

**THE GENDERED FACE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG TEENAGERS IN  
GHANA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ST. MARY'S AND PRESBYTERIAN  
BOYS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is entirely my work conducted at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo. All references made in this research have been duly acknowledged in the reference section of the work.

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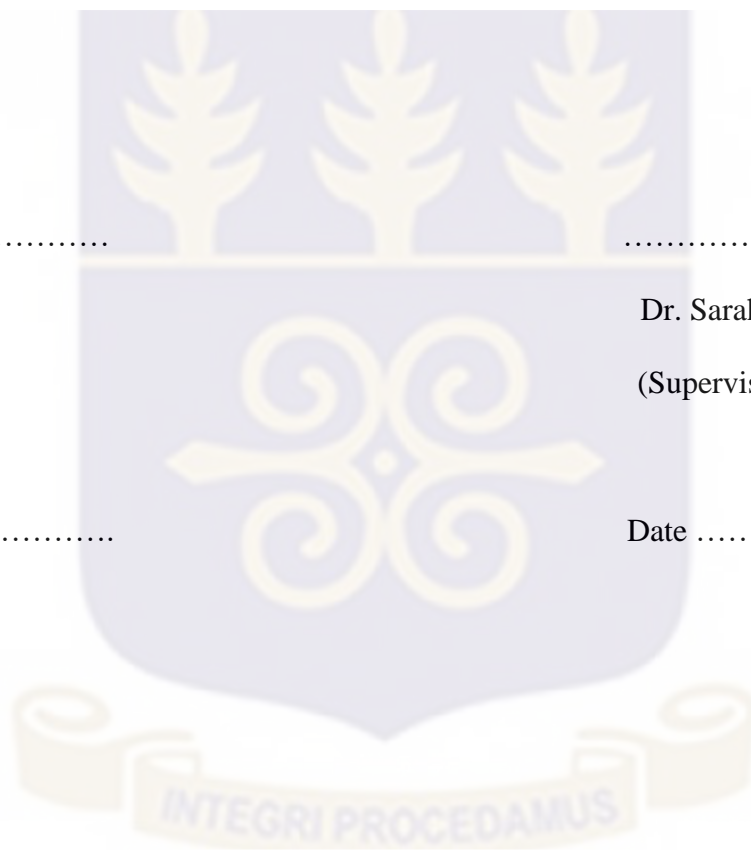
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## ABSTRACT

The study observed the use of social media sites amongst male and female teenagers residing in Ghana, with the focus on students from St. Mary's and Presbyterian (Presec) Boys Senior High Schools. The study specifically sought to identify the type, number of social networking sites both genders use and the frequency of their engagement with these sites. The study also tried to find out the intersection between gender, personality traits and usage of social networking sites. It also attempted to identify specific purposes and motivations both genders got in using a particular social media site(s). Two hundred students from both schools were surveyed. The scholarship was underpinned by the Uses and Gratifications as well as the Social Role theories. SPSS (The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22) was adopted as the software to analyze the research data. Findings of the study revealed gender differences in Ghanaian teenagers' social networking sites usage based on type, number and frequency of usage. The study found gender differences in their motivation and gratification obtained from using these sites. Nonetheless, the study revealed that, though the differences existed, the gender gap in social media usage by teenagers in Ghana is not significant. The study did not discover any significant connection between both sexes' personality traits and the frequency or extent of social media use.

## **DEDICATION**

I devote this dissertation to God Almighty for giving me the strength and Grace to finish this task successfully.

The dissertation is also devoted to my family and loved ones for the immense help in diverse ways and to all those who in one way or the other have contributed to my education.



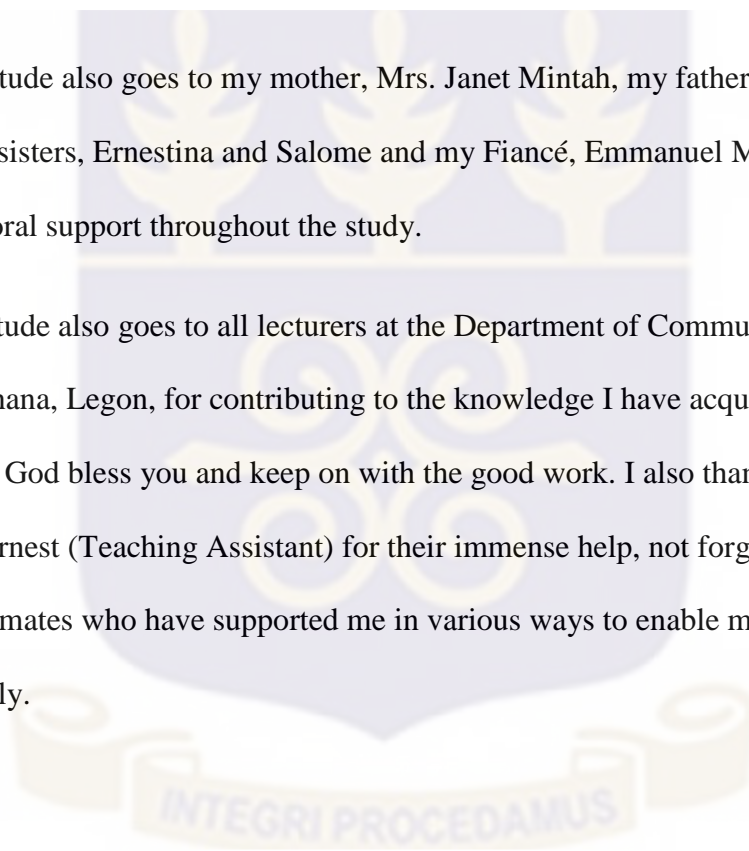
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**TABLE OF CONTENT**

Contents	Page
DECLARATION .....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATION .....	viii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.0 Background to the Study.....	1
Teenagers and Social Media Use .....	2
Gender and Social Media use.....	3
Social Media, Gender and Personality Traits.....	4
1.1 Statement of Problem.....	5
1.2 Objectives of the study.....	7
1.3 Research Questions.....	8
1.4 Significance of the Study .....	8
1.5 Definition of Terms.....	9
1.6 Chapter Summary .....	10
CHAPTER TWO .....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	11
2.0. Theoretical Framework.....	11
➤ The Uses and Gratifications Theory .....	11
➤ The Social Role Theory .....	14
2.1. Literature Review.....	15
CHAPTER THREE .....	26
METHODOLOGY .....	26
3.0. Introduction.....	26
3.1 Research Approach and Method .....	26
3.2. Population, Sample and Sampling Technique. ....	27
3.3. Data Gathering and Instrumentation.....	28
3.4 Data Analysis.....	28

3.5 Chapter Summary .....	29
CHAPTER FOUR.....	30
RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	30
4.0: Introduction.....	30
4.1: Demographics of Respondents .....	30
4.2: Teenagers' Engagement with Social Networking Sites by Gender .....	31
4.3: Gender and Purpose of Social Media Use .....	37
4.4: Gender and Social media Gratifications .....	39
4.5: Relationship between Gender, Personality Traits and Social Media Usage.....	40
CHAPTER FIVE .....	47
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	47
5.0: Introduction.....	47
5.1: Type and Number of Social Media Accounts.....	47
5.2: Frequency of Social Media Use.....	49
5.3: Personality Traits and Frequency of Social Media Use .....	50
5.4: Purpose of Social Media Use.....	51
5.5. Gratifications Obtained from Using SNSs.....	54
5.6: Conclusion .....	55
5.7: Limitations of the Study .....	56
5.8: Recommendations.....	57
5.9: Chapter Summary .....	58
REFERENCES .....	59
APPENDIX A.....	66
QUESTIONNAIRE .....	66

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Age and Gender	30
<b>Table 2A:</b> Gender and Social Media Accounts	31
<b>Table 2B:</b> Gender and SNS Preferred Most Often	33
<b>Table 2C:</b> Gender and Times Spent Using Social Media Accounts Daily	34
<b>Table 2D:</b> Gender and how Often SNSs Are Used	35
<b>Table 3:</b> Gender and Purpose of Social Media Use	37
<b>Table 4:</b> Gender and Social Media Gratifications	39
<b>Table 5:</b> Gender and Personality Traits	41
<b>Table 6:</b> Extraversion and Times Spent on Social Media by Gender	42
<b>Table 7:</b> Chi-Square Tests	43
<b>Table 8:</b> Openness to New Experience and Times Spent on Social Media by gender	44
<b>Table 9:</b> Chi-Square Tests	44
<b>Table 10:</b> Emotional Stability and Times Spent on Social Media by gender	45
<b>Table 11:</b> Chi-Square Test.	46

## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

**SN (s):** Social Network (s).

**SNS (s):** Social Network or Networking Site (s).



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the Study

Barlett-Brag (2006) defines social networking sites as, “a body of applications that augment group interaction and shared spaces for collaboration, social connection, and aggregate information exchanges in a web-based environment”. Kim et al. (2010) explains social networking sites as “internet-based services that allow individuals to create, share and seek content as well as to communicate and collaborate with each other”.

Advances in telecommunication technology, particularly the internet has paved the way for individuals to use these social network sites and for many across the world, these sites have played important roles in their everyday lives. Globally, individuals have various social networking sites including Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, and MySpace among others to form relations with other people. (Boyed & Ellison, 2007). Users believe that these sites allow them to present personal information like age, gender and location and interest to the known and like-minded people. (Boyed & Ellison,2007).

Different studies have revealed the various reasons why individuals use social networking sites. According to Stutzman (2006), social networking sites are used to pass time, learn about other people, maintain social relations, among others. Lockyer & Patterson (2008) stated that “social media users could share personal information on their profile page, connect with other users, upload, tag and share content they have created, link others to a variety of accessible content, initiate or join subsets of common interest groups”.

## **Teenagers and Social Media Use**

Globally, the adoption of technologies is higher in young adolescents than adults. According to Pempek, Yemolayera & Calvert (2009), “social network sites seem to be growing in popularity, rapidly, especially among young adults in this “information age”. Hence, the sites play an active role in younger adult’s daily lives (Lenhart, 2009).

Research by Kraut et al (1998) indicates that teenagers between ages 13 and 19 are described as the people who use the internet all the time. In addition, Prensky (2001) describes them as “digital natives.” This is because they were born when the computer and online activities were vibrant. In Turkey for example, young people between the ages of 16 to 24 years are seen as the group that use the internet most often. (Tulk, 2010). Likewise, people aged 15 and older were reported to be the most engaged internet users in Europe regarding the time they spend using internet sites and the content they consume. (ComScore, 2009).

