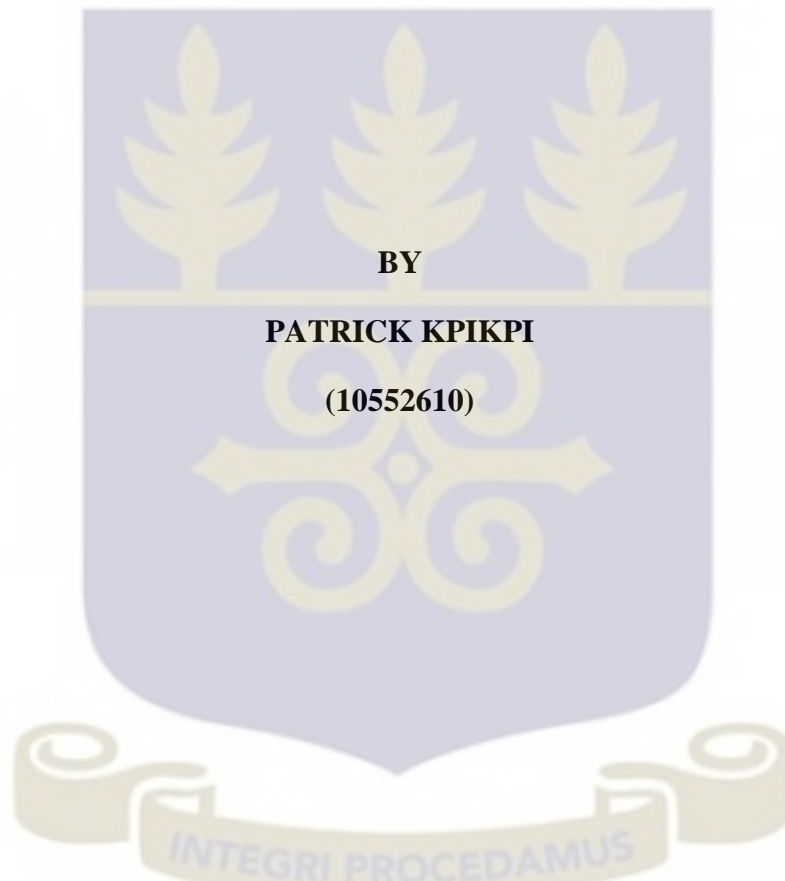


**THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ADVERTISING IN GHANA: AN AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE**



BY

PATRICK KPIKPI

(10552610)

**A LONG ESSAY PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER
OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

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DECLARATION

I, Patrick Kpikpi, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Godwin Sikanku of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon and Dr. Marquita Smith, Fulbright Scholar, University of Ghana, Legon.. Acknowledgements have been given where other works and studies have been cited.

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Dr. Marquita Sheree Smith

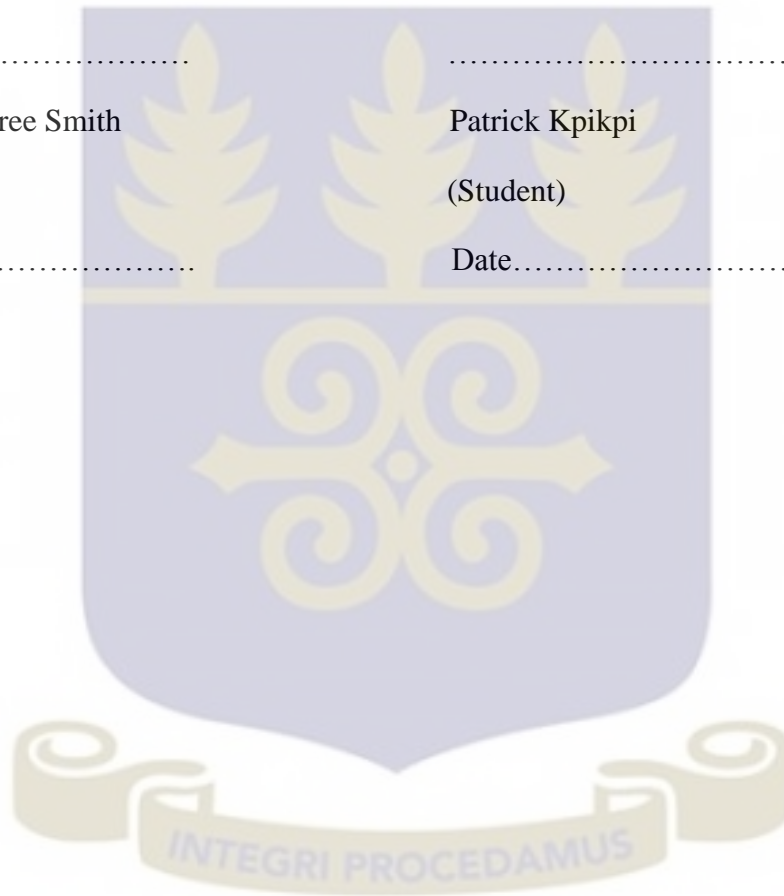
(Supervisor)

Date.....

.....
Patrick Kpikpi

(Student)

Date.....



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Rev. Mrs Eunice Sena Akua Kpikpi, my father Rev A. Y Mac Kpikpi, my brother Van Kpikpi and Henrietta Hughes for their enormous inspiration and support offered in diverse ways.

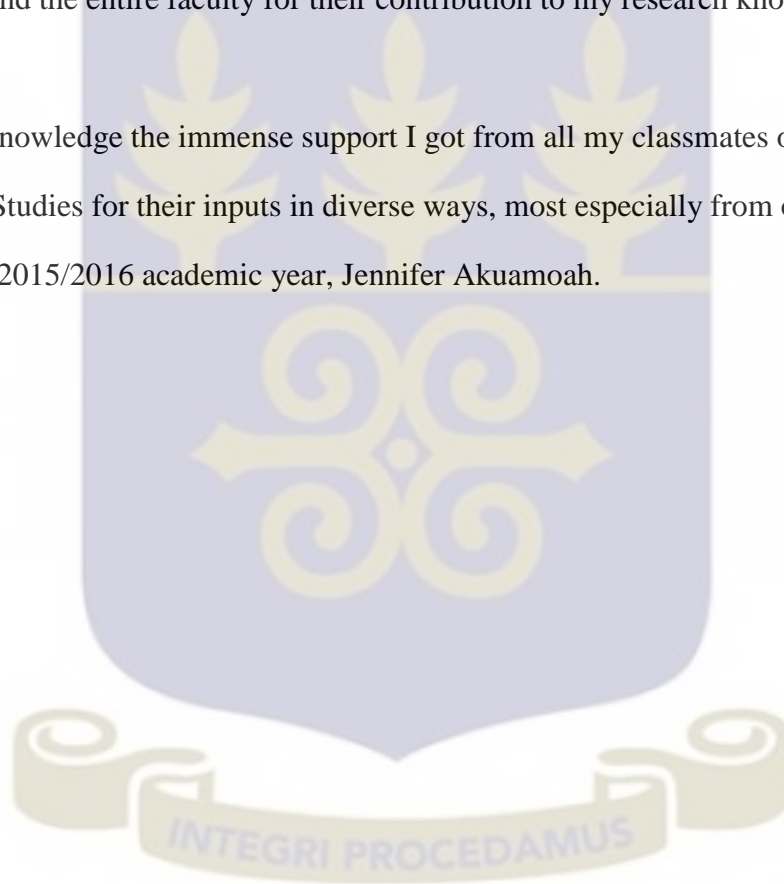


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to God, Almighty for my strength and aspiration to see the work through to its conclusion.

