

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SPORTS FAN  
ENGAGEMENT: A CASE OF ACCRA HEARTS OF OAK AND KUMASI  
ASANTE KOTOKO**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of Master of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in this study have been fully acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

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**CERTIFICATION**

We hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana, Legon.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project work to Jehovah Almighty, my beloved family and Mr. Joseph Syme, who made a great investment in my life by contributing to my education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BBS	Bulletin Board System
CAF	Confederation of African Football
CB-SEM	Covariance based structural equation modelling
CEB	Community Engagement Behaviour
CIC	Community Information Centres
CTRs	Click-through-rates
EPL	English Premier League
FC	Football Club
FEB	Fan Engagement Behaviour
FIFA	Federation International de Football Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFA	Ghana Football Association
GLB	Ghana League Board
GPL	Ghana Premier League
GSE	Ghana Stock Exchange
HOE	Hierarchy of effects
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4AD	Information and Communication Technology for Accelerated Development
IFFHS	International Federation for Football History and Statistic
IPO	Initial Public Offer
IRCs	Internet Relay Charts
IS	Information Systems
ISPs	Internet service providers
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IVS	Independent Variables
IWS	Internet World Stats
MAU	Monthly Active User
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MTN	Mobile Telecommunication Network
NC	Nominalisation Committee

NCA	National Communication Authority
SAS	Strategic African Security
SC	Sporting Club
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SM	Social Media
SME	Social Media Engagement
SNS	Social Network Site
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
URL	Uniform resource locator
WWW	World Wide Web

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of social media and sports fan engagement and explore whether social media engagement has a mediating effect on the relationship between fan engagement behaviour and fan loyalty. The research employed an explanatory research design to explain the cause-and-effective relationship among fan behaviour and fan loyalty. Self-administered questionnaires were employed in collecting the data. The target population for this study was fans of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko, who were active on social media during the sample time frame. After a two and half month period of data collection, three hundred and twenty-five (325) questionnaires were valid for statistical analyses. The Partial Least Square (PLS) method was used to test the hypothesis. The study revealed that social media engagement has a positive and significant influence on fan behaviour and fan loyalty. Sport organisations predominantly use social media to increase their brand visibility and to develop fan relationships. The study found that loyalty in this population was more multifaceted than the unvarying consumer markets. Fans of the two clubs appeared to hold a higher sense of loyalty and control in their devotion to the club. The study contributes to new knowledge regarding the potential and limitations in the use of social media in marketing and relationships. The substantial use of social media seems to be primarily directed towards club's visibility and relationship development. Social media usage is significant in improving fan loyalty in football clubs. The study provides evidence of how a fan's behaviour and the club's effort to engage via social media lead to fan loyalty and commitment.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Chapter overview**

This chapter provides a background to social media and sports fan engagement and presents the concept of social media and how it has evolved to the overall concept of engagement. Furthermore, the research gaps that this study seek to address are stated. The chapter also outlines the objectives and hypothesis of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and the chapter disposition.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have evolved and hence shifted the attention of organisations from outmoded forms of communicating marketing programmes like magazines, television, radio and newspapers to social media in order to better engage with the public (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Schulze, Scholer, & Skiera, 2014). Social media has gradually been adopted as an internet marketing tool within business (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). Studies have shown and unravelled that Web 2.0 (social media) is a significant marketing tool and as such has continuously evolved over the past two decades (Deloitte, 2018; Hoffman, & Novak, 2012; Patino, Pitta, & Quinones, 2012). According to Eagleman (2013), social media is believed to be one of the fastest and proficient ways of growing a football club, communicating with fans and or national governing bodies of sports. It helps in facilitating, reinforcing consumption, accruing brand loyalty and fan retention (Kozinets, 2002; 2010). Then again, it is proven to be a giant catalyst for the footballing world and fans alike. It represents the easiest and fastest way to circulate information around the globe (PwC, 2018).

Not only has social media evolved, but has also offered a platform for sport clubs and management to interact and engage fans in real time (Meng, Stavros, & Westberg, 2015). As Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) note, in this day where social media is eminent, engagement has turned out to be the backbone of marketing, allowing consumers to be active members rather than being passive receivers. Based on the aforementioned, social media becomes a treasured marketing instrument, which permits satisfied consumers to make recommendations to prospective consumers (Boateng, 2014; Forbes & Vespoli, 2013). This also allows fans to be loyal and passionate about their teams irrespective of the club's on-field performance and always recommend their preferred sport club to others.

Building on Keller (2013), social media offers enormous benefits for organisations. Lebel, Loving, and Campbell (2015) state that, sporting clubs utilise social media strategies to augment profit. Social media however offers football clubs with ground-breaking experiences and interactions to build rapport with fans outside the club's home market (Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly, 2014). Given the cumulative commercialisation of sports, it is not astonishing that clubs are impelled into the branding spotlight (Thompson et al., 2018). Therefore, the branding of sport clubs is seen as an essential fragment in guaranteeing achievement and maximising additional financial revenue (Bouchet et al., 2013). This is extremely possible since social media provides fans with the opportunity to find the latest sports information and also network with other fans (Hull & Lewis, 2014). Therefore, it is anticipated that Web 2.0 (social media) can create a chance for football clubs and fans to engage and interact based on the likes, shares, comments, tweets and retweets. Filo, Lock and Karg (2015) state that professional teams invest significant amount of resources and time into nurturing and maintaining fan engagement through social media. Deloitte (2018) asserts that

social media helps football clubs in accruing revenue and acquainting with prospective fans and setting up connections swiftly and smoothly.

Kaplan and Haelein (2010) postulate that in differentiating social and traditional media, social media markers ought to be humble, interesting and honest in communicating with consumers. The evolution of social media has fashioned an opportunity for customers to be heard (i.e. when articulating their grievances), which is a prime component in building trust thereby making the transactional marketing concept obsolete, paving way to relationship building (Andzulis, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012). This affirms the fact that little attention was given to sport fans until the upsurge of social media where fans became powerful and made a lot of contributions to clubs' decisions. For instance, the manager of English Premier League football club Liverpool FC, Jürgen Klopp, made few of his signings based on fans recommendations. This confirms Meng et al's. (2015) findings that sport managers ought to strengthen their commitment by engaging fans. Gantz (2013) indicates that social media facilitates fans' connectivity and supplements other relationships.

All things considered, the term social media is very broad and as such becomes difficult to distinguish what qualifies it (Witktemper, Lim & Waldburger, 2012). Notably, Jaffrey (2011) defined social media as any online platform that heartens interaction, discussion and sense of belongingness. From the above definition, social media could be interpreted as a social networking site (SNS) that involves podcasting, wikis, discussion group, text messaging, forums, photo sharing, content communities, video streaming and blogs that facilitates communication (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010; Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Chan and Guillet (2011) concur that Web 3.0 technologies facilitates online engagement in real time. Williams and Chinn (2010) also defined Web 2.0 as a podium of collective and user-controlled virtual

platforms that enhance involvement, expertise, capabilities and consumer power. These social media platforms permit internet users to relate, engage and socialise with one another (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011); not only is it utilised by individuals but global organisations at large, of which sport organisations are not exception.

Interestingly, social media has powered users by taking active part in forecasting, designing, dissemination, editing and sharing content that is accessible by everyone (Williams & Chinn, 2010; Abeza et al., 2013; Watanabe, Yan & Soebbing, 2015). Thus, consumers are recently becoming producers and disseminators of knowledge (Abeza et al., 2013), paving way for real time information and easy access to same.

For instance, the former director in charge of social media marketing and strategy for National Hockey League (NHL), Mike DiLorenzo once indicated: “social networks aren’t about websites. They’re about experiences” (Wyshynski, 2009 as cited in Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p.268). If social media enhances the interaction of an individual and over thousand others within a space of time, it explains why social media drives business in which marketers influence consumers (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011). With the help of social media, marketers are able to communicate and accrue customer commitment to a firm’s marketing programmes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

In this modern era, social media has become a strategy used by organisations in communicating their marketing programmes (Jaffrey, 2011) and interestingly, it is used largely by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), international corporations, governmental agencies and charity organisations (Kaplan & Haenlien, 2010; Kim & Ko, 2012). McCarthy et al. (2014) stated that sport clubs can use social media to engage,

communicate and drive traffic to their website. Miller and Lammas (2010) state that organisations, in adopting social media strategy, should ensure that the strategy is able to resolve the challenges and explore the opportunities related to it.

Primarily, Facebook usage was eminent in the year 2006 by sport clubs for marketing activities (Pronschinske, Groza & Walker, 2012). Nonetheless, as sport organisations desire to remain relevant and noticeable, it is necessary for them to understand how social media will accrue fans' awareness and interaction. Filo et al. (2015) opine that professional football clubs recently marshal resources towards online engagement and brand awareness. Football clubs such AS Roma, FC Barcelona, Liverpool FC, Manchester United and Real Madrid; mega-events such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), World Cup, Confederation of African Football (CAF), Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League, Super Bowl, and Olympics; athletes like Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar Jr and other sport retail brands like Adidas and Nike are using myriads of ways to integrate social media into marketing strategies (McCarthy et al., 2014; Garcia, 2011).

This notwithstanding, it is quite challenging to measure the impact of social media, but it can be quantified through sales on social media accounts (Jaffrey, 2011). It can be seen that organisations do benefit from social media presence and as such accrued brand exposure, subscribers' online traffic, reduced cost, trust, customer dedication, more leads, co-operations and new business connections (Jaffrey 2011; Stelzner, 2011). Nonetheless, Hoffman and Fodor (2010) state that organisations can ascertain the number of views, likes, shares, retweets, and comments on social media especially with the right account. Essentially,

organisations can also measure the visits to their official websites and the number of sales generated through social media.

Conversely, it is imperative to empirically examine the role of social media sports fan engagement and loyalty through the use of Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, this current study seeks to examine the role of social media sports fan engagement and loyalty of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko, because these two clubs are the traditional clubs in Ghana that have won many laurels and can boast of high branding both online and offline, as compared to other clubs in Ghana.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2000) state that football clubs are facing intense competition from other contenders, mainly other entertainment options such as cinemas, theatres, and shopping complex and other online entertainment such as DStv programmes, television-series, Home Box Office (HBO), and Netflix. However, the above entertainment options all vie for consumers' resources and time; by this virtue, football clubs have stepped up in the game, thereby guiding their territory over arch-rivals and developing strategies to retain their existing customers. Though globalisation has become a threat to live sports, it also permits football clubs to appeal to global fans and attract sponsors to help increase their revenue. Recently, two international brands 'UMBRO' and 'STRIKE' signed sponsorship deals with Accra Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko respectively due to their online presence. That notwithstanding, for clubs to accrue their international fan base, they ought to be active on social media and consistently engage their fan base.

Griffiths (2016) states that most organisations use social media without comprehending the power, influence and reach of the platform. Furthermore, the emergence of social media has seen a lot of organisations struggling to manage, create and implement social media strategies (Miller & Lammas, 2010; Hanna et al., 2011). Thus, social media usage by numerous organisations appears to be “mostly experiential and ad hoc, rather than strategically planned in organisations across myriads of countries” (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012, p.303). Despite the power and influence of social media, most organisations have not applied a concise and clear social media strategy; most firms display lack of social media monitoring, insufficient coaching and support to employees (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). In addendum, social media implementation is often confused with what the firm intended to do (Deloitte, 2018). For instance, a study conducted in 2012 unravelled that only 23 percent of European organisations have specific social media strategies in executing their activities (see PwC, 2018).

Despite the efforts made by sport organisations in engaging their fans on social media, the aftermaths of these exertions have not been sufficiently explored (Mahan, 2011; Meng et al., 2015; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Most sport firms use social media to expedite fans’ connectivity and nurture other relationships (Gantz, 2013). Hence, sport organisations are anticipated not only to win games but also make their events gratifying and engage fans through social media; online media serves as a community where fans can interact with club and other fans. Ioakimidis (2010) states that social media permits fans to express their personal ideas, experiences and sense of belongingness to the community. Nonetheless, sports organisations cannot rely heavily on their social media traffic alone to gain insight into fan engagement. Interestingly, not everyone on a social media page of a sport organisation, or more specifically a football club, may be a fan. Thus, there is a possibility that some people,

after becoming fans, may never visit the platform again or will leave immediately their favourite player leaves. For instance, some Real Madrid fans left the club's social media page simply because Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro left the club for Juventus. Juventus' social media handles gladly gained new followers (PwC, 2018). There is, therefore, the need for investigation to provide the impact of social media on football clubs fan engagement and loyalty.

Previous research has contributed substantially to knowledge pertaining to social media usage. For example, a good number of scholars have investigated the social media usage on sports (Meng et al., 2015; Eagleman, 2013; Kim & Hull, 2017; Vale & Fernandes, 2018; Thomson et al., 2018). For example, researchers such as Vale and Fernandes (2018) indicate that football clubs who use social media have discovered that social media usage has an effect on the clubs' performance, however, the researchers state that the communication and cooperative nature of social media can strengthen new, specific and more social enthusiasms and can be used to promote targeted campaigns and one-to-one relationships. Most recent research works have empirically tested the effect of social media on sport fan engagement (Meng et al, 2015; Thomson et al., 2018; Eagleman, 2013; Vale & Fernandes, 2018) and ascertained that social media's difference and or distinctive functionalities may impact the performance or engagement within different context. Hence, Vale and Fernandes (2018) suggest that future study should focus on fan loyalty and engagement.

This notwithstanding, organisations must comprehend that advancing in social media marketing requires a large amount of resources and time and should be successfully incorporated into the firm's marketing strategy (Seppälä, 2015). Therefore, Rampton (2014) opines that an effective and efficient social media strategy is when an organisation can

interact and engage its audience. Essentially, there is no criteria as to how and when an organisation should market and engage customers on social media; The firm prerogative to decide on the type of strategy to deploy based on its business activities. The above suggest that organisations should endeavour to reach the right audience and attain the best outcome (Jaffrey, 2011; eMarketer, 2016).

Marketers in general should recognise that social media is evolving and changing swiftly with a highly concentrated environment (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Nonetheless, whilst this may seem evident, most organisations overlook this fact especially when implementing social media campaigns and therefore assume that social media environment and consumer behaviours are solid and static. According to Hoyle (2002), consumer trends and purchasing patterns keep on evolving and as such, marketers ought to be on the guard. Thus, the engagement and interaction of consumers have transformed significantly due to the evolution of social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Notably, sport organisations lately have bottlenecks in their social media strategies. Research has shown that most football clubs have not utilised all the features of social media (Pronschinske et al., 2012; McCarthy et al., 2014). Mullin et al. (2000) state that the only distinction between firms and football clubs is the fact that clubs refer to their customers as fans who are more passionate and loyal than consumers of an organisation. Not to mention, the sport consumers (fans) are seen to have a strong bond with the club's brand. Nevertheless, Kim and Trail (2011) argue that sport fans are more dissatisfied and disconnected to their respective clubs than ever; yet social media is seen to be one of the powerful drivers of fan and club relationship (McCarthy et al., 2014).

Social media research in Africa has covered the use of social media sports sponsorship and public archives (Mukwevho & Ngeoepe, 2018), social media browsing among some selected youths (Ramnarain & Govender, 2013), social network marketing to the middle pyramid in emerging markets (Chikweche & Fletcher, 2014), new technology used to accrue the visibility of documentary heritage housed archives in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kamatula et al., 2013) and constraint and regulation of ambush marketing - social and digital mega sports event (Chanavat & Desbordes, 2014). These various studies point to the fact that there is little research pertaining to social media, and sports and fan engagement in the Sub-Saharan context. Therefore, the call for further investigation on social media and sport fan engagement in the Sub-Saharan Context is necessary; as indicated by Li, Li, and Zhao (2009). “The internet is a global medium, but its content is local to each country” (p.126).

Studies on social media have shown varied results. Meng et al. (2015) researched on how football clubs use social media to engage fans, and it was established that social media is an effective tool in engaging fans and enhancing club identification. Kim and Hull (2017) also investigated how social media tool is used in engaging fans of baseball teams, and their findings indicate that fan engagement is not often attained through social media. However, Hambrick and Kang (2015); Vale and Fernandes (2018); and Thomson et al., (2018) carried similar work to ascertain the popularity that social media accrues and how sports brand can leverage this fame to enhance fan loyalty and build brand equity. It was revealed that social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, when utilised by sport firms would lead to long-term relationships with fans and brand loyalty. In view of the above, there is a clear indication that there are varied results in ascertaining how social media impacts on sports fan engagement and loyalty and hence, the need to research on the aforementioned in the Ghanaian context.

### **1.3 Aims and Objective of the Study**

The general aim of this study is to examine the influence of social media engagement on the relationship that exists between drivers of fan engagement behaviour and fan loyalty.

Basically, this study has two broad objectives:

1. To identify the drivers of Fan Engagement Behaviour (FEB) of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko
2. To examine the relationship between social media engagement and fan loyalty of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

H1a: There is a significant effect of fan motivation on fan loyalty

H1b: There is a significant effect fanship on fan loyalty

H1c: There is a significant effect of fan satisfaction on fan loyalty

H2: Social Media Engagment significantly leads to fan loyalty

H3a: Fan motivation significantly improves the effect of fan loyalty on social media engagement

H3b: Fanship significantly improves the effect of fan loyalty on social media engagement

### **1.5 Significance and Justification of Study**

The results of this research are significant in the area of providing scholarly contributions to research and practice, since literature on social media engagement and fan loyalty in Ghana is debatably scanty. This current study drives further than the existing research works on social media in Ghana by examining the effect of social media on sports fan engagement as well as Fan Engagement Behaviours (FEB) and fan loyalty. Furthermore, this study will contribute to extant conceptual and empirical literature on social media sports fan engagement and serves

as a foundation for additional studies. This research will be useful to course tutors for teaching the acceptance of information technology in sports. Pertaining to the implication to practice, this research will offer a comprehension of the role of social media on sport organisations. It will also enlighten sport management on the use of social media in engaging fans. In the null shell, sporting firms in Ghana and beyond can leverage on this research's findings as a blueprint in engaging fans on social media platforms. In addition, this research contains significant inferences for Ghanaian sports marketers, which is necessary for categorising the loyalty patterns and types of fans to aid sports marketers in tailoring their marketing programme. Consequently, as the research aims to unravel the engagement behaviour of fans in the Ghanaian football context, it could serve as a framework to build rapport with fans along the path of fanaticism. That not said, it will go a mileage to build a stronger and larger fan base, which will help to accrue revenue.

### **1.6 Chapter disposition**

This research is organised into six chapters which include an overview of the study, literature review, the context of the study, methodology, data presentation and analysis, conclusion and recommendations. A synopsis of the various chapters are given below.

Chapter One introduces the study, outlines the aims and objectives for which the research is being conducted, explains the significance of the study and gives a breakdown of how the work is organised. Chapter Two presents the discussion of the context of the research which is sporting clubs in Ghana (Ghana Premier League). The sector is purposively selected because social media engagement in the sector has accrued and club teams are taking the advantage and adopting it into their business model. Chapter Three presents the literature review and theoretical discussions underpinning the study. The chapter concludes by

providing a conceptual framework which serves as a theoretical guide to the research. The conceptual and empirical literature are reviewed under the themes fan engagement, fan loyalty, brand building, social media, among others.

Chapter Four discusses the methodological approach adopted by the researcher to achieve the stipulated objectives. The chapter discusses the choice of research design, research population, sampling techniques and sample size. In addendum, the source of data, data collection instrument(s) and methods of data collection and issues of research ethical consideration are addressed. Subsequently, the data analysis tools and technique used for the study are discussed. The chapter concludes by presenting the method for testing the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Chapter Five presents an analysis of the data collected. The descriptive and inferential analyses of the data are presented in this chapter. Smart Partial Least Square (PLS) was used in facilitating the analysis. Further, a discussion of the findings in relation to literature is presented. Chapter Six concludes the research based on findings. Subsequently, inferences and recommendations for further studies were stated.

### **1.7 Chapter summary**

This section offers a background discussion of the research and an understanding of the concepts underpinning the study. It also outlines the problem statement, research objectives, and the significance of the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONTEXT OF STUDY**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The current chapter encompasses thoughts on the context of the dissertation in Ghana's premier league clubs. The chapter discusses internet and communication technology in Ghana, internet penetration in Ghana, social media usage in Ghana, football in Ghana and the two clubs under study.

#### **2.1 Internet and Communication Technology in Ghana**

Generally, the availability of internet has given people the opportunity to utilise online networking, which includes Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter to interact without the requirement for physical meetings. That is to say, the upsurge of social media has been boosted by the increasing availability and recent advances in internet technologies (Web 3.0). Molosi (2001) opined that the internet is growing faster than all other communication technologies that came before it. With the internet, millions of people across the globe get to communicate and share information. Boateng et al. (2008) indicated that the internet and related technologies, which fundamentally make up the electronic commerce (e-commerce) that is used to conduct business transactions, is a significant development that has been widely acknowledged as a revolution for the conduct of business globally. The global diffusion of the internet and related technologies has accrued the knowledge circulation which is done with humanising communication efficiency (e.g. Cowan & Jonard, 2004), improved political engagement (Norris, 2001), improved fan engagement (Vale & Fernandes, 2018), and evolved the 'leapfrog' traditional means of accruing efficiency (Boateng et al., 2008; Steinmuller, 2001).

Ghana lies on the shores of West Africa with a populace of about 29.7million as at 2018, a gross domestic product (GDP) of 47.33 billion USD as at 2017, an inflation rate of 9.9% as at August 2018 and a GDP per capita of 4,227.60 USD as at 2017 (World Bank, 2018). The country has seen the significant increases in internet accessibility subsequently to the liberalisation of the telecommunications industry in the 1990s (Woldie, Hinson, Iddrisu, & Boateng, 2008). Additionally, the liberalisation of the market steered in a new economic system, where organisations compete for the attention of customers (Narteh, Odoom, Braimah, & Buame, 2012). Foster, Goodman, Osiakwan, and Bernstein (2004) indicated that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Ghana was the first country to gain internet services. Interestingly, the internet came into the commercial domain only in the early 1990s, yet its direction of diffusion has tackled a practically foreseeable example (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Lal, 2005). By 1996, Ghana had had three internet service providers (ISPs) contending with each other (Foster et al., 2004). From 1998-2000, being the flourishing years of internet in Ghana, the ISP and the internet café industries grew rapidly (Forster et al., 2004).