Regarding the type of social media sites used, teens are always using the virtual world to communicate with one another through social media sites. The Pew Research Centre in 2015 conducted a study on American Teenagers’ social media use and realised that the vast majority of teens do not stick to one site, but test and use various sites. The study found that, the most predominant sites used by these teenagers are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and Google +.

Also, a study conducted by Statista.com revealed that, some of the popular social media sites used by teenagers and young adults in the United States as of February 2017 were Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Whatsapp among others. However, Snapchat is known to be the leading network with 79%.

Teenagers also have motives for using social network sites. According to Grant (2008) “teenagers and young adults use social networking sites as an extension of their personality to show their friends and the world who they are, what they care about and the people they are like-minded”.

Jones & Fox (2009) believe that, the internet has become part of everyday lives and how we use it depends on our personality. The scholars stated that people use social media sites mostly to connect to others. For example, “three-quarters of American adults have been online with even more teens (93%) reporting they do so and almost all of them say one of their primary reason for going online is for communication”.

### **Gender and Social Media use.**

Scholarships on both adults and teenagers’ use of social media have also observed the impact of gender on social media use. Fallows (2005) for example, reported that there were differences in the motivations derived and time spent by women and men who use the internet. Women, in general used the internet more for social interaction and maintaining relationship, while men spend most of their time online engaging in more tasks focused activities including news reading, getting facts, as well as making new relationships.

The International Journal of Indian Psychology published in December 2015 revealed that, teenage girls in the United States of America use blogs more than boys do. The journal explained that this was perhaps the first time that females were more active participants than males in internet use. Kirpatrick (2010) said that, “as social networking sites become more popular and, as the industry behind them seeks to become the primary infrastructure upon which information is transmitted, we may see an even higher increase in women online.”

The Indian Psychology article also stated that boys upload online video calls than girls do. The boys mostly play video games and visit websites such as YouTube. Girls on the other hand, share more videos and video chat more than boys do.

Muscanell & Guadagno (2012) stated that, men use social networking sites to form new relationships while women engage more in activities that enable maintenance of existing relationships. They also believe that women are using these sites more than men do. In addition, Bond (2009) argues that females disclose more about relationships with close members including family and friends on social media while men reveal more information related to entertainment issues.

Lenhart et al. (2010) observed that females are more likely than males to have a personal profile on Facebook, but males are more apt than females to sustain a personal profile on Linked in. Furthermore, women are more likely than men to use social networking sites (Tufekci, 2008). Moreover, Sheldon (2008) found that women were more likely to use social media to promote relationships with family and friends, to pass time, and for entertainment but men, are more likely to use the sites to meet new friends.

Also, Burke et al. (2010) argued that girls spend more time using social networking sites and are active users more than boys do.

### **Social Media, Gender and Personality Traits.**

Many scholars have also discussed the relationship between social media usage and personality traits. The “Big Five” model of personality traits propounded by Benet-Martinez & John (1998) has been widely used. The traits include: Openness to New Experiences,

Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Golbeck et al. (2011) believe that these traits come with their own attributes: Openness to New Experiences relates to people who are curious, intelligent and imaginative. Conscientiousness relates to people who have a responsibility toward achieving goals, organised and persevering. Agreeableness relates to those who are cooperative, helpful and nurturing and Neuroticism refers to emotionally reactive, anxious, insecure and sensitive people. Extraversion relates to the group that are sociable, amicable and assertive;

Researchers who have tackled gender and social media use have found that males and females belong to different patterns in the relationship between their personality factors and internet use. Male's social media use is not related to those who are emotionally unstable (neuroticism), lonely or those belonging to the trait of extraversion. However, females who are emotionally unstable prefer to use the Internet frequently to avoid being lonely and to belong to a group. (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003).

On the other hand, Correa et al. (2010) stated that extroverted males and females were likely to use social networking sites the more. They believe that men who are extroverts use social media more often and engage more in social interaction. On the other hand, extroverted and open to new experience women are more likely to participate in online social interactions.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

The introduction of digital devices such as the Internet, mobile phones, and social networking applications has allowed the society as a whole to embrace these new tools to change the way they communicate, coordinate their activities and organise social interactions. (Perez, 1983; Freeman & Louçà, 2001). Many scholars believe that teenagers and young adults get access

and use these tools more often than adults do because they are more modern and technologically savvy. In the mid- 1990s, females were significantly less likely than males to use the internet at all. Dholakia et al. (1994) stated that, during this period, women tend to be latecomers to the digital age, and as a result, this new technology was popularly portrayed as a male domain (Badagliacco, 1990).

In addition, Fallows (2005) also stated that men are more interested in technology than women and they are also more Tech savvy. Women were seen as being more likely to be technophobic and were ascribed a particular computer anxiety. This reasoning is in line with the argument that, technology is gendered (Lohan & Faulknet, 2004; Puente, 2008).

Also, scholars believe that different personality traits of both genders and social factors determine how often they use these social media sites differently and the gratifications they derive from these sites (Correa et al., 2010; Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003).

All these studies focused on the experiences that teenagers in western countries have with social media. (Hong et al.,2007; Tahiroglu et al.,2008; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke ,2008; Correa et al., 2010; Kimbrough et al., 2013; Ross et al., 2009, etc.). The present study examines the Ghanaian context, a country where technology and access to such media networks are relatively recent phenomenon in the lives of teenagers.

Since media liberalisation in Ghana in 1992, there has been a proliferation of the media technologies, resulting in expanded access to internet and digital media including social networking sites.

With the advent of social media assumed to be available anywhere, are the issues raised by earlier scholars regarding how men and women, especially teenagers are embracing the use of

technology the same today? What different gratifications do both genders derive from using these social media sites? Are teenage boys using these sites differently from teenage girls? Does gender or social roles influence male teenagers' purpose of social media use as compared to female teenagers? Also, are the various personality traits of male and female teenagers contributing to how they use social media? This study seeks to find answers in the Ghanaian context.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the gendered face of social media use among teenagers in Ghana. In so doing, the study will specifically seek to:

1. Identify gender differences in Ghanaian teenagers' engagement with social networking sites, regarding the number of social media accounts used, the type and frequency of use.
2. Find out whether personality factors influence social media usage of male and female teenagers.
3. Identify specific reasons for male and female teenager's engagement with social media sites and gratifications derived from using them.

### **1.3 Research Questions.**

To understand the role of gender in the use of social media sites, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

**RQ.1.** Do teenage boys have more social media accounts than teenage girls do?

**RQ.2.** Do teenage boys spend more time on social networking sites than teenage girls do?

**RQ.3.** Do personality traits influence teenage boys' and girls' social media usage?

**RQ.4.** Will there be any gender difference in teenagers' purpose of social media use?

**RQ.5.** Will there be any gender difference in the gratifications sought by teenage boys and girls in their engagement with social networking sites?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

According to Omoera (2010), generally in Africa, relatively less studies exist on the gendered face of social media use. The focus of this study will therefore fill a gap by contributing to existing scholarly knowledge on the gendered face of social media use in the Ghanaian context. i.e it will add up to existing scholarship.

This research will gain a greater understanding of Ghanaian teenagers' social media usage by gender, and the influence of their personality traits.

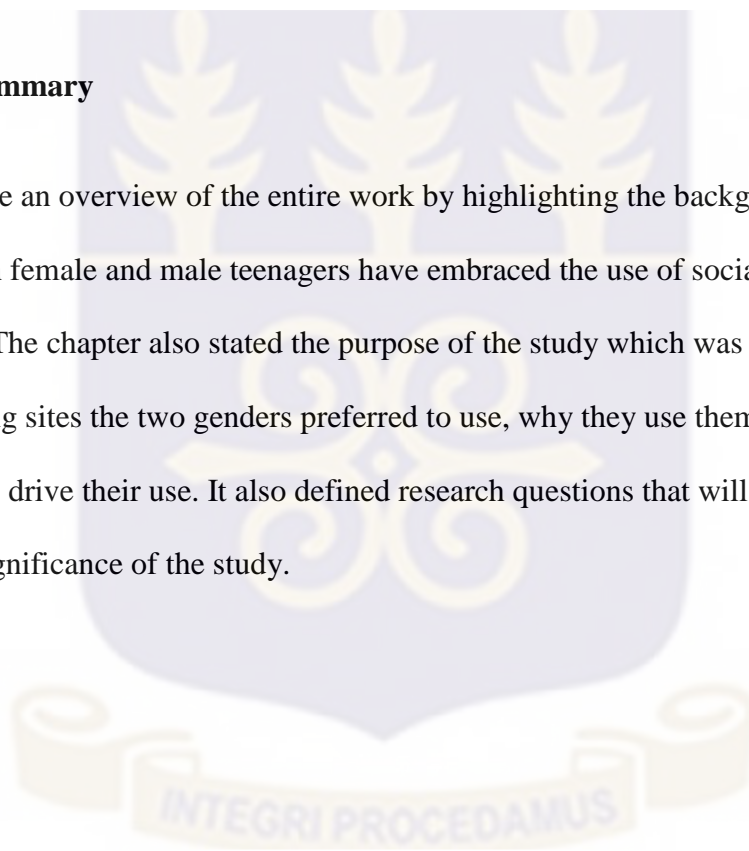
### 1.5 Definition of Terms

1. **Gender:** it is defined in this study as “socially constructed roles that individuals adopt and present to others”. It maps unto biological sex. The terms boys and girls denote the mappings. In this study, the mention of gender means boys and girls or male and female teenagers.
2. **Teenagers:** males and females who fall within the ages of 12 and 19 years.
3. **Social Networking Site(s) (SNS(s))/ Social Media Sites/ Accounts:** they include sites that people use to communicate with others to share their interest. It could be in the form of a website or other services on the internet, like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Bebo etc.
4. The personality traits used in the study are Openness to New Experience, Extraversion and Neuroticism. Extraversion covers people who are sociable, outgoing and friendly. Openness to New experience relates to people who are imaginative, intelligent and curious. Neuroticism refers to the group of people who are anxious, insecure and sensitive.
5. In the study, there are things assumed to be related to males. For example playing games and making new friends. The games in this context refer to all games. Those related to females are maintaining existing relationships and getting in touch with friends and family.

6. **Engagement:** engagement was defined based on the number of accounts teenagers in Ghana use, the type of account and the frequency of use.
  
7. **Mode of engagement:** this was defined in terms of teenagers engaging in online video calls as well as sending text messages.