My thanks and appreciations also go to my dedicated supervisors Dr. Godwin Sikanku and Dr. Marquita Smith and the entire faculty for their contribution to my research knowledge.

I also wish to acknowledge the immense support I got from all my classmates of Department of Communication Studies for their inputs in diverse ways, most especially from our class representative of 2015/2016 academic year, Jennifer Akuamoah.



ABSTRACT

The study is intended to provide understanding of the use of social media for advertising by the advertising agencies in Ghana and to identify the prospects and challenges associated with its adoption. It is also to explore possible solutions that can possibly enhance the use of social media in advertising practice in Ghana.

It sets out to examine the attitude of advertising practitioners towards the use of social media, identify the range of social media tools being applied and the motivation behind those choices. The study used the Diffusion of Innovation Theory to explicate the issues of interest.

The study adopted qualitative research approach using in-depth interview technique with a sample size of 5 advertising agencies selected through purposive sampling. The population under consideration is all the advertising agencies in Ghana formally registered and recognized as advertising agencies.

The study is expected to increase knowledge about the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of social media in Ghana for advertising practitioners. It is also to create understanding about the changing communications landscape and how advertising practitioners in Ghana are adapting.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.1.1 Introduction

As technology is changing the way society communicates today, social media is becoming a part of interaction among individuals, businesses, governments and the society at large. This development has implications for communication experts including advertising practitioners who need to find effective and efficient means of reaching their target audiences. There is a high tendency for audiences using the social media network sites to master the art of social media advertising more than the advertising professionals themselves. When this happens advertising agencies may loose out their clientele as organization may tend to depend more on in-house personnel for their social media solutions. It is against this backdrop that this research is interested in finding out how advertising professionals are faring in this emerging technological environment.

Social media advertising is any kind of paid content on a social media network (<https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-advertising/>). This suggests that free posts on the social media platforms are not inclusive of social media advertising.

Advertising agencies that would build capacity in social media advertising are more likely to attract more clients than those stuck to traditional advertising. This development can lead to liquidation of even huge agencies which cannot adapt to the

wave of change in the communications industry.

This study examines how advertising agencies in Ghana adopt the social media in their advertising practice. It focuses on the perceptions and attitudes of advertising practitioners in Ghana and how they are adapting to the fast changing communication environment which is moving towards digital platforms. The growing popularity of the social media in Ghana and worldwide with advertisers increasing their budgets for social media advertising offers an opportunity for advertising agencies in Ghana to exploit. Failure of local agencies to leverage on the opportunities created by the new communication facilities can lead to advertisers resorting to international agencies where expertise is required, a situation which can lead to capital flight with dire consequences for the local economy.

1.1.2 **The Social Media Advertising**

Advertising has utilized varied media channels over the years and the advent of the New Media comprising the internet and other digital platforms is introducing new dimensions into the advertising sphere. Advertising channels in mass media other than the New Media are referred to as the traditional media notably radio, television and print which comes in the form of newspapers and magazines.

According to Bovee "Advertising is the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media."(Bovee, 1992, p. 7)

The social media which is powered by the internet is a part of the wider digital media

comprising mobile technologies which run with or without the internet. Social media is defined as a set of various web services that can be interrelated for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques (Subramanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Wikipedia also captures very essential elements in its definition as computer-mediated tools that allow people, companies and other organizations to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.

The fact that digital media usage is seen to be more prevalent in the youth than in older people suggests that in the near future the bulk of the advertising audience can more conveniently be located online than in the traditional media (Brown 2012). The emerging communication technologies coupled with the changing practices which manifest in various fields, such as telemedicine in health, virtual classrooms in academia, podcasting and streaming in the mass media, and online surveys in research. These mediums all account for the rise in online population.

As a strategic choice of media channel is crucial to the success in communicating advertising message, changes in the media landscape globally in terms of the New Media with emphasis on the social media poses a challenge to advertising practitioners (Goodwin, 2014). Embracing the new phenomenon can have a lot of prospects for the advertising practitioners while wishing them away also has the potential of spelling their doom in the industry. The importance of the social media in communication today has been evident in many business activities. Brown (2012) proposes that social media is very important in getting close to the customer, hearing what the customer says about your

brand, changing customer perceptions about the organization, improving customer relations and broadening your strategic network. According to Brown (2012) the magnitude at which social media is connecting businesses to people is unprecedented, more than they ever thought possible.

Social media advertising comes in the form of electronic banners, text links, pop-ups, videos, search engine optimizations and online networking portals. These services spread across different platforms and portals. Most notable for search engine optimization is google search.

Statistics from socialbakers.com and ebizmba.com portals, showing the use of social media globally reveal that 1 billion subscribers were on Facebook as at April 2016 and that 936 million out of this are active users of Facebook. From the same sources of socialbakers.com and ebizmba.com the global use of Twitter recorded 320 million as of August 2016, LinkedIn with 255 million in April 2016, Pinterest hit 250 million and Google Plus with 120 million also of April 2016. It has also shown that daily login for Twitter hit 100 million as around same April 2016 and that Instagram has been the fastest growing network around the same period.

1.1.3 History of Advertising in Ghana

Professional advertising in Ghana started with the use of photographs, posters and sign paintings as illustrated in Hartenstein book “ Anibue” (Civilization) in 1932 on the use of advertising media in Kumasi, Ghana. Advertising employed the use of billboards and posters around train stations in the Gold Coast, now Ghana.

The railway together with road networks and motor vehicles played an important role in the process of advertising development in Ghana as they form the main communication system of the time, that facilitated the circulation of the advertising material.(Hartenstein, 1932). According to Hartenstein (1932) roads and transport can be identified as key channels for communication network of the time.

The establishment of the first advertising agency in Ghana dates as far back as 1927 when the United African Company (UAC) formed West Africa Publicity Limited as an advertising agency and later transformed into Lintas Advertising. A paper authored by Kwame Akatu in 1980 noted that the major factor in the in the development of professional advertising industry in Ghana in the beginning was the growth of the British firms and other petty stores in the Gold Coast, now Ghana. This was powered mainly by the billboard, the newspaper and radio. While radio came in 1935, television showed up only in 1965, after independence.

A study conducted by Philip Arthur and Mercy Fumi on the topic:-“ Electronic advertisement in Ghana” published in the volume one of the Dawn Journal December 2012. The study revealed that about 99 percent of the targeted market in Ghana is reached through the electronic media which include radio, television and the computer. Crawford (1960) suggests that the nature of the advertisement determines the media to carry the message. Another study by Sandage and Frybuger (1967) noted that in a world of such technological advancements being witnessed, the electronic media is fast becoming the most popular choice in advertising. Athur, Fumi and Martin (2012) suggests that

electronic advertisements are most commonly used because of their appeal which are being convincing and persuasive.