According to Woldie, et al. (2008), the government of Ghana has been serious in efforts towards hunting a 'knowledge-based economy agenda to make the country an attractive country of well-endowed information and communication technology (ICT). This is because much of the rhetoric has been that internet enabled technology, which also enabled progress (Hinson & Amidu, 2006). Few authors have proposed that ICT growth will result in information literacy and that ICT enhancement has been at the heart of the economic health and social enhancement. Nonetheless, internet access and other infrastructure needs for technological advancements are not readily available in Ghana. Then again, web access rates in many African nations is below five (5) percent. This is because in many rural communities, electricity is not accessible; even in areas where electricity is accessible, it is

unstable. Hence, to lessen the accessibility issues, the government of Ghana has created, with the help of the Indian government, an idea for alleged Community Information Centre (CIC) (Ministry of Communication-Ghana, 2004). Interestingly, the CICs are fully furnished with PCs associated with the web, fax machines, TVs, radios, printers, scanners and telephones. The CICs at various communities serve the Ghana's libraries with real time data, for example, data about the costs of horticulture items for agriculturists; microloans for potential business people; and data about grants for studies (see in Schuppan, 2009).

## **2.2 Internet Penetration in Ghana**

The internet world statistics (2018) indicated that internet usage statistics for the world is estimated at 4,208,571,287, with a penetration rate of 55.1% as at June 30, 2018. Similarly, the assessed populace of Africa in 2018 was 1,287,914,329 of which 464,923,169 were internet users (Internet world stats, 2018). As at 1996, Ghana had three competing ISPs users. Though it can be seen that Ghana was the first SSA country to have access to internet, the internet penetration did not progress speedily until 2005 (Quarshie & Ami-Narh, 2012). This could possibly be attributed to the Government's ratification and adoption of information and communication technology for accelerated development (ICT4AD) in the year 2004 (Quarshie & Ami-Narh, 2012). The international telecommunication union (ITU) statistics and internet world stats (IWS) show that Ghana has seen a steady rise in the internet penetration rate. Table 2.1 below shows the correlation between inhabitant's growth and internet usage.

**Table 2.1:** Population Growth and Internet Usage in Ghana

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pen.	Usage Source
2000	30,000	18,881,600	0.20%	ITU
2005	368,000	21,029,850	1.60%	ITU
2006	401,300	21,801,662	1.80%	ITU
2007	609 800	21,801,662	2.80%	ITU
2008	880,000	23,382,848	3.80%	ITU
2009	997,000	23,887,812	4.20%	ITU
2010	1,297,000	24,339,838	5.30%	ITU
2011	2,085,501	24,791,073	8.40%	ITU
2015	5,171,993	26,327,649	19.60%	ITU
2016	7,958,675	28,033,375	28.4 %	IWS
2017	10,110,00	29,150,00	35.0%	IWS

**Source: (Internet World Stats, 2018; Quarshie & Ami-Narh, 2012)**

The surge in internet penetration could also be ascribed to the rise of mobile-broadband subscriptions. According to the report released by Ghana’s telecommunications regulator, the National Communication’s Authority (NCA), mobile data subscribers in the country have expanded exponentially with a penetration rate of 75.54%. Mobile internet subscribers accrued to 22,044,592 nationwide, as at July 2019 (National Communication Authority, 2019). The statistics indicate that as more individuals subscribe to the internet and cell phone, the more the upsurge in data subscriptions (Mingle & Adams, 2015).

### **2.3 Social Media Usage in Ghana**

The flare in social media on the African continent could be attributed to the mobile phone blast. In the third quarter of 2012, the 54 nations and 1.08 billion people have gathered 821 million subscriptions, up 16.9% year-on-year, bringing about a phone subscription

penetration of 76.4% (Gallen, 2013). According to Marina Lu’s research in collaboration with ABI Research, “while Western Europe languishes with bare positive overall growth quarter-on-quarter, Africa managed to generate 4.2% growth in the same period”. Table 2.2 shows social media usage for mobile internet subscribers, showing Facebook as the most utilised platform in Ghana, with the use of 80.14%, twitter being second with 7.31%, Pinterest positions third with 6.69%, YouTube being 4.07%, Reddit 0.61% and Instagram positioned lastly with 0.58%.

**Table 2.2:** Mobile Facebook, Twitter, Social Media Usage Statistics in Ghana

<i>Rank Ghana</i>	<i>Social Media Usage</i>	<i>% of Social Media Usage</i>
1	Facebook	80.14
2	Twitter	7.31
3	Pinterest	6.69
4	YouTube	4.07
5	Reddit	0.61
6	Instagram	0.58
7	Others	0.06
<i>Total Social Media Usage</i>		<i>100</i>

**Source: Stats Monkey (2018)**

The above table 2.2 shows the Ghanaian usage of SM where Facebook has a utilisation rate of about 80.14%, Twitter positions next with 7.31%, Pinterest positions third with 6.69%, YouTube with 4.07%, Reddit with about 0.61%, Instagram with 0.58% and others with about 0.06%.

## **2.4 Football in Ghana**

Football in Ghana has evolved after the colonial rule of British West Africa to Nkrumah's independent Ghana. Football is arguably a passion of the nation Ghana till the release of the corruption scandal of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) by a celebrated journalist called Anas Aremeyaw Anas. Undeniably, Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana's first president), after the departure of the British and upon attaining independence in 1957, saw unity as the only way to unite a divided nation. Therefore, football which was thought to be an emotional weapon that is capable of breaking even the severest fractions was quickly adopted in the process of organising the formative years of the nation around a common identity (Darby & Solberg, 2010). Nkrumah, being a strong-minded person, used football as a weapon for national development and cohesion, and appointed the first ever national sports director. "Under the stewardship of the first Ghanaian sports director, Ohene Djan, the Ghanaian national team sought victories in international competition with the explicit purpose of causing patriotic opinions amongst the Ghanaian people" (Darby & Solberg, 2010, p.120). To this end, Nkrumah personally established a football club, "Real Republicans", with the purpose of acting as an ambassador in lieu of Pan-Africanism and "the new spirit of the African man" (Darby & Solberg, 2010). According to Darby and Solberg (2010), it was under Nkrumah's regime that football saw a promising future as most significant investments were made in the history of Ghanaian football, and the Ghana league was established in 1960.

Today, the league has seen tremendous changes, both good and bad. This admission does not in any way aim at downplaying the numerous challenges confronting the Ghana Premier League (GPL). Fan apathy, poor management, corruption, lack of investment, player exodus, hooliganism and lack of attractiveness are but few of the traits of the GPL, even till today. Hinson et al. (2011) opined that the Ghana Premier League was halted due to the lack of

funds in 2001. Likewise, the 2009/2010 league season paused as a result of match fixing scandal. This scandal involved one of the second-tier clubs in Ghana, Nania FC, a club owned by the legendary Abedi Pele (former Black stars player, captain and three times African best player), that won a promotional play-off into the premier league by a questionable score line of 31-0 which was unprecedented. That notwithstanding, the Anas Aremeyaw Anas' uncover of the rot in the GPL, where referees were taking bribes to fix matches, unravelled how corrupt the system was. The above issues raised about the Ghana Premier League explains why the league has been unable to attract the masses and the needed resources to run as a professional one. A similar predicament can be found with clubs that participate in it, as they show little signs of financial capability despite the existence of management teams for most of them. However, it is rare for club funding to be at the sole clemency of fans and other benevolences (Darby & Solberg, 2010).

The above stated practice has not changed even for the so-called giant football clubs. Indisputably, the King of the Asante Kingdom (Asantehene) who also doubles as the life patron of Kumasi Asante Kotoko Sports Club has, on uncountable times, been called upon to salvage the club from its financial stagnations. Similarly, businessmen and politicians alike with commitments to local clubs are known to offer hand-outs to football clubs on regular bases (Darby & Solberg, 2010). Though, practices like this may be deemed a kind gesture, it brings the professionalism of football clubs of the country into ill repute. Hinson et al. (2011) stated that the Ghanaian Premier League is made up sixteen football clubs. In addendum to the sixteen clubs, there are divisional clubs- first, second, and third under the management of the Ghana League Board (GLB) with far worse financial plight than their big brothers in the premiership. While most of the clubs in the Ghanaian Premier League are privately owned, nonetheless, they enjoy some level of support from satellite communities, given that they

often are the only club emerging from such communities. Nevertheless, the league also has a fair representation of traditional clubs like Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko whose profile and history are as rich as the big clubs one can find anywhere in the world.

The German International Federation for Football History and Statistics (IFFHS) in 2009 voted Kumasi Asante Kotoko as the African club of the century, beating African giants like TP Mazembe and AS Vita Club of Congo, Al-Merrikh and Al Hilal Omdurman of Sudan, Esperance de Tunis of Tunisia, Raja Casablanca of Morocco, Kaizer Chiefs of South Africa, Al-Ahly and Zamalek of Egypt.

In the area of commercial activities, the GPL has witnessed significant improvement. Thus, the league, which years ago could not boast of a sponsor was rescued by First Capital-Plus with a sum of \$10 million in sponsorship and recently Zylophon took over the sponsorship with an undisclosed amount. Notwithstanding, some football clubs have managed to secure sponsorship deals separately from the league. Presently, Strategic African Security (SAS) is the major sponsor of Accra Hearts of Oak, while MTN being the largest mobile telecommunication company in Ghana is the main sponsor for Kumasi Asante Kotoko. Recently, during the 107 years' celebration of Accra Hearts of Oak, management made mention of their new kit sponsor, Umbro, whereas, Kumasi Asante Kotoko also unveiled Strike as their kit sponsor. The club would be making GHs 50,000.00 from the sponsor for three years including other benefits.

Moreover, other smaller clubs including Wa All Stars, Karela, Elmina Sharks, Dreams, WAFa, and Eleven Wonders football club have not been left out of the sponsorship spree as they all attract some sort of sponsorship from other companies. The Ghana Premier League

has made some advances with broadcasting deals. It is appalling to note that only few, if not one, local television station broadcasts live matches. However, the efforts of GFA in securing a lucrative broadcasting deal with Super Sports on DSTV sports channel SS9 cannot be overlooked. Owusu (2013) is of the view that the exact amount of deals is unknown because of the confidential clause, and the three-year broadcasting deal package signed in September 2013 was expected to see each club in the premier league earn a sum of \$25000. This is not only hope to improve the fortunes of the league but is also expected to expose the GPL to the global audience for attention. Nonetheless, not even these developments have been able to guarantee financial freedom for professional football clubs in Ghana. Indeed, it is not rare for football clubs in Ghana to abandon a continental campaign, usually in Africa on the grounds of insufficient funding (Pannenberg, 2012). This is usually the case where the cost or benefit analysis for participating in the game does not support the wisdom of financial edge for clubs (i.e. it could lead to either break even or a loss situation for clubs).

Even though, the picture appears desolate for professional football clubs, the national team (Black Stars) remains an exception. For instance, the appearance fee for players of the national team was rumoured to be one of the biggest on the African continent and at times beats most European national teams and the United States (Vibe Ghana, 2014). Certainly, the whole country was thrown into intensified displeasure when the proposed budget for the national team's "Brazil 2014 World Cup Campaign" was fixed at \$20 million by the GFA (BBC Sports, 2014). Whereas the government supports and corporates, sponsorship could be argued to have accounted for the ability to pay such heavy sums to players of the national team. Critics of the GFA have often blamed the over attention of the football governing body on the Black Stars (i.e., at the expense of development of the local league) as self-seeking. Though these claims seem to be mindboggling, actions within the circles of the GFA have

sought to give some weight to these claims. As a result, some have questioned the true commitment of the GFA to see the local league grow. A case was highlighted by Hinson et al., (2011) in a \$3 million sponsorship deal saga brokered between the GFA and Globacom, a telecommunication company. In the deal, “[it] was purported that some person or a group of person(s) within the Ghana Football Association acted as an agent to rip off the clubs...” (Hinson et al., 2011, p.105). The so-called agent(s) made away with \$1 million, representing 15% of the total sum for the 2009/2010 league season.

That notwithstanding, another area of menace of the league is in its continuous exit of talented players into foreign leagues. Interestingly, the Ghanaian league has been one of the leagues severely hit on the continent by this phenomenon (Darby & Solberg, 2010). Regrettably, there are no indications that this menace is going away any sooner, especially at a time when most European clubs are willing to pay migrant players attractive monthly salaries and bonuses that are sometimes comparable to what they would have earned in a whole year, or more, playing in the local league (Darby & Solberg, 2010). This coupled with the prestige attached to playing in Europe has further deepened the desire for young football stars to travel abroad (Darby & Solberg, 2010). Ironically, it appears that players are not the only ones seeking economic refuge, as football clubs which are anticipated to put a strong resistance to this peril are more than glad to see their star players leave for an appreciable ransom (Darby & Solberg, 2010). While clubs and players seem to be very comfortable with this arrangement, it cannot be claimed that the feeling is mutual for all. This is particularly the case for many football fans, who in all fairness, see the beautiful game of football as only beautiful outside the shores of Ghana. This is not an isolated event as many African football clubs at best groom football talents purposely for export (Darby et al., 2007).

## **2.5 Overview of the two clubs**

Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko are arguably Ghana's replica of the "El-Clasico", as the two clubs represent the best football has to offer on the African continent. Interestingly, the two clubs are arguably older than Ghana itself and have dominated football as sports in Ghana. Though on the global scale, Ghana can pass as one of the countries with low player remuneration - averaging \$150-\$400 per month, players of the two clubs seem to be the only exceptions. Thus, they are the two big football teams, including some new entrants the likes of Karela, Dreams, Elmina Sharks, Eleven Wonders, Wa All Stars etc. The next sets of discussions give an overview of the two clubs in more details.

### **2.5.1 Accra Hearts of Oak**

Accra Hearts of Oak Football Club is the oldest football team in Ghana and in the Ghanaian Premier League. Established in 11<sup>th</sup> November 1911, the club has been a great force to reckon with, both in Ghana, and on the African continent. The club's existence is fundamentally credited to a cluster of young industrious folks of Ussher town, of which Ackom Duncan, a native of Saltpond in Central Region of Ghana played a crucial role. He was the first captain of the team and subsequently, served as the club's administrator. Among others, he took up managerial duties of the club to challenge what was reported to be the prominent soccer club in the Accra Metropolitan Area at the time, the "Accra Invincibles". That not said, Accra 'Invincibles' was a club largely made up of residents of the neighbouring James Town, a suburb of Accra. Accra Hearts of Oak's official colours are red, yellow and blue, with the heart embossed in the stem of the oak tree. Recently, after celebrating the 107 birthday, they out doored a new logo representing a new era. The club's slogan is "Never say Die", which according to the club's website, symbolises or

communicates the art, science and reality of the fact that the Oak tree is one of the toughest and strongest trees in the forest and therefore able to survive all kinds of weather conditions.

Accra Hearts of Oak Sports Club is the first football club to attempt to trade commercially on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE). Truly, steps had far advanced on the part of the club to raise an Initial Public Offer (IPO) for the shares of the club, upon which an initial approval had been granted by the GSE -the regulatory body. As part of the means to get fully listed on the GSE, the club had to show evidence that it has a robust corporate governance structure in place and that the finances of the club are solid. As a result, a five-member management team was set up in July 2013 for this last impediment. The management team was made up of an acting Executive Chairman, Managing Director, Director of Finance, Administrative Manager/Accountant and Public Relations Officer. According to the board chair of the club, Torgbe Afede XIV, the recent financial performance of the club has been nothing short of impressive. For instance, the club's official website captures him saying that by 31st August, 2013, revenues increased by 206%, from GHs 322,555 to GHc 986,623 ([www.accraheartsofoak.com](http://www.accraheartsofoak.com)).

**Table 2.3: List of Laurels on the Local Front by Accra Hearts of oak**

<b>Competition</b>	<b>No. of Times Won</b>	<b>Years</b>
Ghana Premier League	20	1956, 1958, 1961/62, 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1984, 1985, 1989/90, 1996/97, 1997/98, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004/05, 2006/07, 2009
Ghana FA Cup	10	1973, 1974, 1979, 1981, 1989, 1990 (After winning a protest that declared them winners), 1993/94, 1995/96, 1999, 2000
Ghana Super Cup	2	1997, 1998

**Source: Accra Hearts of Oak, 2019**

**Table 2.4: List of Laurels of Accra Hearts of Oak on the International Front**

Competition	No. of Appearances	Champions	Runners Up	Round/Stage Reached
Africa Club Championship	2		1977, 1979	
CAF Champions League	1	2000		
CAF super Cup	1	2001		
CAF confederation cup	1	2004		

**Source: Accra Hearts of Oak, 2019**

### 2.5.2 Kumasi Asante Kotoko

Kumasi Asante Kotoko Sporting Club has been successful under the supremacy of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the present patron of the club. The king, known in sequestered life as Nana Kwaku – Duah, ascended the throne of the Golden Stool on 26 April 1999, following the death of his uncle Opoku Ware II. As the overlord of the Ashanti kingdom, he automatically inherited the foremost club of the region. Despite being an enthusiastic sports fan himself, his relationship with the club has not been without controversies. Indeed, “rumour has it that he prefers golf to football and even more disturbing, favours arch-rival Hearts of Oak over Kotoko” (Pannenborg, 2012, p.48). It was, therefore, not surprising that Accra Hearts of Oak, after been crowned winners of the CAF champions’ league in 2000, made Manhyia (palace of the Asante King) the first point of high-profile visit. Despite these events, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II remains an influential figure of Kumasi Asante Kotoko Sports Club. In the area of finances, he plays an imperative role, sometimes footing almost all the budget of the club from his own pocket. Furthermore, his seemingly appealing personality and influence both on the local and international scene has worked as an added advantage for the club in many aspects. Due to his influence, Kotoko now has access to a wide pool of sponsors and other corporate endorsements. The club’s current sponsorship list includes RLG Communications,

Fidelity Bank, Everpure Limited, Peppis Pizza, Vit's Noodles Limited, MTN Group, and SportsPro Media Limited.

Also, other global giants like Symbion Power and Kubba - (Singaporean kit manufacturer) and Strike (Portuguese sportswear manufacturer), as well as Sunderland F.C of England have a close working relationship with the club - a height which Pannenburg, (2012) describes as only possible with “big men” in place. Kotoko has such a big man in Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the life patron of the club. In addition to this, the club has celebrated several successes. However, to usher eulogy on only the club’s patron for all the successes would be insincere as the management team of the club also plays an important role.

**Table 2.5: List of Laurels of Asante Kotoko on the Local Front**

<b>Competition</b>	<b>No. of Times Won</b>	<b>Years</b>
Ghana Premier League	24	1959, 1963–64, 1964–65, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1972, 1975, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1986, 1987, 1988–89, 1990–91, 1991–92, 1992–93, 2003, 2005, 2007–08, 2011–12, 2012–13, 2013-14.
Ghana FA Cup	8	1958, 1959, 1960, 1978, 1984, 1997–98, 2001, 2013/14.
<u>Ghana Super Cup</u>	3	2012, 2013, 2014
Ghana SWAG Cup	14	1981, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2015
Ghana Telecom Gala	3	1999–00, 2001, 2005
Ghana Top Four Cup	2	2003, 2007, 2016.
Ghana Annual Republic Day Cup	3	2004, 2005, 2008.
Nominalisation Committee Cup	1	2019.

**Source: Kumasi Asante Kotoko, 2019**

**Table 2.6: List of Laurels of Asante Kotoko on the International Front**

Competition	No. of Appearances	Champions	Runners Up	Round/Stage Reached
African Cup of Champions/CAF Champions League	16	1970, 1983	1967, 1971, 1973, 1982, 1993	1966 QF, 1969 SF, 1971 F, 1976 QF, 1981 SR, 1987, 1988, FR, 2004 TR, 2005 F, 2006 GS, 2007 PR, 2009 FR, 2010 PR, 2013 F, 2014 PR
African Cup Winners Cup	1		2002	
CAF Confederation Cup	1		2004	
CAF Confederation Cup	2			
CAF Champions League:	8			
African Cup of Champions Clubs	16	1970		

**Source: Kumasi Asante Kotoko, 2019**

*Key=PR=Preliminary round, FR=final round, QF=Quarter finals, TR= Third round*

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a thorough discussion of contextual framework of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko. The chapter started with the discussion on the internet and communication technology in Ghana, internet penetration in Ghana, football in Ghana, overview of the two clubs, and the laurels won by the respective clubs.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The preceding chapter gave a background of this research by outlining the problem statement, existing gaps, objectives as well as the significance of the research. This chapter reviews extant literature on social media in sports to uncover existing issues on the subject matter under consideration. The chapter is however categorised into two sections. The foremost section discusses the concept of social media, sport branding, and fan engagement in sport organisations. The second section also looks at social media in sports, with respect to fan loyalty and consumer engagement behaviour in sports. The chapter ends by providing a conceptual framework, which serves as a guide for the study.

#### **3.1 The Evolution of Social Media**

Literature on social media has accrued in contemporary years and as such, it has become a popular term and most people around the globe are using either one or more of these social media platforms. Previously, this was not the case, as literature establishes that social media has developed over time from the embryonic days to medieval age and currently what is known as the golden age. The origins of social media spring faster than what might be imagined (Hendricks, 2013).

In 1979, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis of Duke University advanced the use of social media from the primitive stage of UseNet, where they post news to newsgroups from the internet (Hendricks, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Morrison (2015) stated that login option for interaction called Bulletin Board System (BBS) was introduced at the primitive days of social network. However, the 1980s saw the introduction of the first chat site called CompuServe;

the Prodigy Communication Corporations offered clients access to a wide scope of network services, including games, online news, travel, notice sheet, stocks, shopping and a myriad of other features that were introduced in 1984 (Hendricks, 2013; Morrison, 2015).

In 1988, the Internet relay chats (IRCs) were primarily introduced to sustain and augment social media's popularity till the 1990s (Hendricks, 2013). Recent evidence suggests that from late 1980s to 1990s, which was considered the medieval age of social media, there was the introduction of ICQ in November 1996; SixDegrees, the first distinguishable social media site in 1997; and LiveJournal, the first ever blogging site in 1999 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Morrison, 2015). Boyd and Ellison (2007) stated that SixDegrees.com is considered the first ever social media site, since it allowed clients to make their own profiles, list associations with others and surf their rundowns. The site was fixated to appeal to the masses as it was built on the concept that every person around the globe is connected to another person through six or less relations, since the world is a global village.

Grasped as one of the primary and the oldest blog communities on the internet, LiveJournal was launched as a way of connecting friends and keeping them abreast of ongoing issues. Thus, it began to function as a global social network site (SNS) in the mid-2000s. Studies have shown that although LiveJournal still exists, it has been overshadowed by new SNS leaders such as Facebook and Twitter.

The "Golden Age" of social media commenced in 2001 with the introduction of Wikipedia, Hi5, Flickr, Friendster, Reddit, Facebook, Snapchat, Pheed, Orkut, Tinder, Tumblr, WhatsApp, Vine and YouTube (see Table 2.1). Research has unravelled that the origins of social media can be traced to Friendster and Myspace; it is quite realistic to propose that

social media did not really start until the launch of Facebook in 2004. Web 2.0 is as a result of the evolution of social media; Web 1.0 also have applications such as Encyclopaedia and web pages (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010). Web 3.0 is a portable personal web fixated on individuals, live streams and consolidation of dynamic content (Deloitte, 2018).