### 1.6 Chapter Summary

This section gave an overview of the entire work by highlighting the background to the study, stating how both female and male teenagers have embraced the use of social media in different ways. The chapter also stated the purpose of the study which was to find out which social networking sites the two genders preferred to use, why they use them, for what purpose and what factors drive their use. It also defined research questions that will help in the study, as well as the significance of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

This chapter gives an overview of previous studies conducted on gender and social media use among different groups, including adults, young adults as well as teenagers. First, it discusses the theoretical framework on which the research is established. These are the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory and the Social Role Theory.

#### 2.0. Theoretical Framework

##### ➤ The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The theory was framed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s. Cantril (1942) earlier described Uses and Gratifications theory as “the study of gratifications or benefits that attract and hold audiences to various types of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs”. The theory is grounded on the idea that the media cannot influence an individual except that person has some use for that media or its content.

The Uses and Gratifications theory shifts attention from the traditional point of view of “powerful-media-effects” theories, which portray the audience member as passive. It rather focuses on the audience rather than the media sources and messages produced. Blumler, Katz & Gurevitch (1974) suggest that “media users play an active role in choosing and using the media”. They are directed by their goals and select a media source or content that fulfills their desires. The theory assumes that media users select different choices to satisfy their desires.

**The proponents of the U & G theory came out with five assumptions underlying the theory.**

1. The audience is active: selecting a particular media is directed by goals, purpose and motivations derived.
2. An audience member is willing and able to select options of media content in accordance with specific desires
3. There are socio- psychological factors that facilitate an individual's communication behaviour
4. Mass media compete with others for possible need satisfaction.
5. Individuals are mostly (but not always) more powerful than the mass media in the association

The U & G theory was largely used to investigate how audiences embrace various media content. For instance, it has been adopted in the contexts of radio (Herzog, 1944; & Cantril & Allport, 1935), Print industry (Berelson 1949), television (Rubin, 1983). The theory has also been useful in the area of new media-the internet. (Ruggiero, 2000; Grant, 2005).

### **U & G and Internet Age.**

Scholars such as Ruggiero (2000) and Rubin (2002) wrote on the Uses and Gratifications during the 21st century and asserted that the emergence of new media, specifically the internet may have revitalized the significance of the theory.

Most scholars who have contributed to this theory agree that terms such as active and audience must be reviewed when applied to communication on the internet because of the personal potential of the internet. Individuals have different reasons for using the internet; some are goal directed and want to fulfil a task by visiting particular websites. Others surf the internet for curiosity reasons and for fun. (Ha, 1995).

### **Typologies of U & G**

Different scholars have defined typologies that explain the common reasons for individual media use. McQuail et al. (1972) provided a four point typology for reasons why individuals use the media. They are diversion, for personal relationship and identity, and surveillance. On the other hand, Katz, Gurevitch & Haas (1973) produced five clusters: cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and need to release tension. Rubin (1981) presented a typology of eight gratifications for television watching: gratification to pass time, gain companionship, escapism, pleasure, social interaction, relaxation, information, and excitement.

The different typologies by these scholars were helpful to the study in the sense that, the gratification options provided in the questionnaire were selected from here.

The assumptions of the theory fit into this research because male and female teenagers' preference for a particular social media site will depend on the usefulness of the site to them. These male and female teenagers do not just visit a site but make selections based on the benefits they will derive from it. Also, U& G Theory captured the internet as belonging to the media used by individuals. The theory will help find solutions to the research questions and

objectives of the study. Though the theory explains that media users are active, it doesn't specify the differences that exist among these users based on gender. Thus, it doesn't give separate reasons for male gratification for using any media source as against that of females. This requires the need for a different theory, hence, the Social Role theory.

### ➤ **The Social Role Theory**

“The Social Role Theory of Sex differences” was developed by Alice Eagly in 1987 as a gendered related theory. Her book was published in this year on: “Sex Differences in Social Behaviour: a Social Role Interpretation”. In the theory, she defined Sex in relation to biology, which groups humans into two categories: male and female. She defined gender as “the meanings that people and society in general assign to female and male groups”. She referred to gender roles as “a term for the social roles that society defines to men and women in society”. She describes Gender Stereotypes as “the stereotypes that people believe about males and females.”

The theory states that structural pressures such as organisations, the family, and societies have made men and women behave in different ways. The view is that individuals have social roles that are based on their gender.

Also, the theory sees social life as essentially gendered, due to the present social measures. This is explained further to mean that, society has perceived expectations about females, and these form gender roles solely designed for them. Society also has expectations about males and these also form gender roles meant for them. From this theory, the differences between males and females are in two dimensions: communal and “agentic”. Agentic abilities are demonstrated by self-expansion, self-assertion and having the need to master. These abilities

according to the theory are attributed to men more than women. On the other hand, communal characteristics are established by self-sacrifice, concern for people and a need to be at one with others. Eagly & Steffen (1984) believes that, females' have accommodated the domestic roles and this has fostered a form of interpersonal and friendly behaviours termed as communal. On the other hand, males have focused on employment roles and this favours a pattern of relatively assertive and independent behaviours that can be termed as agentic.

Eagly (1987) also believes that social roles are dictated by the division of labour which produces sex differences in social behaviour. For instance, young people learn and emulate the roles they see played out by the adults in their lives.

This theory is helpful to the study because it will help bring out the gender issues regarding motivations and gratifications sought for using social networking sites, i.e., why male teenagers will have particular reasons for using social media sites compared to reasons that females will give for using those sites. This will contribute to ascertain whether their purposes are in line with the social roles that have been designated to them by the society.

## **2.1. Literature Review**

### **GENDER AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

Scholars have identified the gender differences that exist in using social media sites. Odell et al. (2000) studied "*Internet Use among Female and Male College Students*". The aim of the study was to find out if the gender gap in Internet use has narrowed among college students like it has in the adult population in the United States of America. It also sought to determine if male students differ from females in their time spent using the internet. Participants were

843 students from eight schools who were below 25 years. The sample included 385 males and 458 females completing a survey questionnaire in class.

The results suggest the gender gap has been narrowed in Internet use. It also stated that the differences in both sexes' time spent online was not much. However, there were significant differences in reasons why both genders use the internet. The female college students used the Internet to send E-mails and for research more than males did, but males on the other hand used the Internet to check sex sites, the news, play online games and listen to or download music.

Weiser (2000) conducted a similar study using a different strategy. The study combined an online survey and a paper-and pencil version for comparison to get normative evidence about the reasons why both genders use the Internet.

In general, results show that males' and females' use the internet differently. Females use the internet primarily for interpersonal communication and to some extent, to seek academic help more than males do. Conversely, males use it for entertainment purposes and leisure.

The data for the two samples were combined. With this, females used the internet to obtain course information, chat online, for educational assistance, send E-mails, and for research purposes than the males did. However, the males used the internet to shop, listen to audio messages, build www pages, search for romance and products and items that are hard to find. They also used it to stay informed with the news and pursue sexual relationships more than females did.

Mazman & Usluel (2011) also focused on a specific social media site. They conducted a study titled "Gender Differences in Using Social Networks." The objective of the study was to determine reasons why individuals use social networks. The focus was on the differences

that exist between males and females. Facebook was the social network investigated in the study. The study group consisted of 863 Facebook users of which males were 443 and females were 420 who responded to an online survey. Most of the respondents were university students belonging to the 18 to 25 years age group.

Findings from the study identified four reasons why the respondents use social media sites. These were: to maintain existing relationships, make new relationships, for academic purposes and to follow agenda. The study revealed that females use the site to maintain existing relationships, for academic purpose and to follow agenda more than the males do; while males use Facebook to make new relationships more than the females do.

The researchers explained the reasons for these findings to be the likelihood that, females hide their identities and personal information to preserve their privacy or secrecy in an internet setting. This is evident in Fallows (2005) who stated that females don't reveal themselves to people they don't know. Fallows (2005) believe that, females do that because of the social pressure and social roles designed for them in the society.

Similarly, Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008) applied Uses and Gratifications Theory to explore two friend-networking sites (MySpace and Facebook). The study was conducted on college students to assess the reasons why they use these friend-networking sites, the characteristics of a college user and the uses and gratifications met by using the sites. Researchers distributed questionnaires to 116 students from a 4-year public East Coast University. The total number of male students was 53 and females were 63.

The dominant reasons used in the study were: "to keep in touch with old friends, to keep in touch with current friends, to post or look at pictures, to make new friends and to locate old friends." The study found no gender differences in the dominant uses and gratifications. This result contrasts with the findings from Mazman & Usluel (2011), who found gender

differences in the variables. Therefore, it's important to conduct a study to ascertain which of the results apply to Ghanaian male and female teenagers.

The same study found that males log into their account more times a day compared to females and they had more friends linked to their account, while females change the appearance of their accounts more than males do. The additional information was that females tend to set their website to private more than males do. This confirms Fallows (2005) earlier declaration about women.

Hong et al. (2007) conducted a research on Chinese college students to measure the way they use the internet. The indicators used included the frequency, activities, and time spent. The study also sought to find out the gender differences and differences across ages. They sampled 1845 respondents, of which 1,027 were males and 818 were females. The survey method was used in this study.

Just like Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008), Hong et al. (2007) found more males using the internet daily or weekly than females do. The males also spend long hours in a session online more than females do. The reason this study gave for the results obtained was that, unlike females, male students often felt the need for more time online and felt nervous if they did not access the internet for some time.

Apart from these scholars who focused more attention on college students, Tahiroglu et al. (2008) studied adolescents' usage of the internet. In the study, they investigated the way Turkish teenagers use the internet and the challenges they face using it. Participants were 3,975 students, between the ages of 12 and 18 years of which 2,014 were males and 1,961 were females. They were selected from five secondary and five high schools in Adana City, near southern coast of Turkey.

The study found that females use the internet mostly to seek general information; while males use it to play games. The researchers believe that their findings can be compared to other studies including both Turkish and other countries, which state that females mostly use the internet for social aims. Also, playing games are preferred by males rather than females and females prefer chatting on the internet more than males do. They also believed that these differences exist as a result of cultural characteristics; male teenagers are permitted to use the internet more than females, and in the Turkish culture, males have social opportunities such as access to internet cafes more than females do.

In another study, Barker (2009) published an article on “Older Adolescents’ Motivations for Social Network Site Use: the Influence of Gender, Group Identity, and Collective Self-Esteem.” The main aim of the study was to evaluate motives for social media use, group belonging, and gender effects among young adults. She did an online survey with 734 freshmen students attending a communication class in 2008.