The advent of the internet into Ghana in 1998 has introduced a new dimension into the electronic media and set the tone for a dramatic change in the dynamics of the communication landscape. Social media platforms such as Yahoo, Myspace and LinkedIn showed up in the early 2000 and Youtube, Facebook and Twitter in 2006. According to socialbakers.com, Facebook is the most widely used social network platform in Ghana and showed that active Facebook users in Ghana reached three million in November 2015 and internet penetration in Ghana was about five million (5million) users in December, 2014. Today Internet penetration is said to be seven million (7million) representing 28.4 percent of the population and three million are said to be active on social media mostly on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Audiences are becoming technologically savvy; drifting towards online and the growing trend is posing challenge to communication professionals including the advertising practitioners. Razdan (2008) suggests that consumers have significant influence over the choice of a media channel in advertising and that their behavior determines the strategy for the advertising industry for that matter the advertising agency. Goodwin (2014) indicates that there is a huge gap between what the clients need and what the advertising agencies can provide and the gap appears to be widening. This suggests that advertising agencies need to do more to cope with the new developments in the advertising industry brought about as a result of changing communication technologies and the behavior of the audiences.

According to Brown (2010) global statistics show that 96 per cent of the youth, usually referred to as generation Y are on social media. The implications are that these group of people will in the short time form the bulk of the working class and that the younger generation replacing them will also be born into the digital age, a development which is very important to the marketers and the advertising industry in terms of channels to adopt.

The New Media for that matter, the social media is actually the biggest shift in human behavior in relation to business and way of life since the industrial revolution, and that the new generation is the most influenced (Brown 2010). Digital generations are classified according to how they relate to the recent communication technologies in terms of era with the most important being the internet. Generation Y which is also referred to as the millennial generation are those born between 1980 and 2000 whose youthful ages meet with the emergence of the internet. This group of the population form the youth and the core of the working class today. Generation X are those born between 1963 and 1979 while Baby Boomers otherwise called BB are between 1945 and 1963.

A Ghana Statistical Service report (2014) revealed that ages of 14 years and below, form 38.6 percent of the Ghanaian population, and the ages between 15 and 24 represent 18 percent while ages between 25 and 54 represent 33.8 percent. In the rest of the segments of the population between 55 and 64 account for 4.8 percent while 66 and above take 4.1 percent. This age demographics therefore suggest the ages from 15 to 54 which form 52 percent of the total population are amenable to social media and this will soon be augmented in the near future with the addition of 38 percent from 14 years and below. These

developments offer further prospects for social media advertising.

Since the growing trend in the way we communicate as a people suggests that people will be increasingly spending more time on digital platforms, advertising industry would also need to re-strategize on how to meet its audiences that are migrating online.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The new communication technologies including the social media have become a fabric of the societal communication sphere, not excluding the advertising industry. Hence the purpose of this study is to explore how the social media is being used in advertising in Ghana and examine issues related to it, areas of interest are as follows.

1. To understand how key players in the advertising industry such as Prime Time Advertising, Lintas, Stratcom Africa, Ogilvy and Squad Digital use social media in advertising practice.
2. To assess the level of awareness of social media advertising among the advertising agencies in Ghana.
3. To understand the attitude of advertising practitioners in Ghana towards the social media advertising.
4. To identify challenges associated with social media advertising from the perspective of advertising agencies in Ghana.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. How do advertising practitioners in Ghana perceive social media advertising?
2. How are the advertising agencies coping with social media advertising in professional practice?
3. Why do advertising agencies in Ghana prefer the social media tools and platforms adopted?
4. What is the knowledge of advertising practitioners in Ghana on social media advertising?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study is intended to increase knowledge about the social media resources that are mostly used in Ghana and the reasons driving their use. The study is also to bring to light opportunities and challenges associated social media advertising. It is also to explore possible means of overcoming the difficulties of its adoption . The work is also to enable not only advertising practitioners but also communication experts to understand the changing communications landscape and how to adapt to fast evolving communication technologies.

Considering the rate of growth of the social media platforms and other digital media it is extremely important for communication professionals including advertising agencies to be in tune with the new development. While some advertising agencies embrace social media and making huge gains, others are hesitant or slow about its adoption for advertising and are dying out (O'Dell 2010). Barack Obama heavily utilized Twitter,

Youtube and Digg in his presidential election campaign in the United States and the results were evident (Brown 2012). Messages on social media have a great potential of going viral as we can see in the case of Susan Boyle, an ordinary contestant in the UK TV Talent Show, with extraordinary voice has been viewed over 150million times within 6 month and becoming a millionaire within same period and worth \$18million (Brown 2012).

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Social Media

Social media refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content or join online communities.(Dewing 2012). It can therefore be seen as all online communication platforms dedicated to community-based networking and content-sharing.

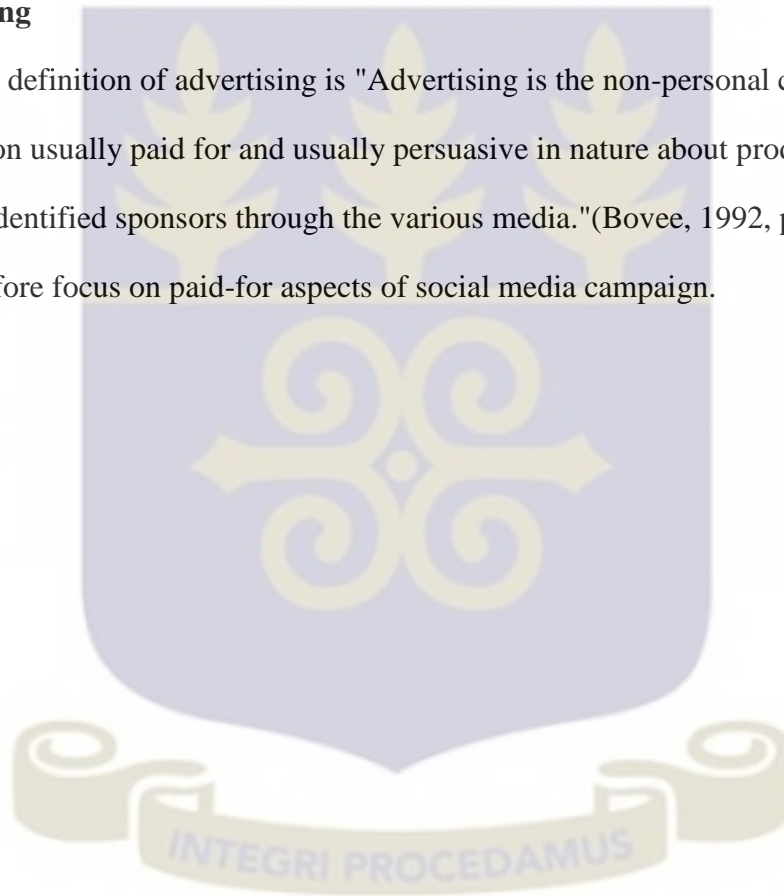
Wikipedia online also looks at social media as computer-mediated tools that allow people, companies and other organizations to create, share or exchange information, career interests, ideas, pictures and videos in virtual communities and networks. Common and key features associated with the social media are its interactive nature normally referred to as web 2.0 based applications, user-generated content, user-created profile on the portals and social media system's facilitation of networking.

Within this context of study social media is referring to the social network sites that offer interactive features to facilitate communication. These are basically the platforms and features driving the network. Platforms are the portals and the interfaces on which the

services and the application run and examples are Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. Tools in the context of social media advertising, refers to the applications used on the social media platforms to drive multimedia content and advertising material distribution or sharing and the types of advertising models used on the platforms.

