 13: How often do you feel depressed, moody or nervous when you are offline, which goes away once you are back online?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NOT APPLICABLE	64	32%
RARELY	51	25.5%
OCCASIONALLY	36	18%
FREQUENTLY	20	10%
OFTEN	26	13%
ALWAYS	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

More than a third of the respondents said feeling depressed, moody or nervous when offline did not apply to them. Just a little over a quarter said they rarely felt that way, 18% of the respondents experienced those feelings occasionally, 13% often and 10% of the respondents said they felt that way frequently with the remaining 1.5% accepting that they felt depressed, moody or nervous when offline, which goes away once they are back online.

4.2.3 Level of Addiction

RQ3. Are students of the University of Ghana addicted to social media and to what extent?

Scores for each respondent's answers to the 13 items of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) included in the questionnaire were summed up and grouped in a range of points.

The scores were ranged as follows:

0 – 14 points: None

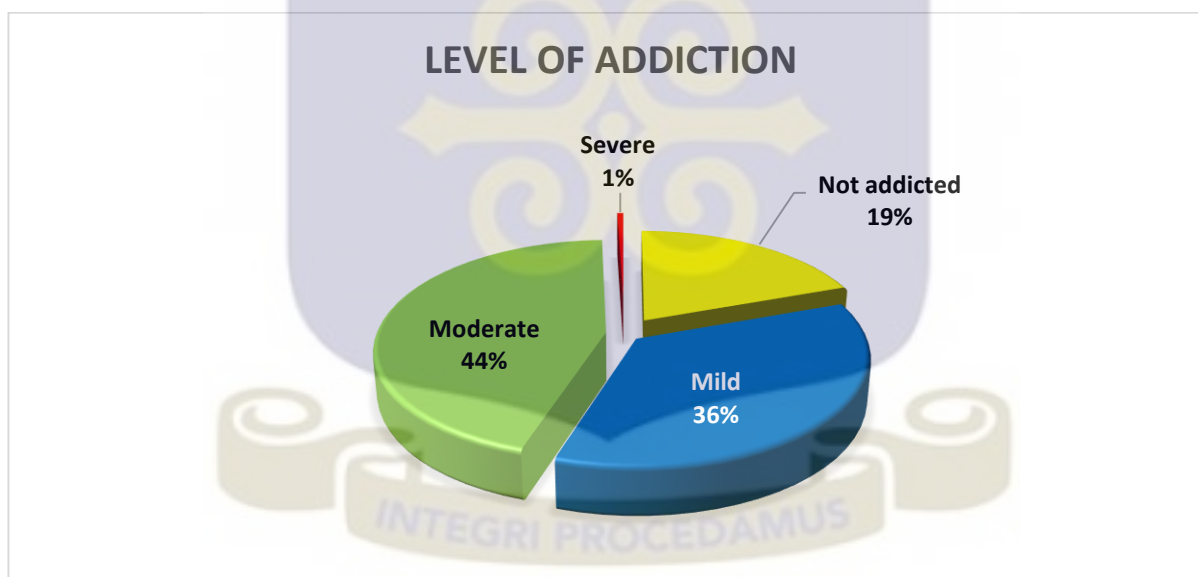
15 – 29 points: Mild

30 – 59 points: Moderate

60– 80 points: Severe

The percentage for each group was calculated and the results are represented in the chart below.

