

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**AN ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY PERSPECTIVE OF ORGANIZATIONAL
LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: EVIDENCE FROM THE GHANAIAN
FASHION INDUSTRY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University.

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DATE

DEDICATION

This study is first and foremost dedicated to the Almighty God who has given me the strength, good health, wisdom as well as life for me to see this day. Secondly, it is also dedicated to the memory of my late dad, Mr. William Owusu-Bempah, and my mum, Mrs. Justina Owusu-Bempah.



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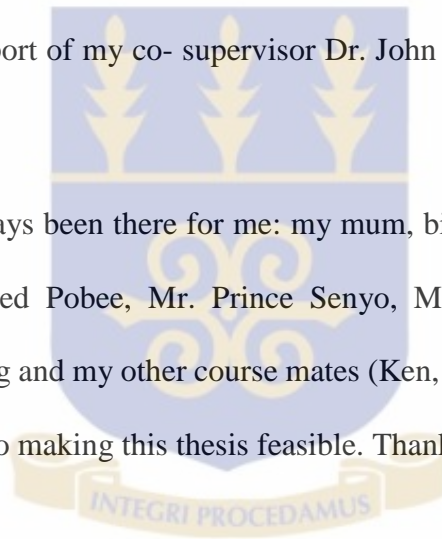


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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AC	Acquisition Capacity
ACT	Absorptive Capacity Theory
AS	Assimilation Capacity
EC	Exploitation Capacity
IS	Information System
KM	Knowledge Management
OL	Organizational Learning
PACAP	Potential Absorptive Capacity
RACAP	Realized Absorptive Capacity
RC	Recognition Capacity
SECI	Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization
SOC	Social Media
TR	Transformation Capacity

ABSTRACT

Learning is key to the advancement of organizations. Organizations that learn have the tendency to adapt to change better than organizations which do not learn. Organizational learning can be facilitated by social media, which is a component of Web 2.0 technologies. Social media is composed of tools, applications and web applications, which have the potential of absorbing external knowledge. The Absorptive Capacity Theory was used as the theoretical lens for this study to help analyze how organizations absorb new knowledge using social media tools and applications; and the extent to which the usage of social media makes knowledge absorption possible in the Ghanaian fashion industry. The mixed method approach was used in this study, a survey of fashion designers and employees numbering 196 was carried out in 55 fashion firms whereas two fashion firms were used in a case study. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling.

This study adds to the few existing studies in the field of Information Systems (IS) that have studied Organizational Learning and social media use. In terms of originality, it is the first study that has studied organizational learning through social media using the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) as its theoretical lens. The findings from the study suggest that Ghanaian fashion designers do not intensively use social media to assimilate knowledge but rather to acquire, transform and exploit knowledge.

The popular social media applications used by Ghanaian fashion designers include; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogger, YouTube, Printrest, Flickr, Google Plus, and Tumblr. Facebook for instance is used on a daily basis by most Ghanaian fashion designers. Fashion designers use social media to acquire, transform and exploit knowledge through research, interaction, communication, and marketing with suppliers, customers and other fashion designers. They are able to gather information on fashion trends, styles and customer preferences through these

social media web applications. The study will further serve as a guide for future IS research on Organizational Learning (OL) and social media. This study discussed the use of social media for learning among organizations in the Ghanaian fashion industry. However, future research can extend this work by looking at Organizational Learning and social media use in a different industry.

Keywords: Organizational Learning, knowledge, Social media, Absorptive Capacity Theory.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Organizational learning is necessary for the successful operation of organizations. Businesses thrive on information and this information accumulates forming a knowledge base. Such knowledge can be acquired both internally and externally and must be managed properly to achieve organizational set goals and objectives (Karkouljian, 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that communities that have mechanisms that create and connect relationships between individuals to work collectively for common goals is an organization (Boateng et al., 2009). According to Nonaka et al. (1998), critical among these mechanisms are those that result in sharing information and make the cognitive map of individuals, as employees, accessible for the greater good; thus creating collective knowledge. Organizations learn and create knowledge through dynamic interactions between employees. Organizations have long recognized knowledge management (KM) as an important business strategy (Hull et al., 2000). A 2001 United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) report indicated that a substantial portion of the federal workforce would become eligible to retire or will retire over the next five to 10 years, and that workforce planning is critical to ensure that agencies have sufficient and appropriate staff to account for these retirements. Oftentimes, when people leave an organization, they take a wealth of knowledge about their jobs with them. Consequently, Lien et al. (2006) posits that firms have to pay particular attention to the enhancement of their learning patterns. One of the ways through which organizations can learn is through the use of social media tools or applications to acquire and also disseminate information both internally and externally (O'Reilly, 2005).

Organizations are in the pursuit of looking for solutions that will make the delivery of their products and services or their value in the market place better. Hence, when new technologies emerge they keep asking themselves the question as to what they can use the technology for. One of the new technologies that has emerged and is gaining popularity and dominance is the social media technology. Social media are technologies, which belong to a portfolio of applications termed web 2.0. Web 2.0 can be conceptualized as a combination of old and new trends, which presents more valuable user perspectives and tap this collective intelligence through internet access and use which originate from tools and applications (CDGGT, 2008: 2; O'Reilly, 2005). A new way of interaction has been introduced by these socio- technological innovations. People collaborate and interact freely, through tools like social networking, blogs, wikis and rich site summary (RSS) (White, 2007). Within web 2.0, social media involves social networking and blogs.

With the evolution of modern web technologies, making profitable use of social media is at the top of the agenda for many organizations (Levy, 2009). Social media refers to Internet-based applications with the potential of helping communication and information sharing by individuals thereby facilitating collaboration. Moreover, social media can be further categorized into social network (for instance, Facebook, twitter etc.) and content network (for instance, YouTube). According to Dutta (2010), social media refers to online services that enhance interactivity socially among users through web-based publishing techniques that are much accessible and scalable. According to Zhao et al. (2013), social media provides space for social interaction, communication, collaboration and community formation as socio- technical systems, websites or applications built on Web 2.0 technologies. From the perspective of an organization, social media can be defined (Bochenek & Blili, 2013) as a tool for building reputation as an intangible asset of a firm. Examples of social media include blogs, discussion

forums, chat rooms, wikis, YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Flickr and Twitter (Dufty, 2012; Zhao et al., 2013). According to Chua and Banerjee (2013), the winners of the twenty-first century are businesses that understand the power of social networking and harness it to co-create their vision of the future. Considering that multi-way communication between organizations and their customers is facilitated by social media at relatively lower costs and higher levels of efficiency vis-à-vis traditional communication channels (Gallaugh & Ransbotham, 2010), it is no wonder customer-facing organizations such as Dell and American Express have been prompt in jumping on the social media bandwagon.

Today, more individuals, organizations and governments patronize social media sites and applications (Wenkel, 2011; Osatuyi, 2013). Wenkel (2011) is of the view that social media are utilized by individuals of all ages in the second decade of the 21st century. Statistics by Alexa.com depicts that in 2013, seven out of the fifteen sites with the heaviest traffic in the US were social media sites. Osatuyi (2013) posits that the government sector is also exploring ways to reach their citizenry using social media technologies. Government officials seek to leverage these resources to improve services and communication with citizens. These technologies have the potential to identify issues in real time, so emergency managers can monitor and respond to issues regarding the safety of the public (Kavanaugh et al., 2012).

According to Leung (2013), businesses can maintain and even increase their dynamic capabilities using social media as a mechanism. The pervasive presence of social media has resulted in games that use social networking sites, forums and blogs as medium of information sources and feedback systems (Harviainen et al., 2012). Bondarouk et al. (2013) postulate that the ability of social media to enhance information sharing and employer branding has served as a platform for HR professionals to have, for instance, Facebook profiles to announce job openings, use LinkedIn to search for qualified personnel, and advertise new jobs on blogs,

Twitter, or YouTube. Findings from a survey OSCAR GbmH (an European student management consultancy based in Cologne) presented in March, 2010 showed that 53% of companies in Cologne used social media for recruiting and employer branding, whereas 2/3 of the internet population frequently visit social media sites.

Social media is fundamentally changing the way we communicate, collaborate, consume, and create. Schirmer (2011) argues that the promotion of collaboration and community with blogs and Twitter further helps in mirroring the everyday activities of individuals (i.e. students, employees) and this can be identified as a benefit of social media use. According to Vuori and Okkonen (2012), the collaborative setting provided by social media applications enables sharing of diverse views. These applications have the tendency of empowering employees to collaborate at different levels and make informal inputs to intra-organizational information flow.

However, in developing countries, the idea of learning through social media is not widespread among businesses as it is in developed countries. According to Pham (2011), fashion designers in California (USA) create fashion-themed- blogs. Fashioned-themed-blogs can serve as a source of gathering information on new knowledge gained internally from employees and externally from customers on their perspectives and styles; hence, creating a platform for learning by the organization. Scholarly attention has delved into the use of social media in online business and e-commerce websites such as Amazon.com and eBay.com (e.g. Levy, 2009; Chua, 2011). However, the extent to which the use of social media can support knowledge management (KM) in organizations has not been adequately explored hitherto.

1.2 Research Problem

Quite a number of organizations have been asking what they can use social media for. Current literature demonstrates a dominance of literature on social media and marketing (Hanna, 2011). On the other hand, in IS literature, social media has been studied from the perspectives of social media and text mining; social media and crisis management; and social media and organizational learning.

One very important area of study regarding social media is social media and text mining. He et al. (2013) carried out an in-depth case study, which applies text mining to analyze unstructured text content on Facebook and Twitter sites of the three largest pizza chains: Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza and Papa John's Pizza. Results from the text mining and social media competitive analysis show that these pizza chains actively engaged their customers in social media. They suggested future research focus on finding innovative ways to turn businesses' social media fans from "like" to "buy". For example, pizzerias will have to provide consumers easy ways to purchase pizzas using social media from "selecting pizza, adding their selections to shopping carts, and completing purchases through payment with credit cards and points". Rickman and Cosenza (2007) have also examined the theoretical/conceptual development and application of weblog-text mining to fashion forecasting in general and street fashion trending in particular. They postulate that future research should look at semantic and image mining of the web as the next frontiers of data mining and trend spotting. According to Kaiser and Bodendorf (2012), combining text mining and social network analysis enables the study of opinion formation and yields encouraging results. They analyzed opinion formation based on consumer dialogs in online forum.

In addition, studies have been carried out relating to social media and crisis management. Freberg et al. (2013) explores how social media is used in public relations and analyses how information is shared on social media during a crisis. An analysis of social bookmarks regarding H1N1 (swine flu) demonstrate the center for disease control (CDC) was the most popular reference for information; individuals were strongly present; blogs were the most popular type of documents; and Twitter is the most popular source being referenced. Moreover, an exploratory study was conducted with government officials in Arlington, VA (and the greater National Capitol Region around Washington, D.C.), with the broad goal of understanding social media use by government officials as well as community organizations, businesses, and the public at large. A key objective was to understand social media use specifically for managing crises from the routine (e.g., traffic, weather crises) to the critical (e.g., earthquakes, floods) (Kavanaugh et al., 2012).

Another area, which has also been studied is social media and organizational learning. A study by Bochenek and Blili (2013) looked at four companies of different sizes, different scopes of operation, and different industries. They found that all the companies learn socially and use social media to strengthen the organization and build business benefits through using social media as a marketing tool and having a strategic framework that makes the company active on social media. Their learning patterns (the learning process and the learning aggregation in social media) are, however, different. It shows that social media is beyond being a tool. They propose that future research should study a larger sample of companies in order to see the learning patterns and profiles of strategic management of social media at the statistically important level. A collaborative setting based on social media principles enables the sharing of different insights on current topic, and therefore adds value to an outcome by enriching

information (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012). Chua and Banerjee (2013) analyzed the extent to which the use of social media can support customer knowledge management (CKM) in organizations relying on a traditional bricks-and-mortar business model. From their findings, social media is not a tool exclusive to online businesses. It can be a potential game-changer in supporting CKM efforts even for traditional businesses.

Most of these research on learning processes of organizations were carried out in developed countries (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012; Chua & Banerjee, 2013), little has been carried out in developing countries (Grabski, 2009), specifically Ghana.

Moreover, there have been arguably no studies on organizational learning through social media using the Absorptive Capacity Theory as its theoretical lens, ascertaining the need for this study.

Also, the most apparent gap in the use of methods was the lack of studies using the mixed-method approach. The qualitative studies tend to dominate this area of study.

Diverse studies have been carried out relating to social media as discussed above. However, this research would do an analysis of how organizations using social media and to understand the knowledge absorption process using the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT), which will serve as the theoretical lens for this research. The theory assumes that absorbing new knowledge can help an organization become more innovative and flexible and achieve higher levels of performance than it would without absorbing new knowledge (Cohen & Leviathan, 1989; 1990).

According to Boateng et al. (2009), organizations are unique in several respects; from their sizes to the industries in which they operate. They are unique in the way they understand their internal and external environments and adapt accordingly. Employees are also directly involved in this adaptation, whether they are top managers or field workers. They continuously need to be trained and provided with a platform of learning in order to close the gap between their practices (what is actually done) and the processes (formally organized) in the organization (Brown & Duguid, 2000; Beckerman, 2003). Thus, organizations are in a consistent search for new and dynamic ways to learn effectively and collectively. The collaborative characteristics of social media offer new ways in which this need can be addressed. This brings us to the method or process of learning. The tool for learning is paramount in making learning effective. Organizations that have identified tools such as social media to enhance their learning processes tend to benefit. This assertion calls for an analysis of the learning processes of firms and the role the social media plays therein.

In Ghana, the issue of how organizations use social media tools to manage knowledge is of necessity. This area is perhaps one of the brightest, most challenging and most promising fields of research, education, and practice for information systems, with significant benefits and consequences for learning by businesses, especially in Ghana.

Some researchers have called for more papers on OL since the area is under researched especially doing so with a different item like social media (Ettinger et al., 2006; Falconer, 2006; Sawang et al., 2013).

1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explain how firms absorb new knowledge through social media to achieve their goals. The study uses the Absorptive Capacity Theory as its theoretical lens.

1.4 Research Objectives

To achieve this research purpose, the following objectives were outlined:

1. To describe the forms of learning for firms in the fashion industry;
2. To describe the sources of learning for firms in the fashion industry; and
3. To explain how social media supports learning in the fashion industry.

1.5 Research Questions

The study responded to the following research questions in the achievement of the stated objectives:

1. What are the forms of learning for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
2. What are the sources of learning for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
3. How does social media support organizational learning in fashion firms in Ghana?
 - (a) What are the types of social media often used by firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
 - (b) Which of the two types of social media (social network and content network) greatly enhances Potential Absorptive Capacity (PACAP) and which of the two greatly enhances Realized Absorptive Capacity (RACAP)?

1.6 Research Significance

Studies that have been undertaken by a number of researchers have contributed in varied ways to knowledge by adding knowledge to an existing body of knowledge, leading to future research as well as policy formulation and implementation (Newman, 2006). The significance of this study can therefore be viewed along the following three strands: research; practice; and policy. Concerning the research significance, this research goes ahead of current research on learning by undertaking an absorptive capacity analysis of organizational learning through the use of social media applications. Literature on the absorptive capacity analysis of learning through social media is arguably non-existent in Ghana and possibly the West-African region.

In relation to significance to practice, the findings from this study are of immense benefit to fashion designers in general, especially the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and the employees of the selected fashion houses in terms of enlightening them on the role social media plays in organizational learning.

Moreover, the study further draws the attention of other firms to the importance of organizational learning and the use of social media tools in learning. The study further attracts businesses to the implementation of learning patterns through social media use.

Concerning the significance to research, this study is the first of its kind that looks at how social networks and content networks enhance learning. The study responded to the call to include recognition in the knowledge absorption phases of the Absorptive Capacity Theory.

Finally, as part of continuous effort in the area, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing an additional dimension to analyzing organizational learning through social media

using the Absorptive Capacity Theory. It will serve as literature for scholarly reference and as a guide for future research in other organizations and the social media.

1.7 Chapter Synopsis

The organization of the research was as follows:

Chapter One (1): Introduction

This chapter provided a basis for the research by giving an overview of the background, the problem statement, research purpose, the research objectives, the research questions, the significance, research limitation and organization of the research.

Chapter Two (2): Literature Review

Literature pertaining to organizational learning and social media was reviewed. This was done to understand the organizational view on organizational learning and its impact on the attainment of organizational goals and how social media is used in organizations.

Chapter Three (3): Study Setting

This chapter presented a brief overview of the Ghanaian fashion industry studying specifically Vlisco and Nallem Clothing.

Chapter Four (4): Research Framework

This chapter provided the research framework that was adopted for this study. The constructs and variables of the framework are explained followed by how they were measured. This chapter is important as it provides the frame for the research.

Chapter Five (5): Research Methodology

This chapter described the research methodology adopted, which included research design, data collection procedure and development of data collection instruments. The mode of data analysis is outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Six (6): Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section explored the data collected from the field and was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and qualitative analysis.

Chapter Seven (7): Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The final chapter presented a summary of the key findings, and contributions made to the study of organizational learning through social media in the Ghanaian fashion industry. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research were also mentioned in this section.

1.8 Summary

This chapter provided the background of the study, the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, the research methodology and the research significance. The next chapter will provide a literature review of the research study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction/Rationale for the Review

In order for organizations to remain dynamic and innovative in today's highly volatile competitive environment, they are beginning to acknowledge the need to tap into knowledge assets diffused around the organization (Khatibian et al., 2010). According to Karkoulian et al. (2013), learning organizations make continuous growth part of its culture, which enables such institutions to manage change effectively. Learning leads to knowledge and knowledge is a critical success factor of organizations, which must be taken advantage of by every organization. This review is founded on a collection of scholarly and academic articles and reports that depict the link between social media and organizational learning. Companies strive to demonstrate a wide range of learning capabilities and eventually become learning organizations (LO) because the ability to learn fast is emanating as the new competitive edge (Marquardt, 1996).

The underlying reason for this review is to collate existing academic and scholarly articles on organizational learning (OL) and social media. There are quite a number of studies on social media and perceived affordance and on e-learning as well (Falconer, 2006; Ettinger et al., 2006; Sawang et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2013). Farr (2000) defines OL as the process of providing organizational knowledge. The degree to which an organization learns demonstrates how it can respond to new challenges. Knowledge (as believed) is power, therefore organizations must make a conscious effort to understand the internal and external environments that affect them and adapt accordingly. Organizations that are able to do this are termed 'adaptive organizations' (Nohria, 2006). Being 'adaptive' comes only if organizations are able to learn newer ways to reach their goals. One technology that is helpful in understanding an

organization's environment is social media. According to Zhao et al. (2013), social media involves socio-technical systems, websites or applications that are founded on Web 2.0 technologies, which facilitate social interaction, communication, collaboration, and community creation.

Employees or individuals within the organization must also be involved in the adaptation process, whether they are top managers or field workers. Employees continuously need to be trained and provided with a platform of learning (Beckerman, 2003). The perceived affordance of the interaction design of social media is a prerequisite to facilitate organizational learning (Zhao et al., 2013). It can be deduced that an organization's knowledge is constructed socially in that they create a platform that allows members to interact; interpret and give meaning to data and information; create context; and learn within that context in the process of developing knowledge. Organizations, from a social perspective, are social communities where social and individual expertise is converted into services and products which are economically useful by applying organizational principles that are higher (Korgut & Zander, 1992). This view implies that an organization's set-up depends on the ability of that organization to use its expertise and knowledge. A number of researchers have studied e-learning versus organizational learning (Ettinger et al., 2006; Falconer, 2006; Sawang et al., 2013). What this research sought to do is to study specifically how organizational learning can be achieved through social media and not the broader idea of technologically supported learning that e-learning connotes.

This review is appropriate because organizational learning is necessary for organizational growth and development (Lietaer, 2002). The profits of successful hierarchical learning are decently perceived regarding enhanced development (Chanal, 2004), attaining to and managing change (Boyce, 2003) and in creating fitness (Drejer, 2000). Several academic studies have

been conducted on OL and e-learning (Falconer, 2006; Ettinger et al., 2006; Sawang et al., 2013) however with little emphasis on social media, and a greater emphasis on e-learning in general. Arguably, academic research and conceptual as well as theoretical understanding of organizations learning through social media is on the low side. This is illustrated and elaborated in a paper by Gorelick (2005), who discovers that technology can facilitate learning in an organization having other conditions in place.

This chapter is developed from existing literature in order to compile evidence by endeavoring to present a more systematic means to synthesizing the existing literature in this research area, and figuring out gaps and trends in the literature up to date; and presenting the relevant findings for OL and social media.

2.2 Framing Organizational Learning and Social Media Research

2.2.1 Organizational Learning Defined

This section displays a tried and true way of organizational learning through social media. Individuals learn in order to acquire knowledge. However, it can be argued that it is not enough for individuals in firms to learn to develop usable knowledge; rather such knowledge should be shared within the organization to allow for organizational adaptation and further enhancement of organizational performance (Farr, 2000). Some organizations, according to Conklin (2001), underperform due to organizational amnesia. In effect, an organization's ability to exploit, learn and use knowledge to have a competitive edge over other existing firms tends to contribute immensely to the success of that organization (Lietaer, 2002). Knowledge generated through learning can be used by an organization to create business value.

Organizational learning that incorporates execution and taking in results from the dynamic organization between the sense making and organizing variables. Human qualities and feelings assume a huge part in compelling hierarchical learning. Solid senses making components can overcome powerless organizing elements (Schwandt, 1999). For instance, data innovation, especially community advancements technologies (which comprises Web 2.0 tools), can be actualized to support information catch and imparting. Standards as strategies and methods, e.g. the utilization of innovation to catch lessons learned and for archiving gatherings, are devices for learning (Gorelick, 2005). Deductively, an individual's ability to easily adapt to a technology determines the degree to which that technology can be used by that person to learn. This also implies that, if an organization's culture and structure does not support the use of technology to learn, organizational learning through a technology like social media will be a hard nut to crack.

The benefits of organizational learning ranges from information diffusion, knowledge attainment across the organization, innovation, competitive advantage, adaptability, customer satisfaction just to mention a few (Farr, 2000; Othman et al., 2004; Boateng et al., 2009). Farr (2000) posits that organizational learning allows individual members to detect the discrepancy between actual and expected results, and tries to correct errors underlying assumptions eventually facilitating the provision of knowledge. Othman et al. (2004) is of the view that organizational learning is not merely the process of acquiring knowledge. Rather, the learning that takes place at the individual's level has to be disseminated across the organization. This, in turn, enables the organization to make decisions that will equip it to respond and adapt to change and uncertainty. Specifically, this adaptation is brought about through double-looping learning and entails a re-examination of fundamental assumptions; emphasizing the statement that organizational learning holds a potential benefit of adaptability.

Although organizational learning is important, organizations are vulnerable to underperformance due to organizational amnesia, which Conklin (2001) understood as organizations acting in ways that suggest they have forgotten key lessons previously learned. Lessons learned and knowledge previously generated are sometimes lost and forgotten. Hence, processes, structure and culture that support learning for knowledge generation and performance enhancement have to be created in order to avoid impediments to organizational learning. A learning organization is an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself (Pedler et al., 1989). This implies that in a learning organization, and lessons learned by individuals or members must ultimately be diffused within the organization to allow for accessibility across the firm in order to facilitate organizational adaptation and a positive and timely response to change. In a 2002 report on work-based learning in SMEs, Britain's Learning Skills Development Agency, concluded that workforce learning is very important in developing knowledge necessary for the firm's growth and survival (Hughes et al., 2002).

2.2.2 Organizational Learning and Social Media

Two on-going advancements are bringing about real changes in financial and social action. To begin with, the omnipresence and scope of electronic systems keep on growing exponentially; and second, systems empowered by advanced stages and innovations are progressively making worth for both people and associations (Agarwal et al., 2008). Advances in innovation, for example, thing ID, versatile information administrations and Web 2.0 (including wikis, websites and shared stages), give open doors for organizations to enhance their inside operations and work together with their production network accomplices (Agarwal et al., 2008; Culnan, 2010).

Web 2.0 can be respected as an umbrella term, enveloping new community oriented advancements (Morrison, 2009); while online networking can be depicted as a consequence of applying Web 2.0 advancements to an online social environment (Bonso'n & Flores, 2011). For instance, organizations can make utilization of virtual thought research centers and intelligent open source groups in sourcing thoughts and developments by captivating clients, suppliers and other exchanging accomplices in social networking empowered methodologies (Ahlqvist et al., 2010).

It has been guaranteed that learning a trade in systems crossing authoritative limits is key for organization imaginativeness (Nooteboom, 2000). Web 2.0 innovations empower content era, group building and choice help and are in this manner giving another stage for information trade and system improvement (Chui et al., 2009). Hence, organizations are progressively demonstrating enthusiasm for consolidating Web 2.0 innovations inside their inner, as well as their outside operations. For an organization, the employment of social media can be either exploitative in the feeling of making incremental upgrades in existing courses of action, drawing on existing learning, or explorative in the feeling of making new plans of action and drawing on new wellsprings of learning (Subramani, 2004; Jansen et al., 2006; Gupta et al., 2007). Regardless of the way that organizations are progressively perceiving the potential quality identified with utilizing Web 2.0 as a part of a business setting, research on utilizing Web 2.0 as a part of associations is still in its earliest stages (Saldanha & Krishnan, 2010).

2.2.3 The Forms of Knowledge in Organizational Learning

Knowledge can exist in different forms and these forms of knowledge can be created, sustained, shared and renewed to help attain organizational goals. Moreover, it can generate value when using information and communications technology (Sarirete et al., 2011).

Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) are of the view that knowledge can exist in two structural forms, namely, tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge exists in the minds of people whereas explicit knowledge is knowledge that has been converted into tangible forms like textbooks, reports, financial statements etc. According to them, knowledge processing implies knowledge conversion from tacit to tacit, tacit to explicit, explicit to explicit and tacit to explicit. These different forms of knowledge can be accessed across the organization to enforce organizational learning. Falconer (2006) found that tacit knowledge regularly surfaces as instinct, knowledge or aptitude amongst people, yet can likewise cultivate hostility and animosity if the encounter has been negative. Of itself, tacit knowledge is not positive or negative; its helpfulness results from the understanding it can give to an association.

According to Murovec and Prodan (2009), knowledge can be absorbed in two ways, namely: demand-pull and science-push. Demand-pull refers to new knowledge derived from the market sources (for example, customers, competition, and suppliers). Science-push refers to new knowledge derived from research and scientific sources (such as books, journals, conferences, trade shows, and other academic sources). Sarirete et al. (2011) are of the view that making explicit an organization's knowledge helps the organization to see what it is missing and what it does not know. An organization starting to capitalize its important knowledge will help to minimize the risk of turn-over and loss of knowledge.