1.6.2 Advertising

A popular definition of advertising is "Advertising is the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media."(Bovee, 1992, p. 7) The study will therefore focus on paid-for aspects of social media campaign.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the theoretical foundation upon which the study was based. It also discusses previous related scholarly works and concepts. The chapter further looks at the methodology used in the study.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The study is based on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory developed by Everett M Rogers in 1962. The theory is normally associated with how people in a society come to adopt and use technology or innovation. It also looks at how in some instances the innovation or technology can possibly be rejected.

2.2.1 Diffusion of Innovation Theory:

Diffusion of Innovation theory is a theory which states that diffusion is the process by which an innovation or a new idea is communicated through channels over time among members of a social system (Rogers 1995). It attempts to create a framework for understanding how technology, innovation or a new idea comes to be adopted by members of society. Rogers (1962) defines diffusion within the context of Diffusion of Innovation theory as the process by which innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. He sees innovation as an idea, practice or an object perceived as new by the individual or other unit of adoption.

Rogers proposes that four elements influence spread of new idea, which are the innovation itself, communication channel, time and a social system. He also notes that the process relies heavily on the human capital which is the innovativeness of the individual which he classified as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and the laggards. Rogers also identifies five stages through which an individual may pass in the process; knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. An individual might reject an innovation at any stage of the process on the grounds of inability to master the complexity, becoming disillusioned or a better innovation sets in.

Potential adopters according to Rogers, evaluate an innovation on its relative advantage, compatibility with existing systems, complexity to learn, trialability and its observed effects. Rogers theory provides the understanding that transmission of an innovation or its communication alone does not guarantee its adoption and explains the importance of the social system as an influencing factor. The opinion the society has about the innovation determines individual attitude and behavior toward the resource. A social system can be seen as a set of interrelated units engaged in a problem solving to accomplish a common goal. (Rogers 1995)

The Diffusion of Innovation theory mentions the ease of transmission to adoption to include changing of attitudes and behaviors and infrastructure support for the technology, all of which manifest in the study. It created the basis for the assessment of social media characteristics in particular and digital technologies in general about how they affect adoption of social media advertising. The theory also brings into focus issues related to rate of adoption as related to stages as well as the importance of the

communication element that drives the transmission of the innovation.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory was employed in this study because it provides the basis for understanding issues related to adoption of social media platforms and tools by advertising agencies in Ghana. The theory aided the explanation of the rate of adoption of social media advertising in Ghana. It was also useful in creating understanding about why some advertising agencies are relatively more in tune with social media than others. The theory offered a good basis for identifying challenges faced by advertising agencies in Ghana regarding the application of social media in advertising practice. The Diffusion of Innovation by and large had been useful in guiding the investigation relating to how the agencies are using the new technology in Ghana. It also provided an insight into the rate of adoption as revealed by data collected.

2.3 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.3.1 Introduction

The media landscape globally is experiencing fast paced digital transformation. The advent of the Internet has changed the way many organizations, businesses and individuals communicate and connect with one another. Information can now be gathered faster and more conveniently by the consumer to be more informed about products before making purchasing decisions (Blakeman2015). The internet for that matter the digital infrastructure continues to grow and its role in communication in all fields including advertising is becoming increasingly relevant. The social media use is popular among consumers as advertisers and communication practitioners are still learning how best to deliver and meet the needs of their clients (Blakeman 2015). Social media in particular is

becoming critical in advertising because of a paradigm shift in communication which is drifting towards the online environment. Communicators like advertising industry practitioners need to adjust to the new order in order to remain in business or be useful in their field of endeavor. Globally there is evidence of a rise in social media advertising. In the United States where its advertising expenditure represents 26 percent of the global figure, digital advertising alone hits 72.09 billion dollars towards the end of 2016 overtaking TV spending which is 71.21 billion dollars.

(<https://www.emarketer.com/Article/US-Digital-Ad-Spending-Surpass-TV-this-Year/1014469>).

Digital advertising in terms of spending had already overtaken newspaper in 2013 in the U.S and Facebook is the largest player in the digital market place, indicating that social media is the greatest force to reckon with. Facebook captures 11.93 billion dollars representing 34.5 percent of digital display advert in the United States and followed by Google Search 4.79 billion dollars representing 13.8 percent share.

(<https://www.emarketer.com/Article/US-Digital-Ad-Spending-Surpass-TV-this-Year/1014469>). Digital advertising has no doubt become a key component of marketing campaign in most parts of the world today.

In the light of the global trend in digital marketing and the hike in social media advertising spend this study is interested in finding out the state of social media advertising in Ghana in the context of the capacity of the practitioners to meet the demands of the time. The study examines the responsiveness of the advertising practitioners towards the opportunities and challenges presented by the social media.

According to Mulhern (2009) the digital revolution is changing news, information and Advertising. News and information delivery is longer the preserve of the traditional media such as the print, radio and television. The social media is transforming advertising agencies and professionals globally (Akhagba 2012). Today advertisers and advertising professionals can create and distribute advertising content and this development is breaking the monopoly of the traditional media. Previously they would have to depend on the traditional mass media for reaching their audiences. Akhagba (2012) suggested that advertising professionals adopt new media technologies at different stages of advertising process.

Neti (2011) suggests that different organizations are adopting social media marketing at different rates and many have still not positioned it as a priority despite the benefits. It is however recognized that social media advertisers believe social media will play an increasingly important role in attracting and maintain customers in the future (Neti 2011).

Social media has gone beyond entertainment and become relevant to business as 70 percent of the world's active population is now in the social media space (Neti 2011). A key advantage of the social media over the traditional is its two-way process. This does not only present ideas and products to audiences or customers but also gains feedback which comes in the form of grievances, suggestions and testimonies that guide the advertiser (Neti 2011). The social media mechanism also creates the opportunity to identify influencers who can then be used as brand evangelists (Brown 2012). Social media advertising is also generally seen to be relatively cheaper than the traditional media.

Lightcap and Peek (2012) acknowledges that the internet has been one of the significant technological changes that have hit the communications and the advertising industry. They also suggests the spread of the internet and the boom in mobile technology has caused more turbulence in the advertising industry than anything else over the centuries. According Lightcap and Peak, digital media is breaking down advertising cost barriers and the dominating pricing power of the traditional media. It has also greatly improved measurability and targeting in advertising as the technology seamlessly allows for record keeping and identification of audience interests.

A key advantage in the use of the social media is the is automated features of the system to identify target audience interests and filtering messages to ensure advertisements reach mainly audiences that are interested in such messages. Digital technologies are able to show interpersonal communication patterns of social groups thus allowing marketers to easily identify and target their audiences (Mulhern 2009). The way information is now digitized and broadcast through various network outlets is introducing new approaches by which communications may be utilized to connect to consumers and products (Nagar 2009).

The production of digital formats coupled with their replication and distribution across consumer networks are some of the critical factors contributing to the growth and popularity of the social media (Mulhern 2009). In the digital media, content of varied forms can be copied and shared on many occasions without reducing the quality of the original. According to Neti (2011) social media, today is among the best opportunities in the communications industry and one cannot lose out having presence on those

channels if competitors are out there reaping benefits. Neti (2011) noted that previously businesses were skeptical about the social media but now recognize that it has become the trend and that global companies have utilized it to power their advertising campaigns.