Figure 6: Level of addiction to social media among students



f =200

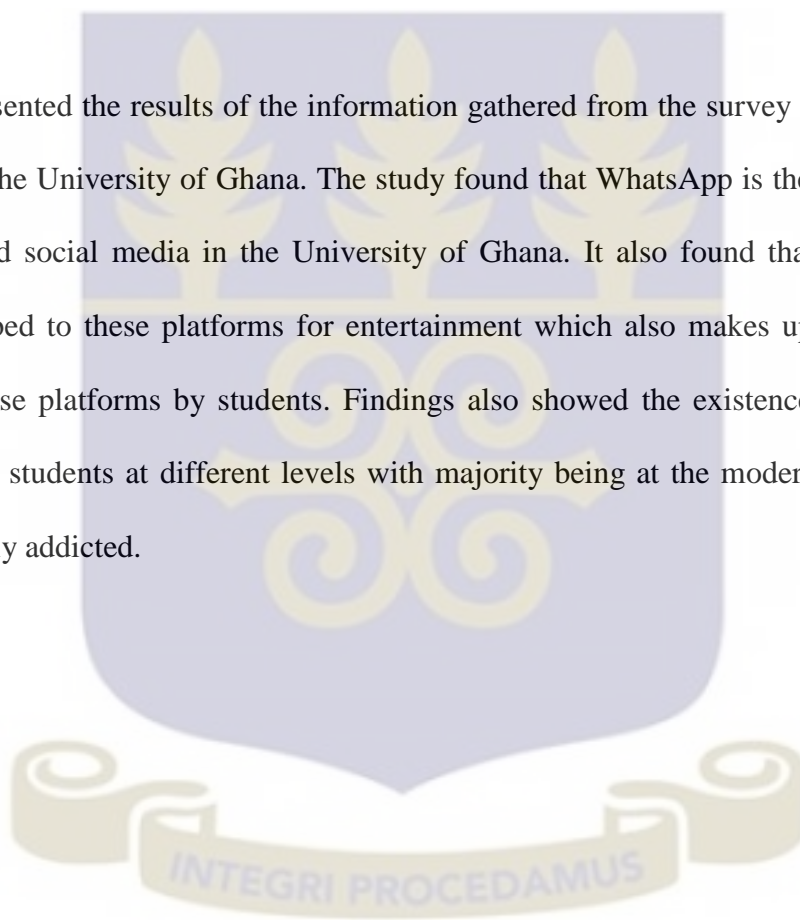
Figure 6 shows the various levels at which students are addicted to Social media. Although all the respondents sampled for this study use social media, not all of them are addicted to Social media. The survey revealed that 19% of the respondents obtained scores below any of the levels of addiction and can therefore not addicted to social media. A majority (45%) of student obtained

scores that placed them at a moderate level of addiction while 35% obtained scores that fall within the mildly addicted range. Only one of the respondents can be said to be severely addicted to social media after scoring 60 points which falls within the severe level of addiction.

These findings confirm the existence of the social media addiction phenomenon among students of the University of Ghana although it is not at an alarming level.

4.3 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the information gathered from the survey conducted among 200 students of the University of Ghana. The study found that WhatsApp is the most subscribed to and most used social media in the University of Ghana. It also found that majority of the students subscribed to these platforms for entertainment which also makes up the issues most discussed on these platforms by students. Findings also showed the existence of social media addiction among students at different levels with majority being at the moderate level and just 1% being severely addicted.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in the preceding chapter and draws on the theoretical framework used in the study and related literature which was reviewed in chapter 2, as well as the objectives of the study to enable the researcher draw conclusions and make recommendations for future studies. This study sought to find out the level of social media addiction among students of the University of Ghana. The sample frame was made up of 200 students drawn from the various Colleges in the University. A 100% response rate was achieved and answers provided by respondents to questionnaires they were given are summarised according to the research objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings and Discussion

The discussion of the findings of this study will be done in connection to the research objectives, theoretical framework and the literature that were reviewed in chapter two. To this end, this subsection seeks to establish how the findings reflect the assumptions and principles that underpin the Uses and Gratification and the Media Systems Dependency theories.

The first objective was to identify the social media platforms students of the University of Ghana use the most. The study revealed that all the respondents are subscribed to more than one social media platform. WhatsApp was identified as the most popular social media tool among the students, with 99.5% of the respondents having subscribed to this platform. This was followed

by Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Skype in that order. Some of the respondents mentioned that they were subscribed to other social media platforms such as Snapchat, LinkedIn, Telegram, IMO, Google+, kik, WeChat and Snapchat.