2.2.4 Knowledge Sources in Organizational Learning

The place, person or thing from which something has been obtained is termed a source. Knowledge can be acquired from two sources: internal and external. Technical knowledge tends to be obtained from four sources (Murovec & Prodan, 2009).

Internal

- (1) The firm conducts its own research and development (R&D).
- (2) The firm derives new knowledge from its own current manufacturing operations.

External

- (3) The firm borrows new knowledge from other organizations or other sources.
- (4) The firm purchases new knowledge, such as through buying new equipment, hiring new knowledgeable people, or paying a consultant to train individuals in the use of a new method.

According to Freeze and Kulkarni (2007), knowledge sources include expertise, lessons learnt, policies and procedures, data, and knowledge documents. Experts and their expertise have been studied extensively and are the source of a great deal of organizational knowledge. Expertise can be obtained within the organization (internally) or can be obtained externally (through borrowing expertise from other organizations or hiring experts). The knowledge gained while completing tasks or projects, situation-specific can be described as lessons learnt. It can also be referred to as best practices, best known methods, and internal benchmarking. One of the most common sources of knowledge identified is lessons learnt (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Moreover, a form of codified knowledge that is extremely explicit can be termed as a Knowledge Document. Such a document can be acquired both internally and externally. This codified knowledge therefore may include statistics, maps, procedures, analysis among others (McDermott, 1999). Codified knowledge can originate internally; however, a bigger percentage of such knowledge sources may be found outside the firm (Zack, 1999).

In addition, data are raw numbers and facts that are aggregated through processing to form information in order to provide knowledge (Bach & Belardo, 2003). It can be acquired both internally and externally. Institutional knowledge required for efficient and consistent operation of an organization is referred to as Policies and Procedures. It has been argued by

Freeze and Kulkarni (2007) that much of the organization's knowledge is embedded in its practices in the form of routines and operating procedures thereby authenticating the significance of practice as an aspect of institutional knowledge. Huber (1991) cited that standard operating procedures, routines and scripts contain a great deal of organizational knowledge. Policies and procedures are obtained internally.

The sources of knowledge can therefore be classified under internal and external sources. This classification can therefore be tabulated as below:

Table 2.1: Classification of the Sources of Knowledge

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Expertise	Expertise
Knowledge Documents	Knowledge Documents (mostly external)
Policies & Procedures	
Lessons Learnt	
Data	Data

Source: Adapted from Freeze and Kulkarni (2007)

2.2.5 Learning and Knowledge

As indicated by Cook and Yanow (1993), the methodology of getting information is termed learning. Then again, despite the fact that individual learning is fundamental, it is a wasteful condition for OL (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Dixon (1994) is of the view that, by seeing how people learn, we can comprehend what OL is. Direct tangible encounters; verbal transmission of data; and redesign of existing learning (what they know) into another structure resultantly making new information; are the three individual learning techniques. This procedure can be imitated on account of an organization.

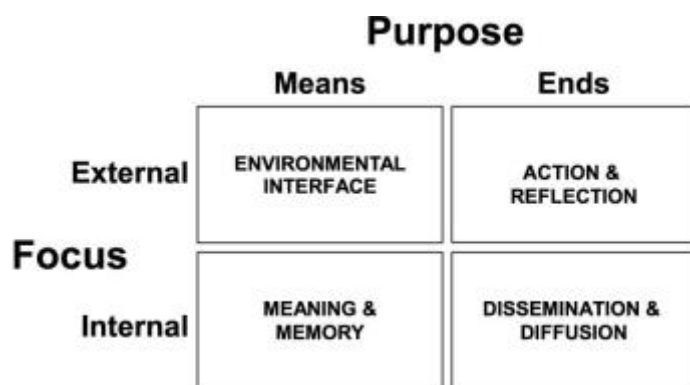
Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) additionally help the contention that hierarchical learning includes learning and production of information by firms through dynamic collaborations between workers. This meaning of OL is taking into account the presumption that people experience a learning transformation process, which empowers them to learn. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) contend that "human learning is made and extended through social cooperation in the middle of implied and express information", this collaboration brings about the 'production of information'. The creators emphasize that information transformation is a ceaseless process through which one rises above the limit of the 'old self' into 'another self' by securing another connection, another vision, and new learning (Nonaka et al., 2000). Such intuitiveness encourages access to a bigger pool of significance which can't be gotten to by workers as people (Bohm, Senge & Nichol, 2004). These learning making methodologies otherwise called the SECI model, can be recognized in four transformation modes:

- Socialization – implied to unsaid transformation, a procedure of imparting encounters or through eye-to-eye correspondence and making implicit learning, for example, imparted mental models and specialized abilities;
- Externalization – implied to express transformation, a procedure of articulating implicit information into unequivocal through the utilization of reflections, analogies or models;
- Combination – unequivocal to express transformation, a procedure of making unequivocal information by uniting other express learning from various sources; and
- Internalization – unequivocal to inferred, a procedure of exemplifying express information into unsaid learning.

Schwandt (1993) on the other hand depicted dynamic modifying as an arrangement of activities, performing masters, pictures and methodologies that empowers a relationship to

change data into respected acknowledging which, in this way, broadens its long-run adaptable cutoff. This perspective delineates how a firm adjusts as a system. Schwandt's model burdens the associations and blend of sub- systems, which allows the relationship an extension of its learning cutoff. The four limits of Schwandt's learning system are depicted in Figure 2.1

Figure 2.1: Schwandt's learning system



Source: Adapted from Schwandt's Learning Sub-systems (1993)

Knowledge is a strategic asset that aids organizations in sustaining their competitive ability in a dynamic environment (Jantunen, 2005). Knowledge is acquired through learning (getting access to information); deductively knowledge is a product of learning. Arguably, in the knowledge-based society, knowledgeable workers have become the most pivotal assets (Drucker, 1993). A critical component of business success is qualified employees. There is a need for effective strategies that will continuously enhance the competencies of employees. Globalization, as indicated by Ho (2010), has a tendency to bring new business. Additionally, globalization opens the way to sound rivalries inside various businesses. For this reason, organizations must consider workers as information laborers and not as workers who just bring on board their labor.

An organization's success is, to a large extent, built upon the organization's speed in learning as well as the learning speed of its individuals. Jude-York (1991) points out that organizations in today's dynamic marketplace strive due to their lack of learning employees who can quickly retool to meet new challenges. Individuals who are most likely to succeed in today's business world are self-directed learners, and such individuals are becoming increasingly valuable resources within modern organizations (Ho, 2008).

2.2.6 Learning and Managing Knowledge in Organizations

Learning does not occur in a vacuum; rather it goes through a series of processes or methods. Different researchers have looked at the learning process from diverse perspectives. Numerous models concerning successful individual learning concentrate upon its experiential, cyclic and/or iterative nature: gaining from encounters, changing conduct and applying those practices to new circumstances that then offer ascent to new encounters (Kolb, 1984; Race & Brown, 1998). Comparative cyclic models are additionally basic in the field of authoritative learning.

Argyris and Schön (1996) characterize authoritative learning practices into single-circle furthermore twofold circle learning. In this model, single-circle learning is said to happen when the organization adapts in a manner that just changes activities or methodologies for activities (the procedure circle), instead of influencing the fundamental arrangements, qualities and suppositions that drive those activities (the strategy circle). This single-circle mode of conduct is portrayed by Garratt (1987) as paired considering, i.e. accomplishing a greater amount of, or less of the same thing. The issue with this mode of learning is that it doesn't bring about any essential changes, furthermore it subsequently prompts a manifestation of imagining that looks no more remote than existing activities for answers to issues. Along these lines, the hidden

reasons why slips or issues might happen are propagated. This model is extremely resounding of Reason's dynamic disappointment/idle condition hypothesis examined previously. On the other hand, when twofold circle learning happens, it does result in changes to strategies, qualities and suspicions: the gaining from the procedure circle encourages into the arrangement circle and back once more.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have studied knowledge management process but with emphasis on knowledge conversion. In their view, knowledge conversion involves knowledge moving from tacit to tacit (through socialization), from tacit to explicit (through externalization), from explicit to explicit (through combination) and from explicit to tacit (through internalization). Zack and Meyer have also propounded stages of learning and managing knowledge and these processes involve: knowledge capture; creation; codification and refinement; sharing; access; application; and re-use of knowledge.

The processes of McElroy's model of information processing involve: knowledge capture; codification and refinement; sharing; access; application; evaluation; and re-use. The model emphasizes knowledge evaluation and re-use. Knowledge claims are tested and evaluated leading to the survival of knowledge claims which will be integrated as new organizational knowledge or falsified/undecided knowledge claims. One of the great strengths of the McElroy model is the clear description of how knowledge is evaluated and how a conscious decision is made as to whether or not it will be integrated into the organizational memory.

The validation of knowledge is a step that clearly distinguishes knowledge management from document management. The KM cycle does more than address the storage and subsequent management of documents or knowledge that has been warehoused "as is". The KM cycle

focuses on processes to identify knowledge content that is of value to the organization and its employees.

All the models of information or knowledge processing are good and suitable for analyzing organizational learning but the one model that best analyzes organizational learning, thus acquiring knowledge from internal and external sources and using such knowledge to attain organizational goals, is the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) propounded by Cohen and Levinthal (1990) and re-conceptualized by Zahra and George (2002). This theory will best suit this study since the aim of this study is to analyze the role of social media in organizational learning.

2.2.7 Challenges of Learning

There are still questions on the effective use of Web 2.0 to enhance organizational learning. Collaborative features seem to be shared by collaborative publishing, social networks and blogging: do they offer more or is it all just for fun? In adapting these tools, should organizations adapt on the basis of what these tools are; or consider how they can assess these tools from a learning perspective? The challenge of organizations in this Web 2.0 era is reflected in these questions. Assessing Web 2.0 tools and applying them to organizational learning is an area in which we desire to gain knowledge. New insight into the evaluation process for learning tools is opened up by such knowledge, and organizational learning strategies are further improved by this knowledge. The challenges of learning can be categorized into the following: technological, cultural, managerial, and behavioral.

2.2.7.1 Technological

One challenge of learning in relation to using Web 2.0 tools is the assessment of Web 2.0 tools. Web 2.0 tools can be classified based on Web 2.0 applications, and these applications can be

categorized into interactive, communicative, generative, documentative and collaborative publishing (Richardson, 2007). This implies that these tools serve purposes designated by the applications they are classified under. Consequently, assessing these tools requires a foreknowledge of its designation. Organizations should therefore have requisite knowledge about the Web 2.0 tools and applications so as to be able to harness it for learning effectively across the organization. An organization's ability to identify a Web 2.0 tool, its application and function creates a platform for effective organizational learning. The availability of technological facilities can be mentioned as a challenge to organizational learning. In order to access Web 2.0 tools there are facilities which must be present in the organization, for instance: projectors, computers, internet facility, conference facilities etc. (Ismail, 2001). The story in most developing countries is very different because these facilities are mostly absent hence limiting access to the global world and hindering smooth learning processes.

2.2.7.2 Cultural

A major challenge to learning is the culture of an organization; therefore it is vital to the enhancement of organizational learning (Sanz-Valle et al., 2011). According to Kuo (2011), if a firm's culture is unfriendly to organizational learning then effective learning cannot take place in that organization which will have a negative influence on innovation and performance. Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) are also of the view that, for a firm to be sustained over a long period, innovation and high performance of individual employees across the organization play a key role. It is therefore undisputable that learning organizations must put in place performance feedback mechanisms on organizational learning to measure the impact of organizational learning on organizational growth and sustainability.

2.2.7.3 Behavioural

The expertise of employees can either enhance learning or hinder learning. Employees contribute to the success of organizations. Their ability to learn at a fast pace opens an organization up to innovation which has the tendencies of increasing organizational performance. It is therefore important that individuals become self-directed learners so they can learn much about their field of work as well as their firm as a whole. If all the workers of an organization enhance their learning speed, the said organization will be a learning one and learning organizations do not have the tendency to fail (Drucker, 1993; Ho, 2008).

2.2.7.4 Managerial

The attitude of management towards learning can be a challenge to organizational learning. In an organization where there is bureaucracy and every new development has to go through in depth scrutiny before being implemented, individual learning becomes difficult and the organizational level of learning is rendered fruitless. To this end management's ability to implement strategies which allow for new business processes across the organization will tend to create room for organizational learning which will result in the attainment of organizational goals (Argote et al., 2003).

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter started with an introduction and the rationale for the review. It was followed by a session which highlighted the framing of the IS research. The methodology for the literature review was also discussed together with the issues, methodology and conceptual approaches discussed in OL literature. Finally, research gaps and future research directions were pointed

out. However, this research responds to some of the aforementioned gaps. This research also employs the Absorptive Capacity Theory as its theoretical lens to achieve the research purpose.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the brief overview of absorption or learning, the social media and learning as well as the research framework (Absorptive Capacity Theory).

3.2 Web 2.0 Explained

Our tasks and processes in daily personal and professional lives have been made more efficient and less stringent due to Information Technology (IT). Since its introduction within organizations, individuals have been using IT for the purposes of collaboration (Tapiador et al., 2006). During the 1980s, formal collaborative processes involving IT were called Computer Supported Collaborative Work (CSCW) (ibid; Grudin, 1994). With time however, the limitation of IT became evident, and organizations realized that they were merely information exchange platforms (Orlikowski, 1997) where it was difficult to seek relevant information.

Moreover, they could only be used in ‘tree organizations’ (Tapiador et al., 2006). Hierarchies however do not apply any more in dynamic organizations today and users must be able to customize presence. Realizing this need, innovators have experimented with practices and technologies particularly associated with the Internet. They produced ‘web-collaboration’ techniques and tools that became popular and widely used by Internet users; these are now considered under the umbrella term of ‘Web 2.0’.

During a brainstorming session Tim O’Reilly invented the term ‘Web 2.0’ (O’Reilly, 2005). The term itself has received a lot of publicity and criticism. Therefore, “...*pinning down Web*

2.0 is like trying to scoop up water with your hands” (Treese, 2006). There are no definite lines drawn in literature for its complete definition, therefore people confuse tools of Web 2.0 (blogs, wikis, podcasts, RSS) with the concept itself (Anderson, 2007). Ultimately, the label ‘Web 2.0’ is far less important than the concepts, projects, and practices that are hidden behind it (Alexander, 2006). Hence, rather than confusing it with a next technical version of the Internet, the definition explains the concept.

Web 2.0 is the combination of new and old trends of accessing/using the internet, originating from collaborative tools and techniques. They enable interaction, content syndication, inter-networking and other means of social collaboration. They set standards for Web-based user interfaces and allow development of a single platform. Blogs, wikis and RSS are not Web 2.0 but they are the tools that use the concepts of Web 2.0 (Adapted from O’Reilly, 2005; Treese, 2006; Alexander, 2006). Ultimately, the label ‘Web 2.0’ is far less important than the concepts, projects, and practices which are hidden behind it (Alexander, 2006).

3.2.1 Working Definition of Social Media for this Study

For the purpose of this study, social media will include Instant Messaging tools (Whatsapp), Content Management tools (YouTube, Blogger), and social media tools (Facebook, Twitter). Some of these tools are under Web 2.0 technologies.

3.2.2 Learning through Web 2.0

Through knowledge sharing and interaction with people there may be an emerging opportunity for organizations to adapt Web 2.0 for learning. The need to learn and the learning process in organizations are addressed by this opportunity. Web 2.0 can be considered as a learning enabler that allows people to access their knowledge and share with others. Individuals who

use Web 2.0 applications are able to create knowledge more efficiently than the conventional methods because of their collaboration properties. It is through this collaboration that knowledge can be shared at the two levels; individual and collective. At the organizational level, knowledge assets must be made accessible by the tools that enable learning (Dixon, 1994; 2000); Web 2.0 facilitates this. The idea is to make internal knowledge visible and to access external sources of new knowledge through 'boundary spanning' (Pawlosky et al., 2001).

3.3 Conceptual Approaches for Learning through Social Media

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) reiterate that knowledge conversion is a continuous process through which one transcends the boundary of the 'old self' into a 'new self' by acquiring a new context, a new vision, and new knowledge (Nonaka et al., 2000). Such interactivity facilitates access to a larger pool of meaning (Bohm, Senge & Nichol, 2004), which cannot be accessed by employees as individuals. These knowledge creating processes (KCPs), also known as the SECI model, can be identified in four conversion modes (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995): Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization.

The Meyers Zack model is another information-processing model adapted to knowledge content. In their model, the refinement step is a crucial one. The notion of renewal, which is based on the notion of an information asset, is also crucial. The Meyer and Zack model is one of the most complete descriptions of the key elements involved in the knowledge management model. Its strength derives primarily from its comprehensive information processing paradigm, which is almost completely adaptable to knowledge-based content. In particular, the notion of refinement is a crucial stage in the KM cycle and one that is often neglected.

3.3.1 Learning and Social Media Models

According to Cook and Yanow (1993) the process of acquiring knowledge is termed as learning. Boateng et al. (2009) used the SECI model to study Web 2.0 and organizational learning. The SECI model (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) looks at knowledge conversion in four modes: socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. The emphasis of this model is knowledge conversion. This study will not lay emphasis on knowledge conversion but the absorptive capacity of firms.

Linke and Zerfass (2012) used the Social Media Governance framework to study online communication management. The emphasis of this framework is social media governance, which involves the formal or informal frameworks, which regulate the actions of the members of an organization within the social web. The framework looks at the following: regulatory frameworks for social media; skills for social media; strategies for social media PR; and activities in social media PR. This is not what this study seeks to do.

Finally, the Theory of Performance Feedback was used by Schwab (2007) to study performance feedback with the goal of identifying principles that will promote a more integrated understanding of learning during the execution of innovative practices and contribute to the development of more fine-grained multilevel models of organizational learning.

3.3.2 Justifying the Use of Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT)

Primarily most of the studies on organizational learning and social media used theoretical frameworks in their studies. For instance, Roblek et al. (2013) used the Social Media Value Added Model to study the role of social media in enhancing organizational change and value

creation in knowledge-based industries. However, this research study will use the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) as its theoretical lens.

In addition, the literature reviewed on organizational learning and social media uses several research frameworks, arguably, none of these studies have used the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) as its theoretical lens. Chua and Banerjee (2013) used a Customer Knowledge Management Framework in their study. Vuori (2012) used the Resource-based View (RBV) to study Web 2.0 and social media use. Similarly, Bartlett-Bragg (2009) used the Social Learning Network Approach in studying social learning networks. None of these studies stated used the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT). This reinforces the need to use ACT as the theoretical lens to study organizational learning and social media from a different theoretical view.

Lastly, the absorptive capacity theory emphasizes a firm's recognition of new external information, assimilating that information, and applying that information with the aim of attaining organizational goals (Cohen & Levinthal, 1989; 1990). Social media is external to an organization hence using this theory is suitable for this study. Wagner et al. (2014) in their study used the SECI model to study knowledge creation, which can be both internal and external as well as across different sources. This study however is using social media as its sole external source of knowledge to the industry under study to measure the impact of social media use on organizational learning.

3.4 Absorption/Learning and Social Media

The process of acquiring knowledge is termed learning (Cook & Yanow, 1993). Learning can occur at two levels; the individual and the organizational levels. Employees within an organization can acquire knowledge to facilitate their specific business roles; however, to

achieve organizational goals such knowledge must be diffused to other parts of the organization (Hong, 1999). Organizational learning implies knowledge acquisition by members across the organization and the diffusion of lessons learnt by individuals to other parts of the organization to enhance collective understanding, adaptation and easy response to change (Dodgson, 1993). Arguably, not all learning leads to adaptation. Similarly, not all learning at the individual level generates into learning at the organizational level. Learning occurs in a more limited form and in a less significant way in some organizations. Such learning does not lead to a reassessment of values and adaptation.

There are different types and methods of learning. Argyris and Schon (1978) postulate three types of learning that happen within an organization, namely: single loop-learning; double-loop learning; and deutro-learning. Single-loop learning happens when an organization identifies an error and undertakes corrective measures without questioning or transforming its current policy. Double-loop learning also occurs when the error detected which has to be corrected requires alteration of the organization's underlying policies, norms and objectives. Basic assumptions are re-tested in the quest to understand the problem faced. With deutro-learning, members develop new strategies after they have learnt about previous context of learning and have understood the reasons behind the ability and inability to learn in previous context. According to Dodgson (1993), OL starts with double-loop learning. Very few organizations are effective with double-loop and deutro-learning; however, most of them tend to do well with single-loop learning.

Social media tends to enhance collaboration within an organization. Social media are certainly in the public eye at the moment, for instance 2013 statistics from Alexa.com depicts that social media is ranked the 2nd top website out of the top 500 websites worldwide. Today, Facebook

is the largest social network in the world with more than 5000 active users of whom 50% log in on a daily basis. It is not surprising therefore, that marketers are devising ways to use Facebook to reach their target audience. In our working lives, an aspect where collaboration plays an important role is the aspect of learning. A greater proportion of what individuals in an organization learn comes through mutual problem-solving and the sharing of experience. However, Shepherd (2011) is of the view that some people do not benefit from working within the same four walls hence making face- to- face interactions difficult to come by and limiting the opportunities for collaboration in the past. Social media has the potential to maximize collaborative learning, not just now and then but on a continuous basis, and not just when and where it suits others, but at a time and place of your own choice.

There are diverse ways in which social media (Shepherd, 2011) can be used to facilitate workplace learning. Firstly, in order to enrich longer formal programmes, such as professional and postgraduate qualifications and management development programmes, social media can be used as a vehicle for group collaboration that is on-going. Many firms are already reaping benefits from using forums to share ideas and discuss issues, blogs as learning journals, wikis as a focus for group collaborative projects, not to mention use of podcasts and videos as a means for sharing research. Another example is the use of online communities of practice to share new ideas and debate issues. Those in more of a hurry might now use micro-blogging services such as Twitter and Yammer to quickly update peers on new developments (Pawlosky, 2001). Learning largely takes place on-demand, at the point when it is needed most. Organizations can do their best to satisfy the needs of employees for on-demand information but they will scarcely be able to exhaust it all on a top-down basis. Members of an organization can use social networks to find sources of expertise or offer their own expertise to others; they

can also diffuse their own home-made learning content, using whatever medium is best suited to the job and their talents.

Learning at work is as much about “learning from” as it is “learning to”. We learn through our own experiences and the experiences of those around us, but only if we make a deliberate attempt to reflect. Here is where blogging can play a valuable role. This discipline will not be for everybody, but for those that really engage with the medium the opportunities for learning exceed all others. Writing a blog post to capture an idea or review an experience forces you to reflect and clarify your thoughts. It greatly amplifies the possibility that the experience will be a lasting one – in other words, you will have learnt something (Pham, 2011)

3.5 Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT)

Absorptive Capacity Theory inspects the degree to which a firm can perceive the estimation of new outside data, acclimatize it, and apply it toward attaining to organizational objectives (Cohen & Levinthal, 1989; 1990). The theory expects that retaining new learning can help a firm get to be more inventive and adaptable and accomplish larger amounts of execution than it would without engrossing new information. The theory additionally expects that organizations that have higher capacities for retaining new learning will have a game changer over firms with lower capacities. The theory expects that firms oblige an information base to have the capacity to assimilate and utilize new learning. Keeping in mind the end goal to perceive, acclimatize, and utilize new information, firms must have a learning base that is moderately like the new learning that is being transformed. Most hierarchical developments originate from acquiring thoughts from other individuals, as opposed to through imagining them (March & Simon, 1958). There are two components that will influence an association's impetuses to obtain new information: (1) the amount of learning accessible to retain and

endeavor; and (2) the trouble and expenses included in engrossing that new learning. An organization's capacity to discover and utilize new information relies on the absorptive limit of its workers. In any case, an association's absorptive limit is not simply the total of its individuals' absorptive limits. Associations rely upon proficient people to survey and assess the potential positives and negatives of new learning. These individuals can serve as "guards" who can avoid or encourage the ingestion of new learning

Zahra and George (2002) re-conceptualized part of the theory. They took the steps of recognizing the value of new knowledge and assimilating and applying it, and created four capabilities or dimensions: (1) acquisition; (2) assimilation; (3) transformation; and (4) exploitation. (They refer to acquisition and assimilation as “potential” absorptive capacity; transformation and exploitation as “realized” absorptive capacity.) Murovec and Prodan (2009) showed that there can be two sorts of absorptive limit: demand-pull and science-push. Demand-pull alludes to new learning obtained from business sources (for instance, clients, rivalry, and suppliers). Science-push alludes to new learning obtained from exploration and exploratory sources (such as books, diaries, meetings, exchange shows, and other scholastic sources).