Another very important factor stimulating the growth of social media advertising is the real-time interactive features that come with it. Advertisers often gain feedback on how customers or audiences view their products and services and address their concerns instantly. This interactivity does not only confirm the reach of the advert but also enable advertisers to understand the customers and audiences the more. Unlike in the traditional media consumers actively demonstrate their intent to buy or not to buy (Lightcap and Peek 2012). In examining the role of social media in Marketing, Neti (2011) suggests that social media today is among the best opportunities available to a brand for connecting to prospective consumers.

2.3.2 Role of Social Media in Advertising

Social media has been described by Neti (2011) as a medium to socialize and network by the use of web-based technology to quickly disseminate knowledge and information to a huge number of users, allowing creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media has been identified as relatively more cost effective than the traditional media. With a device and internet connection, one can have access to a wide range of useful advertising and marketing resources.

Neti (2011) noted that social media taps into wisdom of consumers, utilizes the prospects of customer evangelism, shares knowledge and expertise, reduce costs and increases

revenue generation. This suggests that brand campaign and awareness come at a relatively lower cost using social media. Neti (2011) identifies three broad areas which are beneficial to marketers including advertisers the first of which it says provides window to marketers as well as listens to customers' suggestions and grievances. Secondly it says social media makes it easy for marketers to identify peer groups and influencers among various groups who in turn become brand evangelists. Thirdly it offers cost effectiveness and in most cases costs nothing. According to a global Social Media Marketing Report 2010 about 56 per cent are using Social Media for 6 hours or more a week and one out of three spend more than 11 hours a week on social media.

A world-renowned research organization; PEW Research Center based in US found in a study that more than 70 per cent of the economically active population is well entrenched in the use of the Social Media. Social Media is becoming an integral part of political campaigns, national defense strategies, public policy, public relations, brand management and even intra company communication (Neti 2011). The reason why social media should be important to marketers and advertisers is the huge numbers of active users in recent times, the reach of the channel, the transparency in the technology which gives confidence to the customer and the fast means of building brands. (Neti 2011)

Neti (2011) stressed the importance of the social media as conversation taking place everywhere, and I quote “ There is no escaping social media these days, whether for an individual or for businesses. Social media conversation is taking place in homes, small businesses and corporate boardrooms and extending its reach to the non-profit, education and health sectors. From feeling excitement, novelty, bewilderment and overwhelmed, a

growing number of people now speak of social media as simply another channel or tactic. It is imperative to understand that today social media has exponential potential. They are part of an ever growing online network of people who discuss, comment, participate share and create” (Neti 2011, p. 14)

2.3.3 Challenges of the Social Media use in Advertising Practice

While a recent study by Small Business Report (2009) from University of Maryland shows that the use of social media in advertising and marketing is increasing, many industries are not using it and that different industries adopt social media at different rates. Neti (2011) suggests that charitable organizations use the social media more heavily than the business world and the use is more encouraging among small businesses. Social media advertising requires some reasonable level of technical expertise and the content need to be innovative to attract attention. Social media requires novel advertising since attention span of the audience is very low because of the multitasking nature of the facility. (Neti 2011)

Results of social media advertisements are usually not always immediate and strategies also call for careful planning that requires patience. Neti (2011) suggests that the market needs to be analyzed well to determine the social media plan is suitable for the brand and that result might be visible in about three to six months.

Neti (2011) concludes that all are rethinking strategies and paying attention to social media. “ Whether you are an individual, a start up, a small business or large corporation, an online presence and an ongoing conversation with your constituents is a baseline

requirement- and will take time and expertise. Companies are diverting resources and rethinking their traditional outreach strategies. And as the social media wave dissipates into the vast ocean of connected experiences, the term itself will become an entry in dictionaries and encyclopedias and we will embark on a new era of knowledge, accessibility and experience unbound by distance, time or physical walls. It is high time every business adopts Social Media and takes it seriously” (Neti 2011, p.14)



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the type of study and the approach to investigation. It looks at the sampling methods used, data collection and analysis procedures.

3.2 TYPE OF STUDY

This study employed qualitative approach to research and used in-depth interview to uncover issues related to the use of social media by advertising practitioners in Ghana. It examined their current attitudes towards the use of social media use for advertng, explored the prospects and challenges associated with the social media for advertising in Ghana. It also delved into how practitioners are coping with the changing communication landscape as pertains to advertising in Ghana.

The study chose qualitative approach because the subject matter about how the agencies feel about social media and how they are using it for advertising requires detailed investigation. It also has to do with opinions and impressions of the advertising agencies which can be better obtained through in-depth interview. The study seeks to investigate why some specific advertising agencies use social media in advertising while some others do not. It therefore requires a detailed examination of their experiences if any regarding the use of social media for advertising. This study deals with the use of social media facility by advertising agencies in Ghana by assessing the perceptions and attitudes of advertising practitioners. The study will require a more detailed exposition and explanation from the respondents, hence the choice of qualitative approach.

The subjective nature of the enquiry calls for qualitative research approach. Walliman (2011) suggested that qualitative research usually has to do with people on issues that are subjective in nature and cannot be quantified on an interval or ratio levels.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population covers all registered and recognized advertising agencies in Ghana. The study adopts purposive sampling method which is necessary to enable the study narrow down to advertising agencies that use the social media in their professional practice and those that do not. It helps in eliciting responses from subjects or agencies relevant to the study.

The sample size was 5 advertising agencies namely Lintas, Prime Time, Stratcom Africa, Ogilvy and Squad Digital. The unit of analysis was each selected advertising agency represented by an officer nominated by each unit of analysis specifically one in charge of social media advertising for those into social media and the Managing Director for those not into social media. Three of the 5 respondents were from agencies not practicing social media advertising and 2 from those practicing social media in advertising. From a pilot investigation it was noticed that the number of advertising agencies not practicing social media advertising far exceed those using social media.

Lintas has been chosen because it is one of the oldest and most dominant registered advertising agencies in Ghana not doing social media advertising. Prime Time has been selected because it is not doing social media advertising even though it is relatively prominent in the advertising industry in Ghana over the years whereas. Ogilvy has been selected because it does not do any social media even though it is one of the top advertising

firms in Ghana and relatively modern. Stratcom Africa has been identified as a leading contemporary advertising firms in Ghana and had indicated the use of social media for advertising Squad Digital has been chosen because it has demonstrated to be doing relatively more digital marketing and social media advertising than the traditional media.