The findings from this study ties in with the study by Dau (2015) which showed that majority of the respondents use almost all popular social media platforms. The point of departure is that while Dau (2015) identified Facebook as having the largest number of users, this study confirmed WhatsApp as the most popular social media platform although Facebook was also highly popular.

The findings also show that WhatsApp is the most regularly used social media platform although almost all respondents had alternatives. This finding is in agreement with postulations of the Uses and Gratification theory which explains that there is a motive behind audiences' choice and use of media. According to the theory, media consumers are at liberty to choose from a variety of channels, specifically one that fully meets their needs although they have many alternatives and social media certainly offers a wide range of platforms for the audience to choose from.

Findings also confirm assertions by the Media Systems Dependency Theory which posits that the more a medium fulfils the needs of a user the more dependent he/she is on that media therefore students use WhatsApp more regularly than any other social media platform because it satisfies their reason for using social media more.

Each of these platforms has its strengths and specialized functions, hence the selection of one platform is an indication of what the audience want to use the medium for, which confirms assertions by the theorists of the Uses and Gratifications theory that users look for a media source that best satisfies their needs although they may have alternative choices. This means the users turn to the particular social media platform that meets their expectations which in this case

is WhatsApp. The extent to which the social media platform is able to deliver and meet the expectations of the user determines the degree of dependency on that social media channel. Findings show that all the reasons for which respondents chose to join and use social media can be satisfied more by WhatsApp which majority of respondents also chose as their most regularly used social media platform. This analysis ties in with the postulations of the media systems dependency theory which states that the more a person is dependent on a specific media to fulfil his or her needs, the more the media will become important to him/her.

The second objective sought to determine what students use the social media platforms they are subscribed to for. In a descending order, students use their social media accounts for entertainment purposes, to create media content and share opinions, to meet new people, to create awareness for social events and to maintain old relationships. This finding confirms the research finding by Dau (2015), Omekwu et al (2014) and Appeanti & Danso (2003) that majority of the respondents use these social media platforms mainly for social purposes. All these studies found that majority of the respondents use these social media platforms mainly for social needs such as friendship, maintaining and forming new relationships, with the most dominant being entertainment as most of them said they joined social media because of entertainment and the issues they discussed most on these platforms is about entertainment.

The third and main objective was to find if addiction existed and the level of addiction among students of the University of Ghana. Generally, the findings confirmed the existence of the social media addiction phenomenon among students of the University of Ghana and also showed that addiction existed at different levels i.e. mild, moderate and severe levels of addiction. At the mild level are average users who use their social media accounts a bit too long but have control over their usage. At the moderate level, the user may experience occasional or frequent problems

because of their use of the media while at the severe level, social media usage causes major problems in some aspects of the user's life like poor academic performance in the case of students.

Findings showed that almost 80% of the respondents were moderately and mildly addicted while only 1% was severely addicted. However, findings also showed that almost 20% of the respondents were not within any of the various levels of addiction.

The findings also revealed that majority of students of the University of Ghana spend over 4 hours on social media daily. This further confirms the existence of addiction to these sites among students as time spent on social media has been identified as a dimension of addiction in the study by Al-Menayes (2015) with results of another study carried out by the University of Derby in the UK which shows that users who spend an average of 3.6 hours per day on social media are classified as addicted. Also, Responses to one of the questions asked in the IAT (*How often do you find yourself saying "just a few minutes" online?*) showed majority of students spent more time than intended using social media and had a difficulty in trying to cut down the amount of time they spent online. This confirms two of the six factors (excessive use and lack of self-control) that determine the existence of addiction mentioned earlier in chapter 4.

This finding specifically relates to the basic assumption of the media systems dependency theory. This theory is anchored on audiences' dependence on media for their needs to be met. From the study findings, social media addiction is present but not at its optimal level. It can therefore, be inferred that the sampled population are dependent on social media because of needs they want met when using a platform.