3.5.1 Critique of the Absorptive Capacity Theory

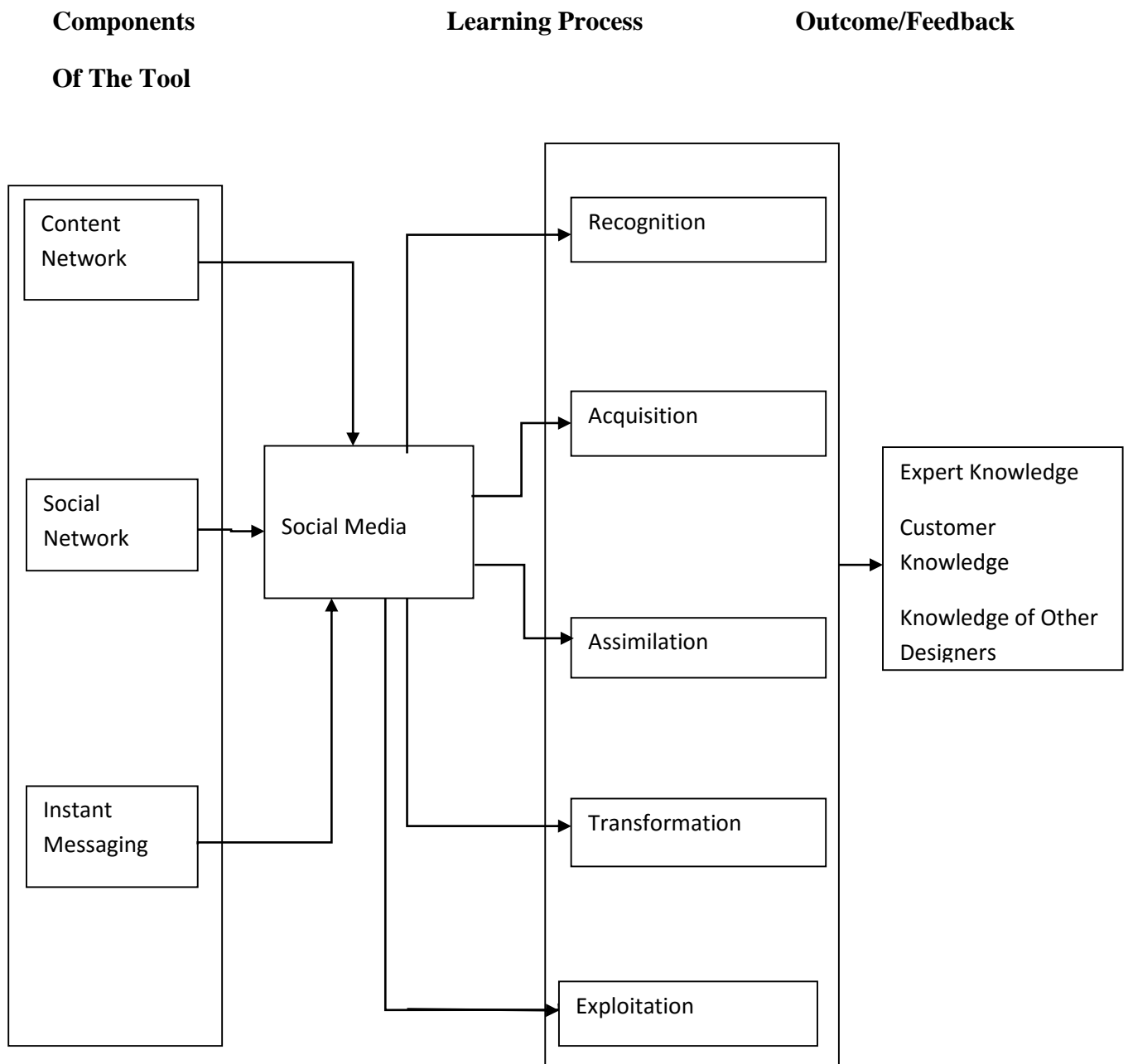
Todorova and Durisin (2007) criticized the Zahra and George (2002) re-conceptualization of the theory, saying that the changes did not build enough on the original work. First, they criticized the reformulation for removing the step of “recognizing the value” of new knowledge.

Second, Todorova and Durisin (2007) argued for a more complex relationship among acquiring, assimilating, transforming, and exploiting new knowledge. They argued that these four steps can influence each other and do not occur linearly from one to the other. As a result,

Todorova and Durisin (2007) remarked that the “neat” new concepts of potential and realized absorptive capacity would have to be removed from the theory.

Third, Todorova and Durisin (2007) argued that the theory should be re-conceptualized as an ongoing process that involves feedback loops.

Based on the criticism, this work will adapt the idea of Zahra and George (2002) but add the dimension of recognizing the value of knowledge as theorized by Cohen and Levinthal (1990) relating the phases as interlinear and indicating a feedback loop and demonstrating the source of the knowledge as emanating from social media.

Figure 3.1: The Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from Zahra and George (2002)

This framework will help to answer the research question of “what are the sources of knowledge for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry”? According to ACT, the sources of knowledge for an organization are four, which can be categorized into internal and external sources. The internal sources consist of the following;

(1)The firm conducts its own research and development (R&D).

(2)The firm derives new knowledge from its own current manufacturing operations.

The external sources of knowledge consist of the following;

(3)The firm borrows new knowledge from other organizations or other sources.

(4)The firm purchases new knowledge, such as through buying new equipment, hiring new knowledgeable people, or paying a consultant to train individuals in the use of a new method.

In addition, the framework will help to answer the question: “what are the forms of knowledge for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry”? According to Murovec and Prodan (2009), there are two kinds of absorptive capacity:

(1) Demand-pull; and

(2) Science-push.

Demand-pull alludes to new knowledge acquired from market or business sources (for example, customers, competition i.e. from other fashion designers, experts and suppliers).

Science-push alludes to new learning derived from exploration and scientific sources (such as books, journals, conferences, trade shows, and other scholarly sources).

Furthermore, the conceptual framework will help to answer the question: “How do social media support organizational learning in fashion firms in Ghana?” And the sub-questions:

(a) What are the types of social media often used by firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?

(b) Which of the two types of social media (social network or content network) better enhances PACAP (Potential Absorptive Capacity); and which of the two better enhances RACAP (Realized Absorptive Capacity)?

3.6 Hypotheses

3.6.1 Social Media and Absorptive Capacity

The relationship between network structure and absorptive capacity has been addressed by previous studies (Tsai, 2001; Van Gilsing et al., 2008), but without reference to the organization of networking behaviour. In a study by Peltola (2014), social network literature was used to hypothesize on the organization of networking behaviour and its relation with absorption of external knowledge. In a study about networking behaviour of hospitals, Goes and Park (1997) established that the type and degree of ties affect the ability of the firm to integrate and assimilate external knowledge. Frequency of contact, as one of the indicators of strong ties (Granovetter 1982; Krackhardt 1992), is considered an important relational trait, which enables transfer of especially *complex knowledge* and information entailed in innovation (Krackhardt 1992; Uzzi 1997; Hansen 1999; Reagans & McEvily 2003; Van Gilsing & Nooteboom 2005; Nooteboom et al., 2007). At the same time, a wide network range (Reagans & McEvily 2003) is important to gain new external knowledge. An individual with a widespread network of connections across multiple pools of knowledge and expertise bridges holes between people and is exposed to more diverse knowledge (Reagans & McEvily, 2003).

Boateng et al. (2009) is of the view that the Internet has introduced the next level of collaboration to the doorsteps of organizations, and it is termed 'Web 2.0' (which includes social media). According to them, arguably little academic research has so far been conducted on the implications of this new approach for the domain of organizational learning.

Social media is a very effective networking structure. For fashion designers, interaction with different types of actors (customers, fashion bloggers, other fashion designers, suppliers etc) may be important for accumulation of relevant information and knowledge to realize different

types of goals and profitability. This is being made possible through the social media. Frequent contact with customers and other actors through social media, for instance Facebook, will enable the dissemination of complex knowledge and information (Nooteboom et al., 2007). Social media tools, applications and web applications are key to enhancing the use of social media to learn.

Reagans and McEvily (2003) conclude that an individual surrounded by a diverse network could transfer knowledge across a structural hole, even when the connection is weak. Apparently, transferring knowledge and maintaining a diverse network are related, as experience with one of the two helps to achieve the other. Debatably, fashion designers engaged in more frequent networking with a wider range of knowledge sources are more likely to experience a rich exchange of knowledge and in this way be more skilled in recognizing and approaching specific actors for the acquisition of the knowledge that they need. Frequency of interaction and information exchange increases the amount of information the fashion designers accumulate, which contributes to a better ability to identify and understand the pieces of knowledge that are relevant for their own firms and profitability. As the higher level of interaction increases the likelihood of (tacit and explicit) knowledge recognition, transfer and assimilation (Dhanaraj et al. 2004), it is expected that:

H1: The use of social media by fashion designers has a positive relationship with the recognition capacity of knowledge by these fashion designers.

H2: The use of social media by fashion designers has a positive relationship with the acquisition capacity of knowledge by these fashion designers.

H3: The use of social media by fashion designers has a positive relationship with the assimilation capacity of knowledge by these fashion designers.

3.6.2 Recognition and Acquisition Capacity

The acquisition capacity of fashion designers can be demonstrated in the ability of fashion designers to identify knowledge and the need of that knowledge through frequency of contact with the prevailing social media tools, applications or web applications. According to Zahra and George (2002), the recognition capacity of knowledge implies “recognizing the need for new knowledge”. Recognizing the need for new knowledge results in the collection of that knowledge.

H4: The recognition capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their acquisition capacity.

3.6.3 Acquisition and Assimilation Capacity

Acquisition capacity of the fashion designers can be reflected by more skills in collecting knowledge about developments in the sector through discussions with business partners, fashion bloggers and customers through social media: for instance, getting feedback from customers on preferred styles (helping to know fashion trends) and also acquiring information on market competition and using that knowledge to meet customer specifications, make changes to their business (styles, designs and marketing strategies), and detect new possibilities so as to attain the organizational goal of profitability.

Consequently, fashion designers’ acquisition capacity is expected to have a positive relationship with their assimilation capacity.

H5: The recognition capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their acquisition capacity.

3.6.4 Assimilation and Transformation Capacity

Fashion designers who are more skilled in the recognition of changes in technical possibilities and who are always among the first to detect changes in fashion trends and changes in market competition are said to have a better ability to analyse, process, interpret and understand external knowledge and information (assimilation capacity). Fashion designers with higher assimilation capacity are also expected to be more skilful in assessing the relevancy of new information and knowledge for their own firms. Greater ability to understand new possibilities and opportunities is expected to result in more skill in recognizing the usefulness of new and external knowledge for profitability of their own firms and a greater capacity to translate new information and knowledge into changes and adaptations. Accordingly, it is hypothesized:

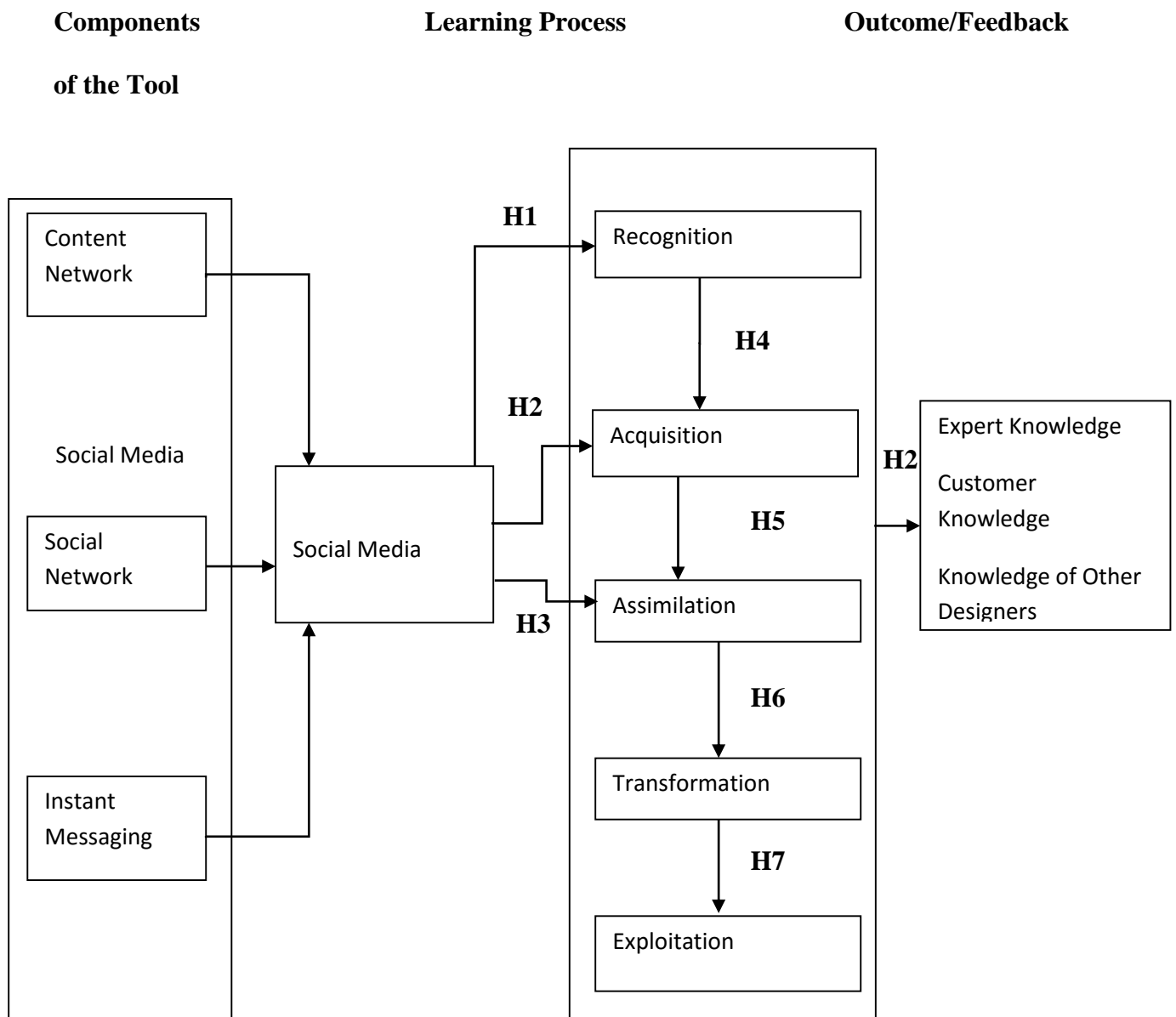
H6: The assimilation capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their transformation capacity.

3.6.5 Transformation and Exploitation Capacity

It is expected that the capacity to transform and apply knowledge to one's own firm has a positive relationship related to exploitation capacity. Skill in assessing the relevancy and usability of new information for profitability on one's own firm, plus the capacity and ability to translate market trends into adaptations in the firm, is expected to result in the ability to make an additional step. The latter is related to exploitation of knowledge. Firms with high transformation capacity are expected to be more skilful in transposing the information into profitable changes and adaptations on the firm. Fashion designers who translate new knowledge into actual adaptations usually also have an idea about how the adaptation will contribute to increased profit. Therefore, it is expected that:

H7: The transformation capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their exploitation capacity.

The hypotheses discussed are captured in the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: The Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Source: Adapted from Zahra and George (2002)

3.7 Variables to be Measured

Each of the constructs (factors) of the conceptual framework will be measured by three variables with the exception of the first construct which is measured by two variables outlined as follows;

Potential Absorptive Capacity (PACAP)

(1) Recognition Capacity

- RC1 Identification of knowledge relevant to fashion designers through social media
- RC2 Need for the knowledge identified in the fashion business through social media

(2) Acquisition Capacity

- AC1 Openness towards the environment of the fashion industry
- AC2 R&D cooperation enhanced by social media use
- AC3 Internal development of technological competences

(3) Assimilation Capacity

- AS1 Assimilation of technology or knowledge concerning the fashion industry through social media
- AS2 Human resources readiness in the fashion industry to assimilate new knowledge to detect new possibilities to serve new customers
- AS3 Recognition of shifts in market competition by employees in the fashion industry through social media

Realized Absorptive Capacity (RACAP)

(4) Transformation capacity

- TR1 Transmission of IT-based knowledge
- TR2 Exchange of scientific and technological information
- TR3 Integration of R&D

(5) Exploitation capacity

- EC1 New knowledge exploitation
- EC2 Application of experience
- EC3 Development of patents

The expansions of the variables to help measure the constructs are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The Expansion of variables to Help Measure the Constructs

Variables	Measurement
RC1	Capacity of the organization to identify new knowledge through social media
RC2	Capacity of the organization to see the need for the knowledge
AC1	Capacity to capture relevant, continuous and up-to-date information and knowledge on current and potential competitors
EC1	The organization's capacity to use and exploit new knowledge leads to translation of external knowledge into new business applications
AC2	Degree of management orientation towards waiting to see what happens, instead of concern for and orientation towards their environment to monitor trends continuously and wide-rangingly and to discover new opportunities to be exploited proactively
EC2	Degree of application of knowledge and experience acquired in the technological and business fields prioritized in the firm's strategy that enables it to keep itself at the technological leading edge in the business and further contributes to profitability
EC3	Capacity to put technological knowledge into product and process patents leading to profitability
TR1	Capacity of the company to use information technologies in order to improve information flow, develop the effective sharing of knowledge and foster communication between members of the firm, including virtual meetings between professionals who are physically separated—Internet B2E portals, email, teleworking etc.

AS1	Capacity to assimilate new technologies and innovations that are useful or have proven potential
AS2	Ability to use employees' level of knowledge, experience and competencies in the assimilation and interpretation of new knowledge to detect new possibilities to serve new customers
AC3	Effectiveness in establishing programs oriented towards the internal development of technological acquisition of competences from R&D centers, suppliers or customers
TR2	Degree to which firm prevents all employees voluntarily transmitting useful scientific and technological information acquired to each other.
AS3	Degree to which employees recognize shifts in market competition in the fashion industry
TR3	Capability to coordinate and integrate all phases of the R&D process and its inter-relations with the functional tasks of engineering, production and marketing

Source: **Author's Construct**

3. 8 Measurements

Following the line of authors who uphold the need to study absorptive capacity from a dynamic or process-oriented perspective (Zahra & George, 2002; Lane et al., 2006), and in accordance with my interpretation of the construct, five different dimensions - recognition, acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation - exhaustively cover the domain of absorptive capacity. Van den Bosch et al. (2003) state the need of a clear distinction between the measurement of the construct and the measurement of its antecedents and consequences in order to specify its operationalization.

For this reason, the researcher proposed to study the routines, the mechanisms and the activities that make up potential absorptive capacity (PACAP) which includes recognition, assimilation

and acquisition, and realized absorptive capacity (RACAP) which includes transformation and exploitation as the tools with which to develop the constructs measures. This study used Likert-type self-evaluation scales, which reflect managers' perception of the strength of their firm's capacity to value, identify, acquire, assimilate, transform and apply new external knowledge, for each of the attributes of the construct and how social media helps in facilitating the process. The scale used has five points, where 1 is “social media is used very poorly”, 3 is “social media is used neutrally”, and 5 is “social media is used very intensively”. The study included running two confirmatory factor analyses for both PACAP and RACAP constructs to verify that the individual items of each first-order factor represents the same theoretical concept, and that the theoretical dimensions of each second-order factor co-vary to reflect the same construct. The study tested goodness of fit of the estimated model using absolute, incremental and parsimonious fit indices, together with statistical significance levels and parameter validity.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed Web 2.0 and learning; the Absorptive Capacity Theory and the critique of the theory; the conceptual framework for this study; and the hypothesis for this study. Variables to be used to formulate questions in order to measure the hypothesis, together with the scale for measuring the variables, were also discussed in this section.

It was discovered that learning implies acquisition of knowledge and this process can be facilitated by Web 2.0 technologies that constitutes social media.

In all, seven (7) hypotheses were formulated around the constructs of the Absorptive Capacity Theory: recognition, acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the research framework of this study was discussed. This chapter highlights the methodology adopted for the study. It consists of research paradigm, research design, research approach, sample size, data collection method, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, research limitations and challenges.

4.2 Research Paradigm

This study was undertaken from the perspective of realism. The realism paradigm provides the information systems researcher with both elements of positivism and constructivism (Healy & Perry, 2000). While positivism concerns a single, concrete reality and constructivism multiple realities, realism enables the IS researcher to acquire multiple perceptions about a single, mind-independent reality (Bisman, 2002). This study in extending the use of realism in IS research, gains the opportunity of obtaining detailed answers to the question of the impact social media has on organizational learning – thus analyzing from the perspective of the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT). Realism recognizes that perceptions have certain plasticity (Churchland, 1979) and that there are differences between reality and people’s perceptions of reality (Bisman, 2002), rather than being supposedly value-free, as in positive research, or value-laden as in interpretive research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Table 4.1 below shows the philosophical assumptions in realism and how they apply to this research.

Table 4.1: Research Paradigm and Application

Philosophical assumptions	Realism	Application of realism in this study
Ontology	Objective reality is distorted by human subjectivity. Value cognizant; conscious of the values of human systems and of researchers.	In this research, the single, mind independent reality is organizational learning; however, people including organizations have multiple perceptions about the impact of social media on organizational learning. Hence, the realist researcher investigated what the single reality of organizational learning (OL) is and how people actually perceive the impact of social media on organizational learning
Epistemology	The researcher is not entirely independent from what is being investigated. The knower and the known are co-created during the enquiry.	This was reflected in the study when the realist researcher went beyond what the reality of learning through social media is to know people's perceptions of the reality.
Methodology	Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are seen as appropriate for researching the underlying mechanisms that drive actions.	In this study both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to explore OL through social media in organizations.

Source: **Author's Construct**

However, the pending question is how does realism facilitate such an investigative exercise?

To do this, the realist researcher observes the empirical domain to discover by a “mixture of theoretical reasoning and experimentation” (Outhwaite, 1983, p. 332) knowledge of the real world (in this research “an organization”), by naming and describing the generative mechanisms that operate in the organization and result in the events that may be observed. In

this study, for instance, the researcher combined both theoretical frameworks with other data collection mechanisms in order to ascertain knowledge in organizations on the dimensions of organizational learning and how social media facilitates OL. The realist researcher recognizes that perceptions about social media's influence on organizational learning are divergent and that there are differences between people's perceptions of OL (Bisman, 2002). In this research, the single, mind independent reality is OL; however, people including organizations, have several perceptions about the impact of social media on organizational learning. It is now evident that objective reality is distorted by human subjectivity. The researcher therefore needs to select appropriate data collection methods which fit the research paradigm and support the research purpose.

4.3 Research Design and Methods

A realist researcher who needs to investigate a phenomenon finds himself thinking about issues such as why it is necessary to study the phenomenon; the kind of knowledge it stands to develop; what the best way to gain knowledge is, and who will derive the benefits from the study (Harnesk, 2004). For the realist, exploratory research is one of the valuable mediums to delve into ISDRP, seek new insights and to assess phenomena in a new light (Robson, 1993). Saunders and Thornhill (2000) add that exploratory studies are a particularly useful approach when a researcher wishes to improve a problem's understanding. Moreover, because the objective of this study is to create an awareness of the need for organizations to learn through the social media, the realist researcher achieves this by gathering information on the multiple perceptions people (organizations) have concerning OL through social media. This provides the realist with the actual perceptions organizations have regarding OL through social media.

Within a realism framework, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are seen as appropriate (Healy & Perry, 2000) for researching the underlying mechanisms that drive actions and events. The researcher therefore adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods for this research.

The type of mixed method approach used was the sequential explanatory strategy. The quantitative method was used before the qualitative method. In this approach, quantitative data are collected and analyzed first and the results used to inform the subsequent qualitative phase. This explains why this strategy is considered explanatory. The researcher collected data using a quantitative survey instrument and followed up with interviews with two individuals who participated in the survey to learn more details about their survey responses. Furthermore, the quantitative method was necessary before the qualitative method because the survey leads to selecting a firm(s) for a case analysis (Baumann, 1999).

With the qualitative research method, in-depth interview was used. Wright's (2006) work on in-depth interview as a qualitative research technique with top US and Japanese manufacturing companies of bearings, photocopiers and machine tools for British and industrial markets so as to examine how workable low pricing strategy in the American and Japanese international marketing works. The findings from his research depicts the importance of the in- depth interview technique which placed senior company managers on a "less directive" (semi-structured) basis. This encouraged respondents to put forth their needs, ideas, experiences and attitudes vital to the marketing strategies and price competition in their marketplace.

4.4 Conducting the Survey

4.4.1 Selection of Sample for the Survey

According to Castillo (2009), samples are drawn because it will be impractical to investigate all members of a target population. Sampling is a process of selecting research participants (Creswell, 2009). To arrive at the sample or target population for this study, data collection was therefore scheduled in two stages consisting of a pilot study, which took place from 1st May, 2014 to 5th May, 2014; and a main study which took place from 6th May 2014 to 12th May, 2014. In the pilot study, data (questionnaires) were collected across five different Ghanaian fashion firms. The firms selected were obtained from the internet. The criteria for selection were related to the researcher's theoretical concepts, namely:

- Learning organizations
- Fashion firms which learn through the social media

After the pilot survey fifty (50) organizations were added to the sample size to continue with the actual data collection.

4.4.2 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaires for the survey were designed to meet the purpose of the research and to answer the research questions. The table below shows how the researcher designed the survey questionnaires.

Table 4.2: Questionnaire Development

Hypothesis	Factors	No. of questions
H1: The use of social media by fashion designers has a positive relationship with their recognition capacity H4: The recognition capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their acquisition capacity	Recognition Capacity	2
H2: The use of social media by fashion designers has a positive relationship with their acquisition capacity. H5: The acquisition capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their assimilation capacity	Acquisition Capacity	3
H3: The use of social media by fashion designers has a positive relationship with their assimilation capacity.	Assimilation Capacity	3
H6: The assimilation capacity of fashion designers has a positive relationship with their transformation capacity	Transformation Capacity	3
H7: The transformation capacity of fashion designers has a positive	Exploitation Capacity	3

relationship with their exploitation capacity		
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Source: Author's Construct

The table above shows the factors that the researcher used in the study and the hypothesis that were formed for each of the factors as well as the number of questions asked under each factor. This was done to enable the researcher to undertake a survey, which in the realism paradigm is very crucial as it helps the realist to triangulate with other data collected. The researcher administered the questionnaires among the 55 fashion firms used for the study.

4.4.3 Data Collection

Data was collected among the 55 fashion houses in Ghana on a purposive as well as snowballing basis. The questionnaires were left with the organizations to complete after which they called the researcher to fetch them. In all, 196 completed questionnaires were returned.

4.5 Case Study on Organizational Learning and Social Media

4.5.1 Selecting Case Organization

At the end of the survey data collection, only two organizations; Aya Morrison and Inka Accessories gave access to the researcher for a case study and had sufficient experience to enable such a detailed analysis of OL through social media. The selected company had been in operation for over 5 years and was actively involved in using social media for OL. Evidence of their use of social media for OL was authenticated through documents and interviews with CEOs and the responses of employees to the questionnaires administered to them. The firm also assured its commitment to the case study. Case study is considered as an intensive research method in realism (Sayer, 2000) and that the social analysis of the phenomena of interest, as

provided through case study can bring to bare the impact of social media use on OL. However, Macome (2002) argues that case study research has been criticized for being non-representative and lacking statistical generalizability. In order to overcome this criticism, this study combined the case study with the survey, which will provide statistical generalization.

On the other hand, Yin (1994) indicated that case studies are used for analytic generalizations, as the researchers aim is to generalize a particular set of results and avoid making statistical generalization. For the realist researcher, generalization goes beyond statistics to include analytical generalization. This necessitated the researcher to go beyond generalizing the research results with statistics to include interviews with the CEOs of the case firms in order to enhance triangulation of the impact of social media on OL. This said, it is important to echo that this research is not solely a survey/positivist research that seeks statistical significance or a purely qualitative research that does analytical interpretation to phenomena, rather this is a realism research. The realist researcher seeks to generalize on the ability of the constituent properties (underlying casual mechanisms) to explain a particular occurrence of the phenomena being studied. Thus, rather than a larger number of cases, the study examines the explanatory power of the casual mechanisms underlying the occurrence of the phenomena within a particular case study. Further, the choice of the case firm did not compromise the triangulation of data. The researcher's objective in triangulation was to establish a valid detailed and full account of the extent to which fashion firms learn with the help of social media and how social media use facilitates OL. The data collection processes are discussed in detail in the next section.