Barker (2009) found that females were more interested in using social networking sites to communicate with their peers, to entertain themselves and for passing time. She believed that they had a collective self-esteem which is linked to these motivations. Males on the other hand reported using SNSs for Social Compensation (a more rewarding group, try to move from a low-self and identification esteem group), learning about social world and Social Identity Gratifications.

Her findings reflect previous research that showed that females are more likely than males to use social network sites to relate to others and are more linked to their friends than are males.

Also, Dunne et al. (2010) conducted a study on “Young People’s Use of Online Social Networking Sites- a Uses and Gratifications Perspective.” The paper sought to discover why adolescents use and participate in social media sites. The study made reference to a site called

Bebo. A qualitative approach was employed in exploring the uses and gratifications that girls from the ages of 12-14 years in a secondary school setting in Ireland seek and obtain from the Bebo SNS.

Dunne et al. (2010) revealed that, in addition to using Bebo, the respondents also used Facebook or MySpace. The participants used the site for friending purposes. Apart from using the sites for friending purposes, the study highlighted more U&G that were sought from using SNS. They include gratification to communicate, entertain, escape from pressure and alleviate boredom, interact with the opposite sex and to seek information. Aside gratifications sought, they also unveiled gratifications obtained to be; portraying of one's image, acceptance from peers, maintaining relationship, being safe from embarrassment and rejection, etc.

The same uses and gratifications theory was adopted in Tanta et al. (2014). The title of the paper was "Uses and Gratifications Theory- Why Adolescents Use Facebook?" The aim was to investigate the benefits that adolescents in the city of Zagreb get from using Facebook and to find out their needs that are gratified.

The result confirmed that adolescents use the site to socialise and communicate with their friends. This finding is in line with findings of previous studies. In addition, they use the site to deliberate on school events, organise meetings with friends and obtain information about social occasions. The study also found that adolescents use Facebook to obtain gratifications such as the need for integration, information, social interaction, and need to understand their social environment. They also use it for entertainment and to reduce boredom.

As the years pass by, there have been more advances in technology and more scholars are conducting studies on gender and social media usage. Kimbrough et al. (2013) conducted a

study on “Gender Differences in Mediated Communication: Women Connect more than Do Men.” SNSs were included in the mediated communication networks used in the study.

Participants were asked about their experiences with several communication tools to gain a general impression about how the technologies are being used (frequency of use) and some of the motivations behind their use. The total number was 379; 267 women and 112 men from a large south eastern university.

The result indicated that women, compared to men use technology more frequently. Also, women preferred more social networking sites than men. Additionally, women were found to use online video calls than men did.

In addition, Misra et al. (2015) did a study on “The Gender Differences in Usage of Social Networking Sites and Perceived Online Social Support on Psychological Well -Being of Youth.” The total sample size was 100 Indians. Males were 50, and females were also 50. Respondents were college students or freshmen in the corporate sector that filled an online questionnaire.

The study found that females still used SNSs for maintaining existing relationships while males used the SNS to play games and to develop fresh contacts. Also, females are more frequent users of SNS as compared to males because they spend more hours daily using SNSs. These findings support Tufekci (2008), who discovered differences between males’ and females’ usage patterns and their purposes for using social networking sites.

Interestingly, the researchers believed that, the Social Role theory might contribute to the reasons for females’ attractiveness to social media. This is because; the theory suggests that the different social roles enable them to acquire different skills which in turn shape their

social behaviour. The female gender is expected to play more connectivity and communal roles; while the male sex is more genetic and self-governing.

### **GENDER, PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

To support these gender differences, personality traits of individuals have also contributed to social media usage.

Ross et al. (2009), in general, conducted a study and looked at personality and motivations related to Facebook usage. The study was carried out to explore how personality characteristics influenced how University students employed Facebook for social reasons.

The Five Factor Model (FFM) was used. They include neuroticism, openness to new experiences, extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness.

The number of students used was 97 from a university in south western Ontario. The men were 15 and women were 82. Consistent with expectations, extroverted individuals significantly reported belonging to more groups than people in the low extraversion group. Individuals high on the traits of neuroticism preferred to use the Facebook Wall, while those low in neuroticism posted photos on their Facebook profile. Also, those who were high in openness to new experiences were associated with the tendency of being sociable through Facebook. On the other hand, agreeableness and conscientiousness traits were not significant factors in the analysis of Facebook use by individuals.

Also, Moore & McElroy (2011) conducted a study on the impact of personality traits on Facebook usage. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of personality in Facebook

usage, observing how personality traits affect the footprint people leave on Facebook, regarding the time they spent using Facebook as well as its use.

The study found that those who belong to the neuroticism (emotionally unstable) group reported spending more time on Facebook, whereas more emotionally stable and more introverts are reported to use the sites more frequently to keep up with their friends. Also, extroverts had wider social network and more friends than introverts did.

Likewise, Hughes (2012) conducted a similar study but sought to find the correlation between the personality traits and the two major SNSs –Facebook and Twitter– used for seeking information and socialising.

The study concluded that, for Facebook social, only sociability and neuroticism were found to correlate significantly with it and this further supports the neuroticism hypothesis revealed by scholars such as; Amichai-Hamburger & Ben Artzi, 2003. There was no significant correlation between Facebook social and the traits of extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to new experiences. These outcomes contradict previous research (Correa, Hinsley and Zuniga, 2010; Amichai-Hamburger & Ben Artzi, 2000). Also, Facebook information was positively related to neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to new experiences, but it was negatively related to conscientiousness.

For Twitter social, conscientiousness and openness to new experiences showed significant connections with it, but Twitter social was not associated with neuroticism. Also, using Twitter to seek information was found to relate positively with conscientiousness and negative with neuroticism and extraversion.

A related study that included gender was conducted by Correa et al. (2010). They looked at “Who interacts on the web: the intersection of users’ personality and social media use”. They

focused on instant messaging and social media sites. The study was conducted to examine the relationship that exists between personality traits and social media usage with emphasis on three of the five traits (extraversion, openness to new experiences and neuroticism). They selected these three traits because they believe that, they are related to the use of applications on the internet. It also examined the role of gender in that dynamic. Respondents were 959; 33% males and 67% females.

For the gender aspect, the study revealed that, extraversion was positively associated with men's social media use; while emotional stability was negatively related to their use. The more extroverted and nervous they were, the more likely to engage in using social interactive applications. Openness to new experience was not statistically important. For the women, on the other hand, extraversion and openness to new experiences were related to social network use. Contrary to men, emotional instability was not related to women's social media use.

In addition, Muscanell et al. (2012) examined the "influence of gender and personality on individuals' use of online social networking websites". Sites such as Facebook and MySpace were included in the study. Respondents were 238 undergraduate students. The study predicted that gender and scores on the Big Five personality scale would influence online social networking activities.

The study revealed that gender and personality traits are linked to both sexes' reasons for using social network sites and their involvement in specific activities. Women were using the sites to engage more in activities that promote relationship maintenance compared to men who used the sites mostly to make new friends and find potential dates. The findings are consistent with the result of previous studies showing that men use SNSs to meet new friends more often than women do.

The study also explained the gender differences to be connected to the gender roles that stipulate that, men are and ought to be more brave (Helgeson,1994), and therefore, are more willing to meet new friends through online communication. Women on the other hand, are seen to play more interpersonal roles and relationship maintenance online. (Williams et al.,2009). They also show more concern to privacy issues and do not want to disclose their identity compared to men on SNSs (Fogel & Nehmad, 2009). This explains why females are more likely to interact with people they already know and trust.

For personality traits, men low in openness to new experience were reported to play games more often than those high in openness to new experience, and those low in agreeableness reported posting blogs more than those high in agreeableness. This finding contrasts with the results from Guadagno et al. (2008) who reported that people who are high in openness to new experience and neuroticism (especially women) reported sending blogs more often. Significantly neuroticism was not meaningfully related to any of the specific social network activities they measured, and this is also not consistent with previous studies. (Rice & Markey, 2009; Guadagno et al. , 2008).



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0. Introduction

This section explains the method used for collecting data for the study and discusses the research design and data analysis. The chapter also highlighted the population, sampling technique and samples used for the study. It also emphasised the method of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

#### 3.1 Research Approach and Method

The quantitative research approach was employed in the study. This research approach helped quantify the social phenomenon the study sought explanation on. The quantitative approach was used because, according to Wimmer & Dominick (2011), “it helps provide accurate and precise representation, summary and report of results from a particular study”. It also allows the researcher to convert a communication framework into quantitative statistical data. Other Strengths of this approach according to Carr (1994) are that, it is considered more reliable and also data produced can be tested and verified. The quantitative method used for the study was the survey administration design. Babbie (2001:282) explains this method as “the administration of questionnaires to a sample of respondents selected from a population.”

Aside the strength of this approach as explained by Wimmer & Dominick (2011), it was also employed in this study because as the literature (chapter 2) showed, Barker (2009), Misra et al. (2015), Guadagno et al. (2013), Hong et al. (2007) among others who all sought to

examine the gender differences in social media use adopted this approach by employing the survey method.

### **3.2. Population, Sample and Sampling Technique.**

The study population was form one and two students from St. Mary's and Presbyterian Boys Senior High Schools. Since it is a gender study, these two schools were purposively selected from the single sex schools in Accra.

The study used the probability sampling procedure to obtain a sample size of 200 students from the two schools. This sampling method was used because, according to Babbie (2010:203), it guarantees that “the sample observed is representative of the whole population”. It helps researchers who want precise and statistical descriptions of large populations. The selection was based on gender and age made up of one hundred males and one hundred females with age range between 12-19 years old.

The stratified sampling method was used to get the sample. Babbie (2012:224) defines Stratified Sampling as “a method for obtaining a greater degree of representativeness by decreasing the probable sampling error.” According to him, it “allows the researchers to organise the population into homogeneous subsets and to select the appropriate number of elements from each group”. With this method, the students in each school were put into two groups constituting form one students belonging to one group and form two students belonging to another group. After, fifty students from each group in each school were randomly selected to represent the parent sample.

### **3.3. Data Gathering and Instrumentation**

Data were collected through survey using self-administered questionnaires. The questions were both open-ended and closed-ended and were in three parts. The first section is demographic questions concerning age and gender. The second section involves social media usage questions that cover the type, frequency and purpose of their social media usage, as well as the gratifications they derive from using the sites. The third part covered questions on personality traits based on parts of Benet-Martinez & John (1998) 44-item inventory that measures people on the Big Five items of personality. The personality traits were later linked to the frequency of social media usage by both genders to determine if the traits they exhibit have any relationship with the time they spend using social media sites.

