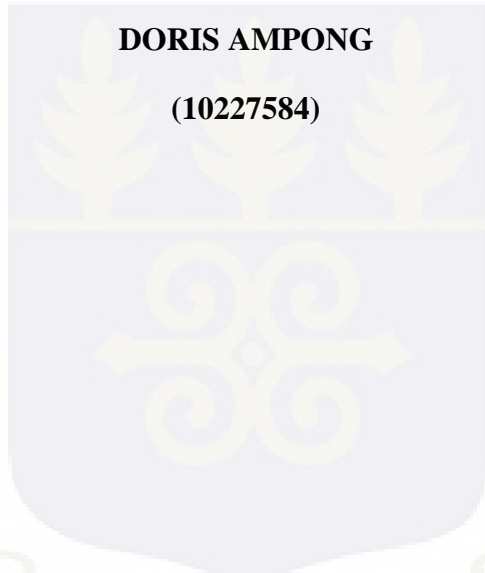


WOMEN AND SOCIAL MEDIA: A STUDY OF GHANAIAN WOMEN BLOGS

BY

DORIS AMPONG

(10227584)



**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MA COMMUNICATION
STUDIES DEGREE**

OCTOBER, 2013

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is the result of original research conducted by me under the supervision of Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo and that all references have been duly acknowledged.

This dissertation has not been presented in whole or in part to any education institution for any purpose.



.....
Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo
(Supervisor)

Date.....

.....
Doris Ampong
(Student)

Date.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Inspector William K. Ampong and Ms. Dora Sakyiwaa.

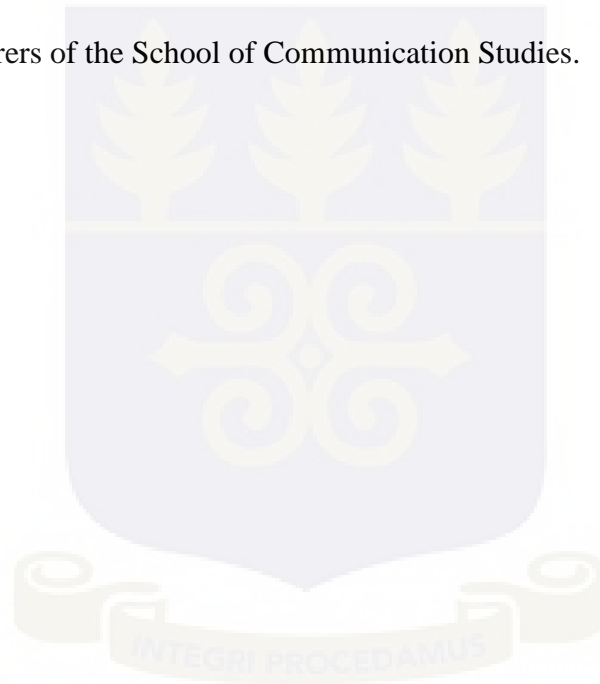


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am appreciative to God for His protection, provision and guidance throughout the period of my study. I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo, for her encouragement, direction, correction and support towards this study.

I also express my heartfelt gratitude to my family and friends for their constant reminder about my work. A special appreciation goes to Mr. Michael Hagan for his diverse contributions to this study.

I am thankful to all lecturers of the School of Communication Studies.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | | |
|----------|---|--|
| ICTS | - | Information Communication Technologies |
| UNDAW | - | United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women |
| GoG | - | Government of Ghana |
| GINKS | - | Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing |
| GENARDIS | - | Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in the Information Society |
| USA | - | United States of America |
| UK | - | United Kingdom |
| US | - | United States |
| BP | - | Blog Post |
| BT | - | Blog type |
| TT/S | - | Treatment of themes/ Subject |
| BD | - | Bloggers demographic |
| LU | - | Language Use |
| TA | - | Target Audience |
| FUB | - | Frequency of Updating Blogs. |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....i

DEDICATION.....ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iii

LIST OF ACRONYMS.....v

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....vi

ABSTRACT.....ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background.....1