4.5.2 Questions Used and Data Collection

The primary data collection method employed was semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed the fashion designers and Chief Executive officers (CEO) of the case firms with

regard to the issue being discussed. For Aya Morrison Fashion firm, Aya Morrison, the CEO was the person the researcher interviewed for the case study. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree. For Inka Accessories, the CEO who holds a Bachelor of Science degree was interviewed. The interview for Aya Morrison Fashion firm was conducted on 12th June, 2014 at the office of the CEO with the aim of determining the impact of social media on the organization's learning ability and the profitability of the organization. The interview for Inka Accessories was carried out on 14th June, 2014 via telephone. The advantage of this interview was that the two participants were informed of the interview ahead of time and were as well notified of the area of the research study so they could reason out the state of affairs of their firm in the area under study. The interview further created an atmosphere that allowed for interaction and stimulating discussion and provided a platform for discovering the perceptions and experiences of the CEOs of the case firms. The forum also uncovered concepts and generated new ideas on the topic that were discussed. The CEOs were interviewed to obtain a wider view of the ideal situation of learning in a typical Ghanaian fashion firm and they were indeed able to account largely for the impact of social media on their learning potential as a business. The interviews were taped and transcribed, with copies of transcribed interviews returned to the interviewees to check and resolve any discrepancies.

Realism encourages the use of multiple data collection methods to enhance triangulation of perspectives and know the single reality and people's perception of the reality. The researcher further observed the CEOs, brand managers and other employees of these firms to find out their perception on the use of social media in organizational learning. Secondary data sources included documentary materials of the organization's history, industry reports and verified online information.

4.6 Mode of Analysis

4.6.1 Quantitative Analysis

The survey questionnaires were coded and entered into the IBM SPSS Amos software (version 22) in order to run the analysis. The data set was screened and cleaned. This was done to rectify mistakes that occurred during data entering. Three techniques were used, namely: Confirmatory Factor Analysis to analyze the factors of the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) to understand how social media supports organizational learning; Excel was used to analyze the forms and sources of knowledge and to analyze the tools and applications to verify those which are frequently used by fashion designers, and to discover those applications which have an effect on the Potential Absorptive Capacity (PACAP); and crosstabs were used to test the hypothesis whereas the Structural Equation Modeling was used to confirm the factors of the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) and to as well test the fitness of the model using Pclose.

4.6.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data analysis was based on Miles and Huberman's technique of qualitative analysis. According to them analysis constitutes three concurrent flows of activities: data display; data reduction; and conclusion drawing/verification. All these activities were presented in the analysis of this study. The elements of objectivity, reliability, credibility, external validity, and utilization were all used in the study to derive its findings.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were addressed considering various precautionary approaches. An introductory letter of permission to obtain data/information was obtained from the Department of Operations and Management Information Systems (OMIS), University of Ghana Business School

(UGBS). The purpose and objectives of the study was concisely explained to the target respondents. The confidentiality of their responses was clearly explained for the appreciation of the respondents. Finally, respondents were involved only after their informed consent was obtained, and they were alerted that it was their right to participate or not (entirely voluntary), and their involvement would not have anything to do with their job evaluation.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the methodology used in this study. It can be summarized as follows: the researcher discussed a methodological review and posit that the current study is exploratory and the method used was both qualitative and quantitative; the data collection method is primary in nature; and the data analysis technique used is multivariate and thematic analysis. Careful attention has been given to create high reliability and validity in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a synopsis of the context on which this study is based; that is, the fashion industry in Ghana. For the purpose of this study, two of these fashion firms will be discussed.

5.2 Brief Overview of the Fashion Industry in Ghana

The fashion industry is a pivotal component of the Ghanaian society and plays an essential role in the country's culture. Consequently, the notion of what to wear and what is appropriate to be worn for a particular occasion cannot be over-emphasized. At the time of this research, the number of fashion firms retrieved from Ghana Business Directory was 127. About 31.5 percent (40 fashion firms) of them were using social media to learn in their business; whereas the remaining 68.5 percent (87 fashion firms) of them were not using social media in their business. The names and locations of other fashion firms which were not listed in the Ghana Business Directory were obtained through friends as well as through some fashion designers totaling 15 fashion firms increasing the sample size to 55 fashion firms. From the survey, it can be argued that some Ghanaian fashion firms are embracing the idea of learning through the social media.

People in Ghana take pride in how they dress. There is often a gender and generational divide in clothing in Ghana. The older generation tends to wear more traditional clothes, while the younger generation tends to wear the universal costume of youth: jeans and a t-shirt. Women tend to wear more traditional clothing than men. However, as compared to other parts of the world, many people in Ghana take pride in continuing to wear their traditional clothing, even with the influx of Western styles (Shepard, 2014).

The traditional cloth associated with Ghana is called Kente. Kente is made by the Akan people. It is a mix of cotton and silk and is worn for special occasions. Kente weavers can be classified as a class of fashion designers (thus fabric designers).

Figure 5.1: Kente Clothe



Source: Google.com

In everyday life, Ghanaian women tend to wear a long skirt and a short sleeved top, often in bright colours and bold patterns. Long dresses are also worn, especially if they are going out. Women often wear head wraps that match or complement their outfit.

5.3 Nallem Clothing

Nallem is proudly an African label that seeks to fill the gap between designer couture and chain store clothing. According to Nallem Clothing, they envisage their products will strengthen the essential bonds of family and friendship for all occasions. At Nallem, we assure you of unique creativity and a selection of fabric that guarantees comfort, color and top of the world taste of fashion and style hence our slogan “The Confident Urge”.

The hunger for design and style manifested in the founder of this unique and progressive brand, Gregory A. Kankoh, has since his childhood experimented with footwear, bags, toys and a

unique choice of clothing and detail. Greg's current status as a designer is no surprise to those who knew him growing up. His views have been sought in both print and electronic media and complimented with awards and participation in high profile fashion events in Las Vegas, Dubai, Abuja and African Fashion and Design Week Port Harcourt to mention a few. With Nallem, you are welcome to elegance, creativity, style and design with a touch of Africa's unique taste of culture and style.

5.4 VLISCO Ghana Group

VLISCO is an authentic designer and manufacturer of super wax print. Since 1846 Vlisco has been creating unique fabrics in Holland that have influenced the African fashion landscape.



Figure 5.2: Styles

Source: VLISCO Website

In West Africa, VLISCO's boutiques can also be found in Togo, Benin, and Cote d'Ivoire. Vlisco aims to be visible in all capital cities in West Africa. VLISCO opened its first flagship store in Ghana on the 2nd November 2013. The store is designed to show case qualities of inspiration for unique designs and colours. The new store concept will offer a taste of the

wisdom and sophistication of 160 years of heritage and serve as a meeting point for the past, present and future.



Figure 5.3: VLISCO Collection

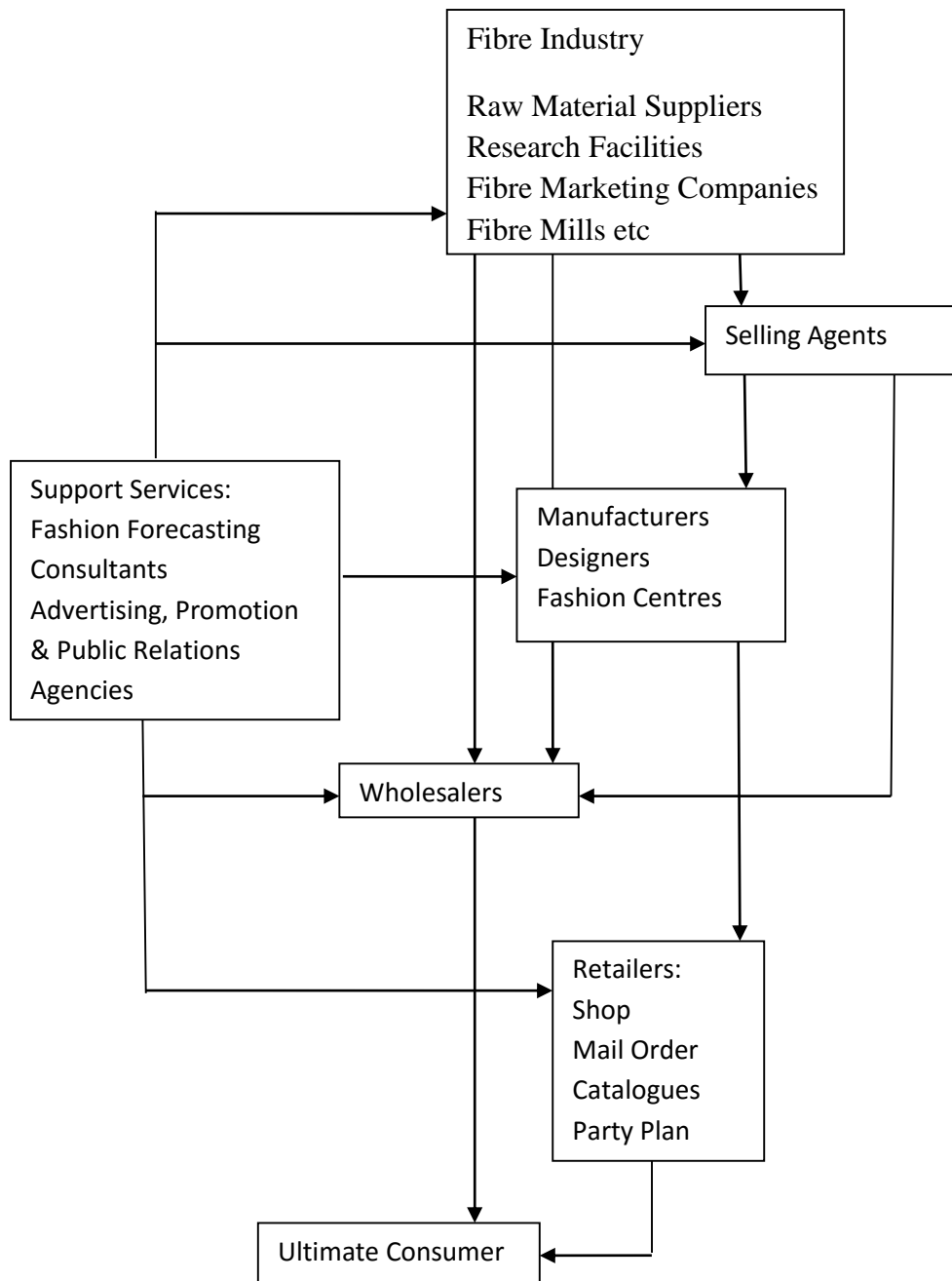
Source: VLISCO Website

Their collection features a coordinated mix of wax, java and luxury editions, combined in creative ways to accentuate the female form.

5.5 Fashion

Fashion is a term that usually applies to a prevailing mode of expression, but quite often applies to a personal mode of expression that may or may not apply to all. Inherent in the term is the idea that the mode will change more quickly than the culture as a whole. The terms "fashionable" and "unfashionable" are employed to describe whether someone or something fits in with the current popular mode of expression (Sumathi, 2007). The term "fashion" is frequently used in a positive sense, as a synonym for glamour and style. In this sense, fashions are a sort of communal art, through which a culture examines its notions of beauty and goodness.

Figure 5.4: Fashion Flow Chart



Source: Author's Construct

5.5.1 Classification of Fashion

The duration of fashion's importance is a critical fashion designer or manufacturer's concern. A fashion can be brief or of long duration. Once having identified this characteristic, a designer is in a position to assess a fashion's importance to the retail inventory.

Fashion is classified into many types, such as:

- Fad
- Basic or classic
- Style
- Fashion forecasting
- Trends

5.5.2 Fad

Short-lived fashions, or fads, can come and go in a single season. They lack the design strength to hold consumer attention for very long. Fads usually affect only a narrow consumer group; begins in lower price ranges; are relatively simple and inexpensive to copy; and therefore flood the market in a very short time. Because of market saturation, the public tires of them quickly and they die out.

5.5.3 Classics

Some styles never become completely obsolete, but instead remain more or less accepted for an extended period. A classic is characterized by simplicity of design, which keeps it from being easily dated. An example is the Chanel suit, which peaked in fashion in Paris as well as other manufacturers, have produced variations of these suits for a small, dedicated clientele.

5.5.4 Style

Style is always constant. It does not change whereas fashion changes: it is not constant. It is the modification of fashion. Style is the basic outline of any garment. When we ask for a different neckline and different sleeves with some trimming here and there over a basic garment then the basic garment is modified into a different look or a different outfit: this modification will become fashion when people accept it.

The term style is a popular word in fashion and refers to a sub-division within fashion. By definition, it is that which has certain characteristics that distinguish it from other designs. For example, the fashion could be a pleated skirt, yet the style is box pleat. It is a common fallacy to believe that the famous designers create fashions. They create styles, which they hope will be accepted. When and if there is consumer support for the style then it becomes fashion. It is repetitious but important to stress that fashion is synonymous with acceptance.

5.5.5 Fashion Forecasting

This is the important part of fashion scenario because when any new garment is designed and worn by the designer, it will not create fashion by itself. There is the need for the media to spread fashion and the process of the media spreading fashion and getting the fame and name to the designers is termed fashion forecasting.

Fashion forecasting is done through many communicating media, such as, cinema, fashion shows, press, magazines, newspapers and window displays.

It includes:

- Market research
- Consumer research
- Surveys

- Consumer focus groups
- In-store informal interviews
- Shopping
- Sales records
- Evaluating the collections
- Fashion trends
- Trend for target markets

Fashion forecasting is mostly done where there is a large audience in special occasion, so that it can create fashion awareness.

5.5.6 Trends

Fashion trends are the styling ideas that major collections have in common. They indicate the direction in which fashion is moving. Fashion forecasters look for the styles they think are prophetic, ideas that capture the mood of the times and signal a new fashion trend. Several designers may use a similar fashion idea because they have been inspired by common sources. The trend may appear in a fabrication, a silhouette, or another design element that appears in several collections. Very often, a new trend appears in small doses until it spreads to other collections. As the press notices similarities between collections and highlights them, the media exposure also helps establish the trends.

Evaluating the collections becomes one way a designer, working for a mainstream manufacturer, can research fashion direction. As designers are not invited to the shows, they must evaluate by shopping in major fashion capitals or using design services, magazines, and newspapers.

5.6 Fashion Design

Fashion design is a form of art dedicated to the creation of clothing and other lifestyle accessories. Modern fashion design is divided into two basic categories: haute couture and ready-to-wear. The haute couture collection is dedicated to certain customers and is custom sized to fit these customers exactly. In order to qualify as an haute couture house, a designer has to be part of the Syndical Chamber for Haute Couture and show a new collection twice a year presenting a minimum of 35 different outfits each time (Manesntails, 2014).

Ready-to-wear collections are standard sized, not custom made, so they are more suitable for large production runs. They are also split into two categories: designer/createur and confection collections. Designer collections have a higher quality and finish as well as an unique design. They often represent a certain philosophy and are created to make a statement rather than for sale. Both ready-to-wear and haute-couture collections are presented on international catwalks.

5.7 Fashion Designers

A fashion designer develops a garment using a combination of line, color, proportion and texture. The fashion designer might be knowledgeable in sewing and in pattern making or might not have any knowledge in either (Frings, 2008). Formal training in sewing and in pattern making is therefore required, however, it is mostly the case that fashion designers have been formally trained, apprenticed or schooled in sewing and pattern making.

Today, to the upper classes, designers are more than dress makers; they are creators of style in apparel for the masses; they are the arbiters of fashion, interpreting culture and setting trends. Due to this assertion, high-end designers specifically, but not exclusively, can be highly influential across the industry. Fashion designers create the clothing and accessories of our desire in our contemporary consumer culture, and the fashion industry brings them to the

marketplace. Over the last forty years the increased importance of the individual named designer and the designer logo has developed, due to the focus on status symbols by society especially the upper class making people to search and buy the products of well-known, star fashion designers (Monseau, 2011). In Ghana, there are names like PKOG, Woodin, MKOGH, and Elikem Kumordji. Obviously, there is a huge cadre of other fashion designers creating clothing that do not bear designer labels. Fashion designers produce fabrics, clothes, shoes as well as accessories.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter represented the context of the study. The profile of the organizations which responded to the survey questionnaire was presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and is organized into three main sections: background of the sample, examination of the hypotheses and brief summary of the chapter. To examine the hypotheses, descriptive statistics of cross tabulations were used to test the hypothesized model of social media facilitating organizational learning and identify important relations between the variables (Recognition, Acquisition, Assimilation, Transformation and Exploitation) of interest. PACAP means Potential Absorptive Capacity which encapsulates Recognition, Assimilation and Acquisition of knowledge whereas RACAP implies Realized Absorptive Capacity which captures Transformation and Exploitation Capacity. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to confirm the factors in the hypothesized model. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the forms and sources of knowledge and the tools and applications predominantly used in the Ghanaian fashion industry.

6.1 Background of the Study

One hundred and ninety-six (196) respondents participated in this study. The participants' backgrounds, i.e., age, level of completed education and the number of workers in the organization, the number of years the company has been in existence and the company's turnover are examined in the following sections.

Table 6.1: Frequency Table of Demographic Variables

Category	Variables	<i>f</i>	Percent
<i>Age</i>	Less than 18	4	2.0
	18-25	90	45.9
	26-30	88	44.9
	31-35	14	7.1
Total		196	100
<i>Education</i>	WASSCE	67	34.2
	HND	16	8.2
	Bachelor's Degree	96	49.0
	Master's Degree	14	7.1
	Professional Certificate	3	1.5
Total		196	100
<i>Years of company's existence</i>	1-5	81	41.3
	6-10	32	16.3
	11-15	55	28.1
	Over 20 years	28	14.3
Total		196	100
<i>Turnover</i>	Less than 3,000	20	10.2
	3000- 10,000	114	58.2
	100,000 or more	62	31.6
	Total	196	100

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.1 above, a frequency analysis of age indicated that 2.0% ($n=4$) of the respondents reported belonging to the less than 18 group, 45.9% ($n=90$) to the 18-25 group, 44.9% ($n=88$) to the 26-30 group, 7.1% ($n=14$) to the 31-35 group.

A frequency analysis of highest education completed indicated 49.0% ($n = 96$) of the participant's highest educational attainment was a bachelor's degree, 34.2% ($n = 67$) of the participant's highest educational attainment was WASSCE, 8.2% ($n = 16$) of the participant's highest educational attainment was HND, 7.1% ($n = 14$) of the participant's highest educational attainment was a master's degree, while 1.5% ($n = 3$) of the participant's highest educational attainment was other professional degrees.

A frequency analysis of the years of existence of organizations completed indicated 41.3% ($n = 81$) of the organizations had worked for a period of 1-5 years, 16.3% ($n = 32$) of the organizations had worked for a period of 6-10 years, 28.1% ($n = 55$) of the organizations had worked for a period of 11- 15 years, whereas, 14.3% ($n = 28$) of the organizations had worked for a period of 20 years and over.

A frequency analysis of the turnover of the organizations in the year 2012 completed indicated 10.2% ($n = 20$) had a turnover of less than 3,000; 58.2% ($n = 114$) had a turnover of between 3,000- 10,000; and 31.6% ($n = 62$) had a turnover of 100,000 or more.

6.2 Frequency Distribution

The frequency tables as shown below answers the following research questions:

1. What are the forms of learning for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
2. What are the sources of learning for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
3. How does social media support organizational learning in fashion firms in Ghana?

6.2.1 Forms of Knowledge

Demand-pull

Table 6.2:

AC1 We communicate and interact with others (customers, fashion bloggers, other fashion designers) to acquire knowledge through social media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	22	11.2	11.2	11.2
intensively	64	32.7	32.7	43.9
Very intensively	110	56.1	56.1	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.2, 11.2% (n= 22) of respondents indicated they have a neutral stance on the usage of social media for communication and interaction with others. Whereas, 32.7% (n= 64) of respondents indicated that they intensively use social media to communicate and interact with others through social media to acquire knowledge. While 56.1% (n= 110) of respondents indicated they very intensively use social media for communication and interaction with others. This result shows that most fashion firms use social media to communicate with others (who

could be customers, suppliers, fashion bloggers, fashion enthusiasts etc) very intensively to acquire knowledge. Acquiring knowledge through others demonstrates the form of knowledge termed demand-pull postulated from the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT). This answers an aspect of a research question raised for this study: “what are the forms of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 1: Most fashion firms use social media to communicate with others (who could be customers, suppliers, fashion bloggers, fashion enthusiasts etc) very intensively to acquire knowledge

Table 6.3:

Indicate to what extent you make use of social media knowledge and information for marketing (communication)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Intensively	38	19.4	19.4	19.4
Semi-intensively	63	32.1	32.1	51.5
Intensively	95	48.5	48.5	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.3, 48.5% (n= 95) of respondents intensively use the social media, knowledge and information for marketing; 32.1% (n=63) of respondents semi-intensively use the social media, knowledge and information for marketing; whereas 19.4% (n=38) of respondents use the

knowledge and information for marketing. Knowledge acquired from market sources such as marketing can be classified under the demand-pull form of knowledge. Further answering the research question: “what are the forms of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 2: Most fashion designers in Ghana intensively use social media to acquire knowledge from market sources through marketing.

Table 6.4:

Indicate to what extent you make use of social media knowledge and information for designing(generative purposes)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very intensively	24	12.2	12.2	12.2
Semi-intensively	69	35.2	35.2	47.4
Intensively	103	52.6	52.6	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.4, 52.6% (n= 103) of respondents intensively use social media knowledge and information for designing; 35.2% (n=69) of respondents semi-intensively use social media knowledge and information for designing; whereas 12.2% (n=24) of respondents use the knowledge and information very intensively for designing. Knowledge acquired from market

sources such as competition and suppliers as well as customers can be used for designing which falls under the demand-pull form of knowledge, also answering the research question: “what are the forms of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 3: Most fashion designers in Ghana intensively use knowledge from social media for designing

Science-push

Table 6.5:

TR2 We prevent all employees voluntarily transmitting useful scientific and technological knowledge acquired to others

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very poorly	44	22.4	22.4	22.4
Poorly	88	44.9	44.9	67.3
Very intensively	64	32.7	32.7	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.5, 44.9% (n= 88) of respondents poorly put in place measures to prevent employees from voluntarily transmitting scientific and technological knowledge acquired to others; 32.7% (n=64) of respondents very intensively prevent employees from voluntarily transmitting scientific and technological knowledge acquired to others; whereas 22.4% (n=44) of respondents poorly put in place measures to prevent employees from voluntarily transmitting

scientific and technological knowledge acquired to others. This table shows that most fashion firms in Ghana do not prevent their employees from disseminating useful scientific information to other employees or even to customers. This knowledge falls into the category of science-push knowledge as defined by ACT, also answering the research question: “what are the forms of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 4: Most fashion designers in Ghana do not prevent their employees from transmitting useful scientific and technological knowledge.

6.2.2 Sources of Knowledge

Internal

Table 6.6:

We coordinate and integrate all phases of the Research & Development process with its interrelations with the functional tasks of production, marketing and translate external information into adaptations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	11	5.6	5.6	5.6
intensively	97	49.5	49.5	55.1
Very intensively	88	44.9	44.9	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From table 6.5, 44.9% (n= 88) of respondents very intensively use the social media to coordinate and integrate all phases of the Research & Development (R&D) process with its interrelations with the functional tasks of production, marketing and translating external information into adaptations; 49.5% (n=97) of respondents intensively use the social media to coordinate and integrate all phases of the R&D process with its interrelations with the functional tasks of production, marketing and translate external information into adaptations; whilst 5.6% (n=11) of respondents have a neutral stance on the use of social media to coordinate and integrate all phases of the R&D process with its interrelations with the functional tasks of production, marketing and translate external information into adaptations. It can therefore be deduced from this table that most fashion firms in Ghana use social media to carry out research intensively and the knowledge (new styles, new designs and new fashion trends) is adapted by these fashion houses into new designs. Knowledge of this form is acquired internally through R&D; answering the research question: “what are the sources of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 5: Most fashion firms in Ghana use social media to carry out research intensively and the knowledge (new styles, new designs and new fashion trends) is adapted by these fashion houses into new design.

External**Table 6.7:****EC1 We translate external information into new business applications**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	7	3.6	3.6	3.6
Agree	82	41.8	41.8	45.4
Strongly Agree	107	54.6	54.6	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.7, 54.6% (n= 107) of respondents “strongly agree” that they translate external information into new business applications; 41.8% (n=82) of respondents “agree” that they translate external information into new business applications; whereas 3.6% (n=7) of respondents have a neutral stance on translating external information into new business applications. External information according to ACT could either be borrowed knowledge or purchased knowledge. Hence, fashion designers either borrow or purchase external knowledge and translate them into new business applications (new marketing strategies, new designs etc); also answering the research question: “what are the sources of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 6: Fashion designers either borrow or purchase external knowledge and translate them into new business applications (new marketing strategies, new designs etc).

Both External and Internal

Table 6.8:

**Indicate how you make use of social media
knowledge and information for interaction**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Internally	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
Externally	38	19.4	19.4	20.9
Both	155	79.1	79.1	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.8, 19.4% (n= 38) of respondents interact externally with the help of social media to either acquire or disseminate knowledge; 1.5% (n=3) of respondents interact internally with the help of the social media to either acquire or disseminate knowledge; whilst 79.1% (n=155) of respondents use the social media to interact both internally and externally to either acquire or disseminate knowledge. According to ACT, knowledge could be obtained both internally and externally and Table 6.8 shows that fashion firms in Ghana obtain knowledge or disseminate knowledge through interaction with customers or suppliers through social media (for instance; Facebook, Blogger); further answering the research question: “what are the sources of knowledge which aid learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 7: Fashion firms in Ghana obtain knowledge or disseminate knowledge through interaction with customers or suppliers through social media (for instance; Facebook, Blogger).

6.2.3 Tools and Applications

Application

Table 6.9: We normally use social media applications to identify knowledge

Degree of Use	Communicative Frequency & Percent	Collaborative Frequency & Percent	Interactive Frequency & Percent	Documentative Frequency & Percent	Generative Frequency & Percent
Very Poorly		(17.3%) 34		(1.0%) 2	
Poorly		(50%) 98		(6.1%)12	
Neutral	(3.1%)6	(32.7) 64	(11.2%) 22	(31.6%)62	(3.1%)6
Intensively				(55.1%) 108	
Very Intensively	(96.9%)1 90		(88.8%)1 74	(6.1%) 12	(96.9%)1 90
Total	196	196	196	196	196

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.9, 96.9% (n= 190) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated that they “very intensively” use the communicative application for recognition of new knowledge; 50% (n=98) of respondents also representing the highest number of respondents indicated they have a “neutral” stance on the use of the collaborative publishing application for recognizing new knowledge; 88.8% (n=174) of respondents “very intensively” use the interactive application for recognizing new knowledge also representing the highest

number of respondents; and 55.1% (n=108) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated they “intensively” use the documentative social media application to recognize new knowledge. 96.9% (n=190) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated they “very intensively” use the generative social media application to recognize new knowledge.