The Big Five Factors of personality mentioned and explained earlier in the study are; extraversion, openness to new experiences, neuroticism (emotional instability), agreeableness as well as conscientiousness. This study adopted three of these factors: emotional instability, extraversion, and openness to new experiences. The three traits were employed by previous researchers that focused on general uses of social media as well as studies related to gender (Guadagno, Okdie, & Eno, 2008; Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000; Ross et al., 2009). This knowledge was useful in determining the extent of social media use by both genders in the present study. The questionnaire was designed to satisfy the research objectives and questions outlined in the introduction of the study. All questionnaires were fully completed by respondents.

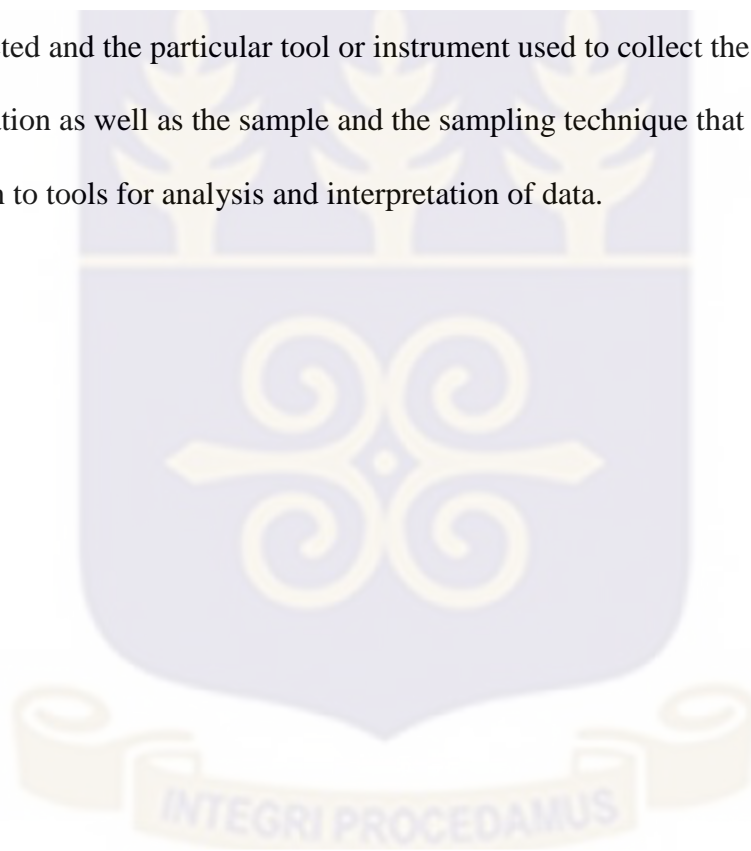
### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Data gathered were examined using version 22 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Findings from the study have been presented using descriptive

statistics, specifically, frequency and cross tabulations tables. Chi-Square tests tables were carried out to find the association between both gender and personality traits as well as frequency of respondents' social media use.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

The chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in the study, outlining the research setting and overall design of the study. This section highlighted how the data that aided in the study was collected and the particular tool or instrument used to collect the data. It described the study population as well as the sample and the sampling technique that was used in the study in addition to tools for analysis and interpretation of data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.0: Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research as well as the analysis of the data gathered.

The objective of the study was to investigate the gendered face of social media use among teenagers in Ghana, specifically, to determine the type, extent and duration of use, the uses and gratifications sought for using these social network sites and how personality traits influence their usage of these sites. The findings of the survey were presented using descriptive statistics. Tables were generated to present the results of the study.

#### 4.1: Demographics of Respondents

The key demographic data that were considered in this study were age and gender. The respondents were 100 (50%) males and 100 (50%) females.

Table 1: Age and Gender

AGE RANGE	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
12-15	10	22	32
	10.0%	22.0%	16.0%
16-19	90	78	168
	90.0%	78.0%	84.0%
Total	100	100	200
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 1 shows** that, out of the 200 respondents, the majority of them (168), representing 84% fell within the ages of 16-19 while 16% (32) were between ages 12-15. Males who fell within the ages of 16-19 years represented 90% while that of females were 78%. On the other hand, 22% of females and 10% of males fell within the ages of 12-15 years. This result indicates that majority of the respondents for both genders for this study belonged to the 16-19 years age group.

#### 4.2: Teenagers’ Engagement with Social Networking Sites by Gender

This part of the findings focused attention on the number of accounts used by teenagers, the type preferred and the frequency of social media use.

Table 2A: Gender and Social Media Accounts

Social Media Accounts	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
FACEBOOK	91 16.3%	86 22.0%	177
INSTAGRAM	73 13.1%	44 11.3%	117
SNAPCHAT	52 9.3%	35 9.0%	87
TWITTER	43 7.7%	17 4.3%	60
WHATSAPP	94 16.9%	89 22.8%	183
YOUTUBE	78 14.0%	51 13.0%	129
GOOGLE+	68 12.2%	55 14.1%	123
OTHER	58 10.4%	14 3.6%	72
Total	557	391	948

With regards to the social media accounts, respondents were asked to select all the social media sites they have accounts with.

This finding is based on multiple responses from the 200 students surveyed. In all, there were 948 responses about the kind of social networking sites they have accounts with. It was found, as presented in **Table 2A** that, majority of teenagers in Ghana are actively involved in more than one social networking site. Whatsapp was the predominantly used social networking site attracting the highest responses (183) from both genders.

In terms of gender, responses gotten from males were 557 as against 391 for females. This indicates that male teenagers have more accounts than female teenagers do. Out of the 100 male respondents, majority of them 94 (16.9%) use Whatsapp in addition to other networks while that of females were 89 (22.8%). This was followed by Facebook (177 responses), where males had 91 (16.3%) and females had 86 (22%). YouTube followed with 129 responses. Males tended to use it more (78 responses), representing 14% while that of females were 51 responses, representing 13% of the females' population. The next on the hierarchy was Google+ (123 responses) of which 68 came from males (12.2%) as against 55 from females (14.15%). Instagram followed with 117 responses, of which, males scores were 13.1% and that of females 11.3%. The next was Snapchat, having 87 responses. With this, responses for males were 52 (9.3%) and that of females were 35 representing (9%). The less dominant site used by these teenagers was Twitter (60 responses) with males having 43 and females having 17. The "Other" category recorded 72 responses with Telegram and Imo being the dominant ones used. Others included; Skype, Viber, V Kontakte, Wattpad, Kiki, Musically, Tango, Wechat and Facetime. With all these other sites, males tended to use them more than females did.

For Table 2A, respondents were asked to list all the sites they have accounts with but **Table 2B** allowed respondents to list just one site they preferred to use all the time.

Table 2B: Gender and SNS Preferred most Often

SITES PREFERRED MOST OFTEN	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
FACEBOOK	23 23.0%	27 27.0%	50 25.0%
GOOGLE+	1 1.0%	3 3.0%	4 2.0%
INSTAGRAM	19 19.0%	2 2.0%	21 10.5%
SNAPCHAT	1 1.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%
TELEGRAM	9 9.0%	1 1.0%	10 5.0%
WHATSAPP	46 46.0%	65 65.0%	111 55.5%
YOUTUBE	0 0.0%	2 2.0%	2 1.0%
Total	100 100.0%	100 100.0%	200 100.0%

The study found per **Table 2B** that, still, the site teenagers prefer to use most often was Whatsapp (55.5%). Per gender, out of this, 65 females representing 65% used it compared to 46 males, representing 46% using it. The next social networking site used most often was Facebook (25%). Similarly, females topped with 27% compared to males who had 23%. Instagram followed, and with this, males tended to use it most (19%) than females did (2%). The next was Telegram, which male teenagers use it most often (9%) than female teenagers do (1%). Google+ followed with males having 3% and females 1%. For Snapchat, only males

tended to use it most often (1%). On the other hand, for YouTube, females tend to use it most often (2%).

Table 2C: Gender and Times Spent Using Social media Accounts Daily

HOURS SPENT ON SNS SITE EACH DAY	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
0-5 HOURS	36 36.0%	37 37.0%	73 36.5%
6-10 HOURS	35 35.0%	24 24.0%	59 29.5%
11-15 HOURS	11 11.0%	21 21.0%	32 16.0%
MORE THAN 16 HOURS	18 18.0%	18 18.0%	36 18.0%
Total	100 100.0%	100 100.0%	200 100.0%

As explained in **Table 2C**, 18% of the population interviewed spend as much as 16 hours per day. Some spend 11-15 hours (16%), but in terms of gender, it can be realised that, sometimes, the times spent are the same or slightly different. From the table, 37% of females use social media sites between 0-5 hours, more than males do (36%). For 6-10 hours, males tend to use it more (35%) than females (24%) do. For 11-15 hours, females passed the males with 10%. Both genders scored 18% for the “more than 16 hours” option. The analysis shows that the gender difference in hours spent using SNSs is narrow.

Table 2D: Gender and How often SNSs are Used

HOW OFTEN SNS SITES ARE CHECKED	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
ONCE A DAY	5	8	13
	5.0%	8.0%	6.5%
TWICE A DAY	9	8	17
	9.0%	8.0%	8.5%
THRICE A DAY	10	8	18
	10.0%	8.0%	9.0%
THROUGHOUT	73	69	142
	73.0%	69.0%	71.0%
OTHER	3	7	10
	3.0%	7.0%	5.0%
Total	100	100	200
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This table is supporting Table 2C to determine the frequency of teenagers' social media use. From the table, it is realised that, most teenagers in Ghana are so active that, they check their accounts throughout the day (142), but some check them thrice, twice and even once a day.

By way of gender, more than two thirds (73%) of male respondents reported visiting social media sites throughout the day, while about two-thirds (69%) of females visited these sites throughout the day. Also, males who visited it thrice a day were 10%, and females were 8%. All the other options recorded were below 10%. For visiting the sites once a day, the percentage for males was 5 and that of females was 8. For twice a day, 9% represented males while 8% represented females.

For the "Other" option, the female respondents topped with 7% while 3% was recorded for males. Some responses from the females for the "other" category were "once a week, over three months, during vacation." while some of the males' responses include "when I feel like

it, when I am free and anytime.” The responses from the “Other” option cannot be quantifiable and therefore suggest that, they are not active users.

Generally, the four tables presented on teenagers’ engagement with social media sites show that, Ghanaian teenagers are very active social networking sites users irrespective of gender.