**Table 3.1: Evolution of Social Media**

Age	Year	Social Media Platforms and Description
The embryonic Age of Social Media	1979	UseNet, Posts news to newsgroups
	1979	Bulletin Board System (BBS)-Late 1970s, first site with login option for interaction
	1980	CompuServe first chat introduced
	1984	Prodigy Communications Corporations-pioneered online portals
The Medieval Age of Social Media	1988	Internet Relay Chat-File sharing, link sharing and keeping in touch
	1996	ICQ-multi user messaging, multiplayer games, made emotions and abbreviations such as “LOL” and “BRB” became famous
	1997	Six Degrees-Glimpses of first social media resembling that of today’s like create profile and add friends
	1999	Live Journal-first to introduce dynamic content on the blogs and forum, create groups and interact
The Golden Age	2001	Wikipedia-an online free encyclopaedia
	2002	Friendster-operated by allowing people to meet new people and accrue their network
	2003	Hi5-included photo sharing, user groups, social gaming and status update
	2003	MySpace- private messaging, public comments posted to a user’s profile, bulletins sent to friends
	2004	The Facebook-opened only for the students of Harvard University
	2004	Orkut-owned by Google, meet old and new friends, rate friends, change themes, etc.
	2004	Flickr-photo sharing platform
	2005	YouTube-first organised video streaming and video sharing platform
	2005	Reddit-entertainment and social networking platform
	2005	Facebook-best performing social media platform till date with 2billion active users
	2006	Twitter-A microblogging platform with a question and answer format
	2007	Twitter-A microblogging platform with a question and answer format
	2009	Tumblr-Live streaming and microblogging platform
	2012	WhatsApp-iOS, Android and windows-based application for personal and group chats
	2012	WhatsApp-iOS, Android and windows-based application for personal and group chats
2013	Snapchat-New platform for chatting by posting pictures	
		Tinder-A social discovery application for iOS and Android devices
		Vine-A multiple platform video sharing social application

**Source:** Adopted (Morrison, 2015)

Web 1.0 is perceived as the earliest manifestation of the World Wide Web (www), which was employed primarily as a storehouse of online data and instrument that could be accessed to attain an end. Initially, the Web was grounded on “read only”, executing basic functions such as finding a website, and navigating pages between them using hyperlinks, sending emails to friends and other multimedia functions (see in Kidd & Chen, 2009). In its present day, the Web goes beyond these basic functionalities to incorporate content creation and sharing, creating online communities, sharing files and blogging. This newest manifestation of the www known as Web 2.0 is progressively applied as a method for interactivity and individual expression. The distinction between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 is the creation of content where web 1.0 is less with majority of its clients acting as the consumers of the content (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008).

### **3.2 Nature and Definitions of Social Media**

Andzulis et al. (2012) stated that social media is diverse for different individuals and organisations. In spite of the popularity of social media, term is not easily defined, as there is dismay among managers and academic researchers as to what exactly ought to be incorporated under this term (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010). Social media is any tool or service that utilises the web to enhance interactions (Schultz et al., 2012). The meaning of social media is not constrained to any Web, and this seems very reasonable as social media can be traced as far back as 1979. Turban, King, Lang, and Lai (2009) share comparable views as they refer to social media as an online site where people can share their sentiments and experience (i.e. photos, videos, music etc.).

This notwithstanding, some researchers (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010; Lewis, 2009; Lombardi, 2012) have argue that social media needs to be defined considering user-generated content (UGC) and Web 2.0, as these are words often mentioned in unification with social media.

In the research of Kaplan and Haelein (2010), social media is seen as the materialisation of the Web 2.0, the use of the WWW to denote conceptual and technological foundation of UGC which is seen as the number of ways in which people make use of social media (SM). Grounded on this assumption, SM can be defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 that allows the creation and exchange of UGC” (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010, p.69). Shen and Bissell (2013) stated that SM is seen as a new media that is devoted to social interactions, including, but not constrained to, weblogs, podcast, Twitter, microblogging, wikis, Facebook, et cetera.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), researchers of social media provided an orderly classification scheme for the myriads of social media platforms grounded on concepts in social presence, self-disclosure, media richness and self-presentation, thus, collective projects (e.g., Wikipedia); microblogs and blogs (e.g., Twitter); content communities (e.g., YouTube); social networking sites (e.g., Facebook); virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life); and virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft). Nonetheless, as technology continues to advance, new social media platforms keep coming up, hence, its categorisations are not carved in stone.

The above definitions underline the fact that “social media is any tool or service that uses the internet to aid conversations” (Schultz et al., 2012, p.77) and highlight the fact that there are a number of SM platforms (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In effect, this

research sights SM as the use of mobile and web-based innovations to make communicating platforms through which organisations, individuals and groups co-create, share, discuss, and modify UGC (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Notwithstanding, Shen and Bissell (2013) are of the view that irrespective of the definition or the standard use in classifying the platform, each form of SM is armed with certain strengths and functions.

### 3.2.1 Examples of Social media

Social media encompasses many areas. According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), the following constitute social media:

- ❖ Social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook, Faceparty)
- ❖ Creativity works sharing sites:
  - Video sharing sites (YouTube)
  - Photo sharing sites (Flickr)
  - Music sharing sites (Jamendo.com)
  - General intellectual property sharing sites (Creative commons)
  - Content sharing combined with assistance (Piczo.com)
- ❖ User-sponsored blogs (The Unofficial Apple Weblog, Cnet.com)
- ❖ Visual worlds (Second Life)
- ❖ Invitation-only social networks (A Small World.net)
- ❖ Social bookmarking sites allowing users to recommend online music, news stories, videos, etc. (Digg, del.icio.us, Reddit, Mixx it, Newsvine)
- ❖ Educational material sharing (MIT, OpenCourseWare, MERLOT)
- ❖ Company-sponsored cause/help sites (Click2quit.com, Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty)
- ❖ Open source software communities (Linux.org, Mozilla's spreadfirefox.com)

- ❖ Company-sponsored websites/blogs (P&G's Vocalpoint, Apple.com)
- ❖ News delivery sites (Current TV)
- ❖ Commerce communities (Threadless.com, iStockphoto, eBay, Craig's List, Amazon.com)
- ❖ Business networking sites (LinkedIn)
- ❖ Podcast (For Immediate Release: The Hobson and Holtz Report)
- ❖ Collaborative websites (Wikipedia)

### **3.3 Theoretical Background**

#### **3.3.1 Uses and Gratification Theory**

The concept of uses and gratification theory first appeared in the article, “on the use of the mass media for important things” (see in Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973). Katz et al. (1973) explain that uses and gratification (UG) “attract and hold audiences to the kind of media and the types of content which satisfy their social and psychological needs” (p.164). The UG theory is a term which was originally seen as a socio-psychological concept but has now transcended its roots and expanded into myriad fields (Ifinedo, 2016; Wei & Lu, 2014). Uses and gratification may be explained as the hybrid of attributes in media content that lead to the satisfaction of audience needs. The UG theory can be defined as an approach to understanding how people aggressively search for specific media to interact. That said, the UG theory is an audience-fixated method of understanding mass communication.

According to Peirce (2007), gratification includes motives such as reasoning needs, affective needs, and social integrative needs, which lead to the satisfaction of audience needs. The core concept of uses and gratification, however, is straightforward; it involves normative influences, social changes and people's reaction to social state (Blumler, 1979; Ifinedo,

2016). Uses and gratification theory has a high correlation level with factors such as government and politics, public relations, efficient financial markets (Liu, 2015; Wei & Lu, 2014); confidence in mobile social network games (Huang et al., 2017), and satisfaction with sports engagements (Vale & Fernandes, 2018; Thompson et al., 2018).

Extant literature relating to uses and gratification has also been looked at the relationship between customer engagement and loyalty and socio-psychological interaction (Rubin & Windahal, 1986). However, an aspect of the literature emphasises how organisations use the drivers of gratification to achieve organisational objectives (e.g. Peirce, 2007; Perse, 2014), while the other emphasises the utilisation of gratification drivers (i.e. media content, exposure to media and the social context in which one is exposed to media) for collective actions that include in communication and public relations. A central component of uses and gratification is relationship (Liu, 2015).

For organisations, relationship or engagement allows firms to draw on drivers of gratification from media in connecting to customers (Perse, 2014). According to Perse (2014), these drivers of gratifications may take the form of useful information, personal relations, or dimensions to engage customers. Therefore, social media permits customers to learn detailed information about other contacts, including personal backgrounds, music, interest, taste, and whereabouts (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012).

### **3.3.2 Uses and Gratification and Social Media**

One of the strains in the UG theory is beholding how and why people aggressively search for specific media to satisfy specific desires and as well recognise their motives for making media choices (Katz et al., 1974). Most studies have transformed from the old-fashioned

media effect to the functionalist paradigm of social science that focus on the analysis of uses and gratification to help people play a more active role in mass media (Liu, 2015). Katz (1959) questioned what people do with media instead of what the media does to people. Katz et al. (1973) categorised 35 needs that motivate people to use traditional media into five groups: cognitive, effective, individual integrative, social integrative, and tension release needs.

Safi and Igbal (2015) stated that every medium for mass interaction provides an advanced method at the initial stage. These kinds of consumers' needs will drive them toward certain types of media and content (Ruggiero, 2000; LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin, 2001). In view of this, SM has become the means of bridging long distance relationships and thereby keeping individuals in constant interactions with minimal cost. That said, online relationship may be sustained by technologies like distribution lists, search capabilities, and photo directories; this implies that relationship building will occur on social media.

According to Thompson et al. (2018), social media allows consumers to interact with each other through varied means within the platform, as well as chat, leave public comments on users' profiles, send private message, tweet, retweet, link to outside content and share photos and videos. Communication on SM is reinforced through individual-level ties and group-level identification within peer groups (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). Furthermore, with the likes of uses and gratification theory, researchers are interested in utilising tools and adopting different media sites and their services to fulfil specific needs (Elhadidi, 2018). These needs which make motives differ are reliant on the nature and characteristics of social media sites (Gan & Wang, 2015; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

Therefore, uses and gratification might be augmented by such sites, which support relationships, allowing customers to bond and engage with organisations (Liu, 2015; Liu, Cheung & Lee, 2010). Social media platforms might help the creation of an online networking community for individuals who present themselves to revitalise deep-rooted affiliations and create new affiliations. Ellison et al. (2011) stated that social network sites are concerned with work-related contexts (e.g., LinkedIn.com), which allow sharing of intimate memories (e.g., Instagram), and keeping others informed such as music, politics, products or services (e.g., MySpace.com, Facebook.com, Twitter).

Vale and Fernandes (2018) suggest that uses and gratification have been on the ascent in the previous decade in the form of relationships or engagement in social media. The authors also indicate that people who are not online are at a disadvantage and are cut off from explosion of relationships and gratifications. Uses and gratification serve as a facilitator by which individuals create and control information flowing in a relationship (Peirce, 2007). Additionally, the spread of social media technology creates networking opportunities, which supports the development of uses and gratification (Ruggiero, 2000). Shao (2009) postulates that social media could greatly increase engagement, since the technology is well-suited to sustaining such relationships reasonably and easily. Hence, social media affects organisations' performance through uses and gratification (Ruggiero, 2000). The uses and gratification further explain the extent to which firms nurture and build relationships with customers (Phua et al., 2017).

Possibly, the personal disclosure and interactive tools on SM permits sport clubs to straightforwardly engage and develop relationships with prospective fans as compared to prospective efforts on fans that they have no information on. The information provided on

social media platforms may give a clue on how to engage fans, thus it could be grounded on harmless interactions on the page. Customer engagement is accepted to be specifically and unquestionably identified with various outcomes, such as, trust, fulfilment, fulfilment duty, and loyalty (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013), and these are the benefits of uses and gratification. This research is therefore grounded on the idea that sport clubs and marketing personnel can surge their engagement by taking advantage of social media, because fan engagement is an important benefit that emanates from social media activities (Vale & Fernandes, 2018).

### **3.4 Social Media Usage**

Organisations' social media usage can be categorised as building customer relationship, information search and visibility.

#### **3.4.1 Managing and building customer relationship**

According to Rodriguez et al. (2017), the advancement of technology allows businesses to better oversee client data in a powerful way, which helps in the identification and understanding of specific needs and the procurement of an answer that addresses those issues. This reflects the central focus of customer relationship management (CRM) i.e. to take advantage of customer data creatively, effectively and efficiently to design and implement customer- focused strategies (Hansotia, 2002). Conventionally, the definition of CRM technology from extant literature tends to focus on the systems that offer support for marketing activities (e.g., forecasting and costing, and campaign and promotions management); sales (e.g., sales force automation); analysis (e.g., calculating customer retention rates, customer lifetime value); and data integration (Jayachandran, Sharma, Kaufman, & Raman, 2005; Rapp, Trainor, & Agnihotri, 2010). Despite the fact that this

definition remains for the most part legitimate (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010), the prevalent adoption of SM tools (such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) brought about the manifestation of “social CRM”. Hence, this recent introduction to the marketing space has presented a far-reaching set of tools and events empowered by social media (Greenberg, 2010a; Rodriguez et al., 2017; Trainor, 2012).

A review of previous studies on CRM shows that, perhaps up until now, exertions to absorb and relate with customers have been below expectation, but the acceptance of social media by customers and businesses now makes this relation possible (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Myron (2010) stated that customer relationship management is a strategy and a philosophy that is braced by technology podiums such as workflow, social characteristics, processes and business rules, which is purposely designed to engage consumers in a two-way communication that will go a mileage to offer favourable value in a transparent business setting. Social customer relationship management can convey information, which will drive a candid client centric innovation (Nadeem, 2012), and anecdotal evidence shows that customers who interact and do business with an organisation via social media are likely to be loyal. Nadeem (2012) opined that the application of new technology and social platforms will increase and empower significantly more prominent personalisation and real-time location-based engagement.

### **3.4.2 Visibility**

Treem and Leonardi (2012) state that the aggregate of effort that individuals must put out to find information is tied to visibility. Visibility may be the single most powerful way to make products or services enter the intuitive mind of consumers. Nonetheless, research confirmed that if individuals find out that information is hard to get to, or they do not know what

information exists for them to get, they will perhaps search for it (Brown & Duguid, 2001). Hence, the provision of easily accessible information by businesses about products, services and offerings is certainly significant in achieving brand visibility. Social media gives consumers the ability to make their behaviour, preference, knowledge, and correspondence network connections that were once unnoticeable (or if nothing else difficult to see) to others (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Kim and Ko (2012) opined that social media platforms are a function of a series of other factors as well as other promotional activities that offer more noteworthy visibility to an organisation.

The use of social media creates an opportunity for products to have an unrestricted voice and presence on the Web, thereby supplementing and strengthening other communication activities designed to make a brand visible (Keller, 2013). Some scholars (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) have noticed that SM can offer expanded visibility for both behaviour and information which separate them from other technologies. Whether through remarks, votes, posts, modifications, friending, or pictures, commitments to social media are unique to all who have access to the platform.

### **3.4.3 Information search**

Information search is pointed at “evaluating markets; accessing information about rival firms and searching for customers and partners” (Moen, Koed, Madsen, & Aspelund, 2008, p.490). Social media allows for diverse application practices that can generally be sorted as information search, exploratory browsing, shopping and entertainment (Cotte, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci, 2006). With consumers’ currently gradually maintaining a strategic detachment from surveys, numerous analysts are enthusiastic about the potential of social networks’ yield market insights (Keller, 2013). Therefore, cautiously tracking and testing

social media users who state that they “follow or like” the brand, allows the brand to fine-tune its marketing messages.

### **3.5 Empirical Literature Review**

In every research work or academic study, empirical literature review plays a significant role (Boateng, Hinson, Heeks, & Molla, 2008). Literature review highlights the difference between what is known and what needs to be known, thereby enabling the detection of critical knowledge gaps, thus alerting other scholars to opportunities to make key contributions (Melville et al., 2004; Webster & Watson, 2002). Boateng et al. (2008) stated that undertaking an empirical review entails the gathering, assimilation, and examination of extant literature from divergent sources that are predominately scholarly oriented ones.

### **3.6 Social Media Marketing in Sport**

Williams and Chinn (2010) stated that, irrespective of the financial muscles of sport clubs, they often engage and monitor the needs of their fans on social media. According to Mahony et al. (2002), clubs ought to enhance fans’ interaction with the brand; clubs can accrue fan attachment to club by embracing the positive fans engagement. In view of this, the researchers suggest that clubs engage through the chat rooms and websites of the club. Interestingly, scholars have proposed the use of social media as a marketing tool in communicating marketing programmes; clubs can however use social media in promoting forthcoming games as well as events (Witkemper, Lim & Waldburger, 2012).

That notwithstanding, social media has recently changed the paradigm by giving sports consumers power than sports brand (McCarthy et al., 2014). Social media has the capability to increase commitment, affiliation and traffic to the sports brand, as well as accrue profit.

The ultimate goal of a sport marketer is to direct traffic and engage fans on social media; this will however enhance the communication between the club and fans and serve as a medium for educating fans about sports as well as attract prospective fans (Eagleman, 2013; McCarthy et al., 2014). In view of this, there are three main conditions to be accomplished in order to construct an effective strategy and viral marketing; “giving the right message to the right messengers in the right environment” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p.253).

According to McCarthy et al. (2014), sport clubs’ social media pages ought to be legitimate and open as well as promote user interaction, which will attract new followers and enhance fan commitment and loyalty (Pronschinske et al., 2012). Research reveals that the main social media tools that are used publicly includes Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Deloitte, 2018). The posts that sport clubs put on social media influence the club’s brand, since it enhances brand exposure and fan engagement. The post published on the club’s social media page include pictures, statuses, notes, links and videos. That not said, the evolution of technology has called for the utilisation of videos and pictures which surpass statuses and links. In addendum, the length and content of the message, timing, and promotion on social media have consequence on the consumer based on the popularity of the post. For instance, for sports marketers to reach and meet the needs of the target market, they need to consider the social media content, hourly and daily timing of the promotion as well as the season and time difference between promotions (Mullin et al., 2000).

All social media posts written by an organisation should be assimilated and matched with the organisation’s communication policy to secure a coherent brand and consistent messages (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012 p.303). Witkemper et al. (2012) stated that sport clubs can effectively gain popularity on social media by using their athletes such as players to answer

questions from fans. Engaging fans on social media will go a mileage to accrue the fan base of the club and fanship as well. Though social media has positive impact on football clubs, it however has negative effects that will damage the club's brand when not considered. Sport marketers are circumspect when dealing with fans on social media; in as much as fans are lively, they at times become aggressive and jay to the club on social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Abeza et al., 2013; Eagleman, 2013; McCarthy et al., 2014), and it is imperative to monitor and curb all negative comments related to the club. Another appalling issue raised by sports marketers is how to respond to the negative comments of fans on social media (McCarthy et al., 2014). Recently, a lot of football clubs struggle in identifying their real fans online (Abeza et al., 2013) and as such, they doubt the effectiveness of the content in reaching the right audience.

Nevertheless, in the sport context, social media has become the medium through which fans discuss and share views about their favourite athlete and club with other fans (Seo & Green, 2008). The aforementioned can be referred to as "participatory culture" (Wantanabe et al., 2015, p.619), where fans are permitted to express themselves online. More so, "interacting with other fans or the sport organisation itself in an online social media setting might also accrue a fan's level of identification with the sport organisation" (Eagleman, 2013, p.489). This can be seen by the fans of other sport leagues such as Ghana Premier League (GPL), National Football League (NFL) and English Premier League (EPL), where fans are seen as loyal to their respective clubs based on their social media engagement. Research has proven that fans are more enthused in watching games of their favourite football clubs. Therefore, social media is essential to sports business due to fans' SM engagement (Carlson & O'Cass, 2012). For example, it is observed that Facebook and Twitter enhance traffic during sport events (PwC, 2018).

There has been a paradigm shift in the consumption and transmission of sports due to the development of social media (Filo et al., 2015). The emergence of social media has given fans the opportunity by sports organisations to follow their events; this can only be achieved by live streaming, watching on television and or social networking (Delia & Armstrong, 2015). Arguably, in view of the above, it can be noted that the phenomenon will continue in the future especially when it comes to major events. It becomes a problem when fans cannot consume events digitally but attend games of their favourite football clubs. Scholars argued that sport fans prefer to watch games live, since it is thrilling and enormous on-site (Hoyle, 2002). This evidence calls for relationship marketing, where football clubs will build and nurture relationships with fans in order to stimulate frequent attendance so to experience the game live.

Football clubs or sport organisations ought to utilise “effective communication platforms” (Abeza et al., 2013, p.120) and devise other marketing strategies to facilitate fan commitment and loyalty (Carlson & O’Cass, 2012). Pronschinske et al. (2012) are of the view that, it is not enough for sport organisations to just create social media pages without engaging fans; developing a social media strategy to communicate is very key (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012; Eagleman, 2013). The social media strategy should be clear enough to harness customer and organisational relationship (Pronschinske et al., 2012). An effective social media strategy should include key performance indicators (KPIs), general objects, measurement procedure and an idea of how the strategy could communicate the organisations activities (Hanna et al., 2011; Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). The said social media strategy should have activities that will foster fan relationship as well as create a strong brand image for the club (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler, 2008). Sport organisations can monitor their social media handles effectively and perform content analysis on issues raised on social media by their fans. One

major problem the football clubs face is how to merge their social media channels and measure their effectiveness (Hanna et al., 2011).

Hoffman and Fodor (2010) explain that for a successful social media campaign, a well-designed strategy will instigate consumers to contribute largely to the outcome, such that they will share videos, pictures, and links, as well as develop content and tweet about the organisation's brand on social media. According to Williams and Chinn (2010), consumers who actively engage an organisation on social media are called "prosumers", as they can no longer be relegated but are seen as partners of the firm's social media strategy. Interestingly, these consumers are no longer seen as "bystanders" but expected to assist the organisation in its social media campaign to promote the brand and reach the larger audience (Hanna et al., 2011). It is imperative to note that fan engagement is obviously leading to a better fan-club relationship and accruing commitment and loyalty (Pronschinske et al., 2012). Nonetheless, for sport organisations to attain larger audience, there is the need to enhance fan participation on social media (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Hence, for fans to be exposed to the sport club's social media posts, they ought to follow or like the club's social media page (Pronschinske et al., 2012); this however forms an SNS relationship between the club and the fan.

Football clubs whose aim is to develop a strategic social media campaign need to recognise the use of social media and also devise methods to curb risks associated with it as well as draw benefits from it (McCarthy et al., 2014). The said methods could include developing search links to increase the traffic of the club's websites, providing content for engagement, posting quality pictures and videos that will spark fan interactions and also design posts for different segments. Therefore, an organisation's social media communication needs a balance between receptiveness and community building (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012).