5.3 Conclusion

The study has shown that students of the University of Ghana are active users of social media. The findings revealed that the most popular social media platform used by students of the University of Ghana is WhatsApp with almost all respondents subscribing to it and using it on a regular basis. Entertainment is the most discussed issue on social media by students of the University of Ghana and it is also the major reason for which majority of them use social media. Importantly, the study confirmed the existence of addiction to social media among students though not at an alarming rate. It revealed that most of them are mildly and moderately addicted with only one person who is severely addicted. This is an indication that Ghana has not been left out of the effects of advancement in technologies like the internet although compared to other places where similar studies have been carried out, the country is just a beginner.

Al-Menayes (2015) found in his study that students with higher social media addiction rate have poorer academic records than those who are either moderately addicted or not addicted. The same can be deduced from findings of this study. Although, the current study did not set out to establish a correlation between social media addiction and academic performance, the research focused on students and this is an important issue that concerns them and must therefore be looked at. One of the questions asked as part of the items which were used to test for addiction, (*How often do your grades suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?*) had majority of the respondents saying their grades were not affected by their use of social media. This majority fall within the mild and moderate levels of addiction. However, the respondent who fell within the severe level of addiction said his grades always suffered as a result of using social media. It therefore backs the results of Al-Menayes' study. Findings show there is relatively low addiction to social media among students of the University of Ghana, hence, it can be deduced that excessive social media use does affect academic performance. Although addiction to social

media is not yet at an optimal level at among students, like all other addictions negatively affect aspects of life, this could be a cause for concern and attention must therefore be given to the phenomenon so as to prevent a negative impact on students' performance.

5.4 Limitations

Firstly, this study was limited with of number of people sampled for the study. The sample size was limited to only 200 students which is a very insignificant number considering the general population of the school due to time constraint. This affected the generalization of the findings. Future studies should study a larger number to further assess the phenomenon to know the actual situation and impact so that it can be addressed appropriately.

Secondly, the method used in conducting the study limited the study in terms of findings. Survey was the only research technique that was used to identify the existence of social media addiction among students. This method only succeeded in scratching the surface of the phenomenon without in-depth analysis into the impact of the addiction on students' academic performance and other aspects of their lives. Future studies must complement the survey research method with either an interview or focus group discussion. This will enable the researcher to gather extensive data for effective conclusion and firm understanding of the social media addiction phenomenon.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

I am a student of of the University of Ghana conducting research on “*social media addiction among students of the University of Ghana*” in partial fulfilment for a Master of Art Degree in Communication Studies. I will be most grateful if you will answer the questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be treated confidentially and used only for academic purposes. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

INSTRUCTION: Please fill the spaces provided. Mark [] where applicable and specify where necessary

Section A

Social Media Use

1. Which of the following social media sites have you subscribed to?

1. Skype []

2. Facebook []

3. Twitter []

4. Instagram []

5. Whatsapp []

6. Other [] Specify.....

1b. which of those do you use on a regular basis?

2. Why did you join these social media platforms? (tick as many reasons as you do on social media)

1. Entertainment []

2. Meeting new people []

3. Maintain relationships []

4. Social events []

5. Create media content and share opinions []

3. On average how much time do you spend on social media daily?

1. Less than an hour []

2. One hour []

3. Two hours []

4. Three hours []

5. Four or more hours []

4. What issues do you mostly discuss on your social media platforms?

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Politics [] | 2. Entertainment [] | 3. Governance [] |
| 4. Economics [] | 5. Sports [] | 6. Other [] specify... |

Internet Addiction Test

5. How often do you find that you stay online longer than you intended?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

6. How often do you form new relationships with fellow online users?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

7. How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend online?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

8. How often do your grades or school work suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

9. How often do you check your social media account(s) before something else that you need to do?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

10. How often do you block out disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the Internet?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

11. How often do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

12. How often do you lose sleep due to late-night social media use?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

13. How often do you fantasize about being online?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

14. How often do you find yourself saying “just a few more minutes” when online?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

15. How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

16. How often do you choose to spend more time online over going out with others?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