### 4.3: Gender and Purpose of Social Media Use

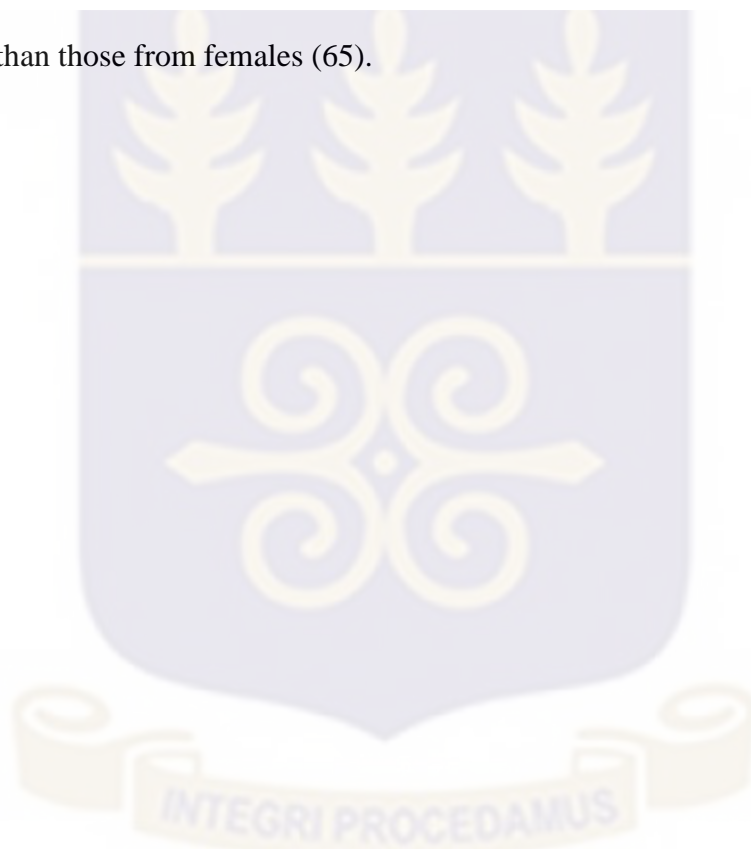
Respondents were asked to select from the different options provided on the reasons why they use social networking sites. They had the choice to select more than one reason.

Table 3: Gender and Purpose of Social Media Use

USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
To Keep In Touch With Friends And Family	90 14.7%	89 16.3%	179
To Meet New People	80 13.1%	68 12.4%	148
Share Photos, Videos, And Music	83 13.6%	72 13.2%	155
To Play Games	47 7.7%	31 5.7%	78
To Discover New Music, Books, Films, And Other Entertainment	73 11.9%	65 11.9%	138
To Read The News And Get Facts	80 13.1%	74 13.5%	154
To Maintain Existing Relationship	79 12.9%	63 11.5%	142
For Academic Purposes	78 12.8%	85 15.5%	163
Total	611	547	1158

As explained in **Table 3**, responses gotten from purpose for using social media sites were 1158. Majority of respondents selected more than one option. Based on gender, 611 responses were from males and 547 from females. With all the eight options except for one, males tended to use SNS for all the reasons more than females did. The only exception was with “Academic purpose”, where females topped with 15.5% (85 responses) and males 12.8% (78 responses).

“To keep in touch with friends and family” recorded 90 responses for males against 89 for females. Males had 80 responses for the option of “To meet new people”, while females’ were 68. For “Sharing photos, videos and music”, the responses of males were 83 and that of females were 72. “To maintain existing relationships” recorded 79 responses from males and 63 from females. The number of males who responded to the option of “To read the news and get facts” was 80 as against 74 responses for females. Also, 47 responses were gotten from males in relation to using the sites “To play games”, while that of females were 31. “To discover new music, books, films and other entertainment”, the responses from the males were more (73) than those from females (65).



#### 4.4: Gender and Social Media Gratifications

For the gratifications derived from using social media sites, respondents were asked to select from the eight options provided in the table below. The responses from the table are more than 200 because, respondents were asked to select as many options that apply to them.

Table 4: Gender and Social Media Gratifications

GENDER AND SOCIAL MEDIA GRATIFICATIONS	GENDER		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
TO PASS TIME	36 6.4%	21 4.4%	57
COMPANIONSHIP	65 11.6%	59 12.3%	124
TO ESCAPE FROM PRESSURE	30 5.3%	21 4.4%	51
ENJOYMENT	83 14.8%	66 13.8%	149
RELAXATION	77 13.7%	68 14.2%	145
INFORMATION	92 16.4%	87 18.2%	179
EXCITEMENT	84 15.0%	76 15.9%	160
SOCIAL INTERACTION	94 16.8%	80 16.7%	174
Total	561	479	1040

Percentages and totals are based on responses.

As shown in **Table 4**, the overall responses for gratifications obtained from using these SNSs were 1040. In all, majority of the respondents selected more than one gratification. This implies that, teenagers in Ghana use social network sites to derive various gratifications.

From the gender perspective, responses gotten from males were 561 against 479 from females. An outstanding observation from the table was that, the males tend to have higher percentages (%) for each of the gratification options more than females do. The highest was “Information” gratification having 179 responses. Whiles the responses obtained from males were 92 (16.4 %), that of females were 87 (18.2%) of their individual population. This was followed by the gratification to seek “Social Interaction”. With this, responses from males were 94 (16.8%) as against 80 (16.7%) from females. The next gratification they get was “Excitement”, with males’ responses being 84 and that of females being 76. “Enjoyment” followed with males having 83 responses (14.8%) and 66 responses (13.8) for females. 65 responses were recorded for males who benefit from “Companionship” whiles 59 responses were registered for females. To “Escape from Pressure”, responses gotten from males were 30 (5.3%) and that of females were 21 (4.4%). The score with the least responses was the gratification to “Pass Time”. With this, responses from males were 36 (6.4%) and females were 21 (4.4%).

#### **4.5: Relationship between Gender, Personality Traits and Social Media Usage.**

This part of the study covered the relationship between gender and personality traits. It also related the hours both genders spent using these SNS sites and their personality traits to find out if there exist a significant relationship between male and female teenagers in Ghana’s personality traits and social media use. The study as mentioned earlier examined three out of the five personality traits; extraversion, openness to new experience and neuroticism (emotional instability). Cross tabulations and the Chi-Square tests were used to ascertain if both genders’ personality traits influence their extent of social media use.

Table 5: Gender and Personality Traits

PERSONALITY TRAITS	GENDER	
	MALE	FEMALE
Introverts	45%	48%
Extroverts	55%	52%
Total	100%	100%
Open to New Experience	95%	87%
Not open to New Experience	5%	13%
Total	100%	100%
Emotionally Stable	73%	76%
Emotionally Unstable	27%	24%
Total	100%	100%

For gender and personality traits, respondents were asked to rate from a scale of 1-5 to determine the group they belonged to. Based on the rating, respondents who scored below 2.5 fell in the category of being an introvert, not open to new experience and emotionally stable. On the other hand, those who scored above 2.5 were described as being extroverts, open to new experience and emotionally unstable.

Based on that, from **Table 5**, more Ghanaian teenagers in the sample were extroverts than introverts likewise open to new experience. On the other hand more teenagers were emotionally stable than those who were emotionally unstable. When it comes to gender; female introverts were 48% as against 45% for males. On the contrary, 55% of males were extroverts against 52% female extroverts. Males who were open to new experience were 95% while females were 87%, but 13% were recorded for females who are not open to new

experiences as against 5% for males. From the table, more females were emotionally stable (76%) than males (73%) but more males (27%) were seen as emotionally unstable more than females were (24%).

The tables below cover gender, personality traits and social media usage. It was designed to ascertain if both genders' social media use are influenced by their personality traits.

Table 6: Extraversion and Times Spent on Social Media by Gender.

GENDER		Hours Spent on SNS Each Day				Total
		0-5 Hrs.	6-10 Hrs.	11-15 Hrs.	More Than 16 Hrs.	
Male	INTROVERTS	16	17	2	10	45
	EXTROVERTS	20	18	9	8	55
	Total	36	35	11	18	100
Female	INTROVERTS	21	8	12	7	48
	EXTROVERTS	16	16	9	11	52
	Total	37	24	21	18	100
Total	INTROVERTS	37	25	14	17	93
	EXTROVERTS	36	34	18	19	107
	Total	73	59	32	36	200

From **Table 6**, a total of 93 respondents were introverts of which 45 were males and 48 females while 107 were Extroverts. Of this, 55 were males against 52 females. Looking at the hours spent on social media, 38 male extroverts spend more time between 0-10 hours than females do (32). On the other hand, for more than 16 hours, more was recorded for female extroverts (11) than male extroverts (8). Both genders recorded the same mark (9) for the option of 11-15 hours. Looking at the table, it can be concluded that more males are extroverts compared to females but it's difficult to determine if male extroverts spend more

hours using SNSs more than female extroverts do since the difference in hours spent on social media sites is not much.

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests

GENDER		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
MALE	Pearson Chi-Square	4.192	3	.241
	Likelihood Ratio	4.513	3	.211
FEMALE	Pearson Chi-Square	4.507	3	.212
	Likelihood Ratio	4.562	3	.207
		.666	1	.414
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	1.023	3	.796
	Likelihood Ratio	1.024	3	.796

From **Table 6**, even though the number of hours spent by both genders was slightly different, however, from the Chi-Square tests table, (**Table 7**), it's observed that, a total P-value of 0.796 was recorded for both genders. Since  $p > 0.05$ , it implies that, there is no significant relationship between the number of hours both genders spent on social media and the personality trait of Extraversion.

Table 8: Openness to New Experience and Times Spent on Social Media by Gender

GENDER TRAITS		Hours Spent on SNS Each Day				Total
		0-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-16 hours	More than 16 hours	
Male	Open To New Experience	33	34	10	18	95
	Not Open	3	1	1	0	5
Total		36	35	11	18	10
Female	Open to New Experience	35	19	18	15	87
	Not Open	2	5	3	3	13
Total		37	24	21	18	100
Total	open to new Experience	68	53	28	33	182
	Not Open	5	6	4	3	18
Total		73	59	32	36	200

As illustrated in **Table 8**, 182 were recorded for respondents who are open to new experience. This shows majority of Ghanaian teenagers who fall in this category use social media sites the most compared to those who are not open to new experience (18). 95 were males while 87 were females. From the table, it is realised that, males who are open to new experiences tend to spend more time using SNS than females, while females who are not Open to New Experience tend to spend more time using the sites than males do.