Table 6.9 shows that communicative, interactive and generative social media applications are mostly used by fashion firms in Ghana to recognize new knowledge, and the tools and web applications under these applications can be classified as social networks. Hence, social networks are mostly used for acquiring new knowledge. Recognition capacity forms a part of PACAP, hence it can be concluded that the type of social media that supports PACAP the most are social networks, thus, answering the research question: “How do social media support organizational learning in fashion firms in Ghana?” and the sub-questions:

- a) What are the types of social media often used by firms in the fashion industry?
- b) Which of the two types of social media (social network and content network) greatly enhances PACAP (Potential Absorptive Capacity) and which of the two greatly enhances RACAP (Realized Absorptive Capacity)?

Finding 8: Social networks are mostly used for acquiring new knowledge. Recognition capacity forms a part of PACAP, hence it can be concluded that the type of social media that supports PACAP the most are social networks

Tools

Assimilation

Table 6.10: We mostly use these social media web application (s) or tools to acquire knowledge

Degree of use	Facebook Frequency & Percent	Blogger Frequency & Percent	YouTube Frequency & Percent	MySpace Frequency & Percent	Twitter Frequency & Percent	Podcasts Frequency & Percent	E-portfolios Frequency &Percent	Flickr Frequency & Percent
Neutral		88(44.9%)					62(31.6%)	24(12.2%)
Intensively	27(13.8%)	82(41.8%)	27(13.8%)	63(32.1%)	49(25%)	79(40.3%)	122(62.2%)	33(16.8%)
Very Intensively	169(86.2%)	26(13.3%)	169(86.2%)	133(67.9)	147(75%)	117(59.7%)	12(61%)	139(70.9%)
Total	196 100	196 100	196 100	196 100	196 100	196 100	196 100	196 100

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.10, 86.2% (n= 169) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated that they “very intensively” use Facebook to acquire knowledge; 13.8% (n=27) of respondents indicated they intensively use Facebook to acquire knowledge. Also representing the highest number of respondents, 44.9% (n=88) indicated they have a “neutral” stance on the use of Blogger to acquire knowledge; 44.9% (n=82) of respondents also indicated that they “intensively” use the social media to acquire knowledge; whereas 26 (13.3%) respondents indicated they very intensively use Blogger to acquire knowledge. 86.2% (n=169) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated they “very intensively” use YouTube to acquire knowledge. Whilst 13.8% (27) of respondents indicated they use YouTube to acquire knowledge; 67.9% (n=133) of respondents “very intensively” use MySpace to acquire knowledge whereas 32.1% (n=63) of respondents indicated they “intensively” use MySpace to acquire new knowledge. 75.0% (n=147) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated they “very intensively” use Twitter to acquire new knowledge while 25.0% (n=49) of respondents indicated they intensively use Twitter to acquire knowledge. And 59.7% (n=117) of respondents representing the highest number of respondents indicated they “very intensively” use Podcasts to acquire new knowledge whilst 40.3% (n=79) of respondents indicated they use Podcasts to acquire new knowledge. 62.2% (n=122) of respondents indicated they “intensively” use E-portfolios to acquire knowledge and 31.6% (n=62) of respondents indicated they have neutral stance about the use of E-portfolios for acquisition of new knowledge; whilst 12 (6.1%) respondents were of the view that they “very intensively” use E-portfolios to acquire new knowledge. Flickr is used “very intensively” by 139 (70.9%) respondents to acquire knowledge; while 33(16.8%) of respondents were of the view that their firm uses Flickr “intensively” to acquire knowledge and 24 (12.2%) of respondents were of a neutral view concerning the use of Flickr to acquire new knowledge. Table 6.10 shows that Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Twitter, Podcasts and

Flickr are the social media tools very intensively used by fashion firms to acquire knowledge. These web applications can be classified under social network type of social media web application. And these web applications are those mostly used to acquire knowledge. Hence, it can be concluded that social networks support PACAP since acquisition capacity is an aspect of PACAP. This further answers the research question: “How do social media support organizational learning in fashion firms in Ghana?”

Finding 9: Social networks support PACAP since acquisition capacity is an aspect of PACAP.

6.3 Examination of the Hypotheses

H1: The use of social media by fashion designers is positively related to their recognition capacity

Recognition

Table 6.11		RC1 We identify knowledge through the social media		
	Frequency of Use	Intensively	Very Intensively	Total
How often do you use the social media for your access to external knowledge and information?	Less than annually	2	2	4
	Annually	6	12	18
	Weekly	11	36	47
	Daily	33	94	127
Total		52	144	196
Notes: Pearson's Chi-Square=1.813, df=3, P=0.612, Cramer's V = 0.096				

Source: field survey, 2014

The cross-tabbing of social media use by fashion firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry with how these fashion firms recognize knowledge revealed the following findings. Fashion designers who very intensively use the social media for recognition of knowledge had the highest score of 94 respondents (from 25 different fashion firms) and these respondents tend to use the social media on a daily basis. Fashion designers who use the social media intensively for recognition of knowledge had a score of 33 (9 different fashion firms), who also use the social media daily. However fashion designers who either use social media intensively or very intensively less than annually, annually and weekly had scores of 2 (from 1 fashion firm), 2 (from 1 fashion firm), 6 (from 2 fashion firms), 12 (from 3 fashion firms), 11 (from 3 fashion firms) and 36 (from 11 fashion firms) respectively. The cross-tabulation depicts that fashion firms which use social media on a daily basis do so both intensively and very intensively for knowledge recognition and this is done by most fashion firms in Ghana; whereas those who use social media less than annually do so both intensively and very-intensively for knowledge recognition but is done by few fashion firms in Ghana. The p-value indicates that the test is insignificant; therefore, there is no positive relationship between the use of social media by fashion designers and their recognition capacity. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Finding 10: There is a negative relationship between the use of social media by fashion designers and recognition capacity.

H2: The use of social media by fashion designers *is positively related to their acquisition capacity.*

Acquisition

Table 6.12		We collect information about developments in fashion designing through our social media platforms to do research				
		Poorly	Neutral	Intensively	Very Intensively	Total
How often do you use the social media for your access to external knowledge and information?	Less than annually	0	2	0	2	4
	Annually	2	2	10	4	18
	Weekly	0	2	22	23	47
	Daily	0	12	50	65	127
Total		2	18	82	94	196
Notes; Pearson's chi-square= 34.079, df= 9, P= 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.241						

Source: field survey, 2014

The cross-tabbing of social media use by fashion firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry with how these fashion firms acquire knowledge revealed the following findings. Fashion designers who very intensively use the social media for acquisition of knowledge had the highest score of 94 respondents (from 25 different fashion firms); 65 of the respondents indicated that they do so on a daily basis; 23 of the respondents do so on a weekly basis; and 4 and 2 do so on an annual and less than annual basis respectively. Fashion firms which use social media to acquire knowledge intensively were 22 (82 respondents) and 50 of the respondents indicated they do so daily; 22 stated they do so weekly and 10 indicated they do so annually. Whereas 7 fashion firms (7 respondents) have a neutral stance on the use of social media to acquire knowledge.

In addition, 2 of the respondents (1 firm) indicated they poorly use social media to acquire knowledge. The cross-tabulation depicts that fashion firms which use social media on a daily basis to acquire knowledge do so both intensively and very intensively and those who use social media on a daily basis dominate fashion firms that use social media weekly, annually and less than annually. In the same way, fashion firms which use social media very intensively dominate fashion firms which use social media intensively, neutrally and poorly to acquire knowledge. The p-value indicates that the test is significant; therefore, there is a positive relationship between the use of social media by fashion designers and acquisition capacity. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Finding 11: Most fashion firms in Ghana use the social media intensively on a daily basis to acquire knowledge.

H3: The use of social media by fashion designers is positively related to their assimilation capacity.

Assimilation

Table 6.13		Our firm is always among the first to recognize shifts in technical possibilities through social media			
		Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
How often do you use the social media for your access to external knowledge and information?	Less than annually	0	0	4	4
	Annually	0	2	16	18
	Weekly	0	7	40	47
	Daily	4	19	104	127
Total		4	28	164	196
Notes; Pearson's chi-square=3.170 , df= 6, P=0.787 , Cramer's V=0.090					

Source: field survey, 2014

The cross-tabbing of social media use by fashion firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry with how these fashion firms are able to assimilate knowledge is showing the following findings. Fashion designers who “strongly agree” to the use of social media for knowledge assimilation in their firms totaled 44 (out of 164 respondents). 104 of the respondents who “strongly agree”

to the use of social media for assimilating knowledge also indicated they do that on a daily basis; 40 of the 164 respondents indicated they use social media to assimilate knowledge weekly; 16 of the 164 respondents indicated they do that annually; whereas 4 of the 164 respondents indicated they use social media to assimilate knowledge less than annually. 28 respondents (9 fashion firms) “agree” to the use of social media for assimilating knowledge. 19 out of the 28 respondents indicated their firms use social media to assimilate knowledge on a daily basis; 7 indicated their firms use social media to assimilate knowledge weekly; whilst 2 indicated their firm does so on an annual basis. However, 4 respondents (representing 2 fashion houses) indicated they had a neutral stance on the use of social media for knowledge assimilation. This cross-tabbing demonstrates that fashion firms which strongly subscribe to the use of social media for assimilating knowledge are in the majority and most of them tend to do so on a daily basis. The p-value indicates that the test is insignificant; therefore, there is a negative relationship between the use of social media by fashion designers and assimilation capacity. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Finding 12: There is a negative relationship between the use of social media by fashion designers and assimilation capacity

H4: The recognition capacity of fashion designers is positively related to their acquisition capacity.

Recognition * Acquisition Cross tabulation

Table 6.14: Recognition	Acquisition									Total
	Acquisition	Facebook	Blogger	YouTube	My Space	Twitter	Podcasts	E-portfolios	Flickr	
Identification	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Communicative	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	10
Interactive	0	8	8	6	14	4	0	0	0	40
Generative	4	8	6	14	6	0	0	0	0	38
Documentative	0	0	0	0	18	10	6	8	8	50
Collaborative	0	0	0	2	0	10	30	4	2	48
Total	18	16	14	25	38	24	36	12	13	196

Notes: Pearson chi-square=4.829, df =66, P=0.000, Cramer's V= 0.641

Source: field survey, 2014

The cross-tabbing of recognition capacity of fashion firms with the acquisition capacity of these firms show that 50 respondents who use social media to acquire knowledge often recognize

knowledge through documentative applications; 48 respondents who acquire knowledge through the social media tend to use collaborative applications to recognize new knowledge; 40 respondents who use social media to acquire new knowledge use the interactive application to recognize new knowledge; 38 respondents who use social media to acquire knowledge tend to use generative applications to recognize new knowledge; 10 respondents who use social media to acquire knowledge also use communicative applications to recognize new knowledge; whereas 10 respondents who use social media in acquiring knowledge also indicated using it to identify knowledge. The cross-tabbing shows that fashion designers who use social media to acquire knowledge and who equally use documentative applications to recognize knowledge are in the majority. The p-value indicates that the test is significant; consequently, there is a positive relationship between fashion designers' recognition capacity and their acquisition capacity. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Finding13: Majority of fashion designers who use social media to acquire knowledge mostly use the documentative application to recognize new knowledge

H5: The acquisition capacity of fashion designers is positively related to their assimilation capacity.

Table 6.15:

Acquisition		Assimilation						Total
		Assimilating	Communicative	Interactive	Generative	Documentative	Collaborative	
Acquisition	Acquiring	14	10	2	8	0	0	34
	Facebook	3	11	0	0	0	0	14
	Blogger	17	0	3	2	2	1	25
	YouTube	0	22	12	1	0	3	38
	MySpace	0	5	8	1	9	1	24
	Twitter	0	1	5	28	0	2	36
	Podcasts	0	0	0	5	7	0	12
	E- portfolios	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
	Flickr	3	0	0	0	0	0	3

Total	37	49	30	45	28	7	196
Notes: Pearson's chi-square= 4.574, df=77 , P= 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.577							

Source: field survey, 2014

Table 6.16 shows the cross-tabbing of the acquisition capacity of fashion firms with the assimilation capacity of those firms depicts that 34 respondents indicated they use social media to acquire as well as assimilate knowledge. 38 respondents who indicated their firms use YouTube to acquire knowledge had 22 of them, representing the majority, indicating they use communicative applications to assimilate knowledge. 36 respondents who indicated their firm use Twitter to acquire knowledge had 28 of them also indicating that they assimilate knowledge through generative applications. 25 respondents who indicated their firms use Blogger to acquire knowledge also had 3 of them assimilating knowledge through interactive applications. 24 respondents indicated their firms use MySpace to acquire knowledge and 9 of them having their firms use documentative application to acquire knowledge. 14 respondents who indicated usage of Facebook to acquire knowledge also had 11 of them indicating usage of communicative application to assimilate knowledge. 12, 10 and 3 respondents using Podcasts, E-portfolios and Flickr to acquire knowledge in their firm had 7 and 10 of them using documentative applications to assimilate knowledge in their fashion firms. This cross- tabbing shows that fashion designers who use YouTube to acquire knowledge are dominant and these fashion designers tend to use communicative applications to assimilate knowledge. The p-value indicates that the test is significant; consequently, there is a positive relationship between' the acquisition capacity and the assimilation capacity of fashion designers. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Finding14: Fashion designers who use YouTube to acquire knowledge are dominant and these fashion designers tend to use communicative applications to assimilate knowledge

H6: The assimilation capacity of fashion designers is positively related to their transformation capacity.

Table 6.16:		
Assimilation		Transformation
Assimilating		37
Communicative		49
Interactive		30
Generative		45
Documentative		28
Collaborative		7
Total		196
Notes: Pearson's chi- square= 4.458, df= 49, P= 0.000,		
Cramer's V=0.570		

Source: field survey, 2014

Table 6.17 shows the cross-tabbing of Assimilation capacity and Transformation capacity of fashion firms in Ghana. From the table, 37 respondents indicated that their fashion firms use social media to assimilate knowledge, which helps them to recognize shifts in technical possibilities and market competition as well as detect new possibilities to serve new customers and transform the knowledge. 49 respondents representing the majority indicated that their

firms assimilates knowledge through communicative application and transforms the knowledge as well as transform knowledge. 45 respondents also indicated their firms assimilate knowledge through generative applications and transform the knowledge. 30 respondents indicated that their firms assimilate knowledge through interactive social media applications and as well transform the knowledge. 28 respondents indicated their firms assimilate knowledge through documentative social media applications and transform the knowledge. Lastly, 7 respondents indicated their firms assimilate knowledge through collaborative social media applications and transform the knowledge as well. This cross- tabbing shows the usage of communicative applications to assimilate knowledge and transform knowledge is mostly the case among fashion firms in Ghana. The p-value indicates that the test is significant; consequently, there is a positive relationship between the assimilation capacity and the transformation capacity of fashion designers. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Finding15: The usage of communicative applications to assimilate knowledge and transform that knowledge is mostly the case among fashion firms in Ghana.

H7: The transformation capacity of fashion designers is positively related to their exploitation capacity.

Table 6.17:		
Transformation		Exploitation
8		11
9		1
10		74
11		11
12		47
13		3
14		42
15		7
Total		196
Notes: Pearson's Chi-square=2.405, df= 28, P= 0.000, Cramer's V= 0.554		

Source: field survey, 2014

The p-value is significant; hence, there is a positive relationship between Transformation Capacity and Exploitation Capacity of fashion firms in Ghana. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

6.3.1 Testing Profitability

Fashion designers' exploitation capacity is positively related to profitability.

Table 6.18:		
	Exploitation	Profitability
	11	8
	12	46
	13	27
	14	31
	15	84
Total		196
Notes: Pearson's chi- square= 39.566, df= 24, P= 0.024, Cramer's V= 0.225		

Source: field survey, 2014

From Table 6.18, 115 respondents indicated their firms exploit new knowledge, which is in the majority, 84 out of 196 respondents also in the majority indicated they are profitable. There is a positive correlation between the number of respondents who indicated their firms are profitable and those who indicated they exploit knowledge. The p-value is significant. Hence, there is a positive relationship between exploitation capacity and profitability of fashion firms in Ghana. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Finding 16: Fashion firms in Ghana who exploit new external knowledge stand a greater chance of making profit.

6.3.2 Summary of Hypotheses Confirmation

Table 6.19: Hypothesis Confirmation of Cross Tabulation

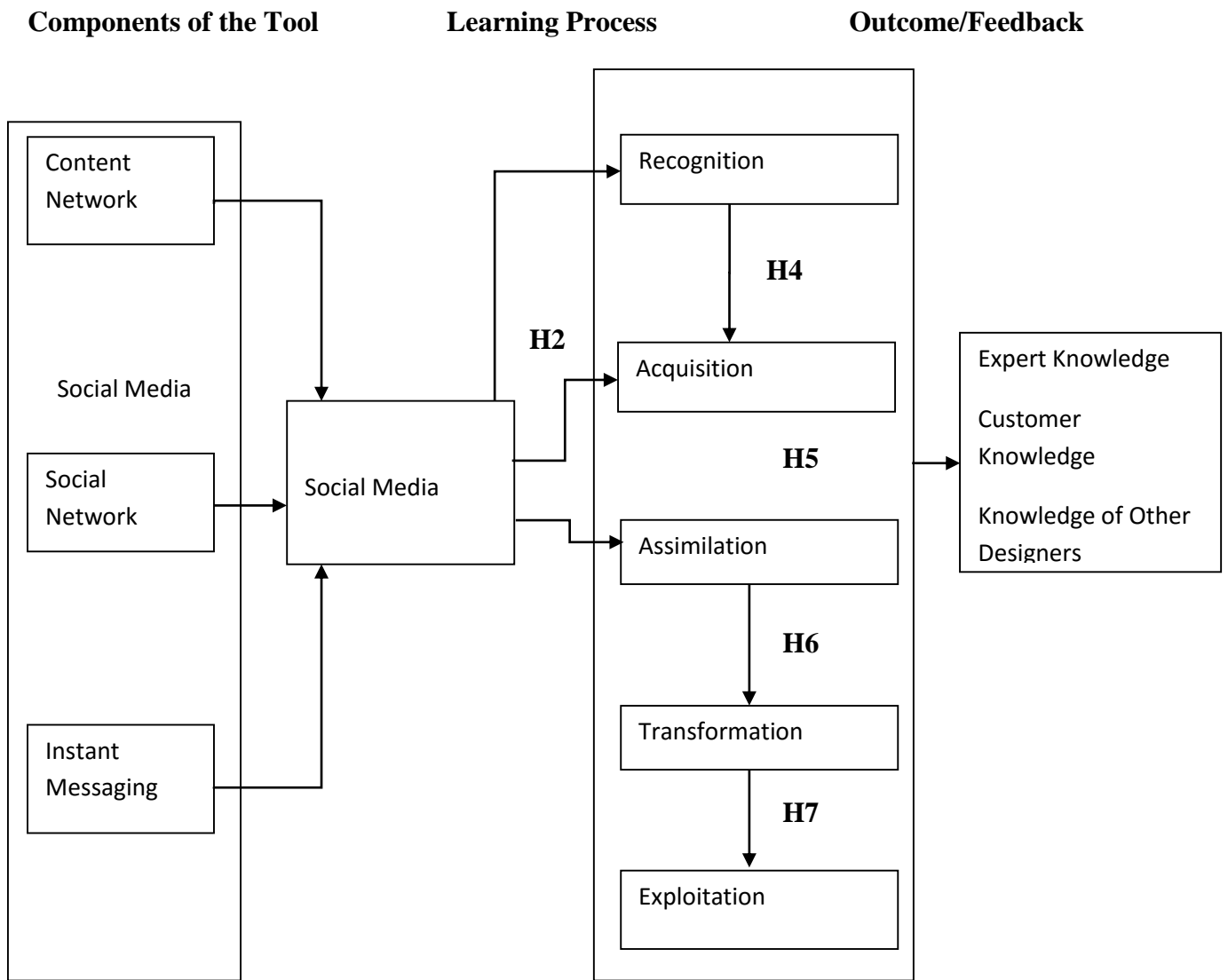
Hypothesis	p-value	Support for Model
Social Media & Recognition Capacity	0.612	H1: Rejected
Social Media & Acquisition Capacity	0.000	H2: Supported
Social Media & Assimilation Capacity	0.787	H3: Rejected
Social Media & PACAP	0.030	H4: Supported
Recognition Capacity & Acquisition Capacity	0.000	H5: Supported
Acquisition Capacity & Assimilation Capacity	0.000	H6: Supported
Assimilation Capacity & Transformation Capacity	0.000	H7: Supported
Transformation Capacity & Exploitation Capacity	0.000	H8: Supported

Source: field survey, 2014

After the hypotheses confirmation process in the cross tabulation, the initial conceptual model proposed in Chapter Three of the study was revisited to effect modifications deemed

appropriate. Figure 6.1 shows the final research model after the modification with the respective significant values of the critical determinant of Cloud computing adoption.

Figure 6.1: The Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis



Source: Adapted from Zahra and George (2002)

6.4 Confirmation of Factors

6.4.1 Discussion of Factors of Absorptive Capacity

This section is in two parts: the measurement model will be completely assessed to find out the factors which are significant from the conceptual model and which fit the measurement model; as well as a summary of the hypotheses which were accepted and rejected respectively.

6.4.2 Factors of Absorptive Capacity

The factors of ACT according to Zahra and George's (2002) re-conceptualizing of part of the ACT theory, thus including the step of recognizing the value of new knowledge are these four capabilities or dimensions: (1) acquisition; (2) assimilation; (3) transformation; and (4) exploitation. However, based on the critique of Turodan and Dorova (2007), the step of recognizing the value of new knowledge is included in this study. The following are therefore the constructs that measure ACT for the purpose of this study:

- a. Recognition Capacity
- b. Acquisition Capacity
- c. Assimilation Capacity
- d. Transformation Capacity
- e. Exploitation Capacity

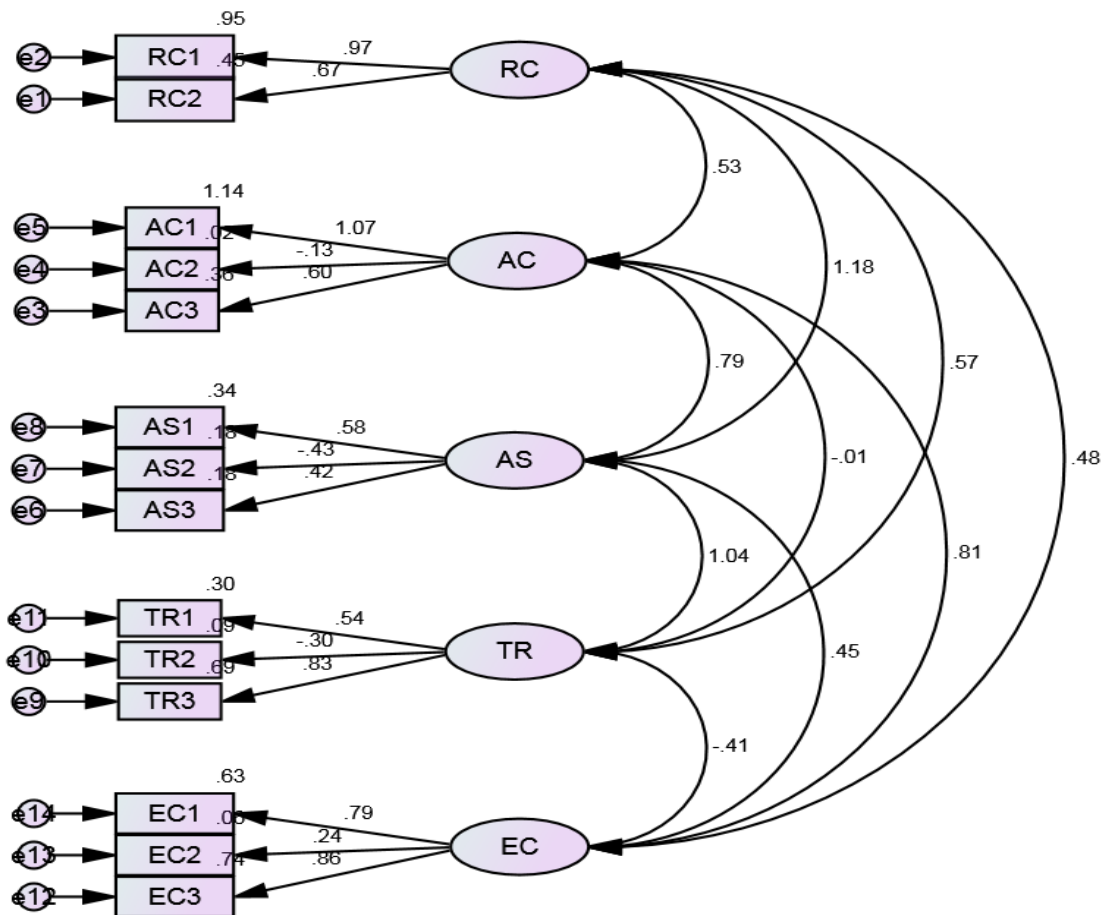


Figure 6.2: Initial Measurement Model (Source: Field Data)

The figure above has factor loadings, which measure the four capabilities of the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT). From the measurement, some first order latent variables have factor loading below the recommended threshold of 0.70. Consequently, those variables were dropped resulting in a final measurement model, which shows the factors which truly measure the absorptive capacity of fashion designers in the Ghanaian fashion industry.

6.4.3 Assessment of the Overall Measurement Model

Some first order latent variables that had factor loading below the recommended threshold of 0.70 were deleted at the validation stage of the measurement model. The variables which were dropped include; AC2 (from the Acquisition Capacity Factor), AS1, AS2, AS3 (from the

Assimilation Capacity Factor), TR2 (from the Transformation Capacity Factor), and EC2 (from the Exploitation Capacity Factor). The Assimilation Capacity Factor was dropped completely. After the problematic factors were deleted from the initial constructs, there was a regeneration of the measurement model with just eight first order latent variables; and there was much improvement in the results as compared to the initial measurement model. Standardized factor loadings above the threshold were recorded for all the eight first order latent variables. Then, the model was fitted as was done earlier with the first model using the goodness of fit indices of absolute, incremental and parsimonious fit measures. The final measurement model is depicted in Figure 6.2 with the respective factor loadings while Tables 6.21 and 6.22 shows the goodness of fit indices and average variable estimation.