 1.1 Women and ICTs.....4

1.2 Problem Statement.....8

1.3 Aims and Objectives.....8

1.4 Research Questions.....9

1.5 Significance of study.....9

1.6 Definition of Concepts.....10

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.....12

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 Theoretical Framework..... | 13 |
| 2.1.1 The theory of technology diffusion and adoption..... | 13 |
| 2.1.2 The Liberal Feminist Theory..... | 15 |
| 2.1.3 The Sense of Agency and Community..... | 16 |
| 2.2 Various works on blogging | 16 |
| 2.3 Conclusion..... | 24 |
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY | |
| 3.0 Introduction..... | 26 |
| 3.1 Research Design..... | 26 |
| 3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling techniques..... | 27 |
| 3.2.1 Population..... | 27 |
| 3.2.2 Unit of analysis..... | 28 |
| 3.2.3 Sample Size..... | 28 |
| 3.2.4 Sampling Technique..... | 29 |
| 3.3 Instrumentation (Data Collection tool)..... | 30 |
| 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis..... | 31 |

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

| | |
|---|----|
| 4.0 Introduction..... | 33 |
| 4.1 Findings..... | 33 |
| 4.1.1 Social Demographics of Ghanaian women bloggers..... | 33 |
| 4.1.2 Type of blogs created by Ghanaian women bloggers..... | 34 |
| 4.1.3 Structure of blogs..... | 35 |
| 4.1.4 Frequency of update..... | 37 |
| 4.1.5 Purpose (s) of Ghanaian women blogs..... | 37 |
| 4.1.6 Themes/ Subjects of Ghanaian women blogs..... | 39 |
| 4.1.7 Language Use..... | 42 |
| 4.2 Discussion of findings..... | 46 |

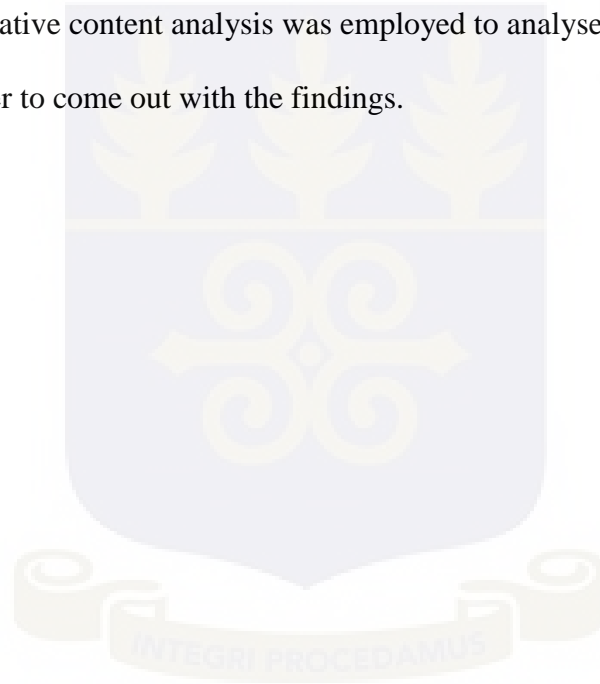
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| 5.0 Conclusion..... | 50 |
| 5.1 Limitation of study..... | 53 |
| 5.2 Recommendations..... | 54 |
| Bibliography..... | 55 |
| Appendix A..... | 59 |
| Appendix B..... | 63 |

ABSTRACT

Blogging has become a major tool for people to interact and make known their various perspectives on life and the world at large. The study investigates the usage and practice of blogging by Ghanaian women.

Using the theory of technology diffusion and adoption, liberal feminist theory and the sense of agency and community, the study establishes that Ghanaian women are actively engaging with blogs by creating personal journal blogs, writing on diverse themes but predominantly on love, among others. The qualitative content analysis was employed to analyse 50 blog posts of Ghanaian women in order to come out with the findings.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The advent of massive technological advances in the world has brought about several forms of media. One of such form of media is the phenomenon of blogging. Blogging has become a major tool for people to interact and make known their various perspectives on life and the world at large. Kenix, (2009) asserts that blogs can discuss any topical issue in society or in the life of the blogger. Blogs have become a popular form of online self-presentation and self-expression through the use of the internet (Guadagno et al., 2007). Kobayashi (2011) asserts that blogs are one of the instruments making online social networking popular.