Table 9: Chi-Square Tests

GENDER		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
MALE	Pearson Chi-Square	2.515	3	.473
	Likelihood Ratio	3.267	3	.352
FEMALE	Pearson Chi-Square	3.434	3	.329
	Likelihood Ratio	3.708	3	.295
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	1.009	3	.799
	Likelihood Ratio	.993	3	.803

It can be realised that, though the results from table 8 indicate differences in hours spent on social media and the personality trait of openness to new experience based on gender, the results from the Chi-Square table (**Table 9**) indicates a different analysis. This is because, a total P-value of 0.799 and 0.803 were recorded for both genders in relation to being either open or not open to new experience. Since  $p > 0.05$ , it implies that, there is no significant relationship between the extent of both genders' social media use and the trait of openness to new experience.

Table 10: Emotional Stability and Times Spent on Social Media by Gender

GENDER TRAITS		Hours Spent on SNS Each Day				Total
		0-5 hrs.	6-10 hrs.	11-16 hrs.	16 + hrs.	
Male	Emotionally unstable	11	6	3	7	27
	Emotionally stable	25	29	8	11	73
Total		36	35	11	19	100
Female	Emotionally unstable	8	6	5	5	24
	Emotionally stable	29	18	16	13	76
Total		37	24	21	18	100
Total	Emotionally Unstable	19	12	8	12	51
	Emotionally Stable	54	47	24	24	149
Total		73	59	32	36	200

As illustrated in **Table 10**, a total of 149 respondents were emotionally stable (do not belong to the neuroticism group). These emotionally stable teenagers tend to spend more hours using social media sites than emotionally unstable teenagers. In terms of gender, females who were

emotionally stable were 76, more than males (73). For those who were emotionally unstable (51), more males (27) fell in this category more than females did (24). This implies that more males who use social media are emotionally unstable than females even though the difference is narrow. For the hours spent on social media, females who are emotionally stable spend more hours than emotionally stable males, even though there are slight differences. On the other hand, emotionally unstable males tend to spend more time on social media more than females. Here also, the difference is not much.

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests

GENDER		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
MALE	Pearson Chi-Square	2.515	3	.473
	Likelihood Ratio	3.267	3	.352
FEMALE	Pearson Chi-Square	3.434	3	.329
	Likelihood Ratio	3.708	3	.295
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	1.009	3	.799
	Likelihood Ratio	.993	3	.803

The result from **Table 11** is similar to the results gotten from the two other Chi-Square tables covering Extraversion and Openness to New Experience. From the table, it can be observed that, a P-value of 0.571 and 0.576 were recorded. Since  $p > 0.05$ , it can be concluded that, there is no significant relationship between the trait of emotional stability and the frequency of social media use by both sexes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0: Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study presented in chapter four. These findings helped to address the research objectives and questions posed in the study. The study sought to find the gender differences that exist in Ghanaian teenagers' social media use. The focus was to determine the type and number of social media accounts both genders have, their frequency of SNS use, the motivations and gratifications obtained from using those sites and also how their personality traits influence their usage of these sites. This chapter is discussed in relation to the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework underpinning the study to make the study significant.

#### 5.1: Type and Number of Social Media Accounts.

**RQ1.** The first objective that the research sought to find was to identify the difference in relation to whether male teenagers in Ghana have more accounts and use it more than females or vice versa. The variables used to measure this were; the social media sites they have accounts with as well as the type of account they prefer to use most often.

Generally, Whatsapp was identified to be the type that both genders have an account with (49.7%), whereas Facebook followed with 38.3%. The others were YouTube, Google+, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. Also, with the sites preferred most often by teenagers in

Ghana, Whatsapp was still leading with 55.5%, followed by Facebook (25%), Instagram, Google+, Snapchat, and the others.

This result contradicts the statistics given by the Pew Research Centre in 2015 which puts Facebook as the preferred and commonly used SNS among teenagers. Nonetheless, the assertion that the vast majority of teens are not sticking to one site, but are testing and using various sites supports the result from the current study. The result of this present study is also not consistent with the statistics by Statista.com which made Snapchat the leading network used and Whatsapp as the least employed by U.S teenagers as of February 2017.

This result indicates that Whatsapp is becoming the social networking site used by teenagers in Ghana and in some parts of the world. This analysis is supported by earlier studies conducted by Gutierrez-ColonPlana et al (2013). This indicates that teenagers will use a particular SNS more based on the gratifications and satisfaction they get, stemming from the theoretical framework underpinning the study- Uses and Gratifications Theory, which implies that media users will use a particular media source that fulfills their needs. This result could also mean, the type of SNSs Ghanaian teenagers prefer to use most often differs from what is preferred by teenagers from the western countries.

In this study, males tended to have more social media accounts than females did. (Table 2A). However, females tended to use the two most dominant SNS sites – Whatsapp and Facebook – more than males. (Table 2B). The first statement that males had more social media accounts than females is not supported by findings from Guadagno et al. (2013), which stated that females have more social networking sites than males do. Their study also found that, compared to males, females are more frequent users of social media sites. This suggests that, contrary to the popular perception that women in general are technophobic (Fallows, 2005); this study showed that Ghanaian female teenagers are rather using the sites more often.

The contrast is also evident in the findings from Misra et al. (2015) who believe that females are more prone to using social networking sites more than males. The result of the current study indicates that the trend that females use more social media sites than males has changed in the African context, to be precise, Ghana. This is because, the study reveals that, though female teenagers in Ghana tend to use the two most dominant sites more often than males do, male teenagers in Ghana have more accounts than female teenagers do.

## **5.2: Frequency of Social Media Use.**

**RQ2.** The second objective this study sought to achieve was to determine the frequency of social media usage by both genders. The times spent on social media sites per day, and how often the teenagers check their social networking sites were the variables used to measure this objective. These individual variables were employed in previous studies by Odell et al. (2000), Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008), Hong et al. (2007) and Misra et al. (2015).

The result of this study indicates as shown in (Table 2C), that both genders are spending more time using social media sites irrespective of gender and that the number of hours that both genders spent using SNSs seems to be similar. This result is in line with the result from Odell et al. (2000) which stated that, there is a narrowing of the gender gap in social media usage and that there exist little difference between the time that both sexes spend on line.

On the contrary, other scholars stated the difference that exists in the hours that both sexes spend using SNSs. Misra et al. (2015) said that females compared to males spend more hours daily using social networking sites, whiles (Hong et al. (2007); Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008)) believe that, males rather spend long hours online. This finding of the current study still proves how the trend of social media use among teenagers keeps changing.

In relation to how often male and female teenagers in Ghana use SNS, males tend to be in the lead. The study revealed (shown in Table 2D), that male teenagers in Ghana, tend to log into their account more times a day, especially throughout (73%) compared to females (69%). The options that females passed the males were “once a day” and the “other” category of which the percentages were below average.

This finding is consistent with studies conducted by Raacke & Bonds-Raacke (2008) & Hong et al. (2007) who believe that males log into their accounts more often than females do.

Looking at the findings of the current study, clearly, it can be seen that the evidence given by Odell et al. (2000) that, there exist a narrowing of the gender gap when it comes to the extent or frequency of social media use still holds. Though male teenagers in Ghana tend to log into their account more times and spend more hours than female teenagers in Ghana do, the difference is below average, and it’s possible that as technology takes different turns all the time, the gap might be closer than it is now.

### **5.3: Personality Traits and Frequency of Social Media Use**

**RQ3.** The third objective of the study was to find out if the personality traits of both male and female teenagers in Ghana influence their frequency of social media use. The three traits examined in this study were Neuroticism, Openness to New Experience and Extraversion.

As shown earlier in (Tables 6 to 11), all the three personality traits investigated in the study did not have any significant relationship with either of both sexes’ extent or frequency of social media use. Thus; extraversion, openness to new experience and neuroticism (emotionally unstable) were non-significantly related to male and female teenagers in Ghana’s hours spent using these social networking sites. This evidence can be seen from the

different Chi-Square test tables that revealed that the total P-values recorded for both genders in relation to the hours they spend using SNSs and their personality traits were higher than 0.05%. This result then implies that the number of hours male and female teenagers in Ghana spend using social media has no connection with their personality traits.

This finding is not consistent with previous studies. For instance, Moore & McElroy (2011) established that neurotic (emotionally unstable) individuals report spending more time using social media sites and other studies like Hughes (2012) and Amichai-Hamburger & Ben Artzi (2003) supported this claim.

The result of the current study also contradicts a portion of the results found in Correa et al. (2010) who found that, for men, extraversion was positively related to their social media use while for women both extraversion and openness to new experience were positively related to their social media use. On the contrary, their assertion that emotional stability turned out to be negatively related to both genders' social media use support the result of the current study.

In support of the present study, Muscannell et al. (2012) also stated that neuroticism was not significantly related to any of the specific social media activities they measured. Based on the findings from the current study, it can be concluded that there exist the possibility that the relationship between personality traits and social media usage may apply to other age groups as well as other communities rather than teenagers in Ghana.

#### **5.4: Purpose of Social Media Use**

**RQ4.** The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the gender difference with regard to the purposes for using social networking sites. Aside the Uses and Gratifications Theory,

the Social Role Theory has been mentioned in previous literature to explain why males and females have different reasons for using SNSs.

As shown earlier in (Table 3), there exist differences in the reasons why both genders use social networking sites but it was obvious that both sexes are selecting more than one reason. From (Table 3), the five dominant reasons were to: “Keep in Touch with Friends and Family, for Academic Purposes, to Read the News and Get Facts, to Meet New People and to Maintain Existing Relationships”. The result gotten from these dominant variables indicate a gender difference in both sexes usage of these SNS sites. This is because apart from female teenagers using the sites for academic purposes more than males did; the other four options went in favour of the males more than it did for the females.

This evidence contrasts with an earlier study by Raacke and Bonds-Raacke who reported no gender difference in these dominant reasons given for using SNSs. On the other hand, the findings of the current study are in agreement with the results from Mazman & Usluel (2011) who believe gender differences exist in those variables.

Interestingly, male teenagers in Ghana tend to “keep in touch with friends and family, maintain existing relationships and to read the news and get facts” more than Ghanaian female teenagers do. One thing to note here is that, though the males used the sites for these reasons more than the females did, the differences were not much. This finding is not consistent with a study by Mazman & Usluel (2011) who found that females tend to use the SNSs to “Maintain existing relationships, for Academic purposes and to follow agenda” more than males do. The only finding of their study similar to the findings of the current study was the idea that males use social media sites to “meet new people” more than females do. On the other hand, females use the sites for “academic purposes” (15.5%) more than males do

(12.8%). To support this claim, Weiser (2000) also stated that females use the SNS sites for “academic purposes” more than males do.