3.4 PILOT TEST

A pilot test was conducted to have an insight into what pertains on the ground by identifying the levels of involvement of the various advertising agencies with the social media. It was also to find out about the feasibility of organizing the research interview with the various preferred advertising agencies. It assisted to determine how possible it would be to get access to the required data. The pilot test conducted offered more understanding of the advertising industry which aided the final framing of the interview questions. Telephone interviews were conducted to assess the status and nature of the advertising agencies within the sample frame. Online research was conducted to gain more insight into the companies being considered for the interview. Visits were paid to the various chosen agencies to discuss research intentions and arrange appointment for interview.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

In the process of data collection, both primary and secondary sources were used to enrich the Findings. The main data for the research was collected from the primary source through in-depth interview. Respondents were asked questions from the interview guide and follow up questions were added for broader and deeper understanding of issues raised. Some primary data was also collected from online. In this instance Ghanaian advertisements were identified online and their sources traced to know how they got onto the platform. Telephone calls were

placed to numbers found on the advertisements for enquiries. This online data collection helped in the understanding of level of involvement of advertising agencies in the practice of social media advertising within the overall social media advertising environment in Ghana. It enabled the study create a sense of Ghanaian local advertisements on the social media platforms that come from advertising agencies and those that come from advertiser organizations and individuals themselves. This background information aided the actual investigation as outlined in the research questions. Secondary data also came from online sources where additional information was gathered from the websites of the advertising agencies. This helped to gain a general understanding of the operations of the advertising agencies interviewed.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS.

In doing analysis various concepts were coded and emerging patterns were studied, discussed, analyzed and conclusion drawn. The era the agency entered into the advertising industry exhibits some characteristics of its adoption of social media advertising. The younger companies are seen to be more social media. Concepts were identified based on the notion of typologies and taxonomies and conclusion were guided by the use of patterning, clustering, relating variables. The variables being age of company in the industry and use of social media advertising. Causal networks and relations were explained by relating findings with the theory of Diffusion of Innovation. It created understanding for why different agencies have different adoptions levels in the social media use for advertising.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the findings of the study that emanated from respondents as well as other primary sources. Some findings also relate to the online activities of respondents.

4.2 KNOWLEDGE OF ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING IN GHANA

Findings show that all the respondents from both segments of the social media adoption divide, are aware of widely used social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn and have personally used them. It is however clear that not all agencies adopt social media resources in advertising practice. Respondents from all the agencies interviewed have not only demonstrated knowledge about these social media platforms but also exhibited awareness of various social media tools used on the platforms for advertising. They talk about banner ads, pay-per-click text links sponsored links, video and audio streaming and pop-ups.

4.3 ATTITUDE OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES IN GHANA TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

All the respondents speak well of the social media as holding prospects for the advertising industry but believe that at this point in time in Ghana, the traditional media still hold sway over the social media or the digital media in the broader

context. Some of the reasons adduced are limited internet access which is not available in most parts of the country, internet speed and affordability of smart phones. The Ogilvy Ghana informant suggests; “In as much as a lot of people are exposed to the social media or digital communication, when you compare the number of exposure that the traditional media has over the digital media, I think the traditional media takes precedence.” This, they attribute to problems of internet connectivity. In the view of Ogilvy a combination of digital media and traditional would be ideal and proposed; . “If you want the maximum exposure then you should use traditional media and then back it up with the social media”

Internet statistics from the Internet Live Stats (internetlvestats.com) and corroborated by the National Communication Authority of Ghana shows 28.4 percent internet penetration in Ghana. Out of the population of 28,033,375 about 7,958,675 are found to be Internet users in Ghana.

The advertising agencies are of the view that it is more beneficial using the traditional media mainly and then use social media as a complement to the campaign rather than focus more on social media. The Ogilvy Ghana informant states “Digital can be used as a backup. If you want the maximum exposure then you should use traditional media and then back it up with the social media.” They however acknowledged that social media advertising can become more preferred than the traditional media given that substantial number of target audience can be found within the domain of prospective social media users. They state it is also more useful when advertising budget is small and cannot make it in the traditional media as the social media is seen to relatively

less expensive to apply. The informant from Squad Digital says “Social media is a must for the brand, advertisers spend so much on traditional media, so they should be looking at social media because it can help them with brand awareness and reach the maximum audience, and not only maximum audience but also targeted audience, the people they actually want to reach, and definitely it can help them generate leads, a place where you can actually capture the interest of the people.”

4.4 EXTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY ADVERTISING AGENCIES IN GHANA

Social media advertising in this context refers to advertisements placed on social media platforms however it is worth noting that advertising agencies practicing social media advertising do more than just that. Squad Digital explains; “It will be helpful to understand the 3 concepts that we work with, one is the paid media, owned media and earned media. So we have different platforms in each. So in social media the platforms we use are Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Twitter. These are the main platforms we are using for our brands on social media.” In addition, they do buy advertising space from popular Ghanaian websites which they mention as myjoyonline.com, citifmonline.com, ghanaweb.com and ghanacelebrities.com. Others are Youtube inserts, Google Ads and BBC ads.

The most popular social media platform according to all respondents is Facebook. Respondents who use Facebook in social media advertising in Ghana cite the numerical strength of Facebook in Ghana as the major reason it has become more preferred in advertising. The Squad Digital informant suggests; “Facebook is the most important one because 3 million are active on the internet and all of them are active

on Facebook, so we can actually reach reach 3 million people on Facebook, and using Youtube we can reach up to one million people in a month and there 500,000 on Instagram but these are approximate numbers, and in terms of Twitter we have about 350,000 people who are using twitter, so these are the different platforms and definitely Facebook comes at the top because anybody on any social media platform definitely has Facebook.” They also cite the nature of its network as more socially interactive than others and its ability to provide unlimited content space for the combination text, pictures and videos.

At Squad Digital they do Facebook adverts including text, links, banner ads and video. They also do Google plus paid media, Google Display Networks (GDN), Youtube Videos, Youtube Insert and Youtube Display. The informant at Squad Digital says “ To reach maximum audiences in Ghana, normally we use google; in a month we can reach up to 6 million people, that is using Google, Youtube and Google Display, Networks) That’s the advantage any brand can have using the digital.” Squad Digital also does other paid media advertisements at Ghanaian sports websites, Ghanaweb and sponsored posts. Besides paid media Squad Digital also provides owned media services in the form of creating websites with social media interactive features for clients to boost their customer service management.

The second most popular platform according to those into social media advertising is Twitter which they say has one unique advantage of speed of spreading the message. They however acknowledged that there are certain advertising campaigns such as those that depend on photos which are more suitable for Instagram than any other

platform if large audience base is attained in the social network.

Stratcom Africa uses mainly Facebook advertising by placing paid-for content such as links and e-banners while using twitter for their own corporate communication only. All the other respondents from the Prime Time advertising, Lintas and Ogilvy use Facebook and Twitter for their corporate communications only.

It has been observed that the advertising agencies practicing social media; Squad Digital and Stratcom Africa advertising are relatively new in the advertising industry in Ghana while the earlier ones such as Lintas and Prime Time rather lag behind in the adoption of social media for advertising. There seems to be no middle ground about the extent of use of social media advertising by the advertising agencies in Ghana as those doing social media appear to be well versed while other not into the social media are subletting contracts to those into the social media advertising.

4.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ADVERTISING IN GHANA

4.5.1 Factors impeding social media advertising in Ghana.

An important factor cited as having effect on social media application is the relatively small number of people having access to the internet for that matter the social media facilities. Statistical records as at the year 2016 show that internet penetration is around 28.4 in Ghana. Even though there has been significant progress over the recent years in Ghana's digital development, advertisers see it as inadequate compared to the traditional media. The Ogilvy informant suggests "Looking at problems with internet connections in the country, it is a

disadvantage to the digital because without internet you cannot access it. The traditional media like the newspapers TV and radio go to all corners of the country.”