Individuals are able to publish their opinions or views, receive comments or feedback to each blog post, archive past blog posts and connect to other bloggers through blogs. The ease with the creation of blogs without necessarily having an experience or expertise has caused the blogging phenomenon to be widespread. The blogging phenomenon which started in the Western world around 1997 has transcended to the other parts of the world and no longer famous only with the Western world (Kobayashi, 2011).

Due to the ubiquitous nature of blogging there has been a rapid growth and increase in its usage now. In March, 2005 Technorati (a blog analysis and search engine) reported the doubling of blogs every five months and approximately 7.8 million blogs and 937 million links in the blogosphere (Sifry 2005). By December 2007, Technorati was tracking more than 112 million blogs. Blogpulse, another popular blog analysis and search engine, on July 13, 2009 found 112,326,499 blogs in the world. About a year later, on 3rd August, 2010, Blogpulse identified

144,217,571 total blogs (Kobayashi, 2011). According to Blogpulse, the number of blogs that have been identified as of January 2012 is 182,397,015.

The doubling of blogs every now and then is overwhelming and interesting. One is left to wonder why the increase in the usage of blogs or what is the cause of the increase as well as its usefulness to users.

Huffaker (2005) defines blogs as personal journals made up of chronological entries, not unlike a paper diary. The word blog is the shortened form of weblog, a term that was created by John Barger, according to Nardi et. al. (2004). Nardi et. al. (2004) claim that, blogs were born in 1997 but were not widely known until the launch of Pitas, a blogging tool, in 1999 that allowed people to easily create their own blogs. After the launch of Pitas which brought the phenomenon of blogging to the forefront, there has been the creation of enormous blogging softwares that enable people to easily create blogs (Pedersen, 2007). Examples of these softwares are the Blogger, Movable Type, Xanga, Blogspot, Wordpress and Radio Userland. Some of these softwares enable bloggers to track who is reading their blogs as well as the number of comments and links a blogger has.

According to Stavrositu & Sunder (2012), there are two categories of blogs: the filter blogs and the personal journal blogs. The filter blogs talk about social, political and economic issues that are not directly personal or related to the blogger, while the personal journal blogs document the blogger's personal and intimate life issues, for example, the blogger's challengers in life, work, family, etc. Stavrositu & Sunder (2012) assert that the filter blogs have wider and non intimate audiences while the personal journal blogs have smaller and intimate audiences.

Blogs have also been categorised as subject-specific blogs, news and current affairs blogs and then personal diary-style blogs by Somolu (2007). The categorization of blogs as personal, filter,

etc. is usually based on the content of the blogs. It is possible to find a whole lot of categorization of blogs because there is an enormous growth of blogs. However, the dominant types of blogs are the filter and personal journal blogs.

As the blogging phenomenon develops, a community of bloggers called the blogosphere has been created where bloggers interact with each other. The growth in the usage of blogs has brought about the need to relate with other people who share similar ideas and concerns, hence the creation of the blogosphere. The blogosphere comprise both male and female and old and young (Technoratti, 2012). However, the content of each blog differs from one gender to the other as do attitudes towards blogging. According to Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005), men produce more filter blogs than women and women equally produce more personal journal blogs than men.

There have been several debates about the usage of blogs by both men and women and the debates about gender differences in blogging are growing alongside the blogosphere. Researchers to some degree tend to explore the content, uses, motivations, etc of blogs of both men and women bloggers. This is to be able to know empirically the various gender differences in the usage of blogs so as to contribute meaningfully to the debate. Most of the research conducted concluded that female blogs are less prominent or important as compared to male blogs. This is because women are associated more with the creation of personal journal blogs. And also women are not in as many top positions in professions.

The extent to which the gender debate about blogging seems to devalue women blogs has caused a number of feminist bloggers to showcase and highlight more blogs by women to counter these assumptions. Group blogs such as Misbehaving.net, Ms.magazine.net, Feministe and

Feministing have taken it upon themselves to elevate women's blogs and present them from a feminist perspective thereby countering the gendered nature of the blogosphere.

Women are now actively involved in the blogosphere and using blogs to speak their minds. Blogging has become a major tool for women all over the world to make heard their voices on various issues, especially those issues that affect them or relates to their femininity, regardless of the tags associated with them, and they have continued to produce personal journal blogs (Somolu, 2007).Somolu (2007) goes on to say that blogging is one of the computer and internet based ICTs that can be used to empower women.