### **3.7 Theoretical Framework**

In reviewing the theoretical underpinnings of the 24 considered articles, about forty-three percent (43%) had no clear stated theoretical support; therefore, these studies did not make reference to any definite theory. The results of the research are in line with that of Knoll (2015), who categorically indicated that forty-five percent (45%) of the articles he reviewed had no specific theory underpinnings. According to Knoll (2015), the presence of theory in social media studies seems to have accrued overtime, as specified that Chong and Xie (2011) whose review on Web 2.0 was done more than five years ago, had three quarter of the hundred and forty-one (141) articles examined therein mentioning no specific theory underpinning these works.

In Knoll's (2015) review, most of the research works that incorporated a theoretical framework largely referred to socialisation theory, social comparison theory, uses and gratification theory, and social identity theory. The use of these theories (uses and gratification, socialisation theory, social comparison theory, and social identity theory) seems realistic, given the fact that SM is associated with the formation and exchange of content by users who may influence each other through existing relationships (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some research works also applied theories in relation to communication and information technology, where the acceptance model (Davis, 1989; Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989), contagion theory, social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973), and diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 1995) were used. Other research works were able to integrate theories rooted within the marketing discipline such as engagement theory (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998), customer value theory (Slater, 1997), hierarchy of effects (HOE) model (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961, 2000), uses and gratification theory (Vale & Fernandes, 2018), and relationship marketing theory (Berry, 1983). Some studies (Jin &

Phua, 2014; Rodriguez et al., 2017) also adopted the social capital theory, a theory from sociology, which focused on the social networks' theory. There were other theories such as institution theory, hedonic and utilitarian motivations, and theory of reciprocal action. The evolving nature and different types of social media means the concept cannot be explained by one theory. Thus, some studies (Jin & Phua, 2014; Rapp et al., 2010) used more than one theory.

### **3.8 Methodological and analytical gaps in previous research**

Coupled with subject of research method, majority of the research employed a survey approach (about 74%), whereby most of them were conducted via the use of internet (online survey, Facebook brand community, web survey and organisation's social media site). According to Knoll (2015), the concluding seems logical considering the fact that the phenomenon being examined is online in nature. Not to mention that some studies even derived their data from content analysis by investigating content typologies blog post (see in Ahuja & Medury, 2010) and observation of data from several sources such as Alexa, Google search, COMPUSAT, CNET, Yahoo Finance, Lexis/Nexus, and CRSP (see in Luo et al., 2013).

This notwithstanding, few studies (Forbes & Vespoli, 2013; Marshall et al., 2012) were qualitative. Data obtained from respondents in the qualitative studies used semi-structured and structured interview procedures. Remarkably, all the qualitative studies indicated the need for additional surveys to support the findings and the use of large sample size to allow generalisation. In a single study, Park and Kim (2014) applied both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Interestingly, more than half of the studies were concerned with revealing the complex relationships that are SM marketing outcomes. Due to the complexity

of the relationship between variables, in terms of analysis, majority of the articles used advance approaches of data such as path analysis or structural equation modelling (SEM) (using LISREL, Amos or PLS).

### **3.9 General conclusion and research agenda**

The main aim of this section was to review all empirical and academic research dealing with social media and its performance hence, limited by the English language in the search. It was grounded on the major themes of the studies which are the objectives, the theoretical underpinnings, the methodology and major findings. Though the review revealed that much had been done pertaining to social media and sports, it also unravelled that some areas have been neglected and this presents an opportunity for further research in this regard.

### **3.10 Neglected area for further research**

In reviewing the 24 articles, some gaps for future research were identified. Despite the depth of use of social media applications to engage consumers (fans), attention has mainly been directed towards the strategic, academic and practical usage of social media. Nevertheless, knowledge about how sport organisations use online networking stays exceptionally restricted and generally observational (Kim & Hull, 2017). Therefore, this provides an avenue for further research. Meng et al. (2015) and Eagleman (2013) have suggested that fans and sport firms are used as additional validity when examining social media and sport club performance. Stavros et al. (2014) are of the view that future research needs to focus on motivational drivers and fan engagement, since most studies relating to social media and sports organisational performance such as Vale and Fernandes (2018), Witkemper et al. (2012), Gantz (2013) and Thompson et al. (2018) focused on social media issues in football clubs.

Vale and Fernandes (2018), in a recent review of social media and fan engagement on Facebook, indicated that there were limitations with the research method as well as the context. The authors stated that this was due to the fact there was no validated scale for measuring consumer (fan) behaviour in the concept of sport clubs hosted Facebook pages and it seems this same limitation applies to some of the studies reviewed (see Kim & Hull, 2017; Cooke & Buckley, 2008; Ratten & Ratten, 2011). There is, therefore, the need for more studies to explore the myriad of scales for measuring consumer behaviour of sport clubs hosted social media page in a more valid way. According to Pöyry et al. (2013) it is challenging to study behavioural intentions as partakers might respond base on their ideals, not the truth, which generates a response prejudice. “A human being has only limited abilities to identify and report his or her ‘true’ motivations and values as they might be reflected only in their actions-not explicitly beforehand or afterwards” (Pöyry et al., 2013, p. 233). These limitations are upsetting as previous research (Kamal et al., 2013; Kim & Ko, 2010, 2012) might have encountered similar limitation. Therefore, there is the need for future studies to rely on finding a way(s) to validate such responses.

In a study on the influence of social media on sport fan engagement, Vale and Fernandes (2018) have stressed the need to look at other moderating effects, such as fan loyalty in future studies when probing the effects of social media on football clubs. Kim and Hull (2017) explored the influence of social media in engaging baseball fans using uses and gratification theory. However, the study was limited to baseball teams. It was therefore suggested that future studies should include respondents from diverse sports organisational sizes to enhance the findings of the study and to improve the possibility of generalisation. Thompson et al. (2018) are of the view that the use of Facebook and Twitter community pages limits

generalisability. Lastly, future studies must go beyond this current study in measuring fan behaviours and sport branding.

### **3.10.1 Conceptual Background and Development of Hypothesis**

The conceptual background of this study focuses on the relationship between social media usage and fan engagement, social media usage and fan loyalty, and motivational drivers that lead to fan engagement behaviour (FEB).

### **3.11 Customer Engagement**

Extant literature discussions have been provided on customer engagement with scholars having varied views of the concept. Scholars have investigated various aspects of customer engagement. For instance, Brodie, Ilic, Juric and Hollebeek (2013) studied the relationship between customer engagement and customer loyalty, and Challagalla, Venkatesh & Kohli, (2009) studied customer engagement and customer satisfaction. Also, Cheung, Lee and Jin (2011) studied the relationship between customer engagement and Word of Mouth recommendation, and Brodie et al. (2013) researched on customer engagement and behavioural interactions.

According to Kumar, Aksoy, Donkers, Venkatesan, Wiesel, and Tillmanns (2010), the scholars described customer engagement as customers' active interactions with a firm and or other customers either for financial or non-financial gains. The researchers identified that, customers can interact either by purchasing or through other financial commitments to create a relationship hence, they engage with the brand or firm. Kumar et al. (2010) again opined that customer engagement has become an extension of the value customers have towards a firm. The study further explained that customers go beyond the transactional view of the

company to other behavioural manifestations or commitments to the company and its brand. Brodie et al. (2011) therefore recognised some of the behavioural manifestations exhibited by customers through engagement which includes word of mouth, collaboration, co-creation, purchase, interactivity and commitment.

In the same research work, Brodie et al (2011) demonstrated that customer engagement “is a multidimensional concept which is subject to a context and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional or behavioural dimensions” (p.9). However, Libai (2011) noted that customer engagement goes beyond establishing loyalty but stimulates high levels of customer loyalty to a brand. This therefore calls for the need for much work on the varied concept of customer engagement. Roberts and Alpert (2010) further assert that this form of interaction mostly leads to loyalty and can even make consumers “over loyal”.

Thus, customer engagement, being referred to as interactivity in some context, is described as involvement (Hollebeek, 2011). The concept of involvement cannot also be overemphasised when it comes to the explanation of engagement in organisations. Customers have always been craving to develop systems of getting involved with the activities of their favourite brands and as such develop connecting relationships with brands. Hollebeek (2011) described involvement as one of the antecedents that best explains engagement, acknowledging the fact that the level of customer involvement with brands, explains their level of engagement.

### **3.12 Drivers of Fan Behaviour**

#### **3.12.1 Fan Motivation**

Motivation is said to be stimulated within an individual, where its internal factor arouses, leads and provokes a goal-direct behaviour (Funk, Filo, Beaton & Pritchard, 2009; Pritchard,

Funk & Alexandris, 2009). This triggers sport fans to watch and attend games (Madrigal, 2006; Mahoney et al., 2002). Consequently, to understand the various factors that drive individuals to display some behaviour, it is worth investigating the motivations for consuming football. Nonetheless, a series of sport fans motivations has been found to be related to attitudinal loyalty, which includes awareness of the club, love for football, socialisation, the aesthetic nature, sport knowledge and the vicarious achievement (Wang et al., 2011). The entertainment enjoyed by fans is as a result of their interest in the clubs and football in general. Socialisation on the other hand will instigate fans' longingness to bond with other fans (Branscombe & Wann, 1991), as they will discuss and share their experience with regard to the club and its achievement.

Nevertheless, an individual will attend the matches of a sport in order to spend time with other fans, where interactions happen (Wann, Schrader & Wilson, 1999). Aesthetics, however, denote fans' gratitude toward display of a club athletes irrespective of outcome of the match (Boxill, 1985). Sport knowledge also reflects the shared information amongst sport fans, such as fundamental sports rules and values (Zhang et al., 2001). Lastly, vicarious achievement on the other hand denotes the personal achievement that the fans derive from the club's performance, and this good predictor of fan loyalty (Mahony et al., 2002; Wu et al., 2012).

*H1a: Fan motivation will have a positive influence on loyalty.*

### **3.12.2 Fanship**

According to Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw (1999), fanship is identified as a fan's devotion towards a club and his/her level of attachment to sports. Thus, a fan is said to have some level of attachment to other fans who are associated to his/her club. Fans manifest their attachment

through specific behaviour of being an enthusiastic consumer (Clemes, Brush & Collins, 2011). Hence, 'fanship' reflects a fan's level of enthusiasm or passion for a club (Clemes et al., 2011).

According to Reysen and Branscombe (2010), fanship can also be said to encompass a fan's logic of affiliation to a sport club. Hence, a fan's enthusiasm involves their identification with the club (Hunt et al., 1999). Notably, fans who recognise some traits or characteristics of a club as being analogous to their own will self-categorise their proximity (i.e. shared similarities) and will attach or bond with that club (Pritchard et al., 2010). Die-hard fans on the other hand believe that being a 'fan' is essential to them (Tapp, 2004; Wann & Branscombe, 1990); they are prepared to make changes in their lifestyle to accommodate club's performance (Thorne & Brunner, 2006). Likewise, enthusiastic and or highly identified fans (i.e. hardcore fans) exhibit fan-related attitudinal loyalty to the club and sponsor brands (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Filo et al., 2015), as well as a hybrid of attitudinal and behavioural loyalty (e.g. Stevens & Rosenberger, 2012). These hard-core or die-hard fans will be so committed to the club such that they will desire to attend the club's matches irrespective of their performances, as compared to the less identified fans (i.e. fair-weather fans), who will only stick to clubs that performs well and switch when the outcome is not favourable (Wann & Branscombe, 1990; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998).

*H1b: Fanship will have a positive influence on loyalty.*

### **3.12.3 Fan Satisfaction**

There are two distinct conceptualisations of customer satisfaction which has evolved over the years (Johnson et al., 2002): transaction-specific and cumulative satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994). The transaction-specific is about the immediate post-purchase

evaluation of fans' experience with and reactions to a specific purchase (Matsuoka, Chelladurai & Harada, 2003), whereas cumulative satisfaction is "an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time" (Anderson et al., 1994, p.54). That notwithstanding, conceptualising satisfaction as the outcome of one single transaction may be too restrictive when examining the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, as loyalty needs to be measured over time (Olsen, 2007; Olsen & Johnson, 2003), specifically for sport fans (Heere & Dickson, 2008; Tapp, 2004). Hence, the cumulative view is suitable for satisfaction with a sport club (Beccarini & Ferrand, 2006), as fans can use their complete experience over time. In the context of sports, studies have revealed that cumulative satisfaction to be related to attitudinal fan loyalty (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Olsen & Johnson, 2003).

*H1c: Fan satisfaction with the club will have a positive influence on loyalty.*

### **3.13 Relationship between Social Media Engagement and Fan Loyalty**

According to Gamboa and Goncalves (2014), social media accrues the awareness of a firm's brand and enhances customer loyalty. They further explained that social networking sites (SNS) strengthen customer relations and customer satisfaction which will go a mileage to drive loyalty. Likewise, Vale and Fernades (2018) opined that social media (SM) enhances club's brand awareness and engagement, which also leads to fan loyalty. Thus, the internet usage is cut across both men and women (internet world stats, 2019), thereby facilitating social media usage in engaging clubs' male and female fans. The presence of social media is inadequate for companies; they need to use Web 2.0 and social media to interact with customers, as it is a vehicle that gives consumers the power and influence over brands (Gamboa & Gonclaves, 2014).

Customers previously communicated with brands by sending letters, phone calls, or visiting the main store. However, consumers now interact more swiftly with brands via new methods of interactivity enabled by Web 2.0 (Gamboa & Gonclaves, 2014). Web 2.0 has transformed the interactivity from one-to-many, whereby only the organisation played an active role, and many-to-many, where the relationship and involvement of consumers become pertinent (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiwan, 2010). Having said that, Web 2.0 supplies the technological components such as applications and online tools that facilitates social media. SM provides the social aspects of Web 2.0 that allows consumers to generate and share their content (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

Social media consumers become producers of brand content, and organisations as well fortify their relationship with consumers (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Hanna et al., 2011). In view of this, a firm's brand proximity and relationship can lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty. An organisation's consumers can help build a brand, share data about it, exchange ideas among friends and engage with the brand via complaints, commendations, and or queries (Patterson, 2012; Weinberg & Pehliva, 2012). Nonetheless, the loyalty levels of football fans are compared to the loyalty levels of consumers of other organisations (Parker and Stuart, 1997). Likewise, brand loyalty is revealed by football fans in that they are glued to their respective clubs on social media irrespective of their performance (Thompson et al., 2018).

Professional football clubs ought to utilise their social media presence by engaging their fans to enable retention and club loyalty (Thompson et al., 2018; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Thus, it is imperative to note that, fan loyalty does not develop overnight, and clubs ought to improve their comprehension of the development process to facilitate their social media

engagement with fans. Therefore, social media engagement is said to facilitate fan loyalty and as such becoming a good predictor of fan loyalty (Vale & Fernandes, 2018).

*H2: social media engagement will have a positive influence on fan loyalty.*

### **3.14 Relationship between Mediator and Independent variable**

#### **3.14.1 Fan Motivation and Social Media Engagement**

In the milieu of sports, consumer engagement is strictly allied with the growth of new media, which has significantly affected the way sports organisations market and interact with their fans (Ioakimidis, 2010). Social networking sites have provided accrued opportunities for fans, clubs and athletes (Pegoraro & Jinnah, 2012), which may profit both the sport club and fans (de Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000) through transactional and non-transactional exchanges (Yoshida et al., 2014). According to Yoshida et al. (2014), the typology of fan engagement is fixated on two dimensions. The first and foremost dimension denotes fans' in-role behaviours (i.e. self-interest in attending, viewing and reading news about a sport club), and fans' extra-role behaviours (i.e. behaviours absorbed towards a sport club and other fans grounded on a moral duty as a fan). However, the second dimension denotes consumer action associated with transactional (e.g. repurchase behaviour, media consumption, merchandising and relationship equity), and non-transactional behaviours (e.g. interactions with other fans and sport firms). Thus, Yoshida et al. (2014) defined fan engagement as a customer's impulsive, interactive and co-creative behaviours with the sport club and/or other consumers to achieve social or individual purpose. This notwithstanding, Santos et al. (2018), in their study, stated that, consumer engagement is outlined as an extra-role in non-transactional behaviours, and denotes the fan familiarities with the club, the value co-creation inspired by the club and the relationship shared with fans of the same club within the online setting. They further stated that, fan engagement through social network sites comprise three modules: fan-to-fan

relationship (i.e. interactions among fans who share a common interest with the club), club-fan-fan relationship (i.e. fans' behaviours arising from the actions of the club) and fan co-creation (i.e. communications among fans aimed at accruing the worth of the club for them) (Uhrich, 2014).

### **3.14.2 Fan-to-fan relationship**

Extant literature has defined consumer-to-consumer relationship as a communication between customers that heightens one's welfare, by providing support or assistance, usually with little or no reward in return (Thompson et al., 2016). This relationship has become progressively effective due the fast and advance development of SNS platforms. Consequently, fan-to-fan relationship is well-defined as the communication between two or more fans via the official club SNS platforms (Santos et al., 2018). These communications include reciprocal behaviours between fans through SNS platforms (e.g. communicating and sharing information, helping other fans when patronising goods and services or providing instructions on how to use a particular service) (Johnson et al., 2013) as such, tend to contribute to the triumph of sport clubs (Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011).

### **3.14.3 Club-to-fan relationship**

The communication between clubs and fans signifies an opportunity to fashion a connection with customers through distinctive synergies, and to accrue optimistic behaviours towards the firm (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999). These communications, enabled by SNS, may help firms to appreciate the best tools for upholding a relationship with consumers (Sashi, 2012). In the work of Santos et al. (2018), club-to-fan connection in SNS is related to an interactive affiliation formed by the club and aimed at building a long-term relationship with fans. Notably, professional sport firms should increasingly focus on building a dynamic SNS (e.g.

appropriate information, enriched design and entertainment possibilities) to drive traffic and to sustain a strong shared relationship with their fans. Thus, one of the biggest challenges faced by clubs is dealing with network of club-to-fan affiliations while understanding customers' wants and delivering on their expectations.

#### **3.14.4 Fan co-creation**

The term fan co-creation can be well-defined as the benefits gathered from the combination of resources through connections with other fans (Uhrich, 2014). Existing literature points out that SNS have enabled consumer co-creation (Etgar, 2008), while also permitting fans to reach and get hold of others anywhere at any time (Uhrich, 2014). This, however, strengthens the need for clubs to build an enabling environment that permits fans to actively intermingle with each other to build personalised and optimistic experiences, and to reinforce their affiliations with the organisation. Also, fan co-creation brings up fans' behaviour through SNS that reverberate in sharing content, impressions and experiences with the club and other enthusiasts (Uhrich, 2014; Yoshida et al., 2014). However, co-creation often creates a distinctive experience and clients who partake in co-creation procedures tend to be more engaged with organisations (Hoyer et al., 2010).

*H3a: Fan motivation will have a positive influence on social media engagement.*

#### **3.14.5 Fanship and Social Media Engagement**

Biscaia et al. (2018) state that the growth and maintenance of an ardent group of fans is essential to the triumph of the sport clubs, and supporters are often not well-thought-out to be typical customers (McCarthy et al., 2014). Robinson et al. (2005) are also of the view that fans do not just patronise and watch but are relatively enthused and patriotic of their sport club. Interestingly, fans tend to reveal a strong sense of identification with their clubs and

frequently express it by the colours they wear, the stories and traditions of the club they identify with (Dixon, 2013). Likewise, fans have a solid commitment towards their club(s) (Funk & James, 2001), leading to varied heights of engagement on SNS (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Extremely engaged fans unveil extraordinary attendance levels, recommend the club to others and patronise more merchandise (Hedlund, 2014).

*H3b: Fanship have positive influence on social media engagement.*

#### **3.14.6 Fan Satisfaction and Social Media**

Madrigal (2006) stated that the fundamental appeal for watching sporting event is as a result of its distinct competition. That not said, it is imperative to note that fan satisfaction often accrues stadium attendance and serve as a good predictor of fan's willingness to attend future events of the club. Satisfaction pertaining to consumer behaviour has received great attention recently and little has been done on passive consumption of competitive sport fans (Madrigal, 2006). Fans that experience an optimistic effect as an outcome of consumption are more prospected to engage in repurchase and re-patronage activity. Thus, fan fulfilment leads to positive word-of-mouth communications and doubles up as a tool for effective management decisions (Oliver, 1994).

Research unveils how sport fans process cognitions and effective reactions related to the results which influence satisfaction judgments regarding attendance of the club's game. When an enthusiast is satisfied with the club's performance and artistic of the stadium, that enthusiast is compelled to wear paraphernalia of the club or eulogise the virtues of the club to others (Madrigal, 2006). Interestingly, social media promotes loyalty and thus give consumers the chance to participate in consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communications such as sharing experiences and acquaintance through eWOM (electronic word of mouth), in search

of information and meeting people (Rabb, Berezan, Krishen, & Tanford, 2016). Social media enables organisations to engage their target market on a multiple height and thereby accruing the devotion of their customers (Gruen, Osmonbekov, & Czaplewski, 2006). According to Sheldon, Abad, and Hinsch (2011), social media leads to obsession and addiction which might not have an impact on loyalty.

### **3.15 Fan Loyalty**

One's loyalty to a football club is not quite distinct from a customer's loyalty to an organisation's product or services (Parker & Stuart, 1997). In contrast, an impressive display of brand loyalty is made known by football fans, especially when they are glued to their club irrespective of their performance. Conversely, football clubs cannot believe in the idea of unending loyalty amongst supporters; since their significance in terms of revenue is too high to risk it (van Leeuwen et al., 2012). Thus, football clubs need to make every effort to maintain and improve their fans' loyalty, in order to attain justifiable financial success. Parker and Stuart (1997) state that integrating marketing modus operandi from other sectors can enable organisations to decrease the risk in fan loyalty. That not said, fan loyalty does not simply grow overnight; sport marketers need to improve their comprehension of the materialisation process to facilitate the passionate connection between a club and its fans.

The cognitive processes in which psychological networks are formed, as put forward by James (2001), can upshot in one's loyalty. In considering an enthusiast loyalty, affections are formed after the clubs are actively compared and weighed. Diverse dynamics including games approachability, availability of viewership, and the social agents, such as friends and family can influence the growth of these psychological acquaintances. However, James (2001) examined the relations and cognitive growth and he found that from age five,

preferences can start emerging. Normally, at this kind-hearted stage, introduction to a sport club is initiated by the father, who acts as the socialising agent with the utmost influence. Nonetheless, at a convinced point and situation in the life of a supporter, several socialising agents would have numerous influences. For instance, according to Kolbe and James (2000), adults' loyalty for a given club can be influenced more by the community relations and or peers.