Aside from the infrastructural constraints the cost of internet usage has also been noted as militating against numbers of social media users in Ghana. The price of Internet data hovering around Gh5.00 for 200 megabits of data is seen as being on the high side based on the income levels in the country. In Ghana a university graduate teacher has a starting level monthly net income of Ghc1100.00 according to records from the Controller and Accountant General’s department. This figure translates into daily income of Ghc 30 which buys about 1 gigabits of data that can only download an hour’s video.

Another critical factor, probably the most important factor is the low level of technical expertise in Ghana in the use of social media tools and resources for advertising. It has been found out that even though all of the respondents have deep knowledge about these social media resources not all have actually used them in practice. The study revealed that only two out of five is into actual social media advertising as professionals.

The respondents who are into social media also admit there is big gap between knowledge and skill set when it comes to social media advertising in Ghana and stated they usually spend time, amount a month or two to train new personnel to build the needed capacity in order cope with skills challenge. According to Squad

Digital; “In Ghana to manage digital in the company is a big question, because we also have challenges recruiting the right people, what we do is to hire people and train them for months before they can work with clients.”

4.5.2 Factors enhancing the growth of social media advertising in Ghana

The increasing number of youth getting onto the social media in Ghana has been observed as one key factor aiding social media advertising in Ghana, according to respondents. In parts of the country where there is internet connectivity youth presence online has been on the rise. Facebook statistics show that 3 million people from Ghana are currently on its platform alone out of which the youth form the chunk of it. While global statistics according to Brown (2010) suggests that 96 percent of the youth are on social media, Ghana has an age demographics of people between 15 and 54 forming 51 percent of the population according to the Ghana Statistical Services report of 2014.

The respondents attested that brands are also beginning to understand the importance of social media in marketing including advertising. The Squad Digital informant says, “ Slowly they are understanding and accepting it, and we have examples where some of our clients the previous year spent 10 percent of their total marketing budget on digital and this year spending 20 percent and again planning to spend more. That shows that there is increasing acceptance of digital.” The rise of the social media use in advertising in Ghana has also been attributed to its ability to identify the interests of internet users and targeting mainly audiences

interested in particular information or products. The respondents believe it is one of the biggest advantages of the social media over the traditional media.

Social media functionality also gives the advertisers easy access to reports on the reach of their advertisements by showing records of online activities. Advertising agencies into social media advertising identify this automated systems of providing reports as one of the factors encouraging advertisers to advertise on the social media because they are able to show them results of their investment. Squad Digital suggests, “with digital you can actually count your return on investment, you can tell, yes you spent 5 dollars and this is the return you have got, in terms of leads and awareness, for example in one and a half years, we have been able to show results to the clients on their investments and they have been happy and investing more.”

Cost effectiveness has also been identified as a big boost for running social media advertisement. According to the Ogilvy informant the most important drive for the social media advertising perhaps is the relatively less expensive nature within the context of its viral capability and the scope of reach. Compared to the traditional media, social media advertising campaign can make much more inroads when faced with a small budget to manage.

Also important are the increasing number of youth joining the social media space in Ghana and the positive attitude of the brands towards the social media. The Stratcom Africa and Squad Digital informants believe the user-friendly nature of

social media and the entertainment it offers are reasons driving the youth. Squad Digital asserts “ One of the reasons is the youth are more and more using internet to chat with friends, use of Google to check prices and other information, or where they can go to have their holidays. Brands are also now beginning to understand the importance of the social media or digital, two years ago they were not too much into it, so we normally spend time educating our brands, when we go to pitch, we start with education and then training, about how digital can help them, and I think slowly they are understanding and accepting it, and we have examples where some of our clients last year spent 10 percent of their total marketing budget on digital and this year spending 20 percent and again planning to spend more. That shows that there is increasing acceptance of digital.”

Squad Digital believes social media advertising has so many advantages when harnessed can be preferred over the traditional media and states “Social media is a must for the brand, advertisers spend so much on traditional media, so they should be looking at social media because it can help them with brand awareness and reach the maximum audience, and not only maximum audience but also targeted audience, the people they actually want to reach, and definitely it can help them generate leads, a place where you can actually capture the interest of the people. It can also reduce the marketing cost, when brands start putting money in digital, the cost will definitely come down”

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the findings within the context of the research question and objectives and relates findings to the theoretical framework used to guide the study. It also discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for further study.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 knowledge and practice of social media advertising in Ghana

Findings from the research have shown that for those agencies interviewed social media use for advertising is not significantly used for clients. Except for Squad Digital and Stratcom Africa others do not use it in professional practice. In the case of Stratcom Africa, only facebook adverts are being implemented for now. Squad Digital uses a wide range of digital facilities including social media platforms and tools.

All respondents however demonstrate high knowledge and interest of the social media resource. It was observed that lack of confidence is a major inhibiting factor. According to Prime Time informant the agency does not apply social media in advertising for its clients but the individual staff have various social media accounts and sometimes use it for company's own communication. He states "we prefer to be well versed in it in order

to use it for our clients so we partner other agencies when it comes to social media advertisements”. The problem of non-adoption appears more to be with the corporate leadership who cannot take a bold step to start and then build capacity. Most of the respondents say they use the social media as an organization in pursuing their own corporate communication but do not use it for the client because they feel they are still in the learning process.

Placing this delay of implementation of social media advertising facilities for their clients within the context of diffusion of innovation theory can suggest that they perceive the social media advertising mechanism as innovation that is complex to handle and would require some time to master. This delay in adoption of the social media advertising innovation can be understood when related to the diffusion of innovation theory on the bases that adopting technology or innovation has time considerations and normally experiences delays at various stages or even rejected eventually (Rogers 1995).

All respondents have accepted and embraced social media advertising and will only be a matter of time to get to implementation as illustrated in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. According to Rogers (1995) time is involved in the innovation decision making process and that an individual or a decision making unit passes through stages. These stages are gaining of knowledge about the innovation, forming attitude, decision to adopt or

reject innovation, to implementation and confirmation.

The fact that some advertising agencies in Ghana are well established in the social media advertising in using it for clients in Ghana gives credence to the diffusion of innovation's view of categories of adopters which suggests that some adopt faster and earlier than others. It indicates categories as innovators who are normally risk takers and technologically savvy, early adopters who are able to learn faster than those below the ladder, the early majority being the group that comes in when others have experimented and shown good results. It suggests late majority as those who still remain skeptical and join very late after it has become well established in the society and the laggards who find it difficult to change. Laggards are said to be conservative in their approach toward the innovation.

The study has revealed an interesting pattern regarding adoption of the social media for advertising in terms of their period of entry into the advertising industry as a whole. It has been observed that from those interviewed the younger ones in the industry are doing more social media than the older and also bigger ones. This can be understood on the basis that the new ones came in along with the technology or the innovation while the old ones are struggling to adapt.

We can also say some of the new ones are coming in to fill the gap in the

market where older ones are found wanting. Squad Digital for example is handles advertising in all social media platforms popular in Ghana even though they also do other forms of digital and traditional media advertising. Squad Digital appears to be more focused on digital media than the traditional media advertising and has been in the advertising industry in Ghana for only about two years.

5.2.2 Factors influencing social media advertising practice

A number of factors identified as militating against adoption of social media advertising have been attributed to the audience base and infrastructure however the study has shown that the paramount challenge is with the human resource capacity in terms of skills set that needs to be further sharpened and expanded. One agency well established in the social media advertising in Ghana revealed that the organization spends time to re-train newly employed staff for about a month before they can start handling work for clients to enable efficiency in their delivery.