1.1 Women and ICTS

The world has been taken over by Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), and ICTs are a major tool for developing most nations. Most of the developed countries are ahead of others because they appreciate the use of ICTs and have opened their doorways for its usage and therefore ICTs have been incorporated in every aspect of developed countries' development process (Gurumurthy, 2004).

Compared with men, women's use of ICTs is limited and this is because of the unequal access or opportunities in the usage of ICTs for women (UNDAW, 2002). UNDAW (2002) reveals several factors that restrict women from engaging actively in the global usage of ICTs. These factors include physical access to infrastructure, social and cultural issues, education and skills and financial resources.

In Africa, ICTs have not been embraced totally despite their ability to speed up development. Africa is now gradually embracing the holistic usage of ICTs except that some factors like

infrastructure, access and supportive enabling environment is hindering its growth in ICT usage (Africa Partnership Forum, 2008).

In Ghana, not much attention had been given to ICTs in the past especially their ability to speed up development, as well as empowerment of women through their usage (Kwapong, 2008). However, in recent years, some efforts have been made in Ghana to project ICT as a development tool. In 2003, Ghana announced the Ghana Integrated ICT for Accelerated Development (Kwapong, 2008). It is a policy aimed at using ICT to enhance socio-economic development in Ghana.

Among the objectives and strategies of the Ghana Integrated ICT for Accelerated Development are to increase women's access to ICTs by ensuring a gender balance and positive discrimination in favour of the girl child. A key strategy in the accelerated development policy is to strengthen women's networking initiatives and community based activities that defend and protect rights of women to participate equally in civil and public life (GoG, 2003).

The objective of the Ghana Integrated ICT for Accelerated Development is imperative because women in previous years have had little opportunity to build themselves through ICT usage.

Several factors account for the lack of women's engagement with ICTs in Ghana. According to Genardis (2010), societal roles or gendered roles of women in Ghana have been a cause of women's alienation from ICTs. Traditionally, women in Ghana are expected to work in the home by doing all the domestic work, which does not enable them to engage with ICTs (Genardis, 2010; GINKS (n.d)). This restriction makes it difficult for women to get into the ICT arena and has made ICTs in Ghana the reserve of men, causing most women not to be engaged in the usage of ICTs.

According to GINKS (n.d), another mitigating factor against the participation of women in the information age is the inferiority complex that some women tend to have. And this is a result of the value society places on women in Ghana. Also, financial barriers are a factor for women lacking access to ICTs, since women are mostly engaged in unpaid labour.

The low literacy rate of women in Ghana is another factor that excludes women from ICT use (Genardis, 2010). According to a Food and Agricultural Organization (2012) report, the literacy rate for women in Ghana is 46 percent while that for men is 67 percent. Most women in Ghana do not have any form of formal education or ICT training; therefore, they cannot make use of ICTs.

Due to the gender gap in the usage of ICTs, there have been several debates about the gender of ICTs. Some scholars have argued that ICTs are masculine (Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2007, Oudshoorn et al., 2004, Kusku et al., 2007 as cited in Surgevil and Ozbilgin, 2012) while others argue that ICTs are gender neutral, neither masculine nor feminine (Gurumurthy, 2004). One scholar has equally argued that the gender of ICTs is dependent on the social and cultural context in which the technology finds itself (Madanda, 2007). Madanda (2007) claims that the socio-cultural context will determine the gender of ICTs, therefore, the gender of ICTs vary from society to society.

It has been argued by UNDAW (2002) that men benefit more from ICTs than women. Inequality between males and females is therefore evident in the access and use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in most countries. Consequently, especially in developing countries, women are less likely than men to have computer skills (Somolu, 2007).

Maier and Nair-Reichert (2007) and Gurumurthy (2004) have also argued that ICTs, whether computer, internet, telephones, cell phones, radio, television, among others, can play an

important role in the empowerment of women in developing countries. They describe ICTs as 'potential goldmines' for women's empowerment.

It is not surprising that a lot of women organisations and civil society groups promoting gender equality are using ICTs as a platform to carry out their advocacy for gender equality, thereby empowering women. The empowerment of women is imperative for the development of societies because women can contribute to national development if they are empowered.