In view of the aforementioned, loyalty levels of Accra Hearts of Oak FC and Asante Kotoko SC enthusiasts would be predisposed by diverse dynamics and agents at diverse stages in their lives. Likewise, the children who are fans of any of the above clubs are probable to be predisposed by their individual fathers. Likewise, the adult fans are expected to be predisposed by their community or friends. That notwithstanding, if the club has a family sensation to it, the loyalty of kids would be more easily established, as they can unite with their fathers over the club. Hence, if the club gives off the sensation of being one big community, adults' loyalty would be easily advanced, since they will be apt to unite with their colleague adults in the said community. Several schools of thought have opined that loyalty can be categorised under attitudinal and behavioural loyalty.

### **3.15.1 Attitudinal Loyalty**

Beatty and Kahle (1988) state that in the sporting business, the emotional commitment of a fan to a club denotes the attitudinal loyalty. Hence, the emotional or mental attachment towards a brand is by and large defined as commitment. However, supporters' commitment has traditionally been measured in three ways: perseverance, resistance and affection (Gladden & Funk, 2001; Mahony et al., 2000; Pritchard et al., 1999). Thus, if a supporter is extremely attached to a club, and this commitment is unswerving and unaffected by any

criticism, they are showing a high level of emotional commitment. In summary, the attitudinal element simply denotes, fans mental state towards a club, and these go a mileage to drive their behaviour.

### **3.15.2 Behavioural Loyalty**

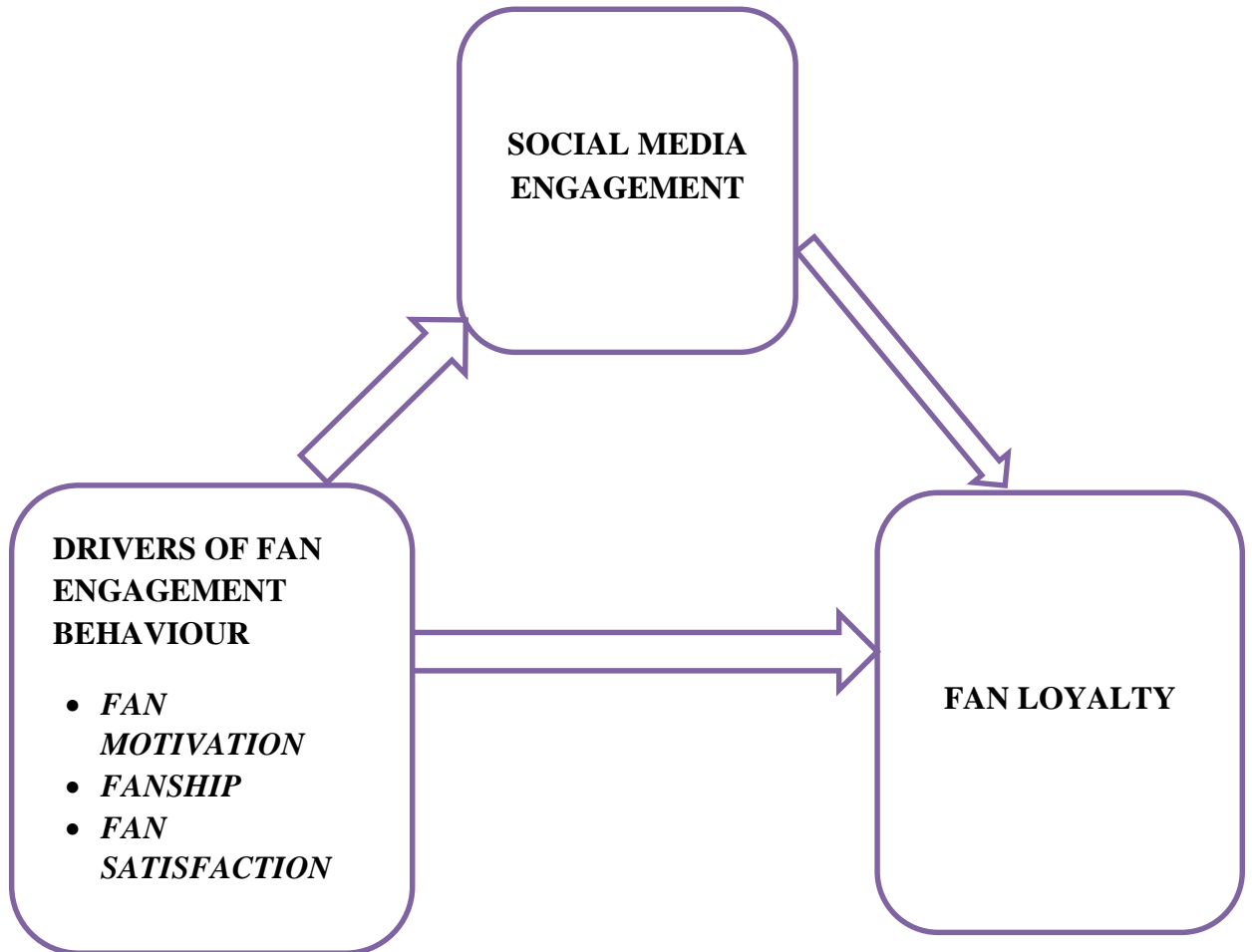
According to Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002), previous behaviour and behavioural intentions are measures of behavioural loyalty. In the context of sports, previous behaviour encompasses the attendance of live matches, consuming club related-media, patronage of merchandise etc. (Gladden & Funk, 2001; Mahony et al., 2000). In addendum, the optimistic and tenacious future behaviour of the fan makes up the premeditated component of behavioural loyalty. Thus, positive word-of-mouth and envisioned loyal behaviour signify this positive and tenacious future behaviour. According to Anderson (1998), affirmative word-of-mouth is all the communication of an informal nature that weighs and endorses goods and services to other consumers. However, behavioural intentions correspond to the past behaviour of the consumer, in relation to viewing matches, purchasing merchandise etc.

### **3.16 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework illustrates the connection between the research objective and the hypothesis of the study. Based on the review of literature, the researcher developed a conceptual framework, describing the link that exist between the independent variable that impacts on loyalty. The main constructs of the framework operate independently of each other. Also, the framework examines the degree of relationship of the three variables under the independent construct on loyalty. The framework explains the interactive influence of social media engagement on fan loyalty of the clubs. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual

framework of this research where social media engagement mediates between drivers of fan behaviour and the dependent variable loyalty.

**Figure 3.1: The relationship between drivers of fan engagement behaviour, social media engagement and fan loyalty**



Source: Author's own construct

### 3.17 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a thorough discussion of concepts, issues and theories underpinning the purpose of the research. The chapter started with the discussion on the advancement of SM, marketing of sports through social media, review of theories, customer engagement, and relationship marketing in sports, loyalty and conceptual framework. The literature review identified constructs which influenced the design of the conceptual framework. The study would continue with chapter four, which discusses the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This section emphasis on the methods used to carry out the research. It further describes the sampling design and techniques used to collect data to response to the research questions, in order to achieve the objectives of the present study. As a result, the chapter is designed to present data on the research method and design, the data sources, data collection and procedure, as well as questionnaire development and validation. The chapter however explains and justifies the suitable research technique used to study how loyalty and commitment functions in football fans in a contemporary setting. Commencing on this study, an analysis will be conducted permitting future practical implications for the football clubs to be understood.

#### **4.1 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is “a set of beliefs, values and techniques which is shared by members of a scientific community, and which acts as a guide or map, dictating the kinds of problems scientists should address and the types of explanations that are acceptable to them” (Kuhn, 2012). Thus, these beliefs, values and techniques can be showed on a continuum with objectivism toward one side and subjectivism at the other (Johnson & Duberley, 2000); as a result, there exists various classifications to distinguish paradigms (Myers & Avison, 2002).

That notwithstanding, the most frequently suggestion of paradigms that mirror the major hypothetical philosophical feeling in social science research are positivism, interpretivist, realism, relativism and critical realism (Chan, 2015; Kim, 2003; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Hence, these research’s paradigms provide the opinion whereupon the researcher

constructs the methodology that is utilised in the study (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), each of the paradigms has its own arrangement of epistemological, ontological and methodological suppositions that serve as a structure to clarify and separate them from each other (see Table 4.1). It is, therefore, imperative to explain the philosophical position adopted for this study.

For this study, the researcher adopted a positivist approach. According to Dash (2005), the positivist methodology of investigating social reality is based on the philosophical thoughts of the French philosopher, August Comte, who focused on observation and reason as methods for understanding human behaviour. Yet, several social science studies today draw their methods of insight from positivism or the disagreement to positivism (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). As a result, most philosophers believe that the positivist approach is the basis and rationale for management research these days (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). There are principles and assumptions of science within which the positivist framework must be understood. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) noted, these are determinism, empiricism, parsimony, and generality.

According to Dash (2005), ‘determinism’ suggests that events are caused by various circumstances therefore, seeing such links are principal for desire and control. ‘Empiricism’ infers gathering of verifiable empirical evidences in backing of hypotheses or speculations. ‘Parsimony’ implies the explanation of the phenomenon in the most moderate way comprehensible, and ‘generality’ is the method of summing up the view of the particular phenomenon to the world at large. For this reason, the positivist approach was deemed appropriate as the researcher sought to establish the casual link between social media and

sales performance and verify the hypotheses through data collected from a large sample size to enable generalisation.

According to Creswell (2014), the philosophical strategies and approaches adopted contribute to a research method are either quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. This study, however, employed a quantitative research method, which basically supports the positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect relationship, questions and hypothesis testing, use of theories) through a research design such as experiments and surveys, data collection and analysis (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; Creswell, 2014).

**Table 4.1: Research Paradigms**

<b>ONTOLOGY (What is the nature of reality?)</b>	<b>EPISTEMOLOGY (What is the nature of knowledge generated?)</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY (How is knowledge created?)</b>
<p><b>POSITIVISM</b> There is a single, objective and tangible reality</p>	<p>Value- Free. Knowledge created is objective, free of time impacts, and is context-free.</p>	<p>Researchers formulate research questions and hypotheses and then test them empirically under carefully controlled circumstances. Deductive reasoning</p>
<p><b>INTERPRETIVIST</b> Multiple realities exist, subject to human experiences and interpretation. Reality is socially constructed</p>	<p>Value-Laden. Knowledge generated is subjective, time-bound and context dependent</p>	<p>Knowledge is made through researchers recognising the different interpretations and constructions of reality that exist, and endeavouring to establish patterns. Inductive logic and emergent design</p>
<p><b>REALISM</b> Reality is “real” yet just incompletely and probabilistically understandable, so triangulation from numerous sources is required to attempt to know it.</p> <p>Relativism Multiple realities exist. Reality as truth is not “absolute”, it is relative, and it is dependent upon something’ and it does exist</p>	<p>Value-Cognisant/Value-aware. Findings are probably true.....researcher needs to triangulate any perceptions collected.</p> <p>The interpretation of the world requires some form of human processing</p>	<p>Social phenomenon is understood through hypotheses which are tested to establish patterns of associations and hence, the most possible explanation. HypotheticoDeduction</p> <p>The construction of knowledge is influenced by the worldview and research paradigm of a researcher. Researchers should focus more on creating and developing new 'useful' theories - useful solutions to specific problems.</p>
<p><b>CRITICAL REALISM</b> Two worlds - transitive and intransitive. Transitive is what we observe and learn with our mind - the perceptions of reality. Intransitive embodies the reality which is independent of what the mind thinks.</p>	<p>Transitive world is value-laden and changing continually. Intransitive world has underlying structures and mechanisms that are 'relatively enduring' - that is what we want to study.</p>	<p>Researchers seek to deconstruct and understand that structures and mechanisms underlying the subjective realities that exist. Triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it. Retroductive reasoning.</p>

Source: Adopted, Boateng (2014)

## **4.2 Research Instrument**

The data collected for this quantitative research primarily used surveys. According to Denscombe (2014), surveys are usually used when studying customer satisfaction and loyalty. Since it can examine three extensive themes: “the demographic and contextual of consumers; their assertiveness, view or preferences; and their planned behaviour and stimuli” (Bryman, 2004; Franklin, 2012; Denscombe, 2014). This auxiliary justified why loyalty is affected by both behavioural and attitudinal measurements (Martins & Sampaio, 2012), which can be effectively researched using a quantitative survey tool.

In view of the above, survey turns to be an operative method of studying views of both persons and clusters (Franklin, 2012). This research was able to attain data from persons, and as established in the researches of Martins and Sampaio (2012) and Tapp (2004), cluster the data into demographic. A survey is treasured in giving a baseline of data about a sample (Franklin, 2012), and increasing the comprehension of the market (Martins & Sampaio, 2012). The study is useful and agrees to the purposes of the investigation and the procedure of modern-day study. Over and done with the use of a survey, the data was well-thought-out, as it was acquired directly from the users themselves and depicted findings that are insightful of the real-life behaviour and assertiveness of fans (Franklin, 2012; Denscombe, 2014).

## **4.3 Research design**

The research design is the blueprint for satisfying goals and giving knowledge to answer the research purpose (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), the purpose is most often exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. As this study is to examine the relationship between fan engagement behaviour and fan loyalty and the mediating effect of social media engagement, it is therefore an explanatory study, which

attempts to explain the reasons for the phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Hence, the researcher deployed the uses and gratification theory or at least hypotheses to account for the relationships (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Yin (2003) states that there are five different strategies in collecting and analysing data to serve as empirical evidence, namely, experiment, surveys, archival analysis, history and case studies, and each can be used for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research. Since this study was based on the verification of hypotheses through data collected from a large sample size to enable generalisation, the survey approach was deemed appropriate (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). According to Collis and Hussey (2013), a survey refers to a methodology where participants are drawn from a population and studied to make inferences about the population. Thus, a survey is a method for acquiring information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a substantial gathering of individuals, alluded to as a populace (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Survey designs might be recognised as cross sectional or longitudinal contingent on whether they reject or incorporate unequivocal thoughtfulness regarding a period measurement (Robson, 2002).

This study however was based on a cross-sectional survey design, which involved the collection of data at a certain point in time from a sample selected to represent the population within a sample frame time. That said, the longitudinal survey represents the collection of data from a sample a number of times over a long period. Generalisation was safely made from the findings of the sample population within the time frame of the survey (Robson, 2002).

#### **4.4 Questionnaire Design**

Pertinent themes from football fan loyalty works, customer satisfaction and fan engagement behaviour were used to form and reinforce the questionnaire, as well as findings from Malcolm et al. (2000), and Vale and Fernandes (2018). As an effect of this, the research work followed the below criteria in designing the research questions.

Segment one contained questions that established a demographic and discrete data of the individual. Segment two then asked questions relating to the respondents' behaviours. The subsequent questions utilised "Likert scaled" contract questions, comprising section three, which was fixated on social media engagement, followed by section four which related to fan engagement behaviour and section five, which focused on fan loyalty. Subjects from Oliver's (1999) robust loyalty hypotheses in brand adoration or sense of belonging to a community, Tapps's (2004) levels of fan loyalty classifications and Vale and Fenandes' (2018) fan engagement behaviours were used to underpin the questions. A research is supposed to be conducted over a long period of time in order to ascertain the dwindling in customer loyalty (Rust & Zaborik, 1993). Franklin (2012) is of the view that, due to the cost involved in carrying such investigations, it is impossible for researchers to achieve that. This research however aims at utilising quantitative technique approach and comprehend the populations' loyalty with their corresponding football clubs.

#### **4.5 Sampling**

##### **4.5.1 Population**

Football masses are unrelated (Buhler & Nufer, 2010) and in this instance, undocumented, in terms of being premeditated or data-based unlike many other consumer markets (Wilson, 2012). This lack of documentation caused a wholly 'random' systematic sampling technique

to be farfetched (Black, 1999). Nonetheless, it is still significant to attain a sample that reflects the population (Denscombe, 2014). Sampling limitations mean that the sample population could not be precisely proportioned to the whole population, which would have accrued generalisability (Denscombe, 2014). Nevertheless, this research utilised cross section techniques that could involve a variety of participants, preventing responses from a sample which is too similar and would not reflect the varied nature of football masses as implied by the relevant literature (Buhler & Nufer, 2010).

#### **4.5.2 Sample Size**

Even though the sample size affects generalisability, it is however significant to distinguish between quantity and quality of samples (Black, 1999). The nonexistence of decisive knowledge on this subject causes the study to be experimental in nature, often related with a smaller sample size (Denscombe, 2014). As this research is extensive in terms of participants and yet fixated on two football clubs, it can measure an all-round perception of fan loyalty.

Though two football clubs were targeted, there was still the need to ensure that the appropriate sample size was obtained for analysis. According to Burns and Bush (2014), sample size has an influence on the precise representation of the population. The researcher had to ensure that the right sample size was selected for the study to enable generalisation, since it is more accurate to use large sample size (Saunders et al., 2009). Nonetheless, Hair et al. (2006) noted that a small or very large sample size may have an undesirable influence on the statistical test, on the grounds that it is possible that it is not sufficiently enormous to make generalisation or too robust to analyse in order to reach any conclusions.

The purposive sampling will afford the researcher the edge of selecting respondents who will part take in the survey. The sample size of 300 is based on Crouch's (1984) recommendation that slightest sample sizes for quantitative consumer investigations should be between 300 and 500 respondents. Based on the aforementioned justification, the research was able to gather 325 responses due to financial constraint and time.

#### **4.5.3 Data Collection Instrument and Method**

In order to address the research questions and to examine the stated hypotheses, the data collection instrument employed for this study was a questionnaire (see Appendix). An initial draft of the questionnaire was developed on the basis of the foregoing literature review. It consisted of questions to identify and measure social media engagement and fan loyalty. The questionnaire instrument contained three (3) sections. Section I explored drivers fan engagement behaviours (i.e. fan motivation, fanship and fan satisfaction) with close-ended questions adapted from Wann et al. (2014); Kennett et al. (2001) and Seo and Green (2008). Section II assessed social media engagement adapted from Kosiba et al. (2018). Lastly, Section III deployed fan loyalty which comprise attitudinal loyalty and behavioural loyalty adopted from Bauer et al. (2008). Thus, the statements concerning all the variables were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A pilot test was conducted with some masters students (marketing option), two (2) masters of philosophy (MPhil) graduates and doctor of philosophy (PhD) students to ensure clarity of the questionnaire and test the questionnaire as a whole. The individual questions are defined as succinctly as could reasonably be expected (see Harrison, McClaughlin, & Coalter, 1996; Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2003). This was done to reduce problems in the

comprehensive stage of the response process as suggested by Chang, van Witteloostuijn, and Eden (2010). After rewording and redesigning the questionnaires, it was ready for administering.

Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires and the use of an email to respondents who opted for it. First, an initial contact was made to some of the participants via phone calls to assess their willingness to assist. Some respondents asked that a link or a questionnaire softcopy be sent to them via email. Only participants who agreed to assist in the research were given a copy of the questionnaire to fill (see Saunders et al., 2012). The gathering of primary data covered a period of two and a half months, i.e. from February 2019 to mid-May 2019. After the two and a half month period, the researcher received three hundred and twenty-five (325) filled questionnaires.

#### **4.6 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) – Partial Least Squares (PLS)**

The study examines multiple dependence relationships simultaneously. The dependent variable, as well as the independent variables, are latent constructs measured with some observed variables. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a collection of several statistical techniques including factor analysis and multiple regression that allows the simultaneous assessment of multiple dependence relationships (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2009). Thus, SEM is useful for testing and confirming theories. Unlike multiple regression, SEM acknowledges the error in measuring the constructs and accounts for these errors as well as reduces the overall error connected with the model (Astrachan, Patel & Wanzenried, 2014).

Data was gathered and processed using SmartPLS version 3.2.3 and IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21. However, the IBM SPSS was used for descriptive statistics comprising frequency tables, measures of central tendency and regression. Smart PLS 3 was used for partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine the structural component of the measurement and the structural model (Hair et al., 2014). That notwithstanding, PLS could be considered as a family of regression-type data analysis methods. According to Joreskog and Wold (1982), PLS is well suited to handle highly complex predictive models and is helpful compared to covariance based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM), when analysing predictive research models that are in the stages of theory development (Gimbert, Bisbe, & Mendoza, 2010).

Another edge of the PLS SEM approach is that it has no assumptions about data distribution (Hair, Sarstedt, et al., 2014; Vinzi, Trinchera, & Amato, 2010). PLS is also a good alternative when the sample size is small (see in Hwang, Malhotra, Kim, Tomiuk, & Hong, 2010; Hair, Sarstedt, et al., 2014). Thus, PLS-SEM can be utilised with much smaller sample sizes, even when the models are highly complex. Nonetheless, Hair et al. (2013) indicated that sample size can be determined by the below mentioned factor in the SEM design.

Wong (2013) cautioned that despite the ability of PLS to handle small sample size, “it does not mean that your goal should be to merely fulfil the minimum sample size requirement” (p.5). Hence, a sample size of a hundred (100) to two hundred (200) participants is a good starting point in carrying out PLS (Hoyle, 1995).

According to Hair et al. (2009) analysing data with SEM consists of six main steps. The first step is to define the individual constructs; the second step is to define the measurement

model. The next stage is to design the study to produce empirical results; the fourth stage is to assess the validity of the measurement model; the fifth step is to specify the structural model, and finally, assess the validity of the structural model. In assessing the model, we adopt the two-step SEM process as recommended by Hair et al. (2009). This however involves assessing the measurement model for validity and reliability before proceeding to validate the structural model. The structural model is assessed after the measurement model has satisfied all conditions for validity and reliability.

#### **4.7 Model evaluation**

Conferring to Hair et al. (2017), before evaluating a model for investigation, there ought to be an estimation of the measures of the indicators as well as the constructs. This they term as the dimension model evaluation. Also, the researcher has to estimate the constructs (structural model) to ensure its fitness. The empirical measures aid researchers to link the hypothetically recognised dimension and structural models with reality.