The p-value of the final measurement was not significant therefore showing that there is no statistical difference between the factors of the measurement model, implying that the model best fits this study. In terms of the RMSEA, the final model had a value of 0.076, which is less than 0.08 as recommended, therefore, the model fits the dataset. The incremental fit indices obtained in the final measurement model were greater than 0.90 ranging from 0.97 to 0.99 which shows the model fits the data set. Whereas the parsimonious fit indices also recorded values of 0.315 and 0.318 less than the recommended value of greater than 0.50.

Table 6.21 Goodness-of-fit Indices for Final Measurement Model [Source: Field Data]

Goodness-of-fit Indices	Benchmark	Final Model
Absolute goodness of fit measure		
Chi-square (CMIN) (χ^2)	$P \geq 0.05$	19.011
Chi-square /degree of freedom	≤ 2	2.112
Absolute badness of fit measure		
Root mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	≤ 0.08	0.076
Incremental fit measure		
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ 0.90	0.989
Incremental fit index (IFI)	≥ 0.90	0.989
Turker-Lewis Index (TLI)	≥ 0.90	0.965
Parsimony fit measure		
Parsimony Comparative of Fit index (PCFI)	≥ 0.50	0.318
Parsimony Normed of Fit index (PNFI)	≥ 0.50	0.315

To sum it all, eight latent variables fitted the final measurement model instead of the proposed fourteen in the conceptual model. The factors which critically measure the absorptive capacity of knowledge through social media in the Ghanaian fashion industry are Recognition Capacity, Acquisition Capacity, Transformation Capacity and Exploitation Capacity.

Figure 6.3: Final Measurement Model (Source: Field Data)

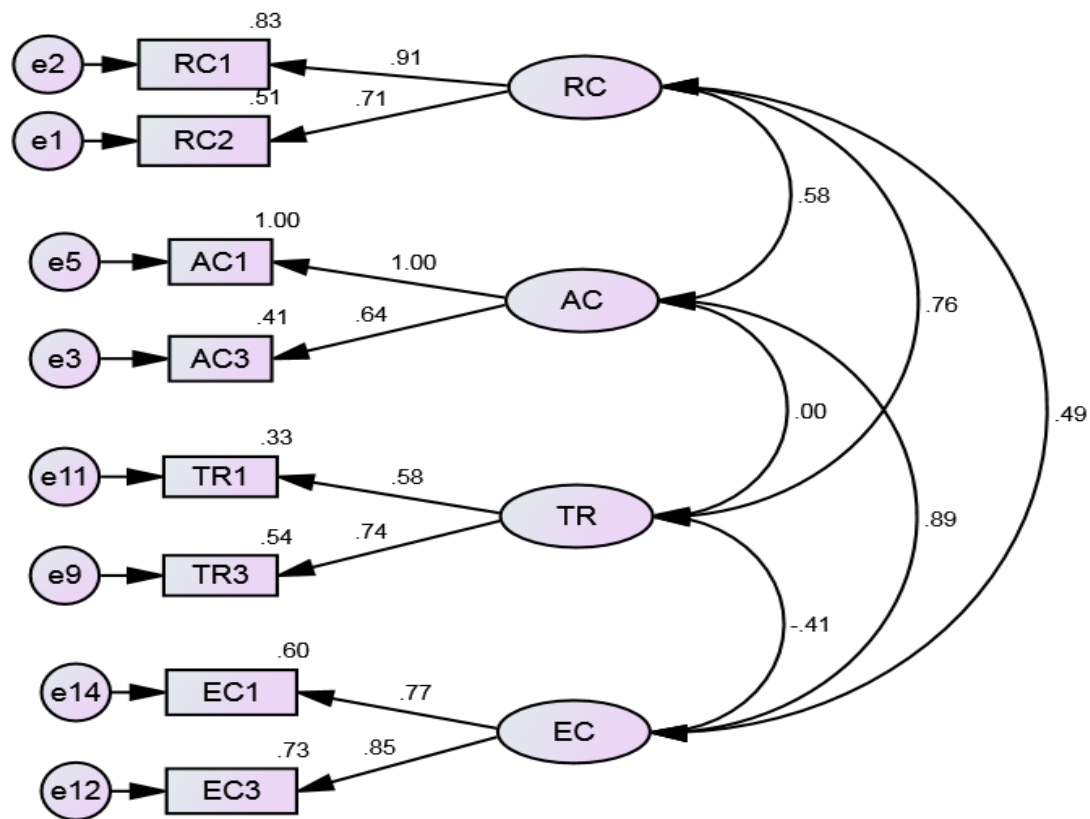


Table 6.22: Shared Variance

Shared Variance								
Construct	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	EC	RC	AC	TR
EC	0.796	0.661	0.797	0.380	0.813			
RC	0.875	0.791	0.726	0.407	0.469	0.890		
AC	0.816	0.698	0.797	0.358	0.893	0.524	0.835	
TR	0.669	0.530	0.726	0.283	-0.348	0.852	0.052	0.728

Source: Analysis output

Table 6.23: Assessment of normality (Group number 1)

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	Kurtosis	c.r.
Q26	3.000	5.000	-.628	-3.591	-.622	-1.777
Q28	3.000	5.000	-.563	-3.216	-.657	-1.879
Q23	3.000	5.000	-.588	-3.358	-.770	-2.199
Q25	3.000	5.000	-.391	-2.233	-.691	-1.976
Q15	3.000	5.000	-.855	-4.886	-.486	-1.389
Q17	1.000	5.000	-1.580	-9.029	4.729	13.513
Q12	4.000	5.000	-1.063	-6.077	-.870	-2.485
Q13	4.000	5.000	-2.166	-12.380	2.691	7.691
Multivariate					17.105	9.466

Source: Analysis Output

Regarding the test of discriminate validity, the Average Variable Estimate (AVE) recorded by the second order latent variables ranges from 0.53 to 0.79, above the validity threshold of 0.50, which shows an acceptable convergent validity of the measuring scales (Hair et al., 2006). The square of the correlation between a construct and any other factor is higher than the AVE for each latent variable, which indicates adequate discriminant validity between the constructs (Chin, 1998).

6.5 Discussion of Findings

Social media is an asset for firms who use it in absorbing knowledge. From the findings, most fashion designers use the documentative application to recognize knowledge and those who use the communicative applications to assimilate knowledge are in the majority. YouTube, for instance, is mostly used by fashion designers to acquire knowledge.

From literature, research has concentrated on communicative applications of Web 2.0 technologies not concentrating on other applications such as the documentative which this study has been able to cover (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012; Chua & Banerjee, 2013).

Statistics from Alexa.com depicts that traffic on social media sites especially Facebook is on the rise. Other findings from this study confirm this assertion that social media usage is on the rise. According to the findings of this study, most fashion firms in Ghana use social media intensively on a daily basis to acquire knowledge.

From the findings of this study, it can be argued that fashion designers do not intensively use social media to assimilate knowledge as proposed by Zahra and George (2007). Thus, assimilation of knowledge when absorbing new knowledge does not play an inevitable role in absorbing new external knowledge.

Most fashion firms use social media to communicate with their customers, suppliers, fashion bloggers, and fashion enthusiasts. This they do very intensively to acquire knowledge. The knowledge they acquire through these means may include but not limited to fashion trends, consumer taste and preferences, existing prices, orders from customers, supplier lists, comments and suggestions among others.

There is also a positive relationship between the Transformation Capacity and the Exploitation Capacity of fashion firms in Ghana. Thus knowledge acquired when transformed is mostly used by these fashion houses to develop new ideas and designs.

The findings further suggest that most Fashion designers in Ghana use social media to research and acquire knowledge which informs future designs. However, they do not prevent their employees from using social media to transmit scientific and technological knowledge.

In addition, the findings suggest that, these fashion designers acquire knowledge from both internal (among employees), for instance through Whats app and external sources (from suppliers, customers, fashion enthusiasts and other fashion designers), through for instance, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whats app among others.

6.6 Case Findings⁸

6.6.1 Case One: Aya Morrison's Fashion House

Aya Morrison is a popular fashion house in Ghana which has being in operation since 2008. It ranks among the top 20 fashion firms in the 'Ghana Business Directory for Fashion Designers'. The focus of the firm includes creativity in designs, satisfaction of customers, profitability and unique designs. This focus has resulted in the popularity of the firm in recent years.

The firm has a branch in Accra, with four departments (Design, Marketing, Sales and Distribution) and close to 12 employees. Creativity in this firm's business is depicted in their designs. The firm's collections include clothes, bags (handbags, purses, back packs), necklaces, hats, slippers, brassieres, ties, belts, and beachwear. Uniqueness is seen in these collections. The bags, necklaces, hats, slippers, brassieres, ties, belts and beachwear (swimming costume

Figure 6.4 Images from Aya Morrison's Fashion House

Source: Google.com

for ladies) are designed with African print cloth. The African print swimming costumes and other beachwear are the first of its kind because it is only produced by Aya Morrison fashion house in Ghana. The clothing line of this firm is mostly for females. Clothes for males are customized upon request and specifications of male customers.

Social media web applications used by Aya Morrison include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google Plus, Printrest, Flickr, YouTube, Blog and Tumblr. The firm has been using Facebook and Twitter since 2008. They use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter on a daily basis. These social media web applications are used in the company for marketing, publicity and communication with customers and other business partners. Aya Morrison fashion house has had 30% of its customers from the social media.

The firm uses social media to recognize, acquire, assimilate, transform and exploit knowledge. Feedback from customers regarding styles they prefer most is gathered through social media.

Also, knowledge about customer demands or requests are gathered through social media which informs future designs manufactured and made available in the market.

With the help of social media, marketing, publicity and communication has been made effective. The company is rubbing shoulders with other competitors (other fashion firms) who also use social media in their business. Some of the competitors of the firm are Christie Brown, Duaba Serwaa and Ajepomaa Galerie. The firm's turnover in 2012 was GHC 30,000.

Miss Aya Morrison is the CEO of Aya Morrison fashion house. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and has been steering the affairs of the firm since its establishment in 2012. She provided key feedback on the issue of using social media for OL. When asked whether her organization acquires knowledge concerning designs from other fashion designers to come up with her own designs from the social media, this was her response:

"...I don't believe fashion designers should derive their inspiration for designing from the designs of other fashion designers through the social media. To me that is so wrong."[CEO, Aya Morrison Fashion House]

This statement implies that some fashion designers however derive their designs from online especially from the designs of other fashion designers through social media platforms (display of collection of fashion houses online). When asked how the firm derives its designs she replied:

"... fashion designers can draw inspiration from the things around them like nature to come up with their own designs. That is not to say that the design might not look like that of another designer, there might be some resemblance but it should be an idea coming from the designer and not from another designer's work" [CEO, Aya Morrison Fashion House].

When asked whether they share designs as workers internally on social media applications, she stated emphatically that:

“...we do not communicate design patents through social media web applications for instance Facebook, ooh no. What if somebody gets a hold of it and steals the idea?” [CEO, Aya Morrison Fashion House]

What the workers of Aya Morrison fashion firms mostly do is to communicate on phone and sometimes through Whatsapp but not through Facebook. However, when designs are ready for the market, then they can be displayed on Facebook.

When I asked if they use blogs for internal communication, she retorted:

“...we blog sometimes but we have not blogged in a very long time” [CEO, Aya Morrison Fashion House]

I also asked her how she measures the impact of her designs against her competitors and customer satisfaction. She answered by saying:

“I get to know the impact of my designs against that of my competitors through word of mouth of my customers and I get to know the specifications of customers and their level of satisfaction with the designs we come up with through feedback on Facebook”.

Table 6.22: Summary of Aya Morrison’s Fashion Firm’s Social Media Web Applications, Tools and Applications

Application	Tools	Web Application (websites)
Communicative	Social Networking Blogs Instant Messaging	Facebook, Blogger, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram Whats app
Interactive	RSS	Facebook, Pinterest, Google plus
Generative	Virtual Learning Worlds	Flickr, YouTube, Tumblr

Source: Author’s construct

6.6.2 Case Two: Inka Accessories

Inka Accessories is a Ghanaian fashion house, which was set up in the year 2008 with one branch in Accra the capital city of Ghana. The company is a sole designer of jewelry and these beads are acquired both internally (in Ghana) and externally (in foreign countries or mostly in other African countries). The firm uses Facebook and YouTube social media web applications to transact business. However, Facebook is mostly used by the company to display pictures of products to customers because it has a wider network, enhancing the marketing capabilities of the firm. Feedback from customers on the styles of beads are derived from Facebook.

Figure 6.5 Images from Inka Accessories

Source: Google.com

The firm works with fashion bloggers to answer the enquiries of clients about Inka Accessories. Deductively, this company uses social media to gather customer requirements thus, acquire and assimilate knowledge on customer demands. This knowledge is further transformed and exploited into future designs tailor- made to meet customer demands.

The company trains people in bead making and has a staff strength of 5 people. The firm's turnover in 2010 was GHC 18,000. The outstanding distinct department in the company is the Marketing department since all the other functions are performed collectively. Some of the competitors of Inka Accessories are Akila and Sheba.

Miss Irene Armah is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Inka Accessories. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Publishing. She stressed that her fashion house has benefited immensely from social media specifically Facebook:

"...my firm gets information from Facebook (fashionista.gh) on fashion trends, customer demands and specification as well as interacting with colleague fashion designers on fashion trends." [CEO, Inka Accessories]

This statement depicts that fashion designers acquire information from social media and use that knowledge to create trendy designs, thus translating that external knowledge into business applications. She also added that

“... I use Facebook mainly for marketing and publicity purposes. Facebook has really helped us in getting the majority of our customers.” Through Facebook, people get to hear of the firm and later become long term clients.

When asked how she derives her designs, she opined:

“... through research and through interaction with other fashion designers to get an idea of what is in vogue” [CEO, Inka Accessories].

This depicts that fashion designers in Ghana use knowledge from the social media to undertake research before coming up with designs that are trendy enough in order to have a ready market for these products.

“I use Facebook because it has a wider network”. This was in reply to the question of why Facebook is the main social media web application used by her firm.

Table 6.24: Summary of Inka Accessories' Social Media Web Applications, Tools & Applications

Application	Tools	Web Application (websites)
Communicative	Social Networking	Facebook Blogger YouTube
Interactive	RSS	Facebook
Generative	Virtual Learning Worlds	YouTube

Source: **Author's construct**

From the above discussions, it can be deduced that fashion designers who use social media derive a number of benefits ranging from marketing, publicity, increased customer size, knowledge of fashion trends, knowledge of customer demand and networking opportunities; as well as access to information to undertake research.

The lessons from the aforementioned fashion houses demonstrate that social media supports organizational learning; and organizational learning through social media comes with the benefits of feedback which informs designers on the preferences of customers. This knowledge is further translated into the look and feel of prospective designs.

Additionally, fashion firms which use social media in learning stand a greater chance of making higher profits than fashion firms which do not use social media. Social media presents the advantage of a wider network across the globe, leading to a larger market size and the likelihood of gaining increased number of customers.

It can be further deduced that some social media web applications are constantly used by more fashion houses than other web applications possibility due to its wider network, accessibility, ease of use and its interactive feature. It can be concluded that a firm's degree of use of a social media application determines the level of benefit it will derive from that application, tool or web application.

6.7 Discussion of Findings

From the case studies, it can be deduced that ideas for designs can be derived from social media. Another source of ideas for designs could be the designer's own mind as well as inspiration from nature.

Hong et al. (2013) studied blogs as a tool for learning which seems to be unpopular among fashion designers in Ghana. However, some Ghanaian fashion designers use blogs to communicate internally (with employees) as well as externally (with customers and suppliers). Trending ideas are communicated by designers through this social media platform.

Findings from this study also depicts that Whatsapp technology which falls under the instant messaging category of the social media tool is also used mostly by fashion designers for internal communication and sharing of design patents but not through other social media platforms like Facebook to avoid theft of designs. However, social media applications such as Facebook is an ideal application for marketing.

Some popular social media web applications include Facebook and YouTube, which has also been studied by most researchers (Vuori & Okkonen, 2012; He et al., 2013; Bochenek & Blili, 2013; Chua & Banerjee, 2013). Twitter is also popular among Fashion designers. Facebook is popular for marketing and publicity.

From the findings of the study, Whatsapp is the emerging Web 2.0 technology that is gaining popularity and dominance among fashion designers in Ghana today. The assertion is that it is convenient and easily accessible.

Arguably, the findings of the study also suggests that Facebook is popular among Ghanaian fashion designers for the reasons of its wider network coverage, accessibility and convenience of use. Vuori & Okkonen (2012) carried out a study on social media considering Facebook as one of the popular social media applications.

6.8 Comparison of Case Studies

Table 6.25 Comparative Table of Case Studies

CASE STUDIES	SOCIAL MEDIA WEB APPLICATION	FREQUENCY OF USE	FASHION INFORMATION	HOW IT IS USED	WHY IT IS NOT USED TO ASSIMILATE KNOWLEDGE
Inka Accessories	Facebook	Daily	Pictures of styles	Communication	Acquired knowledge is mostly transformed and exploited
	YouTube	Daily	Fashion Events	Research	
Aya Morrison Fashion House	Facebook	Daily	Customer Feedback	Communication	Acquired knowledge is mostly transformed and exploited
	YouTube	Daily	Fashion Events	Research	
	Instagram	Often	Fashion Trends	Research	
	Twitter	Daily	People & Styles	Communication	
	Google Plus	Often	Styles	Research	
	Pinterest	Often	Fashion ideas	Communication	
	Flickr	Often	Styles	Communication	
	Tumblr	Often	Fashion ideas	Research	
	Whats app	Daily	Fashion ideas	Communication	
	Blogger	Sometimes	Fashion ideas	Communication	

Source: Author's Construct

From Table 6.25, Facebook and YouTube are the most popular web applications used by the two fashion firms. These web applications are used on a daily basis for communication and

research. Inka accessories uses just two social media web applications in its business whereas Aya Morrison fashion firm uses more than two social media web applications. The reason why these fashion houses don not use social media to intensively assimilate knowledge is due to the fact that acquired knowledge is mostly transformed into suitable forms and exploited (communicated and translated into business ideas) that moves the business forward. The other web application used by Aya Morrison which is not used by Inka Accessories include: Pinterest, Tumblr, Flickr, Blogger, Google plus, Twitter, Instagram and Whats app. And these social media web applications are either used on a daily basis, often or not often (sometimes). Whats app although a Web 2.0 technology, it is used in this study as an instant messaging technology. In terms of how these applications are used in the acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation of knowledge is through research and communication.

6.10 Chapter Summary

This section discussed the findings of the study, tested discriminate validity, the results of tested hypothesis, assessed the normality of the test, the variance of the results, and the goodness of fit of the indices, the latent variables and the final measurement model.

Regarding the latent variables, the construct Assimilation Capacity (AC) had factor loadings below the recommended threshold of 0.70 and was dropped completely. The constructs which measure absorption of knowledge are therefore recognition, acquisition, transformation and exploitation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Introduction

This study examined the use of social media for organizational learning in the Ghanaian fashion industry. To this end, these research questions were formulated:

1. What are the forms of learning for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
2. What are the sources of learning for firms in the Ghanaian fashion industry?
3. How does social media support organizational learning in fashion firms in Ghana?

ACT therefore appropriately helps answer these research questions. The constructs of the ACT are ideal for gathering the needed information on fashion designers and their usage of social media to absorb knowledge. Knowledge on recognition, acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation of new external knowledge among Ghanaian fashion designers is thereby attained.

7.2 Summary of the Research Findings

The findings of the study are in three divisions: first, the findings on the forms of knowledge that aid learning in the Ghanaian fashion industry; second, the sources of knowledge that aid learning in the Ghanaian fashion industry; and third, how social media supports organizational learning in the Ghanaian fashion industry. A discussion of the findings is provided in the three subsections below.

7.3 Nature of Absorptive Capacity

It was discovered that most fashion firms in Ghana use social media to communicate with others (who could be customers, suppliers, fashion bloggers, fashion enthusiasts etc) very intensively to acquire knowledge. They also use social media to market designs as well as to acquire knowledge to create new designs. Acquiring knowledge through others or through market sources demonstrates the form of knowledge termed demand-pull postulated from the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT).

Interestingly, most fashion designers in Ghana do not prevent their employees from transmitting useful scientific and technological knowledge, which falls under a form of knowledge termed as science-push. The forms of knowledge for fashion firms in Ghana can therefore be classified as demand-pull and science-push as postulated by ACT.

Another finding was that the sources of knowledge predominantly used by fashion designers were both internal sources and external sources. The internal source predominantly being through research since most fashion firms in Ghana use social media to carry out research intensively and the knowledge (new styles, new designs, new fashion trends) is adapted by these fashion houses into new designs. The external sources of knowledge on the other hand were customarily borrowed or purchased knowledge. Fashion designers either borrow or purchase external knowledge and translate them into new business applications (new marketing strategies, new designs etc). This knowledge is disseminated to others (customers, suppliers) both internally and externally by means of social media.

Moreover, it was revealed that social networks are mostly used for acquiring new knowledge. Recognition capacity forms a part of PACAP; hence, it can be concluded that the type of social media that supports PACAP the most are social networks. Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Twitter, Podcasts and Flickr are social media tools that are used very intensively by fashion

firms to acquire knowledge. These web applications can be classified under social network type of social media web applications and these web applications are mostly used to acquire knowledge. Hence, it can be concluded that social networks support PACAP since acquisition capacity is an aspect of PACAP.

From the findings of the study, it can be stated that Ghanaian fashion designers also use social media to recognize, acquire, transform and exploit knowledge intensively. They poorly use social media to assimilate knowledge.

7.4 Critical Constructs of Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT)

In order to see the fitness of the conceptual model derived from ACT, with the objective of determining the factors critical to the absorption of knowledge, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis technique under Structural Equation Modeling was used; and cross tabulation was used to test the stipulated hypothesis.

The first conceptual model was built from ACT with 5 factors and 14 variables. The results of the measurement model validation under CFA indicated that Recognition Capacity (RC1), Acquisition Capacity (AC1, AC3), Transformation Capacity (TR1, TR2) and Exploitation Capacity (EC1, EC2) were the factors critical to the absorption of knowledge through social media in the fashion industry of Ghana. Other variables like AS1, AS2 AS3 (Assimilation Capacity factor), TR3 and EC3 were insignificant to the model; hence, were deleted from the final model.

Cross tabulations were used to test and validate the hypotheses proposed regarding the 5 factors of ACT (14 variables) and two (2) of the hypotheses were rejected whereas the rest (7) were accepted. The seven hypotheses supported were H2, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8 and H9 and two rejected were H1 and H3 with a p-value greater than the threshold of 0.05. Overall, the critical factors for measuring absorption of knowledge through social media in the Ghanaian fashion industry are Recognition, Acquisition, Transformation and Exploitation.

7.5 Limitations and Future Research

The study focused on fashion houses within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana; consequently, not covering fashion firms in other parts of Ghana. Thus, future studies should cover other areas of the country to provide a holistic understanding of the use of social media in organizational learning.

7.6 Implications for Research

In terms of research, this study will add up to existing studies on fashion designing (Pham, 2012), social media (Chua & Banerjee, 2013 ; Vuori & Okkonen, 2012) as well as add up to studies which use the Absorptive Capacity Theory as its theoretical Lens.

In relation to practice, the findings of this study will inform the decision of other firms or fashion designers who are not currently using social media in absorbing knowledge to decide to do so for the purposes of research and ease of communication, effective marketing and publicity both internally and externally and also reap the benefit of cutting down cost.

Regarding policy, policy makers in the fashion industry of Ghana can embrace the idea of social media adoption and usage by Ghanaian fashion houses, by explicitly stating and communicating its benefits to practice and research.

Table 7.1 Summary of the Quantitative Survey

Social Media Web Application	Fashion Information	Frequency of Use	How It is Used	Why It is not used intensively to Assimilate Knowledge
Facebook	Fashion Trends	Very intensively	Communication and marketing	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed
	Customer Demands			
YouTube	Fashion Trends & videos on events	Very intensively	Research	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge
Twitter	Fashion trends & ideas	Very intensively	Research & Marketing	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge
Blogger	Fashion ideas	Neutral	Communication	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge
Podcasts	Fashion ideas	Very intensively	Communication and research	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge
Flickr	Styles	Very intensively	Marketing	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge
MySpace	Fashion Trends	Very intensively	Marketing, communication & research	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge
E-portfolios	Fashion Trends	Intensively	Marketing, communication & research	Knowledge is mostly acquired and transformed without necessarily assimilating it before using that knowledge

From Table 7.1, it can be seen that social media web applications which are used very intensively include; Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Podcasts, Flickr and MySpace. E-portfolios,

are used intensively by Ghanaian fashion designers whereas bloggers are used semi-intensively. The information derived from these social media web applications by these fashion designers include styles, fashion trends and customer specifications.

7.7. Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data depict that, Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media web applications among Ghanaian fashion designers. WhatsApp is also an emerging instant messaging technology that is gaining popularity among fashion designers and this was discovered from the qualitative data.

MySpace and Podcasts though used intensively by Ghanaian fashion designers as derived from the quantitative data is not reflected in the qualitative data. E-portfolios are not used by the fashion firms used in the case studies, they are however used intensively by fashion designers used in the survey.

7.8 Chapter Summary

This section looked at the summary of the research findings, the nature of the Absorptive Capacity Theory, the Critical Constructs of the Theory, the limitations of the study and future research, and the implications of the study to research, policy and practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter analyzed existing literature on organizational learning and social media. The following were the aims of the review:

1. To review literature and analyse research on organizational learning and social media:
2. To understand organizational learning through social media by analysing and grouping conceptual approaches:
3. To group and analyse research studies and the methodologies used for the studies as well as evaluating evidences from these studies; and
4. To figure out pivotal gaps relating to the methodologies, concepts and issues discussed.

2.2.8 Classification of Organizational Learning and Social Media Research

In this chapter, we define OL as the process of acquiring knowledge, sharing that knowledge across the organization, adapting the knowledge, and enhancing organizational performance with that knowledge (Farr, 2000). The working definition of social media for this study include convivial networking accommodations, collaborative filtering, social bookmarking, gregarious search engines, file sharing and tagging, mashups, instant messaging, and online multi-player games (Bryer & Chen, 2010). Wiki, blogs, and convivial networking websites, such as Facebook are the most often mentioned types (Boulos & Wheeler, 2007; Vie, 2007).