17. How often do you feel depressed, moody or nervous when you are offline, which goes away once you are back online?

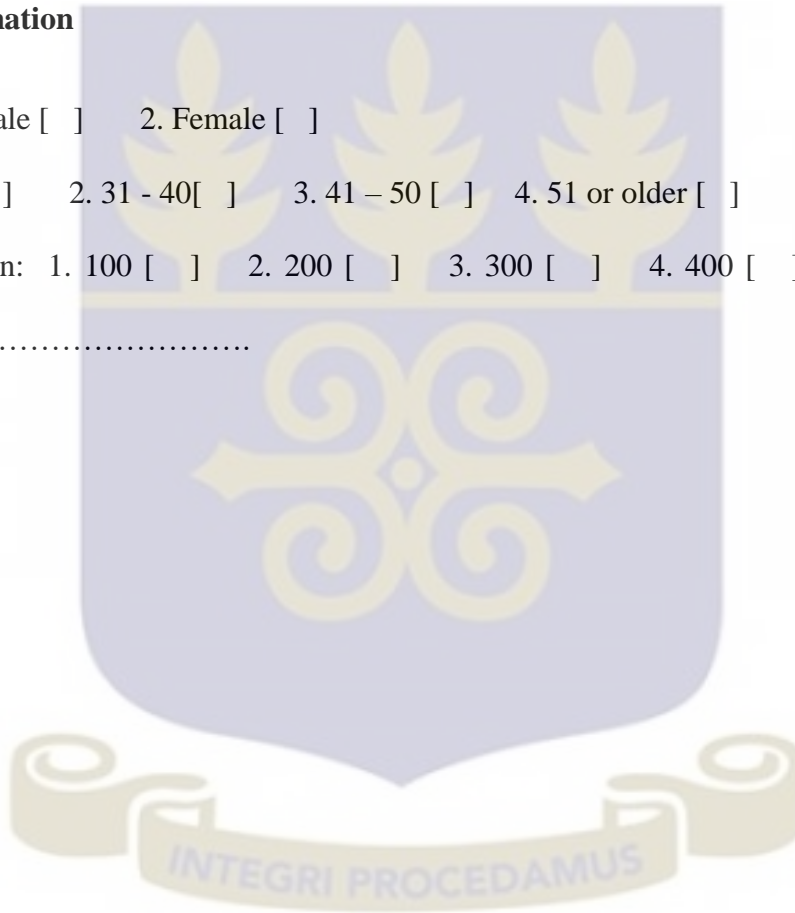
- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Not Applicable [] | 2. Rarely [] | 3. Occasionally [] |
| 4. Frequently [] | 5. Often [] | 6. Always [] |

Section B

Personal Information

18. GENDER: 1. Male [] 2. Female []
19. AGE: 1. 18-30[] 2. 31 - 40[] 3. 41 – 50 [] 4. 51 or older []
20. Level of Education: 1. 100 [] 2. 200 [] 3. 300 [] 4. 400 [] 5.other [] specify

.....



APPENDIX 2



Twitter is an online social networking micro-blogging site that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets" (Twitter Inc.)



Skype is a telecommunications application software product that specializes in providing video chat and voice calls from computers, tablets, and mobile devices via the Internet to other devices or telephones/smartphones. Users can also send instant messages, exchange files and images, send video messages, and create conference calls (Wikipedia).



Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter (Wikipedia).



WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging app which allows you to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. WhatsApp users can create groups, send each other unlimited images, video and audio media messages. (WhatsApp.com)



Facebook is an online social networking service which allows users to create a profile, add other users as "friends", exchange messages, post status updates and photos, share videos and receive notifications when others update their profiles. Additionally, users can join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, etc. and categorize their friends into lists such as "People from Work" or "Close Friends". (facebook.com)

APPENDIX 3

Original Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Dr, Kimberly Young

The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) is the first validated test for Internet Addiction to measure Internet use in terms of mild, moderate, to several levels of addiction.

Based upon the following five-point Likert scale, select the response that best represents the frequency of the behaviour described in the following 20-item questionnaire.