##### **4.7.1 Measurement Model Evaluation**

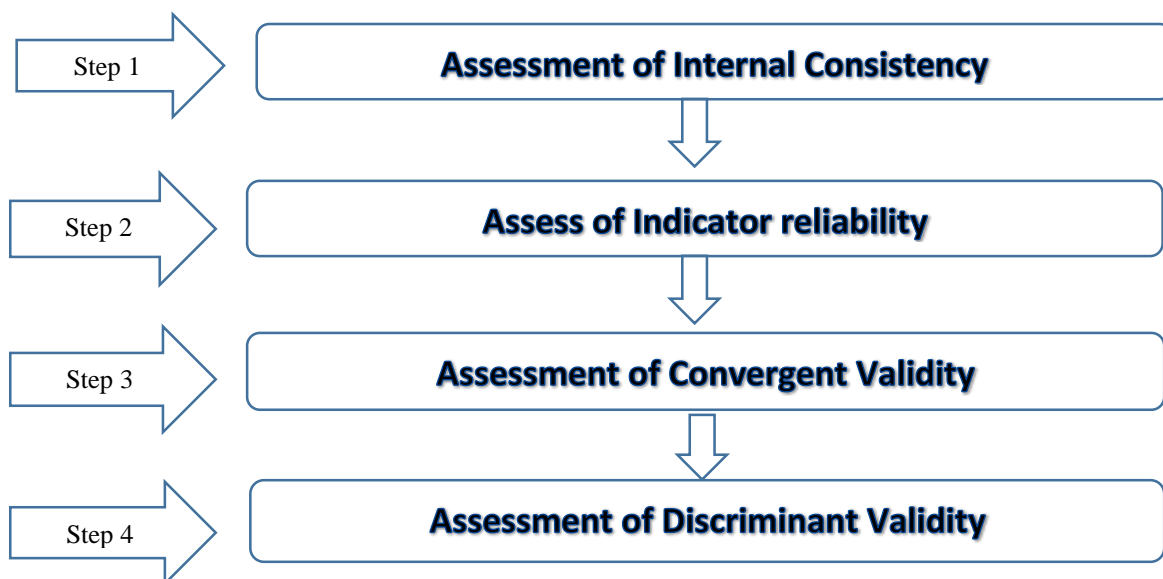
The dimension model basically deals with the consistency and validity of the instrument used for the study. With regard to the valuation of measurement models, the researcher has to ensure that good Cronbach alpha and composite reliability has been obtained (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2014). The aforementioned is used to evaluate the internal consistency. Also, individual indicator reliability has to be assessed, and this is done using the item loadings. The assessment of validity is in two folds: the convergent validity and the discriminant validity. The convergent validity is measured by means of the average variance extracted (AVE), whilst the discriminant validity deals with the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Hair et al., 2017).

#### 4.7.1.1 Internal consistency

According to Saunders et al. (2009), consistency is a sign of the accuracy, precision, and consistency of the dimension. Consistency is a sign of a measurement of interior reliability, how well the items on the test measure the same idea or construct (Zikmud et al., 2012). Internal consistency of the measurement scale items is usually tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient (Hair et al., 2006). Though Cronbach alpha is an extensively used technique of testing consistency, Peterson and Kim (2013) distinguished that Cronbach alpha is of lower bound therefore underestimates the true consistency. Grounded on that argument, the research therefore adopted both the Cronbach alpha and the composite reliability methods, which are frequently used in structural equation modelling (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014; Hair, Sarstedt, Matthews, & Ringle, 2015). Composite reliability assesses the overall consistency of the assortment of heterogeneous but similar items (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Thus, measuring reliability is not a sure way of examining validity.

The diagram below shows the measurement assessment procedure used by the researcher.

**Figure 4.1: Measurement assessment procedure**



#### **4.7.1.2 Indicator reliability**

The indicator consistency is used to check the reliability of the constructs. Thus, the indicator reliability was measured with the item loadings where it deals with the indicators measuring the various construct. Indicator reliability is obtained when an item loading is above 0.70. Nonetheless, scholars have indicated that an item loading between 0.40 and 0.70 can be maintained because the removal of the item will deteriorate the Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach Alpha (CA), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2014).

#### **4.7.1.3 Convergent validity**

According to Hair et al. (2017), convergent validity is an extent to which a measure shows a relationship completely with alternative measures of the same construct. That notwithstanding, indicators of insightful construct are treated as different approach to measure the same construct when using the domain sampling model. The convergent is assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) of the outer loadings of the indicators (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2014).

It is imperative to note that, the height outer loadings on a construct indicates that the common allied indicators are being captured by the construct. The researchers were of the view that, at least, the outer loadings of all indicators should be statistically significant. Since a significant outer loading could be fairly weak, a common rule of thumb is that the homogenised outer loadings ought to be 0.708 or higher (Hair et al., 2017). The square of a consistent indicator's outer loading signifies the amount of variation in an item being explained by the construct and also labelled as the variance extracted from the item.

#### **4.7.1.4 Discriminant Validity**

The discriminant validity was used in categorising the extent to which a hypothesis is different from other constructs (Rezaei, 2015); whereas the convergent validity was used to certify that the constructs identified are truly mirrored by their indicators (Rezaei, 2015). Similarly, discriminant validity is applied via construct correlations and cross-loading benchmark whereas convergent validity is applied using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings (see in Kim et al., 2014; Rezaei, 2015).

#### **4.7.2 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Analysis**

Accordingly, Henseler et al. (2015) suggested and defined heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) as the mean of connections of indicators across constructs measuring diverse constructs (i.e., the heterotrait-heteromethod relationships) relative to the (regular) mean of the average associations of indicators computing the same construct (i.e., the monotrait-heteromethod correlations). Precisely, the HTMT method is an approximation of what the actual relationship between two constructs would be, if they were impeccably measured (i.e., if they were seamlessly reliable). This actual relationship is termed as disattenuated relationship and a disattenuated relationship between two constructs close to 1 indicates lack of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Hair et al. (2017) described cross-loadings of a good model as a model that its indicators load very well on their intended factors and also cross load with other factors. Ideally, the rule of thumb stipulates that the intended loadings ought to be greater than 0.70 and a corresponding cross-loading of 0.30. Cross-loadings are an alternative to the average variance extracted (AVE) as a model of assessing discriminant validity for reflective models (Hair et al., 2014).

A model is said to be inappropriate when its indicator variables are linked with other latent variables than its own latent variable.

Fornell-Larcker on the other hand is the second technique used in assessing discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). In checking the discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker would be used to compare the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) values with the latent variable correlations (Hair et al., 2014; 2017). Thus, the square root of each construct's AVE ought to be greater than its highest relationship with other construct. Another technique used in evaluating the outcome of the Fornell-Larcker criterion is to determine whether the AVE is bigger than the squared correlation with other construct (Hair et al., 2017). However, the rationale of Fornell-Larcker is that a construct shares more variance with its linked indicators than other construct.

### **4.7.3 Structural Model Evaluation**

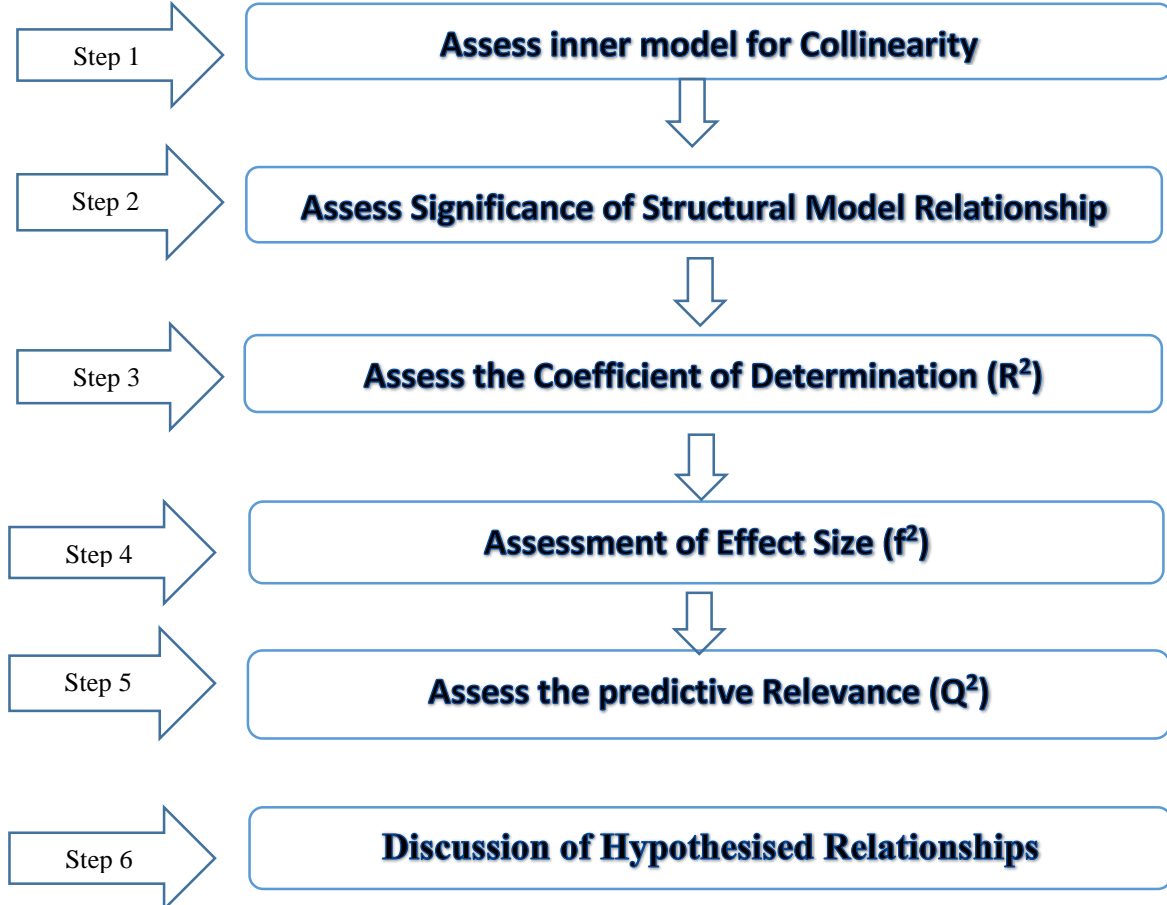
It is imperative to note that once it is long-established that the paradigm measures are reliable and valid, it addresses the valuation of the structural model results. It encompasses examining the model's extrapolative capabilities and the connections amongst the constructs (Hair et al., 2017) and underneath is a pictorial view of the procedure to be embarked on.

#### **4.7.3.1 Assessment of Multicollinearity**

In view of this, Hair et al. (2017) well-defined variance inflation factor (VIF) as the give-and-take of the tolerance (i.e.,  $VIF_{xs} = 1/TOL_{xs}$ ), therefore, a tolerance value of 0.25 for  $x_1$  ( $TOL_{xs}$ ) transforms into a VIF value of  $1/0.25 = 4.00$  for  $x_1$  ( $VIF_{xs}$ ). The scholars however opined that the word VIF is derived from its square root ( $\sqrt{VIF}$ ), being the degree to which the standard error has been accrued due to the existence of collinearity. Likewise, a VIF

significance of 4.00 infers that the standard error has been doubled ( $4=2.00$ ) due to collinearity.

**Figure 4.2: Structural model assessment procedure**



#### 4.7.3.2 Validity

Zikmund et al. (2012) described validity as the accuracy of a measurement or the extent to which a score honestly represents a concept. Validity therefore refers to the appropriateness of the measurements to assess the variable it claims to measure (Burns & Burns, 2008). In this dissertation, construct validity is applied to detect how well the results are obtained, using the measuring instrument prior to theoretical expectations (Hair et al., 2017). Construct validity includes two (2) sub-types: discriminant and convergent validity. Convergent validity was however used to ensure that the constructs identified are truly reflected by their

indicators (Rezaei, 2015), while discriminant validity was also used in identifying the extent to which a construct is different from other constructs. Convergent validity is applied using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings while discriminant validity is applied using construct correlations and cross-loadings (see Rezaei, 2015).

#### **4.8 Ethical consideration**

In addressing ethical issues, a precautionary approach was adopted. Introductory letter of consent to obtain information or data was acquired from the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Ghana Business School (UGBS). The drive and the objectives of the dissertation were elucidated to the participants to eliminate any possible misunderstanding. Respondents were guaranteed that any answer(s) given would be kept with all anonymity and confidentiality (see in Narteh, 2013). Finally, the respondents were given the assurance that there are no right or wrong answers. Conferring to Podsakoff et al. (2003, p.888), “these procedures should reduce people’s evaluation apprehension and make them less likely to edit their responses to be more socially desirable, lenient, acquiescent and consistent with how the researcher wants them to respond”.

#### **4.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter discussed the philosophical opinion employed by the researcher for the dissertation. It also discussed the research design, sample size, the variables under study, the data collection instrument and method, the consistency and validity of the scale, ethical consideration and data processing and analyses.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The previous chapters of this dissertation were dedicated to the review of literature relating to the topic, which enables the development of appropriate hypotheses and methodology for collecting data. However, this current study is focussed on presenting the findings of the analysed data gathered. The data analysis is presented in three parts: the first presented the actual practice of social media engagement; the second examined fan engagement behaviours; and the third examined fan loyalty. The data was analysed by means of SPSS and PLS. Thus, the SPSS was used for the descriptive analysis, whereas PLS was used for SEM, since it is well suited to handle highly multifaceted predictive models (Joreskog & Wold, 1982).

Nevertheless, to perform the actual analysis, some preliminary data analysis (PDA) was run to guarantee the dataset was cleaned and cleansed (see in Ainin et al., 2015). The data screening was done to remove non-engaging responses, thus, responses with a standard deviation of zero, since they had no variation in their responses.

#### 5.1 Characteristics of participants

Table 5.1 displays the details of the frequencies and the percentages of the key demographic characteristics (gender, age, club, education and the level of involvement) of the respondents. The table 5.1 illustrates that more males (63.4%) responded to the survey than females (36.6%) as postulated by Vale and Fernandes (2018) that more males dominate and engage with sports. With regard to the field data, it can be seen that most of the respondents fall

within the youthful population, with 52.6% falling within the age range of 20-29years, 22.8% within 30-39years, 12.6% within 40-49years, 8.0% within 10-19years and 4.0% within <50years as opined by Kolbe and James (2000) that more youth are sports enthusiasts than the aged. 56.0% of the respondents are Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC fans and 44.0% are fans of Accra Hearts of Oak FC. The frequencies indicate that there were more educated people who are football fans. Regarding the educational level, 34.2% are Degree holders, 28.6% have Diploma, 19.1% are SSCE/WASSCE holders, 14.5% are Post Graduates and 3.7% have other educational qualifications. The majority, represented by 52.9% of the respondents, involves in social media engagement with clubs and falls within the range of 5-10, and 47.1% falls within the range of 1-5 social media engagement.

**Table 5.1: Descriptive statistics of participants**

<b>Demographic variables</b>	<b>Frequency (325)</b>	<b>Percentages (100)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	206	63.4
Female	119	36.6
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
10 – 19	26	8.0
20 – 29	171	52.6
30 – 39	74	22.8
40 – 49	41	12.6
< 50	13	4.0
<b>Club</b>		
Accra Hearts of Oak	143	44.0
Kumasi Asante Kotoko	182	56.0
<b>Education</b>		
SSCE/ WASSCE	62	19.1
Diploma	93	28.6
Degree	111	34.2
Post Graduate	47	14.5
Others	12	3.7
<b>Involvement</b>		
1 - 5	153	47.1
5 – 10	172	52.9

Total response (N) = 325; Missing values = 0 for all variables presented

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

## 5.2 Descriptive statistics on construct

Table 5.2 below presents the means and standard deviations of fan motivation, fanship, fan satisfaction, social media engagement and fan loyalty. From the table, the mean for fan motivation is 3.76(SD= 0.99), indicating that on average, respondents are motivated. They are motivated because of the entertainment value attached to sports and as well as the fun bit of sports. This is revealed in Table 5.2 with the indicators *“I enjoy sports because of its entertainment value”* and *“I like to watch, read, and/or discuss sports simply because it is fun to do”*. These indicators were adapted from Wann (2014) in the article “preliminary validation of sport fan motivation”.

With regard to the mean for fanship (Mean= 3.68, SD= 1.08), the respondents love their respective clubs irrespective of their performance. The table further shows that on average, respondents are satisfied with their respective clubs (Mean= 3.41, SD= 0.96); however, the mean for social media engagement is (Mean= 3.87, SD= 0.98), indicating that on average respondents engage their clubs on social media. They exhibit fanship because they are fans of football in general and also see the need to support their favourite club as shown in table 5.2 with the indicators *“one of the reasons I use the club’s social media page is that I am a huge fan of football in general”* and *“I use the club’s social media page because it is important to support my favourite club”*. The indicators used in this research were adapted from Seo and Green (2008) in their article “Development of the motivation scale for sport online consumption”.

The mean of fan loyalty is however high (Mean= 3.65, SD= 1.06), indicating that on average, respondents are loyal to their respective clubs. Hence, this infers that the level of social media engagement and loyalty is high. With attitudinal loyalty (Mean= 3.83, SD=1.01), the data

indicates that fans become loyal to the club based on they being real fans of the club and they being committed to the club as illustrated in table 5.2 with the indicators “*I am a real fan of my favourite club*” and “*I am very committed to my favourite club*”. The behavioural loyalty had (Mean= 3.48, SD= 1.10), implying that fans become loyal to their respective clubs based on participation in discussions about the club and by watching the club’s games on social media. This was shown in the indicators in table 5.2 “*I have often participated in discussions about my favourite club*” and “*I have watched games of my favourite club on social media*”. The scales on attitudinal and behavioural loyalty were both modified from the study of Bauer et al. (2008) titled “Brand image and fan loyalty in professional team sports: a refined model and empirical assessment”.

**Table 5.2: Construct and measurement items means**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Fan Motivation</b>			<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.99</b>
One of the main reasons I watch, read, and/or discuss sports is for artistic value	1.00	5.00	3.49	1.05
One of the main reasons I watch, read, and/or discuss sports is because of the social networks I get from sports	1.00	5.00	3.45	1.06
When my team achieves something I feel as though I have achieved something	1.00	5.00	3.79	.98
I enjoy the sport because of its entertainment value	1.00	5.00	3.93	.95
I enjoy watching sports more when I am with a large group of people	1.00	5.00	3.91	1.01
I like to watch, read, and/or discuss sports simply because it is fun to do	1.00	5.00	3.99	.90
<b>Fanship</b>			<b>3.68</b>	<b>1.08</b>
I use the club's media page because I enjoy interacting with other fans on the page	1.00	5.00	3.44	1.13
One of the main reasons I use the club's social media page is that I consider myself a fan of the club	1.00	5.00	3.68	1.07
I use the club's media page because I derive content from the page for interaction	1.00	5.00	3.58	1.06
One of the reasons I use the club's social media page is that I am a huge fan of football in general	1.00	5.00	3.82	1.12
Using the club's social media page demonstrates my support for football in general	1.00	5.00	3.69	1.09
One of the reasons I use the club's social media page is that I consider myself a big fan of the club	1.00	5.00	3.78	1.05
I use the club's social media page because it is important to support my favourite club	1.00	5.00	3.80	1.03
<b>Fan Satisfaction</b>			<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.96</b>
My club performs well in most competitions	1.00	5.00	3.87	.96
The players display sportsmanship during and after match	1.00	5.00	3.62	.88
The atmosphere is exciting	1.00	5.00	3.66	1.00
The stadium's design allows easy access to amenities (such as toilets and food and beverage services etc.)	1.00	5.00	2.55	1.13
The cost of ticket is moderate	1.00	5.00	3.30	.81
The stadium's physical facilities are visually appealing	1.00	5.00	3.41	.97
Patronising my club's merchandise is convenient	1.00	5.00	3.45	.99
<b>Social Media Engagement</b>			<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.98</b>
I am enthusiastic in relating to the club on social media	1.00	5.00	3.77	.99
I feel energetic during club activities	1.00	5.00	3.78	.97
I feel positive about the club	1.00	5.00	4.04	.88
When it comes to football, my mind is fixated on the club	1.00	5.00	3.93	.99
I focus a great deal of attention on my club's social media interactions	1.00	5.00	3.82	1.04
I become absorbed in the club's performance	1.00	5.00	3.87	.98
I exert my full effort in supporting my club	1.00	5.00	3.91	.95
I am actively using the club's social media page	1.00	5.00	3.83	.99

I try my best to engage in the club's activities on social media	1.00	5.00	3.85	1.01
<b>Fan Loyalty</b>			<b>3.65</b>	<b>1.06</b>
<b>Attitudinal Loyalty</b>			<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.01</b>
I am a real fan of my favourite club	1.00	5.00	4.11	.907
I am very committed to my favourite club	1.00	5.00	4.00	.95
There is nothing that could change my commitment to the club	1.00	5.00	3.90	1.02
I will not change my affiliation to the club in future	1.00	5.00	3.73	1.08
I will defend my club in public even if it will cause problems	1.00	5.00	3.34	1.19
It is really important to me that my favourite club continues playing in the premier league in Ghana	1.00	5.00	3.88	.94
<b>Behavioural Loyalty</b>			<b>3.48</b>	<b>1.10</b>
I have often attended games of my favourite club live in the stadium	1.00	5.00	3.01	1.29
I have watched games of my favourite club on social media	1.00	5.00	3.67	1.07
I have often followed reports about my favourite club's players, coaches, managers etc. in the media	1.00	5.00	3.47	1.08
I have patronized a lot of club-related merchandise	1.00	5.00	3.43	1.03
I often wore the colours and/or logo of my favourite club	1.00	5.00	3.47	1.08
I have often participated in discussions about my favourite club	1.00	5.00	3.85	1.04

Source: Field data (2019)

### 5.3 Model Evaluation

Agreeing to Hair et al. (2017), before evaluating a model for investigation, there ought to be an estimation of the measures of the indicators as well as the constructs. This they term as the dimension model evaluation. Also, the investigator has to estimate the constructs (structural model) to ensure its fitness. The empirical measures aid researchers to link the hypothetically established dimension and structural models with reality.

### 5.4 Measurement Model Evaluation

The dimension model basically deals with the consistency and validity of the instrument used for the study. In the valuation of dimension models, the researcher has to ensure that good Cronbach alpha and composite reliability has been obtained (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2014). It is used to evaluate the internal consistency. Also, individual indicator reliability has

to be assessed, and this is done using the item loadings. The assessment of validity is in two folds: convergent validity and the discriminant validity. The convergent validity is measured via the average variance extracted (AVE) whilst the discriminant validity deals with the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Hair et al., 2017).

#### **5.4.1 Assessment of internal consistency**

The primary benchmark to be assessed in the measurement model is interior consistency reliability. The interior consistency of this study was measured using both the Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability. Hair et al. (2017) established that, internal consistency of construct is achieved when the value of the Cronbach alpha (CA) and the composite reliability (CR) is directly above 0.70. From Table 5.3, it can be seen that the constructs have achieved internal consistency such that all the CR and CA are above 0.70, in the sense that "Fan Loyalty" had a CR=0.933 and CA=0.922, "Fan Motivation" also had a CR=0.879 and CA=0.835, "Fan Satisfaction with CR=0.834 and CA=0.754, "Fanship" also recorded CR=0.939 and CA=0.924 and lastly, "Social Media Engagement" had a CR=0.939 and CA=0.926, indicating that all the constructs have achieved internal consistency, thereby exceeding the 0.70 threshold.