Moving on from this definition, the study can give a brief overview of research classification in the literature on organizational learning and social media (see Appendix A):

- a) Issues that have been discussed in relation to organizational learning and social media include adoption of social media by organizations in learning, development of

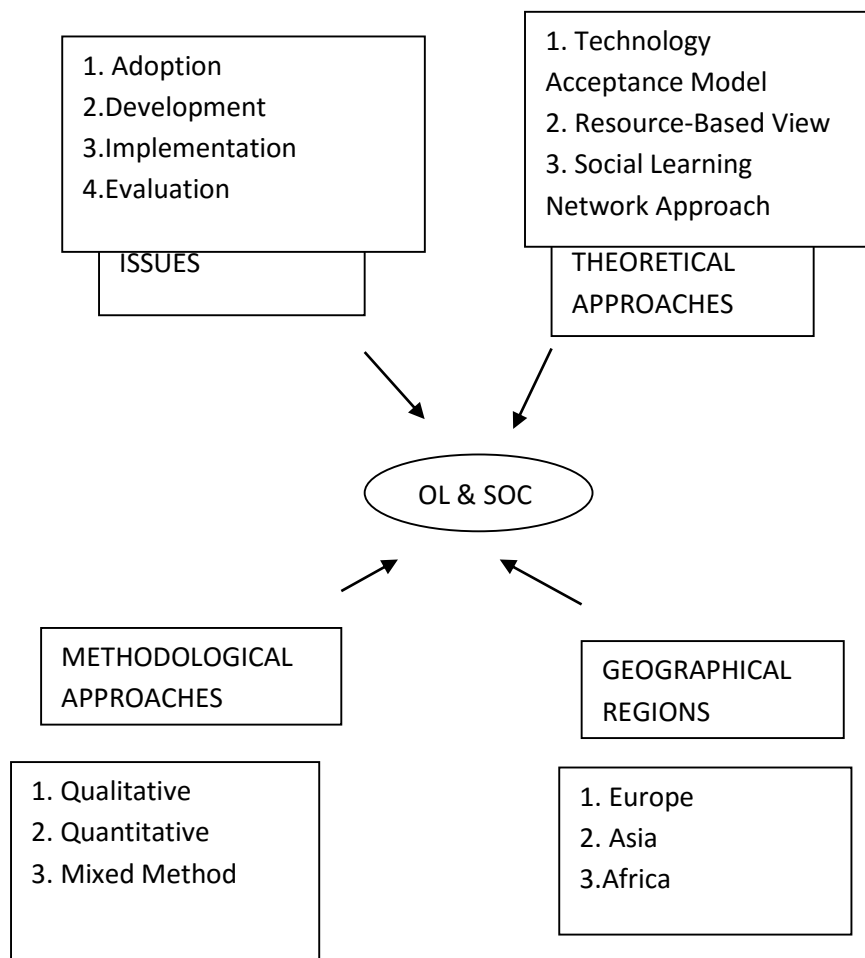
organizational learning through social media, implementation of organizational learning through social media and evaluation of organizational learning through social media. Much of the literature, especially the earlier literature, in the period under review is characterized by write ups on the adoption and motivation for OL through social media in organizations. Subsequently, a number of works have focused on advantages and benefits organizations stand to enjoy when they adopt social media in learning (Fajardo & Oppus, 2010). Hence, this study argues that works on OL adoption represent one of the enduring themes of OL and social media research.

b) The methodological approaches identified in the organizational learning and social media literature includes qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches. Evidence of this from the organizational learning and social media literature shows that two of the methodological approaches (i.e. qualitative and quantitative approaches) have been used extensively in organizational learning and social media research.

c) Furthermore, classification was done based on the geographical regions. Regions like Asia and Europe dominated with research works on OL and social media, whereas Africa was the least among the regions for research on organizational learning and social media.

d) Additionally, theories or frameworks used in the organizational learning and social media research within the years specified were classified. Models such as the Contingency Model, Emergency Management Model, Protection Motivation Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior were frequently used in various studies.

On the basis of the above discussion and with reference to previous works, the classification framework shown in Figure 2.1 is developed to guide the analysis in this chapter. In investigating each of the themes in Figure 2.1 and the issues identified under them, previous works on these themes were analyzed. For each of the issues, the study has identified and discussed the research that has been done on the issue. First, each one of the research themes is briefly explained and related issues identified.

Figure 2.2: Classification Framework

Source: **Author's Construct**

Figure 2.1 shows the themes discussed under ISDRP and the issues discussed under them.

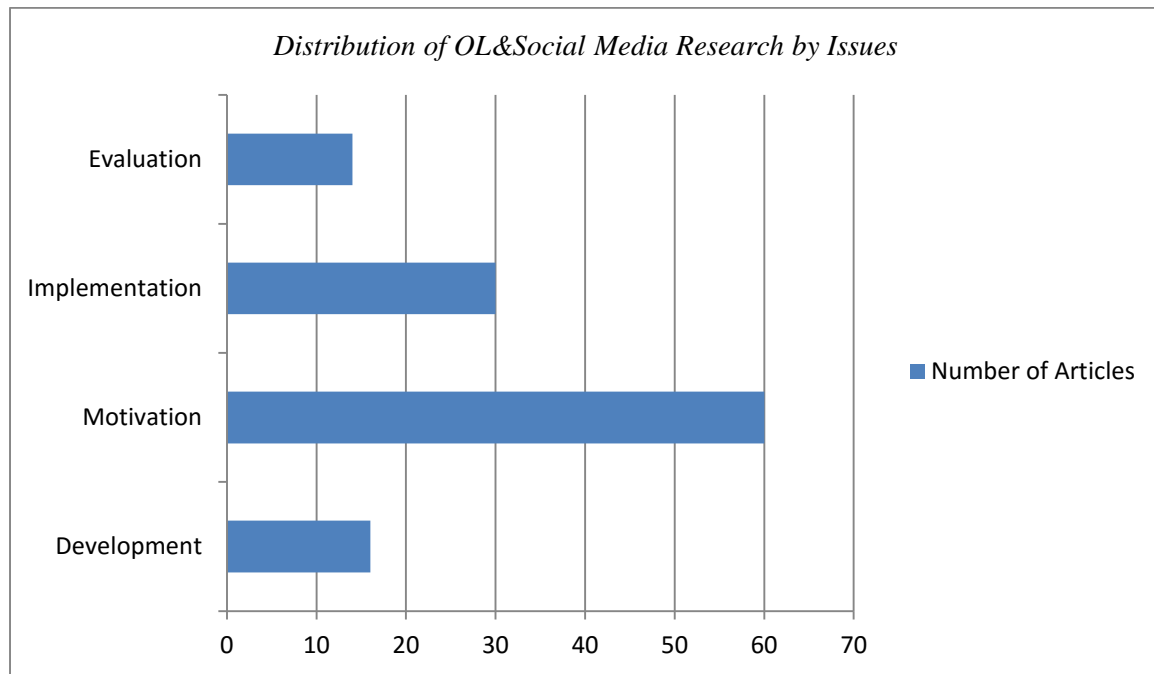
Figure 2.1 will guide the analysis in this chapter. The methodology for the literature review can be found in Appendix A.

2.3 Mapping Organizational Learning and Social Media Research: Issues and Evidence

A total of 120 articles from a spectrum of IS journals were classified according to the classification scheme developed from the literature review. The researcher begins the mapping of the previous research on OL by identifying the issues that have been discussed and

researched. From the literature, four issues were identified, namely: motivation/ adoption, development, implementation and evaluation of OL through social media. These are used as the initial classification schema.

Figure 2.3: Distribution of Organizational Learning and Social Media Research by Issues



Source: **Author's Construct**

From figure 2.2, the findings classify previous research on OL and social media in four sub-groups. A good number of the literature reviewed indicates a dominance of the issue of motivation/adoption of OL and social media, which suggests an expected outcome from organizations which learn through the social media. Motivation as an issue represents 50 percent (60 articles) of articles reviewed; followed by implementation (knowledge management) which represents 25 percent (30 articles) of articles reviewed; then development (applications) representing 13.33 percent (16 articles); and evaluation (potential and constraints) representing 11.66 percent (14 articles) of articles reviewed. The dominance of literature on the adoption of OL and social media by organizations depicts the stage the issue

in question has gone through or is going through regarding OL and social media. A number of studies postulate that organizations are increasingly becoming aware of the need for organizational learning and how to make OL possible electronically (Cegarra-Navarro, 2005; Ettinger et al., 2006; Falconer, 2006). Consequently, most of these organizations have adopted OL.

2.3.1 Adoption/Motivation for Organizational Learning and Social Media

This section analyzes literature that discusses the adoption of OL and social media. From the literature reviewed, this theme is the most dominant theme constituting 50% of the articles reviewed. This issue further looks at what organizations expect as the outcome of organizational learning electronically. Today, most firms have seen the need to learn which they do predominantly electronically, but not necessarily through only social media platforms. Cegarra-Navarro (2005) is of the view that existing knowledge obstructs the assimilation of new knowledge; hence, upon receiving feedback, the institutional order must be done away with in order to make room for intuitive insights. This learning and feedback process, according to Lind et al. (2000), can be done via technological systems; however, the role of these systems in enhancing learning has not been evaluated. Igonor (2002) explains e-learning as electronic technology enabling learning. According to Moffett and McAdam (2003), e-learning implies learning offered through a number of technologies which comprises the internet, electronic distribution technologies, and basic PC technology. Quite a number of the studies reviewed (Lind et al., 2002; Gorelick, 2005; Falconer, 2006) demonstrate the attainment of organizational learning through e-learning and not specifically through social media applications.

Research has observed that the usage of e-learning in its different structures can be excessive to an organization because of the generally low appropriation rate among clients. To be sure, late research has demonstrated that most e-learning projects show higher disappointment rates when contrasted with customary teacher driven courses (Zaharias & Poylymenakou, 2009). There are numerous reasons that can clarify the low reception rates, for example, importance of substance, solace level with innovation, and accessibility of specialized backing. Given the expanding dependence and accessibility of innovation in the present day world, furthermore the potential economies accessible to organizations, it is indispensable to comprehend the elements that may prompt an expanded appropriation of e-learning in an authoritative connection with social media use in OL inclusive (Sawang et al., 2013). It ought to be noted, in any case, that hypothetically and essentially, a measure of accomplishment of e-learning usage is the appropriation of e-learning. This segment gives an important writing audit recognizing key variables identified with fulfillment and future reception of e-learning.

A key region of exploration in regards to fruitful e-learning adoption whether through social media or identifies with the singular attributes of the learner. A few studies have connected different learner qualities with e-learning fulfillment or disappointment (e.g. Sturgill et al., 1999; Piccoli et al., 2001; Hong, 2002; Sun et al., 2008). A typical learner trademark found crosswise over studies identifies with learners' suitability toward oneself. The idea of suitability toward oneself is derived from Bandura's (1982) social learning hypothesis, which clarifies that viability desires can influence characteristic inspiration for performing an undertaking. In an e-learning setting, trust in one's capacity to finish an undertaking utilizing innovation is characterized as innovative adequacy (McDonald & Siegall, 1992; Compeau & Higgins, 1995). Observational studies in e-learning have showed that learners with better PC aptitudes have reported larger amounts of fulfillment with electronic courses (Hong, 2002). Adequacy

likewise assumes a noteworthy part in assenting conduct. Case in point, PC adequacy has been discovered to be a huge indicator of appropriation of advances, for example, the web (Dholakia & Kshetri, 2004), online data frameworks (Yi & Hwang, 2003), and e-duty recording frameworks (Wang, 2003). Ampleness toward oneself and mechanical sufficiency toward oneself specifically, is a vital calculate figuring out which representatives will adequately embrace an innovation (Bandura, 1997). This factor can be either an enabler or inhibitor of organizational learning.

A second central point that can be connected to effective e-learning execution identifies with the qualities of e-learning itself. Two key parts of e-learning qualities include the realness and the many-sided quality of the e-learning. To begin with, genuine exercises are characterized as assignments that are pertinent and valuable to this present reality, what's more give learners a situation to recognize the inquiries and exercises that are intelligently identified with the situation (Bransford et al., 1990; Jonassen, 1991). A second e-learning trademark that is imperative to the adoption of e-learning is many-sided quality (complexity). Case in point, e-discovering that is seen as moderately hard to comprehend and utilization can prompt learners' separation and disappointment (Tornatzky & Klein, 1982; Davis, 1989). Despite the fact that unpredictability does not liken with the converse of usability, the expansive group of exploration identifying with development dissemination bolsters the nearby relationship in the middle of unpredictability and convenience, and if one of these components was discovered to be huge, the other would be additionally noteworthy (Keil et al., 1995; Rogers, 1995). Constantly, innovation learners expect and want the consumption of negligible exertion in managing another innovation (Robinson et al., 2005).

One interesting phenomenon is that arguably social media is easier to use, mostly deals with real life issues and does not require a higher degree of efficacy. This suggestively makes social media ideal for facilitating organizational learning. There are, however, a number of studies on the adoption of OL and social media (Jen-te Yang, 2007; Godkin, 2010; Schultz et al., 2012). Jen-te Yang (2007) has studied the impact of organizational learning through social media on organizational effectiveness. According to Godkin (2010), organizational learning has the capacity to facilitate organizational change. To buttress this statement, Schultz et al. (2012) also mentions that organizational learning can influence the outcome performance of an organization. Moreover, these studies are tailored towards the benefits of using social media in organizational learning.

Table 2.2: Dominant Theories on Motivation/Adoption of Organizational Learning and Social Media

Reference		Sub-theme (60 Articles, 50%)					Theory/Conceptual Framework	
OO	OC	OPE	COM	PER	SMM	PFT	CKST	
					X			X
						X	X	
					X			
					X			X
						X		X
					X			
				X				
				X				X
							X	X

Total No. of Articles	20	10	15	15
In Sub-theme	(33.3%)	(16.7%)	(25 %)	(25%)

Key: OO; Organizational Opportunity; OC: Organizational Change; OPE: Organizational Performance & Effectiveness; COM: Communication; PER: Perspective; SMM: Social Media Model; PFT: Performance Feedback Theory; CKST: Complexity & Knowledge Sharing Theory

Source: Author's Construct

2.3.2 Development of Organizational Learning and Social Media

This session refers to literature and research that discusses the development of OL in organizations and the use of information technology in OL. The idea of OL was initially presented by March and Simon (1958) in their initial dealings with associations. From that point forward it has turned into an inexorably acknowledged hypothesis, despite the fact that the street to acknowledgement has not been straight, with researchers for example, Argyris and Schon (1996) remarking that:

As late as 1978 when our Organizational Learning was initially distributed . . . decently regarded researchers . . . considered the thought befuddling and, in a few ways, hostile.

Whilst there are evident troubles with the thought of organizations inclining as an entirety, there is clear proof that learning does occur in organizations amid dynamic collaborations amongst people, bunches and the organization itself (Sole & Edmonson, 2002; Chan, 2003). The profits of viable OL are decently perceived regarding enhanced advancement (Chanal, 2004), attaining to and maintaining change (Boyce, 2003) and in creating capability (Drejer, 2000). Herschel et al. (2001) argue that, for tacit knowledge to be usable, it must first of all be

made explicit. Johannessen et al. (2001) contend that "the part of IT in making this happen is somewhat constrained" and that the powerful utilization of IT is limited to the exchange of express, modifiable learning and subsequently can't be utilized to change over unsaid information to unequivocal learning. However, evidence from existing IT literature demonstrates that IT can transfer tacit knowledge.

A study by Cheah and Abidi (2001) provides an IT technique for communicating tacit knowledge in the healthcare sector, in the quest to debunk the tendency for organizations in this sector to be "information-rich but knowledge-poor". In view of the recommendation that implicit information is best inspired by inciting activity and use of that learning, their IT procedure depends after offering human services experts a scope of issues that oblige them to apply their insight and abilities, quite a bit of which is experiential and implicit, so as to explain them. The issues, offered as situations, are exhibited as a progression of electronic structures. The learning that is connected to these issues is then changed over ("solidified") into express learning. Arguably, IT facilitates OL since it equally helps in transferring implicit knowledge and in the codification of implicit knowledge within a said organization. Organizations which adopt OL can do so effectively through the use of IT (specifically web 2.0 applications which encapsulates social media).

Table 2.3: Dominant Theories within the “Development” Theme

Key: SNL: Social Networked Learning; CBL: Cloud-based Learning; CS: Crowd Sourcing; TAM: Technology Acceptance Model; RBV: Resource-Based View; SLNA: Social Learning Network Approach; FCC: Framework for the Creation of Communities

Reference	Sub-theme			Theory or Conceptual		
	SNL	CBL	CS	TAM	RBV	SLNA
(16 Articles, 13.3%)						
FCC						
Bartlett-Bragg (2009)	X				X	
Fernando(2010)	X		XX			
Greenhow(2011)	X					
Zywica et al.(2011)	X					
Munguatosha et al. (2011)	X			X		
Sparta (2012)	X					
Vuori (2012)			X		X	
Ratten (2012)		X				
Lee et al. (2011)	X			X		
Total No. of Articles in	10	3	3			
Sub-theme	(62.5%)	(18.75%)	(18.75%)			

Source: **Author’s Construct**

2.3.3 Implementation of Organizational Learning and Social Media

This session pertains to literature on the implementation of OL and social media. Today, most organizations have become increasingly dependent on information technology (IT) and

information systems (IS) to enhance their business processes (Tiwana, 2012). Research shows that information can be transmitted, exchanged and shared between suppliers, vendors and buyers in an industry value chain in real time for business transactions being made possible through communication networks like the internet (Boland et al., 2007). The product development team captures more customer requirements and develops better products to meet specific customer needs within the manufacturing environment through computer-aided design technologies (Lee & Berente, 2012). The examples mentioned depict that, in the present network economy, IT or IS is being harnessed as a key enabler for an organization's operations. Organizations stand the chance of enjoying several benefits if OL is implemented (Boateng et al., 2009) especially if facilitated by IT (in particular Web 2.0 applications).

Liao and Wu (2009) and Hassan (2008) are of the view that organizational learning is phenomenal for organizational growth and survival. Hence, based on reviewed literature, this study believes that organizations that promote workplace families would experience better business performance with organizational learning capability serving as a mediator. A study by Ho et al. (2013) on SMEs demonstrate that the smaller size of employees in SMEs enhances a closer relationship among employees in the firm, thereby generating a sense of belonging and togetherness which would further lead to workplace families. According to them, workplace families have the potential of enabling employee willingness to learn, participation in decision-making, and increase the level of courage to experiment and to try new things resulting in newer or innovative products or processes that would accumulate more income for their firms.

OL however, can be hindered or facilitated by factors such as employee expertise, organizational culture, availability of technological facilities, and managerial support (Ismail, 2001; Argote et al., 2003; Ho, 2008; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012). Wilkesmann and

Wilkesmann (2011) are of the view that every person can be simultaneously a novice and an expert in different fields of knowledge. In their study, they made a link between the two sides of knowledge transfer (obtaining and providing knowledge), represented by the interplay between experts and novices, the possibilities of technical support, and individual and organizational outcomes.

Table 2.4: Dominant Theories within the “Implementation” Theme

Reference	Sub-theme (30 articles, 25%)			Theory/ Conceptual Framework			
	KMC	ELP	LP	KMF	LF	SECI	LPT
Wang (2009)		X					X
Wilkesmann and Wilkesmann (2011)			X	X			
Philips and Philips (2012)			X				
Chua and Banerjee (2013)	X			X			
Kupers (2008)			X		X		
Wagner et al. (2014)	X					X	
Total No. of Articles	12	8	10				
In Sub-theme	(40%)	(26.7%)	(33.3%)				

Key: KMC: Knowledge Management Creation; ELP: E-Learning Participation; LP: Learning Processes; KMF: Knowledge Management Framework; LF: Learning Framework; SECI: Socialization, Externalization, Combination & Internalization; LPT: Learning Participation Theory.

Source: **Author’s Construct**

2.3.4 Evaluation of Organizational Learning and Social Media

The last theme to be reviewed is the “evaluation theme”. This theme involves measuring the effectiveness of OL, expected benefits as well as hindrances to the implementation and success of the use of social media in organizational learning.

The research offers an aide and structure to start on an OL voyage. It is based on Parsons (1968) general hypothesis of social activity that has execution and learning components. The essential precept of this hypothesis is that social framework changes happen through the learning process and are identified with social examples and fundamental suspicions. This study compares Schwandt's meaning of organizational learning and his element hierarchical learning mode with Parson's general hypothesis of execution.

Schwandt (1993) characterized OL as: *“An arrangement of activities, performing artists, images and methods that empowers an organization to change data into esteemed information which thusly expands its long-run versatile limit”*

Schwandt's model accentuates the connections and coordination of sub- systems, which permits the association to increment its learning limit. The four elements of Schwandt's learning framework and Parson's (1968) equivalents are as follows:

(1) The ecological interface sub-system, Parson's adjustment, which is the locus of data admission and yield and obliges instruments to secure, channel, and remove data.

(2) The activity reflection sub-system, Parson's objective fulfillment, which makes esteemed learning from new data, the objective of the learning framework.

(3) Dissemination/dissemination or structuration sub-system, Parson's joining, which exchanges data and learning inside the association, hence coordinating the learning framework. Scattering procedures are formal methodology and strategies that are intentionally coordinated. Dispersion procedures are casual correspondence, gossipy tit bits, and formal correspondence. Electronic systems are key to this sub-system for virtual groups.

(4) The importance and memory sub-system, Parson's culture or example support, which keeps up systems that secure criteria for judgment, determination, center, and control of the hierarchical learning framework. Convictions, values, suspicions, and ancient rarities – the social segments of the association – are included in this sub-system.

The non-existence of these sub-systems will serve as a limitation to OL; however, the existence of these sub-systems will enhance the existence and evaluation of OL. The effectiveness of OL largely depends on these factors.

According to Yoon and Johnson (2008), the advancement of Internet communication technologies, distributed work groups have great potential for remote collaboration and use of collective knowledge. Bell (2012) studies Yammer, a private Enterprise Social Networking sites which offers a service more tailored to specific business requirements: this social media network increases organizational communication by mirroring the methods that have become so embedded in the lives of many.

Table 2.5: Dominant Theories within the “Evaluation” Theme

Reference	Sub-theme (14 articles, 11.6%)			Theory/ Conceptual Framework		
	BOS	GL	IM LDP	GLF	MAP	
Dikova et al. (2010)					X	X
Wilson et al. (2007)				X		X
Bell (2012)				X		X
Total No. of Articles	4	4	6			
In Sub-theme	(28.5714%) (28.5714%) (42.8571%)					

Key; BOS: Benefits of Social Media; GL: Group Learning; IM: Implementation; LDP: Learning & Development Perspective; GLF: Group Learning Framework; MAP: Merger & Acquisition Process.

Source: **Author’s Construct**

2.4 Conceptual Approaches and Methodological Issues in Organizational Learning Research

This section classifies and analyses the methodological approaches and issues identified in the reviewed articles, being further used to detect the gaps in the issues and methodologies used in these studies.

The methods used for the research studies reviewed are classified as the following:

Table 2.6: Mapping of Articles Surveyed According to Issues and Methodological Approach Taken

Method/Issue	Adoption	Development	Implementation	Evaluation
Qualitative	26	5	12	6
Mixed- methods	14	5	5	4
Quantitative	18	5	9	4
No evidently defined methodological Approach	2	1	4	0

Source: **Author's Construct**

Table 2.5 provides the classification of issues used in the reviewed literature as well as the methodologies used in each of these studies. In the adoption papers reviewed, 26 adopted qualitative, 14 adopted the mixed methods approach and 18, the quantitative approach; with 2 of the adoption papers having no evidently defined methodologically approach.

Five (5) of the papers on the development of OL and social media used the qualitative methodology; 5 the mixed method approach; whereas 5 adopted the quantitative approach and 1 paper having no defined methodological approach used. Also, 12 of the reviewed papers on implementation of OL and social media used the qualitative method, 5 used the mixed-method, 9 used the quantitative method while 4 had no evidently defined methodological approach used. Lastly, 6 of the evaluation papers reviewed were qualitative papers, 4 adopted the mixed method approach whereas 4 adopted the quantitative approach.

2.4.1 Methodological Issues

In terms of research method, the qualitative study and mixed method approaches are by far the most widely used methods (75.2%) in organizational learning and social media research by researchers. The dominance of the qualitative method of study depicts the entrenchment of the interpretive research paradigm in organizational learning and social media research. This is shown in the following table.

Table 2.7: Methodological Approaches

Method	No. of Articles
Quantitative	28
Qualitative	49
Mixed method	36
No defined methodological approach evident	7

Source: **Author's Construct**

The methodological approaches used in the reviewed literature and the number of articles and the methodologies used in these articles were figured out. A total of 120 articles were surveyed, out of which 49 were qualitative studies, 36 employing the mixed method approach, 28 being quantitative studies and 7 of the reviewed studies being intensely descriptive with no evidently defined methodological approach. On the other hand, the non-attendance of characterized strategies for enquiry did not so much take away from the astuteness of the reported cases which were frequently educated by experienced experts or by those nearly included in OL.

The majority of the articles used the qualitative research approach (Gorelick, 2005; Ettinger et al., 2006; Falconer, 2006). Ettinger et al. (2006) based their study on 29 research case studies drawing on the experiences of a number of companies that had experienced difficulties in

taking the e-learning route. Falconer (2006) synthesized the evidence in organizational learning, information technology (IT) and e-learning research domains, and further challenges the view that tacit information cannot be effectively changed or disseminated by technological means. These studies however, are representative of exploratory or work in progress.

The quantitative methodological approach is also used in quite a number of the reviewed studies. Sawang et al. (2013) undertook an online survey and found that e-learning characteristics can hinder or ameliorate the relationship users have and their intention to adopt e-learning in the future. Cegarra-Navarro (2005) in his paper, reviewed literature to identify relevant measures and presents a structural equation model, which is validated through an empirical investigation of 151 SMEs in the Spanish technological and information systems sector. He discovered that, despite the fact that most companies have connections to the internet, managers have limited knowledge of the liable business benefits of technology systems for their clients, individuals and teams, and disregard the problem of human integration. An issue linked with the methodologies used in the articles reviewed was to do with the absence of longitudinal studies. Even though this study is not a longitudinal one, future research could undertake the same study at a different point in time to verify either dynamism or statics in the absorption of knowledge among fashion designers in Ghana.