On the other hand social media advertising in Ghana has made significant inroads and all respondents have been positive of further growth and prospects in the social media advertising industry. Even though a good number of respondents expressed concern about the relatively small numbers of the population which statistics put at 3 million on social media in Ghana, they are of the view that there are a number of advertising campaigns that can make huge capital out of this number

because of the nature of the audience on the social media and the mechanisms of the social media advertising that normally targets users or audiences according to their interest therefore enables advertising messages to reach a good number of the target population. They are of the view that the ever increasing internet availability, affordable handset coming in the form of smart-phone which are relatively cheap by international standards and the convenience of use of the mobile phones the are factors that further enhance the prospects of social media advertising in Ghana. They also mentioned user-friendly platforms and applications that come with it as motivation for the youth getting more and more active on the social media

They identified the convenience of accessing news on news portals on the mobiles phones as a great boost to advertising through digital platforms because it gets the users hooked on their devices almost all of the time unlike the traditional media channels like radio, television and newspapers which cannot always be carried along. The study has shown that there is a growing interest of brands to get on the social media advertising over the last two years in particular even though the trend has been increasing from the onset of social media advertising in Ghana since 2006. There currently appears to be a gap between social media advertising demand and the capacity to satisfy the demand. New advertising companies most of which are already digitally prepared are likely to fill this gap if already existing advertising agencies do not invest more in human resource development

to build more digital capacity.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study encountered a number of difficulties but have them managed to the extent that they could in anyway significantly affect the results when it comes to credibility of the findings because of the pilot test conducted. One difficulty was with data collection where appointments with respondents had to be rescheduled on several occasions which put a lot of pressure on the process. Another difficulty was with the fact that the study was about an advertising agency but there was the tendency for the individual respondents to express views not representative of the company but that was recognized and dealt with to appreciable extent. There was also a challenge concentrating on only social media advertising which was the focus of the study as against the broader spectrum of digital marketing but this was also significantly controlled.

5.4 CONCLUSION

From all indications social media advertising holds high stake in the future of advertising in Ghana and the advertising agencies that are building the capacity to adapt to the fast changing communications landscape will have sway over those that may let it pass by them. With the increasing rate of internet penetration in Ghana, and the growing interest of the youth in the social media and other online platforms the critical role of the social media advertising cannot be underestimated and even become more compelling in the near future.

This will become incumbent on communications experts to quickly adapt else

professionals can easily lose their havens to amateurs in the communications industry. The study has brought to the fore the perception and attitudes of the advertising practitioners which are critical elements for the prospects of the advertising industry in Ghana taking into consideration the consequences of ignoring the adoption of the social media. The study also exposed the weaknesses and challenges association with phenomenon and will better inform practitioners about better ways and means of getting adapted.

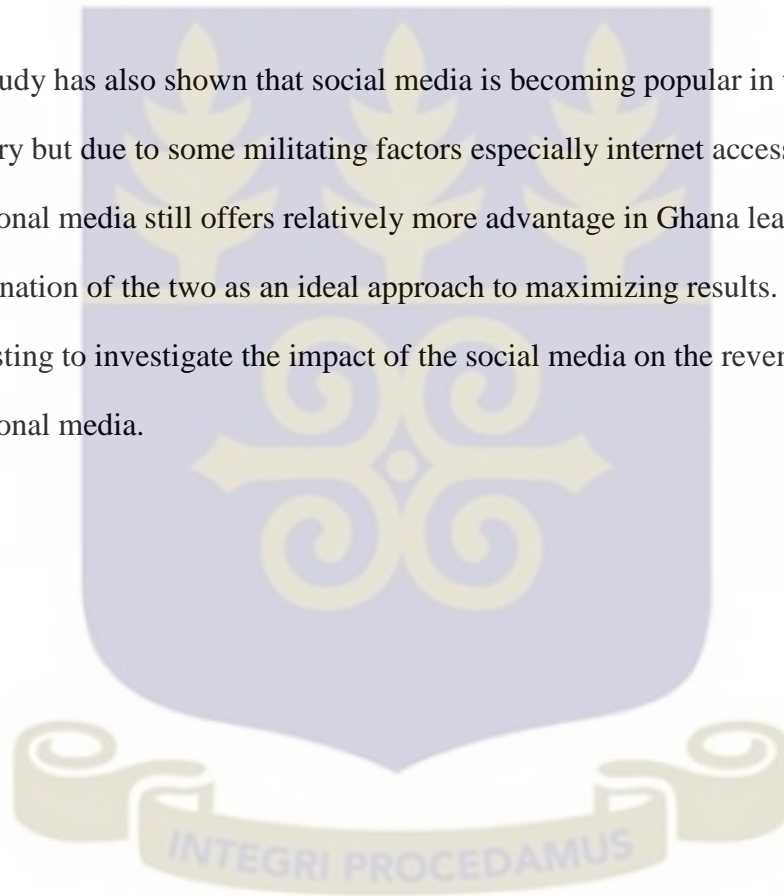
The study has shown that there are pockets of excellence with the competences in social media advertising in particular and digital communication as a whole. These skills when increased by training new experts with expansion of infrastructure can create the necessary synergy that will create the critical mass for the advertising industry in Ghana.

The study also identifies some gray areas in the definition of advertising as it pertains to social media with reference to an aspect in the definition that touches a paid-for form of communication. On some social media portals or platforms the distinction between what is paid and not paid for is not that clear. For example one can buy an online space as a portal or website and this raises a question about an advertising space as this can be classified as owned media. Secondly online portal owners aside from selling advertising space for electronic banner ads and text links, also sell some levels of access the advertiser can gain in terms of social networking. This level of access brings new dimensions to paid-for elements which were traditionally airtime and media platform space.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

From the study, it came to light that even though the social media mechanism is very good at targeting audiences based on their interests and able to generate reports on its reach, it is not clear whether the overwhelming spread of the advertising message is leading to a change of consumer behavior. There will therefore be a need to do some investigation into social media advertising and audience behavior change.

The study has also shown that social media is becoming popular in the advertising industry but due to some militating factors especially internet accessibility traditional media still offers relatively more advantage in Ghana leading to the combination of the two as an ideal approach to maximizing results. It would be interesting to investigate the impact of the social media on the revenue of the traditional media.



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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ADVERTISING IN GHANA; AN AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

1. Can you mention some of the social media tools you know are used in advertising
2. Can you tell me a bit about any of these (what you know about them broadly)
3. Kindly list up to about five if possible according to your preference (starting from most preferred)
4. Do you think any of these social media tools do create value for money
5. What are the benefits of the social media in advertising (what will make you satisfied that it is worth implementing or its not)
6. What social media tools and platforms does your organization use in advertising practice
7. Can you tell me what predominantly informs the choice of a particular social media tool if you do
8. What social media tools and platforms do you think have the most potential for advertising in Ghana
9. Do you want to point to some factors that you think have contributed to the state of social media use for advertising in Ghana
10. What are the problems you think are impeding the use of social media for advertising in Ghana
11. How long has your organization been into advertising
12. Can you remember when you started using social media tools for advertising
13. What is your position in the organization