#### **5.4.2 Indicator reliability**

This measures the relative relevance of each indicator in the measurement of the hypothesis. It is however measured by the significance of the indicator loadings and their statistical significance. The indicator loadings are calculated by the basic PLS algorithm. Thus, the indicator reliability was measured with the item loadings and as it can be seen in chapter four of this study that an item loading between 0.40 and 0.70 can be maintained and loadings

below that are candidates for deletion especially when constructs are reflective. The statistical significances of the loadings are determined by bootstrapping. In view of the table 5.3 below, it can be noticed that  $AL5=0.565$ ,  $BL1=0.691$ ,  $BL2=0.673$ ,  $FS3=0.689$ ,  $FS7=0.687$ . From the table, all the loadings are above the threshold and significant. We, therefore, conclude that all the indicators in the models have achieved acceptable levels of indicator reliability.

**Table 5.3: Item Loadings, Average Variance Extracted Cronbach alpha and Composite reliability of constructs**

Construct	Item	Loadings	CR	AVE	CA	
<b>Fan Loyalty</b>	AL1	0.741	0.933	0.540	0.922	
	AL2	0.817				
	AL3	0.819				
	AL4	0.787				
	AL5	*0.565				
	AL6	0.764				
	BL1	*0.691				
	BL2	*0.673				
	BL3	0.713				
	BL4	0.747				
	BL5	0.728				
	BL6	0.741				
<b>Fan Motivation</b>	FM1	0.701	0.879	0.548	0.835	
	FM2	0.751				
	FM3	0.771				
	FM4	0.713				
	FM5	0.734				
	FM6	0.768				
<b>Fan Satisfaction</b>	FS1	0.728	0.834	0.501	0.754	
	FS2	0.730				
	FS3	*0.689				
	FS6	0.705				
	FS7	*0.687				
<b>Fanship</b>	F1	0.785	0.939	0.688	0.924	
	F2	0.856				
	F3	0.807				
	F4	0.837				
	F5	0.849				
	F6	0.832				
	F7	0.836				
<b>Social Engagement</b>	<b>Media</b>	BE1	0.821	0.939	0.659	0.926
		BE2	0.811			
		BE3	0.806			
		CE1	0.764			
		CE2	0.860			
		EE1	0.835			
		EE2	0.808			
		EE3	0.785			

\* Below the threshold of 0.70 but maintained because its elimination negatively affects the composite reliability

Source: Field Data, 2019.

### **5.4.3 Convergent validity**

This is an extent of the magnitude to which variance in a set of indicators is explained by a single concept, or magnitude to which a set of indicators share a proportion of the variance (Hair et al., 2014). Conferring to Hair et al. (2017; 2014), a conventional rule of thumb is that a dormant variable ought to elucidate a considerable part of each indicator's variance, usually at minimum of 50 percent (%). This however indicates that the variance shared amid the construct and its indicator is bigger than the measurement error variance, and it implies that an indicator's outer loading must be above 0.708 since that number squared (0.708) equals 0.50. Imperatively, an indicator's outer loadings that is below or within 0.40 and 0.70 can be deleted on or after the scale (Hair et al., 2017).

It is noteworthy to mention that all the constructs achieved a suitable level of AVE as the law of thumb requires. The construct "Fanship" obtained the higher AVE (0.688) whilst the construct "Fan satisfaction" achieved an AVE of 0.501, which is still above the threshold of 0.500.

### **5.4.4 Discriminant Validity**

With regard to the aforementioned, Hair et al. (2017) described discriminant validity as the magnitude at which a construct is actually distinct from other constructs by experiential criterions. Thus, founding discriminant validity infers that a construct is inimitable, and seizures phenomena are not represented by the other constructs in the model. However, the researchers opined that cross-loadings are stereotypically the primary method to assess the discriminant validity of the indicators. Nonetheless, other measures are available to assess discriminant validity. Thus, to ensure discriminant validity among constructs, the cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT were all assessed.

#### 5.4.5 Fornell- Larcker

In quantitative research, the Fornell-Larcker principle is the second method in evaluating discriminant validity, in the sense that it equates the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) values with the latent variable correlations (Hair et al., 2017). The scholars further explained that the square root of each construct's AVE ought to be greater than its maximum connection with any given construct. The rationale behind the Fornell-Larcker technique is centred on the idea that a construct shares more variance with its connected indicators than with any other construct.

**Table 5.4: Fornell-Larcker Criterion Assessment**

	<b>Fan Loyalty</b>	<b>Fan Mot.</b>	<b>Fan Sat.</b>	<b>Fanship</b>	<b>Soc. Med. Engage.</b>
<b>Fan Loyalty</b>	<b>0.735</b>				
<b>Fan Mot.</b>	0.654	<b>0.740</b>			
<b>Fan Sat.</b>	0.392	0.350	<b>0.708</b>		
<b>Fanship</b>	0.725	0.694	0.374	<b>0.829</b>	
<b>Soc. Med. Engage.</b>	0.734	0.614	0.418	0.774	<b>0.812</b>

**Source: Field data, 2019.**

Evaluating table 5.4, it can be realised that “Fan Loyalty” had the highest AVE=0.735 as compared to “Fan Mot” =0.654, “Fan Sat” =0.392, “Fanship” =0.725 and “Soc. Med. Engage” =0.734 respectively. “Fan Mot” also had a higher AVE=0.740 compared to “Fan Sat” =0.350, “Fanship” =0.694 and “Soc. Med. Engage” =0.614, whereas “Fan Sat” also had an AVE= 0.708, “Fanship” =0.374 and “Soc. Med. Engage” = 0.418 and so forth.

#### 5.4.6 Cross loading analysis

The cross-loadings are characteristically the primary method to evaluate the discriminant validity of the indicators, and an indicator's outer loading on the related construct should be more than any of its cross-loadings (i.e., its relationship) on other constructs. Thus, the superlative way to evaluate and report cross-loadings is in a table with rows for the indicators

and columns for the latent variable (Hair et al., 2017). Below is a table juxtaposing the cross-loadings of the field data gathered for this dissertation.

It can be grasped from Table 5.5 below that the construct Fanship was measured with seven items, F1 to F7. It can also be seen that the correlation coefficients mapping unto Fanship (F1=0.785, F2=0.856, F3=0.807, F4=0.837, F5=0.849, F6=0.832, F7=0.836) from F1 to F7 is higher than F1 to F7 correlation coefficients mapping unto any other construct such as Fan Loyalty (F1=0.567, F2=0.580, F3=0.584, F4=0.596, F5=0.618, F6=0.653, F7=0.603). This implies that all the constructs have attained discriminant validity.

Table 5.5: Cross loadings

	FAN	FAN MOT.	FAN SAT.	FANSHIP	SOC. MED. ENGAGE.
	<b>LOYALTY</b>				
AL1	<b>0.741</b>	0.515	0.267	0.621	0.621
AL2	<b>0.817</b>	0.524	0.341	0.658	0.673
AL3	<b>0.819</b>	0.538	0.287	0.614	0.598
AL4	<b>0.787</b>	0.472	0.302	0.513	0.503
AL5	<b>0.565</b>	0.355	0.290	0.309	0.337
AL6	<b>0.764</b>	0.495	0.294	0.550	0.514
BE1	0.639	0.547	0.364	0.641	<b>0.821</b>
BE2	0.621	0.443	0.314	0.696	<b>0.811</b>
BE3	0.594	0.415	0.337	0.612	<b>0.806</b>
BL1	<b>0.691</b>	0.519	0.150	0.514	0.447
BL2	<b>0.673</b>	0.507	0.338	0.538	0.537
BL3	<b>0.713</b>	0.525	0.259	0.503	0.473
BL4	<b>0.747</b>	0.458	0.316	0.485	0.561
BL5	<b>0.728</b>	0.396	0.307	0.466	0.538
BL6	<b>0.741</b>	0.435	0.306	0.527	0.598
CE1	0.564	0.473	0.357	0.584	<b>0.764</b>
CE2	0.594	0.509	0.311	0.621	<b>0.860</b>
EE1	0.569	0.515	0.326	0.667	<b>0.835</b>
EE2	0.585	0.524	0.319	0.605	<b>0.808</b>
EE3	0.605	0.550	0.381	0.591	<b>0.785</b>
F1	0.567	0.605	0.281	<b>0.785</b>	0.622
F2	0.580	0.651	0.299	<b>0.856</b>	0.626
F3	0.584	0.601	0.337	<b>0.807</b>	0.614
F4	0.596	0.543	0.231	<b>0.837</b>	0.649
F5	0.618	0.556	0.375	<b>0.849</b>	0.664
F6	0.653	0.545	0.325	<b>0.832</b>	0.663
F7	0.603	0.535	0.319	<b>0.836</b>	0.647
FM1	0.472	<b>0.701</b>	0.204	0.467	0.428
FM2	0.515	<b>0.751</b>	0.222	0.537	0.520
FM3	0.492	<b>0.771</b>	0.273	0.482	0.442
FM4	0.391	<b>0.713</b>	0.315	0.479	0.377

<b>FM5</b>	0.485	<b>0.734</b>	0.269	0.521	0.446
<b>FM6</b>	0.530	<b>0.768</b>	0.284	0.583	0.491
<b>FS1</b>	0.329	0.364	<b>0.728</b>	0.371	0.369
<b>FS2</b>	0.244	0.254	<b>0.730</b>	0.223	0.230
<b>FS3</b>	0.299	0.318	<b>0.689</b>	0.263	0.220
<b>FS6</b>	0.184	0.110	<b>0.705</b>	0.150	0.254
<b>FS7</b>	0.291	0.155	<b>0.687</b>	0.259	0.353

\* **Boldened zigzag figures represents the highest Pearson Correlation Coefficients**

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

#### **5.4.7 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Analysis**

According to Henseler et al. (2015), the scholars recommended a threshold value of 0.90 if the path model comprises constructs that are conceptually very comparable. The HTMT assessment above 0.90 puts forward a lack of discriminant validity and when the constructs in the path model are theoretically more divergent, a lower and more conservative threshold value of 0.85 is mandated. Table 5.6 shows the HTMT of the data collected. From the table, it can be established that all the constructs have achieved acceptable levels of HTMT.

**Table 5.6: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

	<b>Fan Loyalty</b>	<b>Fan Mot.</b>	<b>Fan Sat.</b>	<b>Fanship</b>	<b>Soc. Med. Engage.</b>
<b>Fan Loyalty</b>					
<b>Fan Mot.</b>	0.739				
<b>Fan Sat.</b>	0.457	0.430			
<b>Fanship</b>	0.775	0.789	0.427		
<b>Soc. Med. Engage.</b>	0.787	0.692	0.480	0.835	

**Source: Field data, 2019**

#### 5.4.7.1 Assessment of model for collinearity

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to assess if the construct associates highly with each other. However, Hair et al. (2017) defined variance inflation factor (VIF) as the shared acceptance (i.e.,  $VIF_{xs} = 1/TOL_{xs}$ ) therefore, an acceptance value of 0.25 for x1 (TOL<sub>xs</sub>) translates into a VIF value of  $1/0.25 = 4.00$  for x1 (VIF<sub>xs</sub>). Detailed explanation is captured in chapter four of this study. Thus, table 5.7 below indicates that the constructs do not correlate highly with each other as the VIFs are all less than 5.00.

**Table 5.7: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)**

Construct	Variance Inflation Factor
Fan Mot.	2.007
Fan Sat.	1.234
Fanship	3.086
Soc. Med. Engage.	2.670

**Source: Field data, 2019.**

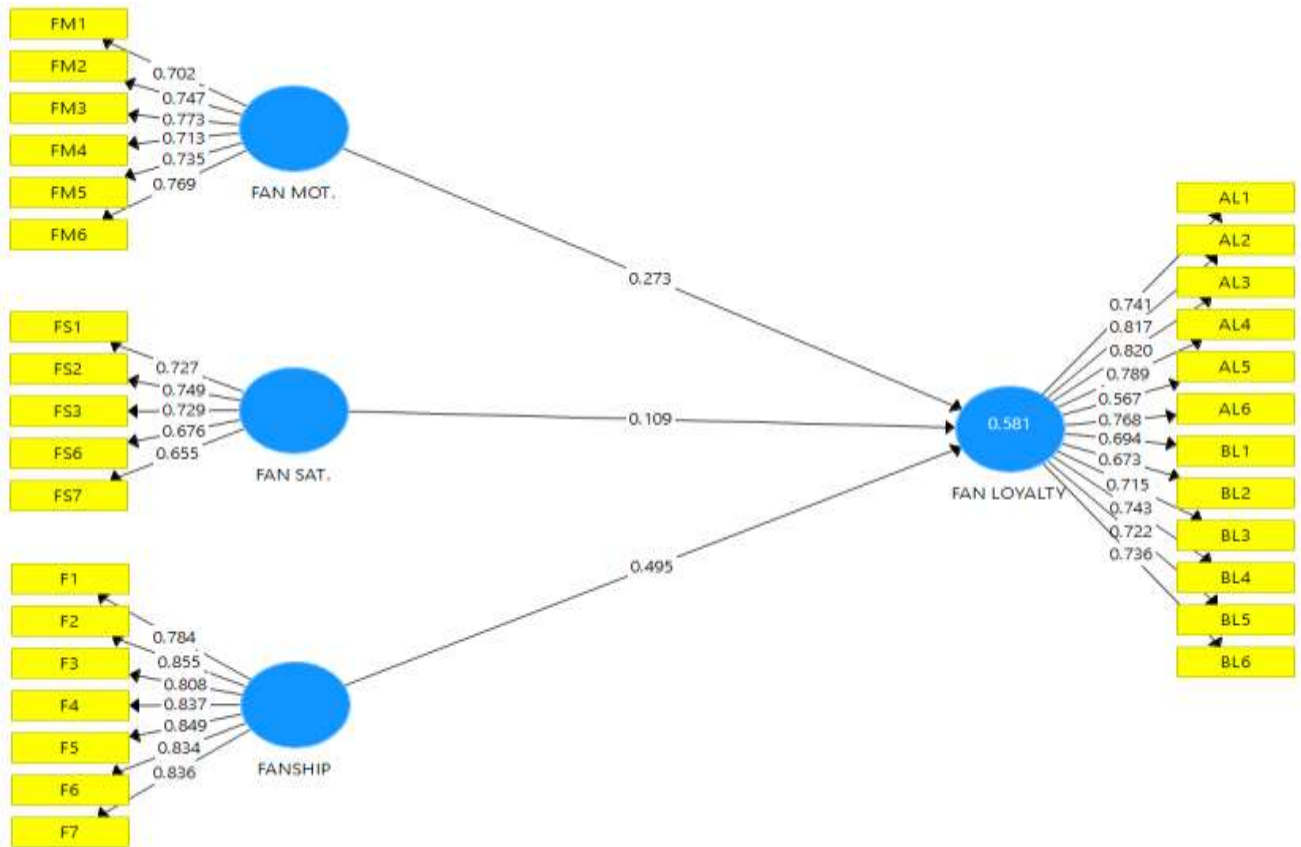
From Table 5.7 above, all the constructs in the model had variance inflation factor (VIF) less than 5.0 (Fan Mot=2.007, Fan Sat=1.234, Fanship=3.086, Soc. Med. Engage=2.670). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no issues of multicollinearity among the constructs.

#### 5.4.7.2 Assess of significant Path

Hair et al. (2017) espoused that investigators use p-values to measure significance levels. A p-value is equivalent to the probability of attaining a t-value at the least extreme, as the one truly experimental conditional on the null hypothesis being sustained. More so, the p value is the probability of erroneously rejecting an actual null hypothesis. The scholars further explained that when assuming a significance level of 5%, the p-value must be smaller than

0.05 to conclude that the correlation under consideration is significant at a 5 percent (%) level.

**Figure 5.1: Direct relationship between the Drivers of Fan Loyalty and Fan Loyalty**



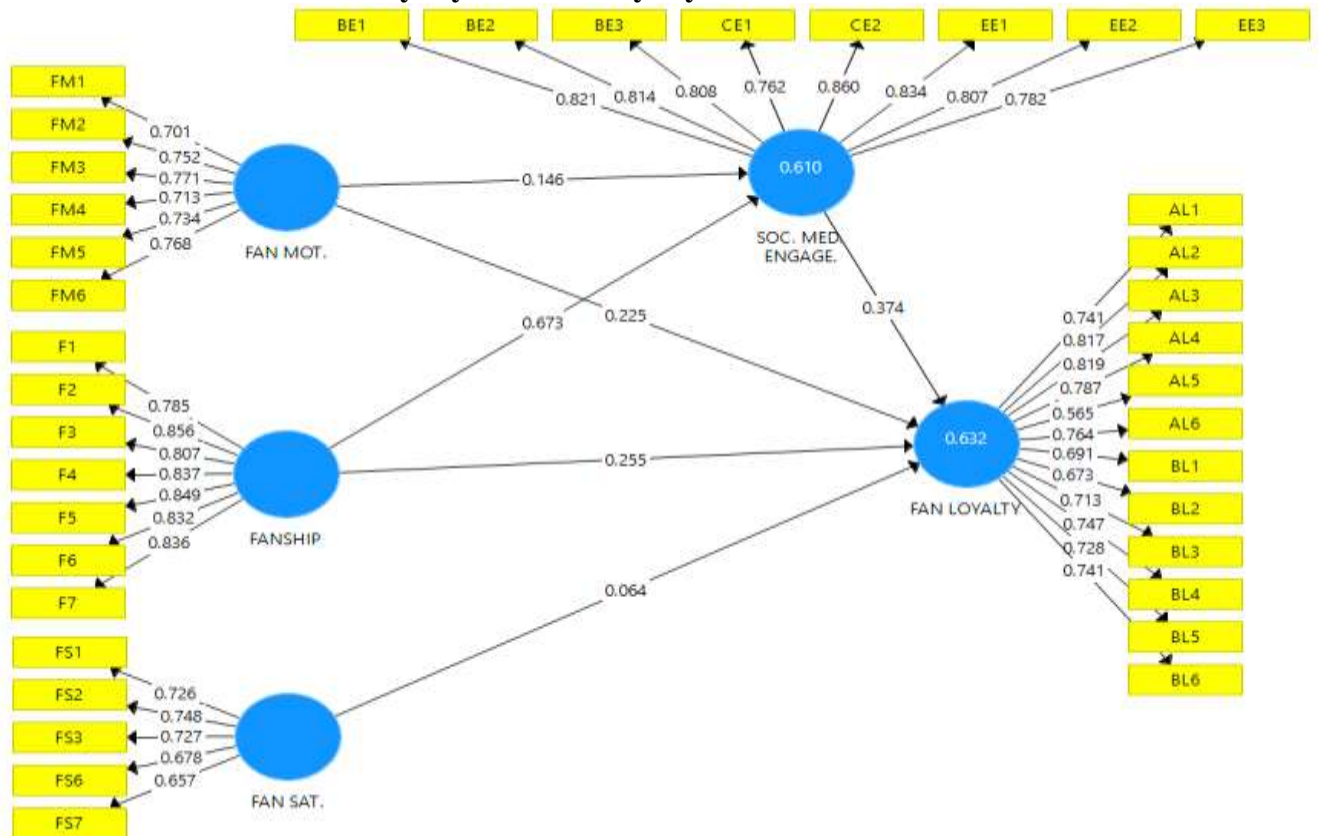
**Table 5.8: Path Analysis**

Path	Path coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1a Fan Mot. -> Fan Loyalty	0.273	4.835	0.000	Supported
H1b Fanship -> Fan Loyalty	0.495	9.468	0.000	Supported
H1c Fan Sat. -> Fan Loyalty	0.109	2.459	0.014	supported

Source: Field data, 2019

From Table 5.8 above, a path whose P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 is estimated to have established statistical significance hence, supporting the associated hypothesised relationship. Considering the hypothesised relationship for the construct Fan Motivation → Fan Loyalty, Fanship → Fan Loyalty and Fan Sat. → Fan Loyalty were all supported. These relationships are deliberated in detail in the subsequent sections.

**Figure 5.2: The mediation effect of Social Media Engagement on the relationship between the Drivers of fan Loyalty and Fan Loyalty**



**Table 5.9: Path Analysis**

	<b>Path</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>	<b>T Statistics</b>	<b>P Values</b>	<b>Decision</b>
H1a	Fan Mot. -> Fan Loyalty	0.225	4.490	0.000	Supported
H1b	Fanship -> Fan Loyalty	0.255	4.104	0.000	Supported
H1c	Fan Sat. -> Fan Loyalty	0.064	1.552	0.121	Not Supported
H2	Soc. Med. Engage. -> Fan Loyalty	0.374	6.337	0.000	Supported
H3a	Fan Mot. -> Soc. Med. Engage.	0.146	2.437	0.015	Supported
H3b	Fanship -> Soc. Med. Engage.	0.673	13.176	0.000	Supported

**Source: Field data, 2019.**

From Table 5.9 above, a path whose P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 is estimated to have established a statistical significance hence, supporting the hypothesised relationship. The hypothesised relationship for the construct Fan Motivation → Fan Loyalty, Fanship → Fan Loyalty, Social Media Engagement → Fan Loyalty, Fan Mot. → Soc. Med. Engage and Fanship → Soc. Med. Engage, were all supported but Fan Sat. → Fan Loyalty was not supported because of the introduction of the mediating variable (social media engagement). But as juxtaposed in Table 5.8, it supported but when the mediator was introduced in Table 5.9, it did not support.

#### **5.4.7.3 Coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

According to Hair et al. (2017), coefficient of determination is a measure of the percentage of an endogenous construct's variance that is elucidated by its predictor constructs. Table 5.10 below illustrates the coefficient of determination of the data gathered from the field.

**Table 5.10: Coefficient of Determination**

	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Adjusted</b>	<b>F square</b>	<b>Q Square</b>
<b>Fan Loyalty</b>	0.632	0.628		0.314
<b>Soc. Med. Engage.</b>	0.610	0.608	0.143	0.374
<b>Fan Mot.</b>			0.068	
<b>Fan Sat.</b>			<b>0.009</b>	
<b>Fanship</b>			0.057	

**Source: Field data, 2019**

#### **5.4.7.4 Effect size (F2)**

In reference to table 5.10, the effect size of the exogenous variables is above 0.02, hence its removal will have small effect on the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>). This also means that their contributions to explaining Fan Loyalty of Football Fans have small effect. Also, from table 5.10, Fan Satisfaction attained an effect size of 0.009 which is below the rule of thumb to achieve other small, moderate or substantial effect (Cohen, 1988). Hence, its removal from the model will have no effect on the R<sup>2</sup>.

#### **5.4.7.5 Predictive relevance (Q2)**

Agreeing to Hair et al. (2017; 2014), predictive relevance is a degree of a model's predictive power, and it examines whether a model correctly envisages data not used in the approximation of the parameters. This characteristic makes Q<sup>2</sup> a measure of out-of-sample predictive power (also known as predictive relevance). From Table 5.10, the Q<sup>2</sup>-values obtained by the endogenous constructs are greater than zero hence, the predictive significance of the constructs are acceptable.