Kwapong (2007) explains that empowerment can be seen as the ability and freedom to make choices in social, political and economic arenas. As such ICTs are now deemed as a crucial factor in the effort to empower rural women so as to enable these women to make choices that will help them. Hence, there is a need to engage women in the study or usage of ICTs in Ghana. Women must be given the space in the area of ICTs.

Despite the several factors militating against the involvement of women in Ghana in ICTs, some women have broken into the ICT sphere and are exploring it. Women in Ghana are embracing the blogging phenomenon to make their voices heard on various issues. A look at BloggingGhana (a blogosphere of both male and female bloggers in Ghana) shows a substantial number of female bloggers in Ghana, even though the blogosphere does not contain the list of all women bloggers in Ghana.

It is against this background that this study seeks to find out how women in Ghana are engaging with blogs.

1.2 Problem statement

Several studies have explored the phenomenon of blogging in various parts of the world and between genders (Herring et al. (2006); Schler et al. (2005); Pedersen and Macafee (2007); Li and Lin (2012), etc). These studies looked at the motivation, purpose, type, usage by both gender, etc of blogs in the world. Little is known however about African women and blogging. Therefore, there is little knowledge on how Ghanaian women are engaging with the blogging phenomenon.

As such, the problem of this research is to contribute to knowledge and literature on Ghanaian women and blogging.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to determine the nature of the blogs created by Ghanaian women bloggers in order to know who is blogging, how they are using the blogs and the content of their blogs.

The objectives of this exploratory study are to:

1. determine the social demographics of Ghanaian women who are blogging.
2. determine the purpose (s) of the blogs which are created by Ghanaian women.
3. determine the subjects which are being blogged about by Ghanaian women.
4. determine how Ghanaian women treat their themes/subjects.
5. determine the type of blogs created by Ghanaian women.

1.4 Research questions

Research questions are formally stated questions intended to provide indications about something; it is not limited to investigating relationships between variables (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). Wimmer and Dominick (2011) argue that research questions are appropriate when a researcher is not too sure about the nature of the phenomenon under study.

In order to investigate Ghanaian women bloggers and find out how they are using the blogs, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Which kinds of Ghanaian women are blogging?
2. What is (are) the purpose(s) of Ghanaian women's blogs?
3. What subjects/ themes are Ghanaian women blogging about?
4. How do Ghanaian women treat their themes/ subjects?
5. How often do Ghanaian women update their blogs?
6. What type of blogs do Ghanaian women create?

1.5 Significance of study

This study will provide an understanding on how Ghanaian women are engaging with the phenomenon of blogging. The various perspectives or ideas of Ghanaian women will be revealed through the various themes they blog about as well as the reason why these blogs even exist.

Again, this study will invariably serve as literature on Ghanaian women blogging and contribute to the scant literature on Ghanaian women blogs.

1.6 Definition of key concepts

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), concepts are terms that express an idea which was formed from observing and coming up with a distinct characteristic among a group. Concepts have been deemed important by Wimmer and Dominick (2011) for two reasons. These are their ability to simplify the research procedure by grouping complex or abstract characteristics into one category for the purposes of analysis and also for their ability to make the communication process easier for those who share an understanding of those concepts.

Based on this assertion, some concepts and variables used in this study have been operationally defined below:

Blog: The personal web page of the blogger on which the blog posts are found.

Blog post (BP): Every article downloaded onto the blog.

Purpose (P): The reason for which the blog was created.

Blog type (BT): The category/ genre of the blog based on the two types of blogs which are filter and personal journal blogs.

Bloggers demographics (BD): Personal information about the blogger which will include the revelation of name or not, age or no age, occupation or no occupation, level of education or not, position at work or not, marital status or not.

Themes/ Subjects (T/S): The particular thing or topic being discussed in the blog.

Treatment of themes/ Subjects (TT/S): The time period the blogger spends blogging about a theme (how long a theme is blogged on).

Language use (LU): The words, sentences and idioms used for blogging.

Tone (T): The type of voice used by the blogger in writing about the theme.

Structure (S): The arrangement of the homepage of the blogs. The arrangement will be based on presence or absence of images, hyperlinks and links to other blog post.