2.4.2 Conceptual Approaches

Table 2.8: Distribution of Articles by Research Frameworks

Theoretical Frameworks	Number of Articles
Group-1 Adoption of OL & Social Media	
Performance Feedback Theory	10
Complexity and Knowledge Sharing Theory	22
Social Media Model	28
Group-2 Development of OL & Social Media	
Technology Acceptance Model	6
Resource-based View	4
Social Learning Network Approach	3
Group-3 Implementation of OL & Social Media	
Knowledge Management Framework	5
Learning Framework	7
SECI Model	16
Learning Participation Theory	2
Group-4 Evaluation of OL & Social Media	
Learning and Development Perspective	8
Group Learning Framework	3
Merger and Acquisition Process	3

Source: **Author's Construct**

From Table 2.8, Group 1 comprises research frameworks which were used in the reviewed articles which discusses the issue of OL and social media adoption. The majority of these studies (28 articles) used a Social Media Model. This implies that OL and social media research

on adoption has a conceptual understanding as its basis, which enhances easier development of conceptual frameworks and the future use of similar models in future research in different sectors or industries. Group 2 captures theoretical frameworks employed in studies on the development of OL and social media. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is the theory mostly used in such studies. TAM was used in 6 articles. Group 3 also consists of theoretical frameworks used in studies on the implementation of OL and social media. A number of theories have been used in undertaking such studies, however the dominant theory used in these studies is the SECI Model (17 articles). Research employing the SECI Model would contribute substantial knowledge theoretically in OL and social media research. Group 4 consists of conceptual frameworks and perspectives, and not necessarily providing a theoretical basis for the studies on the evaluation of OL and social media research. The dominant framework is the Learning and Development Perspective (8 articles). Notably however is the fact that the articles in some of the groups used models derived from literature without a specific underpinning theory.

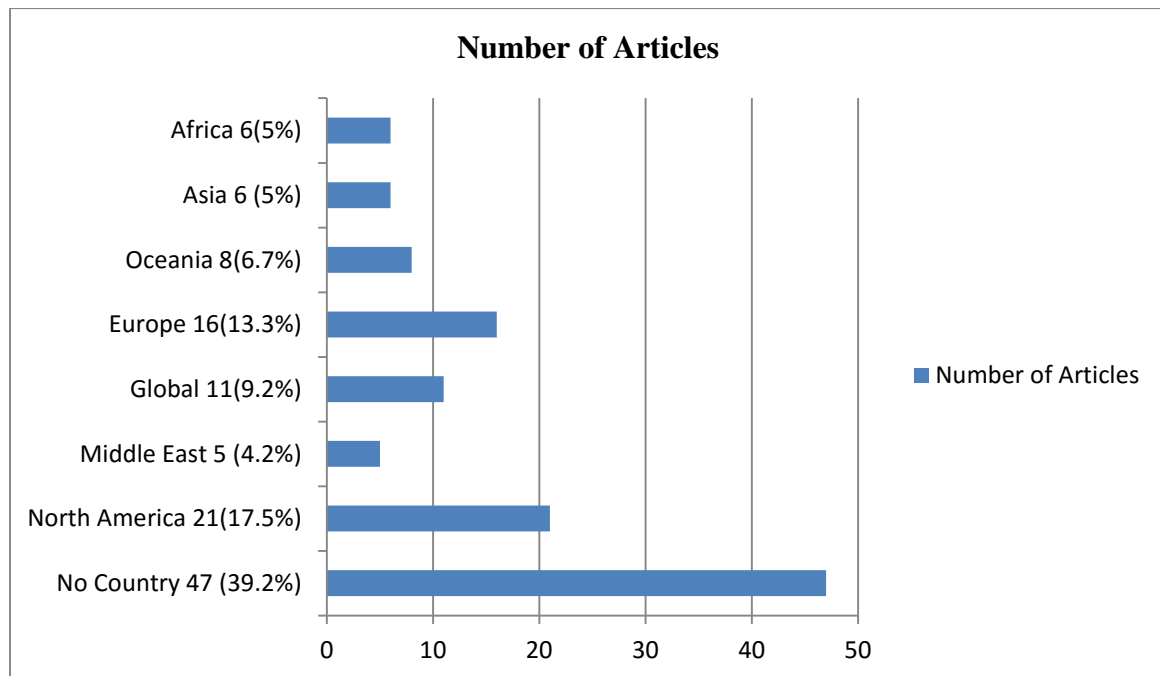
This research studied organizational learning through social media using the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) as its theoretical lens. Arguably, it is evident from Table 2.4 that the ACT has not been used much in IS research. Hence, employing it in this study will immensely contribute to literature. A detailed explanation of ACT is provided in the next chapter.

2.4.3 Geographical issues

Geographical focus explores the geographical distribution of current research in organizational learning and social media use. The distribution on organizational learning and social media literature reviewed in this study fairly indicates that most of the present research (published in journals reviewed in this study) are not concentrated in a specific region (No country, 44%) and the remaining publications are concentrated in North America (18%), Europe (14%) and

Oceania. The less represented regions are Asia (4%), Africa (4%) and Middle East (2%), as shown in figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Distribution of Organizational Learning and Social Media Research by Geographical Region



Source: **Author's Construct**

Within these regions, differences do occur with respect to the number of articles per country. Two countries, USA and Colombia tend to dominate the organizational learning articles in North America. Particularly for USA, these articles focus largely on evaluation of OL and social media use (Lee et al., 2011; Greenhow, 2011; Schultz et al., 2012). Reviewed articles from the country Colombia looks at development of OL and social media (Reyes, 2012). These studies consist of a place for superstitious learning (Schwab, 2007). According to Zywicki et al. (2011), an issue of concern has to do with the design of Web 2.0 technologies, in terms of its user friendliness (thus, access and use) which is largely dependent on the level of literacy and learning opportunities and experiences of the user within these spaces.

In Europe, the dominant countries in literature are UK (Yeomans, 2008; Mistry, 2009) and Germany (Wilkesmann & Wilkesmann, 201; Linke & Zerfass, 2012). Lysova et al. (2014) is of the view that more learning is done online today. There is a large stream of information transmitted through the social media at any point in time, every day. As a result, many companies have adopted the “70-20-10” model. In line with this model, 70 percent of learning happens on the job, when solving problems and performing tasks: this is called informal learning. Asking colleagues, following colleagues on twitter, reviewing performance, observing others, working with mentors, or receiving (360 degree) feedback can be termed as social learning (20 percent). Classroom training, e-learning modules or reading books constitutes the remaining 10 percent of learning (formal learning).

Global studies refer to studies that cover two or more countries. For instance, Vuori (2012) studied social media use and crowd sourcing in Nokia, a multinational communications company with branches in more than 160 countries.

The least represented regions are Asia and Africa with 6 articles each covering the regions (representing 10% for both regions of articles reviewed). In Africa, one study identified was undertaken in Tanzania (Lwoga, 2012) which is a meso level study; and the other study is on developing countries in Africa (Munguatosha et al., 2011) which is a macro level study.

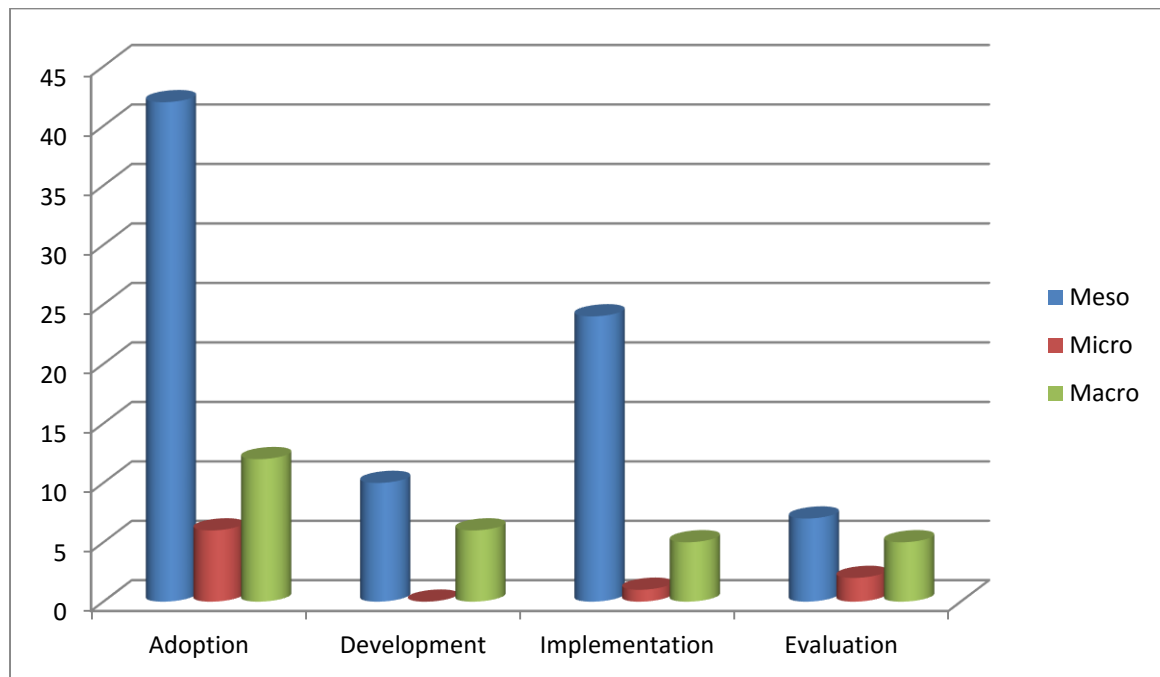
The speculative reasons why Africa is least represented in OL and social media research could be the level of political instability in most countries in the region. The issue of poor collaboration of the private sector and the academics in tertiary institutions in Africa, which influences the quest for research, is another reason. These tertiary establishments may offer a couple of projects inside the IS research because of the absence of imperative human and specialized assets to offer such projects. This generally confines the space for considerable IS

exploration. Indeed, even where such imperative assets exist, the political and monetary requirements identified with the financing of tertiary organizations in Africa influence the allotment of stipends to bolster such research exercises.

2.4.4 Level of Analysis

This section discusses the level of analysis employed in the study. Meso level studies focus on OL in a particular organization. Macro level studies cover OL in organizations in a country or a number of countries. Micro level studies concentrate on individual learning which is encapsulated in the focus of this review.

Figure 2.5: Distribution of Organizational Learning and Social Media Research by Level of Analysis

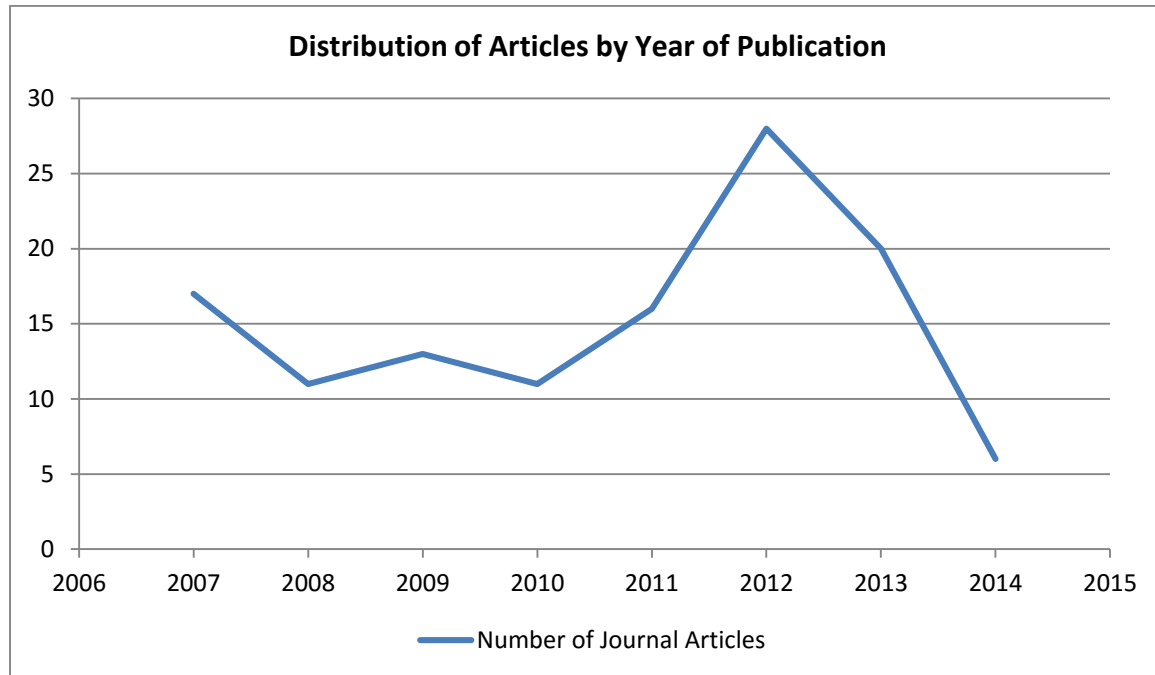


Source: **Author's Construct**

The distribution from Figure 2.5 on literature on OL and social media research reviewed indicated that the majority of the research was conducted at the meso or organizational level followed by the macro level whereas little research on OL and social media has been carried out at the micro level. OL implies organizational learning, so in the attempt to study how organizations learn, the focus is likely to be organizational rather than individualistic even though some studies look at how individuals in organizations learn (Greenhow, 2011). The focus is to understand how the individuals in an organization collectively learn as a body (Gorelick, 2005). This informs the results in Figure 2.5.

2.4.5 Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication

Figure 2.6: Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication



Source: Author's Construct

Figure 2.6 shows the distribution of articles by year from 2007-2014. The overall trend is that of a strong growth from 2011 to 2013. The phenomenon of organizational learning is gaining scholarly attention, hence the growth in research in this area. The highest number of articles were published in 2012 (28 articles) followed by 2013 (20 articles). There was a decline in 2008, thus dropping from 17 in 2007 to 11 in 2008. There was an increase in 2009 to 13 and a further decline to 11 in 2010. After 2010, the number of publication increased from 11 to 16 in 2011, then from 16 to 28 in 2012 and a decline in 2013 to 20. Publications in 2014 declined to 6. The expectation is that the number of articles will increase by the end of 2014. This distribution depicts a rise and fall in publication, however there is a positive growth rate in publications on OL and social media research.

2.4.6 Distribution of Articles in Top IS Journals

Reflecting the general recognition of organizational learning and social media use among the top IS journals, it can be noted that there is no obvious skew towards the eight top IS journals. Generally, it can be deduced that authors are spreading their research dissemination relatively evenly between organizational learning and social media and the top IS journals. The analysis thus indicates that the top six preferred journals to publish organizational learning and social media research are Development and Learning in Organizations; The Learning Organization; Journal of Knowledge Management; Journal of Enterprise Information Management; Organization Science; and On the Horizon. Together these six journals comprise 50% of the publications.

Table 2.9: Distribution of Articles in Top Information Systems Journals

Top IS Journals	IS Journals focused on Organizational Learning And Social Media Articles	Number of Articles
MIS Quarterly		3(2%)
Journal of Knowledge Management		10(8%)
Journal of Information Development and Learning in Organizations		3(2%)
The Learning Organization		14(12%)
Journal of Enterprise Information Management		13(12%)
Organization Science		8(6%)
On the Horizon		8(6%)
Human Resource Management International Digest		3(6%)
Kybernetes		2(4%)
Educational Technology, Research& Development		4(4%)
Journal of Information and Knowledge Management		4(4%)
Total		76(63%)
Other Journals	44(37%)	
Total of All Journals		120(100%)

Source: **Author's Construct**

2.5 Research Gaps and Future Research Directions

The concluding section of this review identifies research trends as well as gaps relating to the issues, evidence, theoretical and methodological approaches discussed and employed in the reviewed studies.

2.5.1 Gaps in Issues and Evidence

As shown through the writing surveyed, there exists sufficient examination of the appropriation and inspiration for OL (Bunning, 2007; Colleoni, 2013; Sawang et al., 2013); in fact, much more than any of the issues that were distinguished in the inspected writing. There exist a little number of articles that confirm the improvement, execution and assessment of OL. The small number of articles concentrating on the advancement, usage and assessment of OL, notwithstanding, is a larger exploration hole.

Regarding adoption (“application”) as a theme, most of the applications used in the literature reviewed concentrated largely on the communicative and collaborative publishing applications. Arguably, Fernando (2010) in his research studied social networks emphatically considering the communicative and collaborative publishing applications. The tools he used in his study included; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Wikis. These tools can be classified as Communicative and Collaborative Publishing Applications (Richardson, 2007); not giving attention to how organizations use these applications to learn and to achieve organizational goals. This study attempts to fill that void in literature.

In the study by Cegarra-Navarro (2005), organizations can communicate through technology systems and get feedback through these systems. He calls for further research using different items such as social media to study the level of communication and learning that can go on using that different item and this is precisely what this study seeks to do.

In addition, Ettinger et al. (2006) studied how organizations can adopt and develop e-learning by adapting the organizational culture to suit e-learning processes as well as the implementation of appropriate training for employees to facilitate usability of e-learning facilities. They recommend that future research analyse the influence of e-learning on organizations which this study seeks to do.

Furthermore, in the research paper by Falconer (2006), he presented and added to the contention that e-learning advances and procedures can assume a critical part in reassuring and encouraging authoritative adapting by changing implicit learning into express information and diffusing it all through the organization. He points out this area is under-researched hence the need for more research in this area. This study seeks to examine the impact of OL through social media on an organization, considering the transfer of both implicit and explicit knowledge and not only implicit knowledge.

Lastly, Sawang et al. (2013) studied the characteristics for user adoption of e-learning in a railway station. Using an online survey they questioned users on their use and likelihood of adoption of e-learning. According to them, the cross-sectional design of the study and its focus on measuring intention to adopt as opposed to actual adoption are both limitations. Future research using longitudinal design and research employing a time lag design measuring actual adoption as well as intention are recommended. This study seeks to measure actual adoption of OL through social media; and ACT is more appropriate for this study as compared to the SECI model. This is because ACT looks at the absorption of new knowledge from an external source, and social media practically is external to an organization whereas the SECI model concentrates on knowledge management within an organization not taking into account external factors.

2.5.2 Gaps in Conceptual Approach

From the literature reviewed, most of the authors undertook their study based on perspectives (Yeomans, 2008; Yoon & Johnson, 2008; Bell, 2012; Zhao et al., 2013). For instance, Yeomans (2008) studied communication from the Strategic Communication Management Perspective. In the same vein, Zhao et al. (2013) researched perceived affordance necessitated by

organizational learning through social media from the Socio-material Perspective. The Complex Adaptive System Perspective was used by Yoon and Johnson (2008) to study Virtual Learning teams.

On the other hand, some of the reviewed articles were written with theories (Lee et al., 2011; Zywica et al., 2011; Wilkesmann & Wilkesmann, 2011; Vuori, 2012; Reyes, 2012). Lee et al. (2011), for example, used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Reyes (2012) used the Complexity Theory to study Communication Management. Equally, Vuori (2012) studied crowd sourcing using the Resource-based View as its theoretical lens. Similarly, Zywica et al. (2011) studied Networking by using the DYN curricular model. A Social Media Value Added Model was used by Roblek et al. (2013) to study organizational change necessitated by the use of social media in organizational learning. Wilkesmann and Wilkesmann (2011) used a parcel model of knowledge transfer to study knowledge transfer.

Arguably, the Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) was not used in any of these studies, which gives this research a degree of originality in terms of its theoretical approach.

2.5.3 Gaps in Methodological Approach

The most apparent gap in the use of methods was the lack of studies using the mixed-method approach. The qualitative studies tend to dominate this area of study. Qualitative studies constituted 40.83 percent (49 articles) of articles reviewed. Few research (28 articles constituting 23.33 percent) has used the mixed method approach and 30.83 percent (37 articles) the qualitative approach. However, for the purpose of this study the mixed method approach would be used in order to answer the research questions and achieve the purpose of the study which is to fill the void in literature regarding methodical approach used in this area of study.

2.5.4 Conclusions and Pointers for Future Research

This review indicates a rapid expansion of research into e-learning, and as yet there has been little study on OL and social media using the mixed method approach. This paper is intended to fill that gap by using the qualitative coupled with quantitative analysis (mixed method) to improve their reliability through more carefully constructed samples. It is hoped that the studies reported here are representative of the field of research, and the interpretation of those studies by the authors accurately reflects the research conducted.

In terms of conceptual approaches to research study, scholarly attention should be directed towards using other theories to study organizational learning and social media. An example of such theories which, can be used for future studies is the Absorptive Capacity Theory. Even though other dominant theories such as TAM and the SECI model have been used in most studies this research seeks a different turn to enhance originality and attain research objectives.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate:

- Literature on issues concerning the adoption of OL is relatively higher than other issues identified such as development, implementation and evaluation of OL through social media;
- Literature on e-learning is higher but these do not necessarily concentrate on a specific e-learning tool such as social media;
- Literature on other sectors such as the railway, education, and technology industry is higher as compared to the fashion industry; and
- There is a call for more research on e-learning and narrowing down to a specific e-learning technology with the focus of actual adoption of this e-learning technology across the organization to enhance OL.

Geographically, future research should be directed towards other regions since little research has been carried out in Africa. This might instigate interesting research since different cultures have a different influence on the way people learn. Moreover, the learning characteristics of organizations in developed countries differ from those in developing countries.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

NB; *Social media refers to online services that enhance interactivity socially among users through web-based publishing techniques that are greatly accessible and scalable. Organizational learning refers to the process of acquiring knowledge and social media has the potential of facilitating organizational learning.*

The bearer of this questionnaire is a student of the University of Ghana Business School pursuing an MPhil in Management Information Systems (MIS). She is conducting a survey on an absorptive capacity perspective of organizational learning through social media: a case of the Ghanaian fashion industry. Please kindly respond to the following questions for the student. Your response will be duly appreciated and treated with utmost confidentiality

Background information

Name of Company.....

Your position in the organization.....

Which department are you in? Please specify.....

Age

Less than 18

18-25

25 -30

31-35

36-40

Greater than 40

Education: circle one option a. High School b. Bachelor's degree c. Master's Degree d.
PHD e. Professional degree f. Others, please specify

How many workers are in the company? a. less than 3 b. 3- 10 c. 10- 17 d. 17- 25 e.

Greater than 25

How long has the company been in existence?

0 to 5 years

5 to 10 years

10 to 15 years

15 to 20 years

20 years or longer

Turnover in the year 2010 (in Ghana Cedis) was*Please choose one of the options*

Less than 3,000

3000 - 10,000

10,000 – 100,000

100,000 or more

Social media

How often do you use the social media for your access to external knowledge and information?

Less than annually

Annually

Semi-annually

Bi-monthly

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

Indicate to what extent you make use of the social media, knowledge and information for the following issues:

1 = very poorly 2= semi- poorly 3 = poorly 4= very intensively 5= semi- intensively and 6 = intensively

Designing (generative purposes)

Marketing (communication)

Interaction

Internally

Eternally

Both

Documentation

Collaboration

Internally

Externally

Both

How often do you have contact with each (category of) social media tool(s) and application (s) for your access to external knowledge and information? *Please choose the option that best approaches the actual situation.*

1= Less than annually 2= Annually 3= Semi-Annually 4=Bi- monthly 5= monthly 6= Weekly 7 = Daily

Social Media Application (s)	Tools	Web Application (websites)
Communicative	Social networking, Blogs Audio blogs Video blogs IM tools Podcasts	Facebook Blogger YouTube MySpace Twitter, BumpIn

	Web-conferencing	Vidipedia
Collaborative Publishing	Authoring Editing tools, Virtual communities of practice (VCOPs), Wikis	Wikipedia Vidipedia Necipia Wordpress
Documentative (Content Management)	Blogs Video blogs E-portfolios	SeeNReport, Calameo Vartti.fi Joomla
Generative	Mashups VCOPs Virtual Learning Worlds (VLWs),	Second Life, Flickr YouTube
Interactive	Social bookmarking RSS VCOPs VLWs	Stumble Upon, Delicious, Facebook, MySpace

Recognition capacity

Indicate to what extent you make use of the social media, knowledge and information for the following issues:

1 = very poorly 2 = poorly 3= Neutral 4= intensively and 5 = Very intensively

We identify knowledge through social media

We identify the need for knowledge through social media.....

Which of these social media applications do you normally use to do the above?

Application	Indicate Option
Communicative Application	
Interactive Application	
Generative Application	
Documentative Application	
Collaborative Publishing Application	

Acquisition capacity

This factor measures your organization's ability to use social media applications to acquire knowledge.

Indicate to what extent you make use of social media, knowledge and information for the following issues:

1 = very poorly 2 = poorly 3= Neutral 4= intensively and 5 = Very intensively

We communicate and interact with others (customers, fashion bloggers, other fashion designers etc) to acquire knowledge through social media about innovations in fashion

.....

We collect information about developments in fashion designing through our social media platforms to undertake research.....

We allocate a lot of time to regulating and using our social media websites to develop our technological competences internally

Which of these social media Web Application(s) / tool(s) do you mostly use to achieve the above?

Tool/Web Application	Indicate Option
Facebook	
Blogger	
YouTube	
MySpace	
Twitter	
Podcasts	
E-portfolios	
Flickr	

Assimilation capacity

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree

Our firm is always among the first to recognize shifts in technical possibilities.....

Our firm has sufficient skills to use knowledge from the social media to recognize shift in market competition, deliberate on how changes in the market can be used to make changes to the business in our firm.....

Our workers are very skillful in detecting new possibilities to serve new customers.....

Please indicate which social media application best support the above actions

Application(s)	Indicate Option
Communicative Application	
Interactive Application	
Generative Application	
Documentative Application	
Collaborative Publishing Application	

Transformation capacity

Indicate to what extent you make use of the social media, knowledge and information for the following issues:

1 = very poorly 2 = poorly 3= Neutral 4= intensively and 5 = Very intensively

We recognize useful new external knowledge, record, improve information flow through the social media and store newly acquired knowledge for future reference to foster communication between members of the firm.....

We prevent all employees voluntarily transmitting useful scientific and technological knowledge acquired to others

We coordinate and integrate all phases of the Research & Development process with its interrelations with the functional tasks of production, marketing and translate external information into adaptations.....

Exploitation capacity

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree

We translate external information directly into new business applications.....

Application of external information to our business contributes to our profitability.....

We have sufficient skills to convert external information into product and process patents leading to profitability.....

Profitability

Please indicate how much higher or lower you are performing based on each of these statements

	Much Lower	Lower	Neutral	Higher	Much Higher
How do you estimate your profitability compared to your competitors?	1	2	3	4	5
Compared to our most important competitors our turnover is:	1	2	3	4	5
Compared to our most important competitors our growth percentage is:	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU

Appendix C: List of Some References

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