## **5.5 Discussion of Results**

One of the primary research questions that worried both practitioners and researchers is the role of social media engagement on fan loyalty (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). As stated earlier, in relations to the Ghanaian context, the most used SM platform by clubs is Twitter and Facebook. Consequently, this research is focussed on the use of gratification theory as an establishment for enhancing social media engagement and fan loyalty of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko. Thus, the research hypothesis will be discussed based on the objectives stated earlier.

### **5.5.1 Drivers of Fan Engagement Behaviour**

#### **5.5.1.1 Fan motivation and Fan Loyalty**

*H1a: Fan motivation will have a positive influence on loyalty*

Fan motivation demonstrated a constructive relationship with fan loyalty (see Table 5.9), such a relationship was significant at 5%, as it recorded a t-statistics value of 4.490 (which is above 1.96) and a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.225. Thus, we therefore fail to reject *H1a*.

Extant literature has hypothesised that fans when motivated by discussing sport and watching games with a large group of people, the propensity for the fan to be loyal accrues. From the survey, watching and discussing sports with large crowd, the club's achievement, and its entertainment value tap into fan engagement behaviour hence, they become motivated and enthused about the club. Interestingly, fans that possess these traits are expected to become loyal fans of the club. This, however, is manifested in the path analysis results presented in Table 5.9, indicating a constructive relationship between fan motivation and fan loyalty. Nevertheless, the relationship is statistically significant across the indicators. Per the estimated result in the above table, it is observed that when the variables associated with fan

motivation are enhanced by 1 unit, fan loyalty will significantly increase by 0.225 units, all other things being equal. Likewise, the t-statistics value of 4.490 implies that the observed positive relationship was not random, we therefore fail to reject *H1a* and accept that the higher the motivation, fanship and fan satisfaction are, the higher the chance of being motivated, all other factors being equal. Thus, the result is not by chance, as it is believed that fans that watch and discuss sports, the social network, the club's achievement, entertainment etc. are said to be motivated and hence become loyal fans of the club. Subsequently, respondents who are highly motivated are said to be loyal to their clubs. There is enough evidence to conclude that their engagement behaviour driven by motivation determines their loyalty to a club. The result is in consonant with Wang et al. (2011), who find that fan motivation has positive relationship with fan loyalty. Contrary to this finding, some studies have found that fan's loyalty to a club is dependent on the entertainment they get from the club and may not be loyal if the club's performance is abysmal.

#### **5.5.1.2 Fanship and Fan Loyalty**

##### ***H1b: Fanship will have a positive influence on loyalty***

In view of the above table 5.9, in illustrating the path analysis of the research, the results established a significant positive relationship with fan loyalty at a 5% implication level with a t-statistics of 4.104, and a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.255. Thus, we fail to reject *H1b*.

With regard to the estimated result in Table 5.9 above, it is observed that when the essential indicators associated with fanship is heightened by 1 unit, fan loyalty will significantly increase by 0.255 units, all other things being equal. A t-statistics value of 4.104 implies that the observed positive relationship was not due to random chance, and therefore, we fail to reject *H1b* and accept that the higher the fanship, fan motivation and social media

engagement, the higher the loyalty of fans, all other things being equal. The relationship between fanship and fan loyalty is significant, implying that all the dimensions have influence on fan loyalty. All the dimensions have positive coefficients thus, all the dimensions are measured with positive worded questions. The results indicate that all the dimensions positively and significantly affect fan loyalty. This means that when fans are enthusiastic and passionate about their clubs irrespective of the performance, they would be loyal.

Conversely, this evidence is supported by Bodet and Bernade-Assollant (2011); Clemes et al. (2011); and Filo et al.'s (2015) assertion that fanship has positive and significant relationship with fan loyalty. Likewise, Tapp (2004) and Wann and Branscombe (1990) are also of the view that “die-hard fans” trust that being a fan of the club is essential to them and hence becoming loyal fans of the club is eminent. However, Thorne and Brunner (2006) argued that a fan is prepared to make adjustment in their lifestyle to put up devotion to their clubs, which implies that at any point in time, they are likely to switch when their club is performing poorly. This argument of the scholars underpins the fact that some of the loyal fans of Real Madrid who later become loyal to Cristiano Ronaldo switched their support to Juventus football club after the said player left.

### **5.5.1.3 Fan Satisfaction and Fan Loyalty**

#### ***H1c: Fan Satisfaction with club will have a positive influence on loyalty***

Although Fan satisfaction demonstrated a positive relationship with fan loyalty (see Table 5.9), such a relationship was significant at 5% significance level, as it recorded a t-statistics value of 1.552 (which is below 1.96), a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.064 and a p-value of 0.121. We therefore fail to accept *H1c*.

Erstwhile literature has hypothesised that fans, when satisfied with the club's performance in most competitions, the atmosphere, players' display of sportsmanship, their susceptibility to be loyal will increase. The club's performance in most competition, the players' display of sportsmanship, the atmosphere and the convenience of merchandise tap into fans' engagement behaviour hence, they become satisfied and passionate about the club. Fans that experience these traits are expected to be satisfied with the club and thus become loyal. This, however, is visible in the path analysis results presented in Table 5.9, indicating an affirmative correlation between fan satisfaction and fan loyalty. Nonetheless, the correlation is statistically significant across the indicators accept the construct which says "*the stadium's design allows easy access to amenities*" loaded very low with a t-statistics value of 2.55 as compared to others. In view of the estimated results (see Table 5.9), it is observed that when the variables associated with fan satisfaction is improved by 1 unit, fan loyalty will significantly accrue by 0.064 units, all other things being equal. Similarly, the t-statistics value of 1.552 implies that the observed positive relationship was by random chance, we therefore fail to accept *H1c*.

This however does not certify that fan satisfaction is a robust determinant of fan loyalty. The study indicates that fans who are satisfied with their clubs may or may not be loyal to the club. Although respondents who are satisfied with the club's performance will be loyal, there is not enough evidence to conclude that their satisfaction with the club will determine their loyalty. The result conforms to the finding in the literature that cumulative satisfaction has positive relationship with fan loyalty (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Olsen & Johnson, 2003). It is however contrary to the finding of Olsen (2007), who found out that conceptualising fulfilment as the outcome of one single transaction may be too obstructive

when scrutinising the correlation between satisfaction and loyalty, as loyalty needs to be measured over time.

## **5.6 Relationship between Social Media Engagement and Fan Loyalty**

### ***H2: Social media engagement will have a positive influence on fan loyalty***

The social media engagement however established a significant affirmative relationship with fan loyalty at 5% impact level with a t-statistics of 6.337 and a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.374 thus, we fail to reject *H2*.

As per the estimated results in Table 5.8b above, it is observed that when the essential indicators associated with social media engagement is boosted by 1 unit, fans loyalty will increase by 0.374 units, all other things being equal. A t-statistics value of 6.337 infers that the observed positive relationship was not due to random chance, hence we then fail to reject *H2* and accept that the more fans feel positive about the club, have their minds on the club, make effort to support the club, and absorb the club's performance, the higher the chance of becoming loyal, all other factors being equal. Consequently, the results are not by chance because there is the belief that fans who engage the club actively on SM are more likely to be loyal fans of the said club.

The results from the path analysis (see Table 5.9) show that social media engagement significantly influences fan loyalty. This suggests that when people (fans) are engaged with the club on social media, they would have positive perception about the club and hence become loyal especially when the club is providing rich content and giving behind the scenes of the dressing room on social media. On the other hand, fans with little or no knowledge about the club's social media engagement would have negative perception about the club and

hence its impact on their loyalty. According to Gamboa and Goncalves (2014), social media helps accrue brand attentiveness and serves as a vehicle for achieving customer (fan) allegiance. They further explained that SNS can improve customer satisfaction and strengthen client associations with the club, which will go a long way to drive loyalty. The results also indicate that social media engagement has a positive and statistically significant t-value of 6.337 and a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.374, which influences fan loyalty. This affirms the finding that fan loyalty does not merely develop overnight, clubs need to augment their comprehension of the formation process to facilitate their social media engagement with fans.

## **5.7 Relationship between Drivers of Fan Engagement and Social Media Engagement**

### **5.7.1 Fan Motivation and Social Media Engagement**

#### ***H3a: Fan motivation will have a positive influence on social media engagement***

Fan motivation demonstrated an affirmative significant relationship with social media engagement at a 5% significant close with a t-statistic of 2.437, and a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.146, we therefore fail to reject *H3a*.

Prior literature has hypothesised that when motivated, the propensity for fans to engage the club on social media is very high. Fan motivation taps into fan engagement behaviour hence, fans who are highly motivated are expected to have high tendency of engaging the club on social media. This is evident as the path analysis revealed an affirmative correlation between fan motivation and social media engagement. It can be observed in Table 5.9 that when fan motivation is enhanced by 1 unit, social media engagement will significantly increase by 0.146 units, all other things being equal. Further, the estimated results from Table 5.9 show that there is a positive and statistically significant (p value = 0.015) t-statistic value of 2.437 and a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.146 relationship between fan motivation and social media

engagement. This relationship is consistent across the indicators. Respondents who are proud of being motivated were found to have high social media engagement level. When people feel motivated about their clubs, they become enthused and participate on social media pages of their clubs. In this light, they are very cooperative and less critical of the club's social media content and as such, they are very likely to be loyal to the club. Empirical studies have revealed that fan impetus has a statistically significant positive connection with social media engagement and hence loyalty (Ioakimidis, 2010; Robinson et al., 2005; Yoshida et al., 2014).

### **5.7.2 Fanship and Social Media Engagement**

#### ***H3b: Fanship will have a positive influence on social media engagement***

Fanship, as seen in Table 5.9, demonstrated a significant positive relationship with social media engagement at 5% significance level with a whopping t-statistic assessment of 13.176, and path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.673. We, however, fail to reject *H3b*.

In view of the estimated result (see Table 5.9), it is observed that when fanship is improved by 1 unit, fans' social media engagement level will significantly increase by 0.673 units, all other things being equal. Thus, a t-statistics value of 13.176 indicates that the observed positive relationship was not due to random chance. We, therefore, fail to reject *H3b* and accept that the higher the fanship, fan motivation and fan satisfaction, the higher the fans' intention to engage the club on social media. Likewise, the result is not by chance because there is the belief that fans who are enthused and passionate are more likely to engage the club on social media. The finding is in consonance with the existing empirical evidence that a positive and statistically significant correlation exists between fanship and social media engagement (Funk & James, 2001; Vale & Fernandes, 2018).

**Table 5.11: Testing for Mediation effect of Social Media Engagement**

	Path	Path	P-Value	T Statistics
	Coefficient			
<b>Direct without Mediator</b>	Fan Mot. -> Fan	0.225	0.000	4.490
	Loyalty			
	Fanship. -> Fan	0.255	0.000	4.104
	Loyalty			
<b>Indirect with Mediator</b>	Soc. Med. Engage. -> Fan Loyalty	0.374	0.000	6.337
	Fan Mot. -> Soc. Med. Engage.	0.146	0.015	2.437
	Fanship -> Soc. Med. Engage.	0.673	0.000	13.176

**Source: Field Data (2019)**

From extant literature, it was established that social media engagement can mediate the relationship between fan engagement behaviour and fan loyalty. However, tests were conducted to ascertain the degree to which social media engagement mediates the relationship between FEB and fan loyalty. This was done in line with the proposition of Vale and Fernandes (2018).

Per the above table, the assumption was that if all three relationships are significant, then the mediation testing would be possible. All the three-relationship tested were significant (see Table 5.8). In determining the type of relationship, if social media engagement on fan loyalty is less in the two model than in the first model, then the mediation is said to be partial.

### **5.8 Chapter Summary**

Out of the six hypotheses that were tested, only one was empirically not supported but the other five hypotheses were supported. The study found out that fan satisfaction after the introduction of the mediator has no influence on fan loyalty. Contrarily, fan motivation and fanship have influence on fan loyalty. Finally, social media engagement influences fan's perception about the club and hence become loyal to the club irrespective of their performance.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

This section gives a summary of the entire research and draws conclusions by highlighting the key results of the dissertation. It further discusses the limitations of the study and gives recommendations for policy and practice, as well as for future studies.

#### 6.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this research is to assess the impact of social media engagement and fan loyalty and to explore the drivers of fan engagement behaviour as well as mediate social media engagement to ascertain the relationship between drivers of fan engagement and fan loyalty, and this was achieved. The target population for the research was fans of Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko who were active on social media during the time of the study. After a two and a half month period of data collection, three hundred and twenty-five (325) questionnaires were valid for statistical analyses. Thus, the Partial Least Square (PLS) method was used to test the hypothesis. This dissertation however provides an insight of how clubs use social media to drive engagement and fan loyalty using the gratification theory.

#### 6.2 Major Findings

Findings on drivers of fan engagement behaviour relate to study objective one (1). The study however found that fan motivation, fanship and fan satisfaction as the main drivers of fan engagement behaviour were found to have positive and significant relationship with fan loyalty. In addition, under fan motivation, fans who exhibit the traits of watching and discussing games with large crowd, club's achievement and its entertainment value showed a

positive and significant influence on the fans' loyalty to the football club. In view of fanship, when fans are enthusiastic and passionate about their clubs, they become loyal, such that the club's abysmal performance does not affect their loyalty. Among the fan satisfaction traits, club's performance in most competition, the atmosphere and athletes (players) display of sportsmanship were found to have positive relationship with fan loyalty. It was also found that, most of the fans have higher tendency of becoming loyal to the club hence, the club's social media engagement will instigate the fans to be committed and attached to the club. Accordingly, among the fans that have the intention of becoming loyal, the study found that the decision to become loyal was greatly influenced by fanship and fan motivation.

Research findings on the influence of social media engagement on fan loyalty relate to objective two (2). The study found that football clubs who utilise social media to engage fans have positive and higher influence on their loyalty. The reason is that, when the sport clubs constantly provide fan with social media content and behind the scenes of the dressing room, they will be influence or motivated to be glued and committed to the club. In addition, fan motivation and fanship emerged to have positive and significant relationship with social media engagement which in turn leads to loyalty. Hence, it was found that fan satisfaction has positive and non-significant relationship with social media engagement, which in turn may or may not lead to fan loyalty. That notwithstanding, football clubs that engage fans on social media have a high tendency of wooing their fans to becoming loyal and committed to them.

### **6.3 Research Implication**

The research findings will be pertinent in providing scholarly contributions to research and practice. Literature on social media engagement (SME) and fan loyalty in Ghana is arguably

scanty. Thus, the current study drives further than the present research works on SM in Ghana and thereby examining the effect of social media on sports fan engagement as well as fan engagement behaviour (FEB) and loyalty. This research will contribute to extant conceptual and empirical literature on social media sports fan engagement and serve as a bedrock for further studies. The current study will be useful to course instructors when teaching acceptance of technology in sports.

With regard to practice, this study will offer a comprehension of the role of SM on sport clubs. Thus, the study will also enlighten sport management on the use of social media in engaging fans. That notwithstanding, sport organisations in Ghana and beyond can leverage on this research's results to serve as a framework in engaging their fans on SM. Again, the study contains pertinent inferences for Ghanaian sports marketers, which is necessary for categorising the loyalty patterns and fan engagement behaviours that will help in tailoring their marketing programme. The study aims to unravel the engagement behaviour of fans in the Ghanaian football context; it could serve as a blueprint to build relationship with fans along the path of fanaticism. This will go a long way to build a strong and large fan base for the club, hence increase the revenue of the club.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

The use of social media should become part and parcel of the marketing strategy tools for sport organisations. As an internal marketing tool, sport organisations can use social media to accomplish the marketing strategy of identifying and anticipating fans' needs based on fans' remarks, requests and objections elicited via social media chats, post and status updates. This however can be achieved through monitoring of new fan groupings identified by data mining through fan data, sales of ticket and merchandise and interests by means of web analytics.

Notably, social media surveys are another alternative which sport organisations may adopt in identifying and anticipating needs of actual and prospective fans.

Social media could be used to satisfy fans' needs through the delivery of prompt response, order status updates, and supportive updates. In the effort to satisfy and engage fans, social media could be used to provide after sales services and add value services hybrid with the dynamic dialogue. Hence, the dialogue maintains permission to keep interacting and then add value by delivering useful content in the right context (Chaffey & Smith, 2013).

The research juxtaposed that Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko had very little knowledge of who exactly comprised their fan base. It is imperative that the two clubs implement fan-relationship management strategy at their clubs. Every sport enthusiast is a prospective fan of either Hearts of Oak or Asante Kotoko. Nonetheless, if the clubs gain the deeper understanding of the current fan base and as well as comprehend fan behaviours, they could better devise strategies towards meeting such needs. When fans' needs are met efficiently, it stimulates them to be committed and loyal to the club. In addition, sport clubs will find it easy to identify sport enthusiasts who are like their fans; and as such, it becomes easy to assist in converting such enthusiast to become fans and committed to the club. Thus, having a complete database of fans makes it easy for football clubs to tailor their approaches to different segments.

### **6.5 Limitations and Directions for Future Studies**

Despite the contributions made by this research, it is subject to some limitations. First and foremost, the research is cross-sectional, which only reveals the attitudes and thoughts of the respondents at a point in time. However, to decide the causal paths of the examined variables,

a longitudinal study would have been more appropriate (Poon, 2004). Since the findings of this research cannot be generalised due to its quantitative nature and small sample size used for the study. Future researchers should look at using either qualitative or mixed method approach to obtain more representative findings. Thus, the quantitative study should have a large sample size, such that its findings could be generalised.

However, the research solely obtained data using various supporters of Accra Hearts of Oak FC and Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC. It is recommended that future study should expand the target population. The fan base of local clubs could be studied with a special focus on finding out those who are part of the fan base. Additionally, majority of the research findings came from male respondents. Thus, future research should include more female respondents, in order to ascertain their engagement behaviour as compared to the males. That notwithstanding, the same research can be replicated on second tier clubs in Ghana to unravel the engagement behaviour of the fans.

The study could not take a longitudinal approach. As stipulated above, the research only analysed fans of Accra Hearts of Oak FC and Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC during the Nominalisation Committee (NC) cup in the premiership. This was however coupled by the fact that the clubs proved to be very successful during the NC cup. Likewise, it will be intriguing to unveil how fans react when the club is performing poorly. Future studies could investigate the fans at the beginning of the premiership season and then re-study them at the end of the season. Again, a research could be carried out to distinguish between the two seasons: one in which the club performed abysmally and other, where the club performed so well.

Lastly, the relationship between social media engagement and fan loyalty in various timelines can be explored to find out whether there are any adjustments in the result between the time periods. Studies may also like to examine the influence of other mediating and moderating variables or other context variables. The current study was, however, limited to a single context (i.e. Ghana), therefore these findings may not be applicable in another context. Future studies could be investigated in other countries so to ascertain the similarities and differences that may exist.

## **6.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter discussed the summary and conclusion of the research under study. It also discussed the major findings, research implications, recommendations, limitations and directions for future studies.

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## APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE



### DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear Respondent:** This questionnaire is designed to understand the impact of social media on sports fan engagement and the role of fan's social media engagement behaviour. This questionnaire is purely for academic purpose and as such any information provided would be treated UTMOST confidentiality. **NOTE:** there are no right or wrong answers

#### Section A: Personal Data

##### Age range

10-19years [ ] 20-29years [ ] 30-39years [ ] 40-49years [ ] 50years and above [ ]

##### Gender

Male [ ] Female [ ]

##### Football Club

Accra Hearts of Oak [ ] Kumasi Asante Kotoko [ ]

##### Educational Level

SSCE/WASCE [ ] Diploma [ ] Degree [ ] Post Graduate [ ] Others [ ]

##### Level of Involvement

On a scale of 1 to 5, how often do you use social media to check sports update of your favorite club. 1-5 [ ] 5-10 [ ]

#### SECTION B

*Kindly indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements below, ranking from the lowest 1 – slightly strongly disagree (SSD), 2 – slightly disagree (SD), 3 – Moderately Agree (MA), 4 – Agree (A), and to the highest 5- Strongly agree (SA).*

<b>Drivers of Fan Behaviour</b>	<b>SSD (1)</b>	<b>SD (2)</b>	<b>MA (3)</b>	<b>A (4)</b>	<b>SA (5)</b>
<b>Fan Motivation</b>					
One of the main reasons I watch, read, and/or discuss sports is for artistic value					
One of the main reasons I watch, read, and/or discuss sports is because of the social networks I get from sports					
When my team achieves something I feel as though I have achieved something					
I enjoy the sport because of its entertainment value					
I enjoy watching sports more when I am with a large group of people					
I like to watch, read, and/or discuss sports simply because it is fun to do					
<b>Fanship</b>					
I use the club's media page because I enjoy interacting with other fans on the page					
One of the main reasons I use the club's social media page is that I consider myself a fan of the club					
I use the club's media page because I derive content from the page for interaction					
One of the reasons I use the club's social media page is that I am a huge fan of football in general					
Using the club's social media page demonstrates my support for football in general					
One of the reasons I use the club's social media page is that I consider myself a big fan of the club					
I use the club's social media page because it is important to support my favourite club					
<b>Fan Satisfaction</b>					
My club performs well in most competitions					
The players display sportsmanship during and after match					
The atmosphere is exciting					
The stadium's design allows easy access to amenities (such as toilets and food and beverage services etc.)					
The cost of ticket is moderate					
The stadium's physical facilities are visually appealing					
Patronizing my club's merchandise is convenient					
<b>Social Media Engagement</b>					
	<b>SSD (1)</b>	<b>SD (2)</b>	<b>MA (3)</b>	<b>A (4)</b>	<b>SA (5)</b>
I am enthusiastic in relating to the club on social media					
I feel energetic during club activities					
I feel positive about the club					
When it comes to football, my mind is fixated on the club					
I focus a great deal of attention on my club's social media interactions					
I become absorbed in the club's performance					
I exert my full effort in supporting my club					

I am actively using the club's social media page					
I try my best to engage in the club's activities on social media					
<b>Fan Loyalty</b>	<b>SSD (1)</b>	<b>SD (2)</b>	<b>MA (3)</b>	<b>A (4)</b>	<b>SA (5)</b>
<b>Attitudinal Loyalty</b>					
I am a real fan of my favourite club					
I am very committed to my favourite club					
There is nothing that could change my commitment to the club					
I will not change my affiliation to the club in future					
I will defend my club in public even if it will cause problems					
It is really important to me that my favourite club continues playing in the premier league in Ghana					
<b>Behavioural Loyalty</b>					
I have often attended games of my favourite club live in the stadium					
I have watched games of my favourite club on social media					
I have often followed reports about my favourite club's players, coaches, managers etc. in the media					
I have patronized a lot of club-related merchandise					
I often wore the colors and/or logo of my favourite club					
I have often participated in discussions about my favourite club					

**Thank you for your cooperation**