0 = Not Applicable

1 = Rarely

2 = Occasionally

3 = Frequently

4 = Often

5 = Always

1. ___How often do you find that you stay online longer than you intended?
2. ___How often do you neglect household chores to spend more time online?
3. ___How often do you prefer the excitement of the Internet to intimacy with your partner?
4. ___How often do you form new relationships with fellow online users?
5. ___How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend online?
6. ___How often do your grades or school work suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?

7. ___How often do you check your e-mail before something else that you need to do?
8. ___How often does your job performance or productivity suffer because of the Internet?
9. ___How often do you become defensive or secretive when anyone asks you what you do online?
10. ___How often do you block out disturbing thoughts about your life with soothing thoughts of the Internet?
11. ___How often do you find yourself anticipating when you will go online again?
12. ___How often do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless?
13. ___How often do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are online?
14. ___How often do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?
15. ___How often do you feel preoccupied with the Internet when off-line, or fantasize about being online?
16. ___How often do you find yourself saying “just a few more minutes” when online?
17. ___How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?
18. ___How often do you try to hide how long you’ve been online?
19. ___How often do you choose to spend more time online over going out with others?
20. ___How often do you feel depressed, moody, or nervous when you are off-line, which goes away once you are back online?

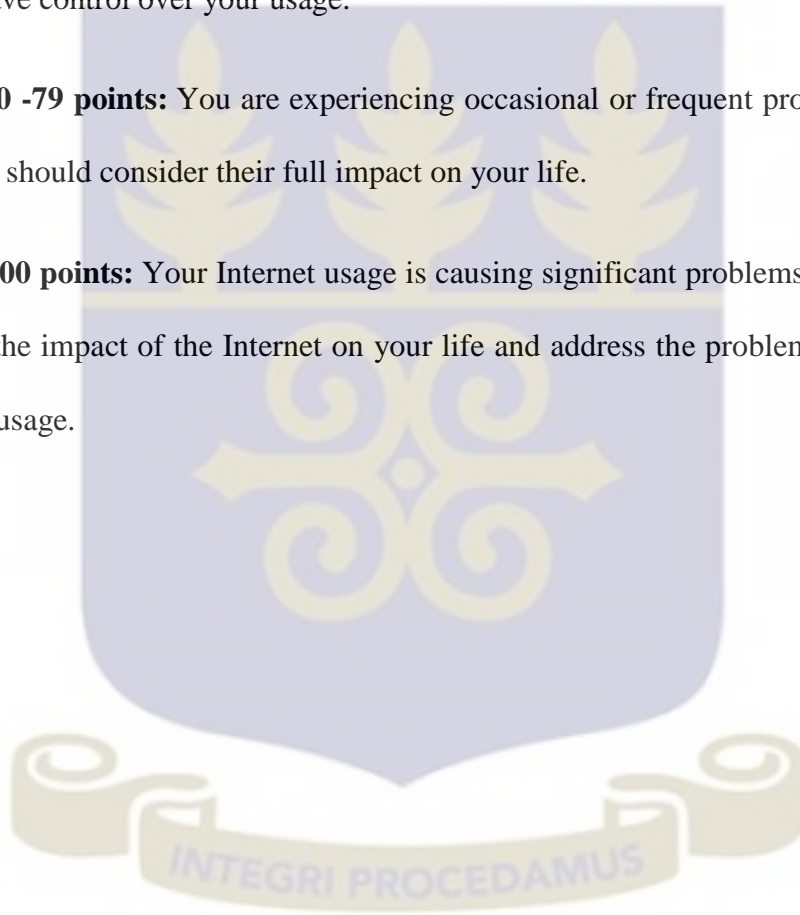
After all the questions have been answered, add the numbers for each response to obtain a final score. The higher the score, the greater the level of addiction and creation of problems resultant from such Internet usage. The severity impairment index is as follows:

NONE 0 – 30 points

MILD 31- 49 points: You are an average online user. You may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but you have control over your usage.

MODERATE 50 -79 points: You are experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet. You should consider their full impact on your life.

SEVERE 80 – 100 points: Your Internet usage is causing significant problems in your life. You should evaluate the impact of the Internet on your life and address the problems directly caused by your Internet usage.



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