Additionally, the claim that males prefer to use social media sites to play games more than females were positive in the present study. Studies by Misra et al. (2015) and Tahiroglu et al. (2008) confirm this claim.

Some researchers who have tackled this issue raised the idea that, these different purposes of SNS use by both sexes could be evidence for the Social Role Theory. (Guadagno et al. (2013); Barker (2009); Misra et al. (2015) & Mazman & Usluel (2011)). The theory stipulates that, different social roles have been designated to both genders. The females’ roles require them to use SNSs for communal or connectivity purposes while males are required to use the sites to exhibit "agentic" roles. From the study, it was realised that the "agentic" qualities of males were exhibited as males were seen using the social networking sites to” play games” (7.7%) more than females (5.7%). Likewise, they used the sites to “read the news and get facts, to discover new music, books, films and other entertainment” more than females did.

On the contrary, the relational or communal roles of females were hidden in this study as more males were seen using the SNSs to “keep in touch with friends and family and to maintain existing relationships” more than females do, even though the percentage of males using the sites for these purposes were slightly higher than that of the females. This result also indicates that the different social roles assigned to both genders keep narrowing as males are seen in this study using the sites for communal purposes also. In terms of gender, those roles are changing as far as the use of social media is concerned.

The issue of privacy and mode of engagement also emerged in studies conducted in this area regarding the Social Role Theory. Scholars such as Mazman & Usluel (2011) & Raacke &

Bonds –Raacke (2008) believe that females tend to hide their identities and personal information to keep their privacy in internet environment and according to Guadagno et al. (2013), this makes them engage more in online video calls rather than sending text messages. This was evident in the current study though males tend to engage in online video calls and send private messages more than females did. On the other hand, females tend to send text messages more than males did.

### **5.5. Gratifications Obtained from Using SNSs**

**RQ5:** The last objective of the study was to investigate the gender difference with regards to the gratifications teenagers in Ghana obtained or sought from using social media sites.

From (Table 4), most of the teenagers had more than one gratification for using SNSs sites. Also, the gratifications gotten from using SNS sites differed by gender slightly. What is unique about this result is that male teenagers in Ghana scored higher percentages with all the gratification options provided in the study than the female teenagers did. This meant that they sought more gratifications more than the female teenagers in Ghana did.

The result from the current study contradicts the finding from, Dunne et al. (2010) who gave a distinction between the gratifications that are specific to males and females. Their study stated that more females seek certain gratifications such as escapism, entertainment and alleviation of boredom more than males do, and this is not evident in the current study.

Also, the result of the current study contradicts that of Barker (2009) who found that, females seek gratifications such as “entertainment and passing time” more than males do; whiles

males, on the other hand seek “social compensation and identity gratifications” more than females do.

These findings tend to give support to the reliability of the theoretical framework adopted in the study-the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which stipulates that, media users have alternative choices to satisfy their needs. The theory proves why both genders will have different reasons for using SNS and gratifications obtained from those sites. (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974).

## **5.6: Conclusion**

This study on the gendered face of SNSs usage among male and female teenagers in Ghana brought out results which support some of the studies reviewed in the literature and at the same time rejected others.

The study concludes that both genders are active users of social media and Whatsapp is the predominantly used SNS by teenagers in Ghana and also across most countries in the world. With regards to gender, one can conclude that, gender is not a big issue in Ghanaian teenagers’ social media use. This is because, from the study, even though both sexes in Ghana use different types of SNSs have different motivations and gratifications for using the sites, the differences were not much. For instance, both sexes selected all the gratification options such as relaxation, passing time, entertainment etc. provided in the study. The only difference was that, the number of males who selected them was more than the females.

Also, the issue of time and gender does not really hold. This is because, even though teenage boys in Ghana spend more time on social media than teenage girls, the difference was not significant in the study.

These observations prove that, the gender gap in social media usage keeps narrowing all the time as stated earlier in the study by other scholars. It can be realised from the current study that, the issues raised by earlier scholars regarding how both genders are embracing the internet are not the same today. This is because females who were described as technophobic are becoming more vibrant users of these sites.

When it comes to gender, personality and social media use, one may conclude that, in the face of Ghana, both sexes' social media use is not influenced by their personality traits. The reason being that, the three traits examined in the study were not related to both genders' social media usage.

The Social Role Theory talks about roles that is unique to males “agentic” and those that are peculiar to females “communal roles”. In the Ghanaian context, this assumption doesn't really matter. The study revealed that, males played both their agentic roles in addition to the communal roles of females more than the females did.

### **5.7: Limitations of the Study**

The study was faced with some challenges. The first challenge had to do with the Methodology. Most of the questions were closed –ended and didn't allow for an in-depth information from the respondents.

Another limitation of the study was the problem faced in obtaining relevant literature on this topic from Ghana and other African countries. The study had to rely on previous studies from the western countries especially the United States of America. This may have affected the analysis made in the study.

### **5.8: Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are worth considering:

1. A study can be conducted in future to investigate how teenagers in Ghana are using social media sites differently from each other. This can help prove the validity of the current study
2. The research can be widened by increasing the sample size and if possible, a longitudinal study (a study done over a long period) can be conducted rather than a cross-sectional (a study done within the shortest time) to get to know the trends as technology keeps evolving at all times.
3. The study could be complemented with a more qualitative approach to get more details beyond the quantitative data on how both genders in Ghana are using Social Networking Sites.

## 5.9: Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study presented the discussions on the main conclusions of the study, the limitations of the study as well as recommendations made to help studies that will be conducted in future.



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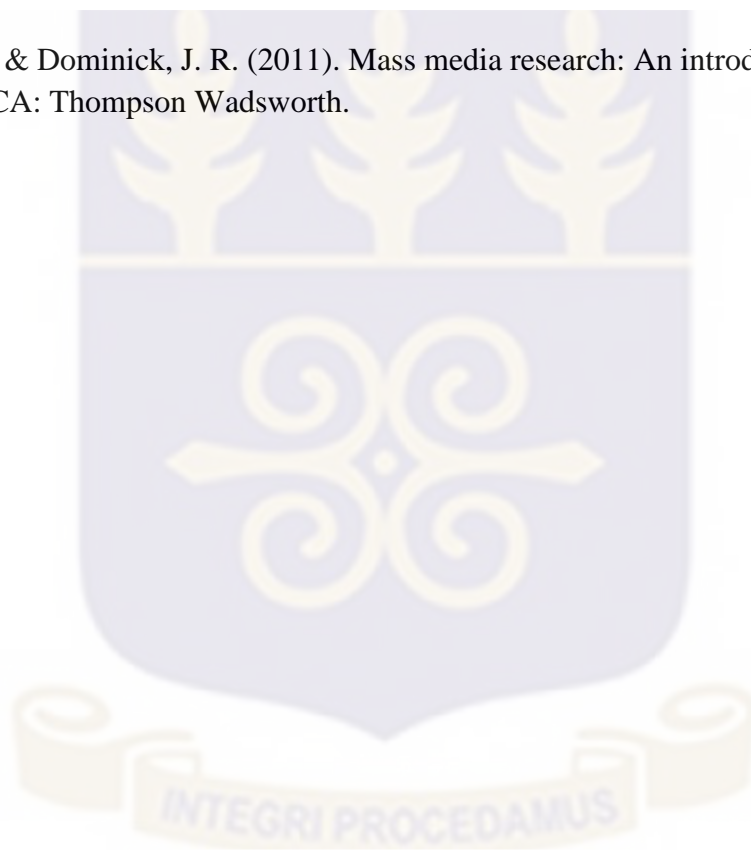
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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear Participant,**

My name is Gladys Sapani, a student offering a Master's Programme in Communication Studies with the University of Ghana. As a part of my course, I am required to submit a research project. My research topic is —*The Gendered Face of Social Media Use among Teenagers in Ghana*. Please rate the questions according to how you use social media sites. I can assure you that the information gathered is for academic purpose only and your response will remain confidential and you will not be contacted for any further response. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

#### **SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of respondents**

**Gender:**

1. Male [ ]
2. Female [ ]

**Age:**

1. 12-15 [ ]
2. 16-19 [ ]
3. Above 19 years

**SECTION B: Social Media Usage Questions:**

**1. Which of the following Social Networking Sites do you currently have an account with? (Tick all that apply).**

1. Facebook
2. Snapchat
3. Instagram
4. Twitter
5. Whatsapp
6. YouTube
7. Google+.
8. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which one of these sites do you use most often? \_\_\_\_\_**

**3. How often do you check your Social Media Site(s)?**

1. Once a day
2. Twice a day
3. Thrice a day
4. Throughout
5. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How many hours do you spend on your social networking sites each day?**

1. 0-5 hours
2. 6-10 hours
3. 11-15 hours
4. More than 16 hours

**5. What do you use these social media sites for? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)**

1. To keep in touch with friends and family
2. To meet new people
3. Share photos, videos, and music
4. To play games.
5. To discover new music, books, films, and other entertainment
6. To read the news and get facts
7. To maintain existing relationship
8. For academic purposes

**6. What specific gratifications do you get from using these social networks? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)**

1. To pass time
2. Companionship
3. To escape from pressure
4. Enjoyment
5. Relaxation
6. Information
7. Excitement
8. Social interaction

**7. Do you set your social media account(s) to private?**

1. YES
2. NO

**8. If yes why?**

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**9. Which of these do you prefer most?**

1. Online video calls
2. Text messages

**SECTION C: PERSONALITY QUESTIONS:**

Here are some questions from three of the Big Five Factors of personality selected from the 44-item inventory that measures people on their personality traits (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998). Please choose one number from each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by **Circling** an appropriate number based on your feelings about yourself.

**Please be guided by the following: Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1: Disagree (D) = 2:**

**Neutral (N) = 3: Agree (A) = 4 and Strongly Agree (SA) = 5**

As a person.....	SD	D	N	A	SA
I see myself as someone who is talkative	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is depressed	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is original, and comes up with new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5

I see myself as someone who is reserved.	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is curious about many different things.	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is relaxed, and handles stress well	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is a deep thinker.	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who worries a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who tends to be quiet.	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is emotionally stable, or not easily upset.	1	2	3	4	5
I see myself as someone who is creative.	1	2	3	4	5
I am someone who is outgoing and sociable.	1	2	3	4	5

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!!!**