Frequency of updating blogs (FUB): How often the blogs are updated.

Dominant features of a blog: The dominant characteristics of all the blog posts of each blog.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Blogging has become an activity that most people engage in for one reason or the other based on several motivating factors. Some people blog as a leisure activity, a creative activity or information sharing and receiving activity. Blogs are therefore seen as an alternative to mainstream media since they provide a platform for everyday people to share their experiences and perspectives of life (Somolu, 2007; Kenix 2009).

In a study on participatory journalism in Mozambique, Paterson and Doctors (2013) found that blogs have the ability to give a quick and possibly true account of issues thereby making blogs an alternative or part of mainstream media. The only difference between mainstream media and blogs are that blogs may be created by inexperienced writers or journalists (Somolu, 2007). One does not necessarily need a particular skill to engage in blogging as it is required to do journalism.

The fact that blogging does not require professionalism or skill may have resulted in an increase in its usage enormously. The increase in its usage has equally caused a lot of blogging software to abound thereby making it easier to create blogs.

Interestingly, more women have been claimed to dominate the blogosphere (Jones et al., 2009 & Stavrositu and Sunder, 2012) and have the ability to keep blogs for a long time (Henning, 2003). This could be because of the ease with which women can create these blogs and operate them.

Women's engagement in the blogosphere has caused some researchers to explore blogs, especially the content of them as against that of men. This is because most women have been claimed to be a distance away from ICTs (UNDAW, 2002; Somolu, 2007).

The increase in the usage of blogs has become an area of interest for many researchers. As such, there have been several research studies to find out the attitudes and motivations of bloggers as well as the content of blogs in the world. Also, the effects of age and gender on blogging have been researched. This section reviews some of the literature on blogging and identifies the various themes under which the studies were done as well as the theoretical underpinnings for this research work.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Borgatti (1997) asserts that a theoretical framework is a theoretical perspective, a basic approach to understanding something and it defines the kinds of variables that one will want to look at. These theoretical perspectives or assumptions are tested through research whereby the results may agree, disagree or only partially agree with the theoretical perspectives or assumptions (Severin and Tankard, 2001).

Three theories therefore underpin this study: the Theory of Technology Diffusion and Adoption; Liberal Feminist Theory; and the Sense of Agency and the Sense of Community theory. These theories are relevant in diverse ways and forms to this study.

2.1.1 The Theory of Technology Diffusion and Adoption

The theory of technology diffusion and adoption is mostly referred to as the Diffusion of Innovations. This theory explains how, why and the rate at which new ideas and technology spread through cultures.

The theory of technology diffusion and adoption was propounded by Everett Rogers who publicized the theory in his book 'Diffusion of Innovations' that was first published in 1962.

Rogers (1962) asserts that there are four main elements that influence the spread of a new idea and these are the innovation, communication channels, time and a social system. These influential elements work in conjunction with one another. Rogers defines diffusion as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.

The theory identifies process as central to its operations and explains that individuals experience five (5) stages of accepting a new innovation which are knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. Rogers (1962) claims that an idea or innovation is perceived not from the scientific standpoint but rather subjective or personal perception of the innovation or idea causes the diffusion.

Rogers (1962) goes on to define adoption as the relative speed with which members of a social system adopt an innovation. He revealed five (5) categories of adopters; innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards.

The theory of technology diffusion and adoption has been criticised in several ways. It has been said that much of the evidence gathered by Everett Rogers for the Diffusion of Innovation is from agricultural methods and medical practice hence not applicable to any other field.

Four major criticism of the Diffusion of Innovation theory has been categorised by Rogers as pro-innovation bias, individual-blame bias, recall problem and issues of equality.

Despite these criticisms, the theory of technology diffusion and adoption is useful to underpin this study.

As previously noted, blogging is an information communication technology (ICT) that has been diffused throughout the world. Though its diffusion process started gradually, it has transcended

to other various social systems of the world. The speed with which blogging is becoming worldwide has caused several people to adopt this innovation including Ghanaian women. Both the male and female gender have adopted the blogging phenomenon and Madanda (2007) asserts that the adoption and diffusion of ICT takes a culturally gender path therefore it is possible to come across a lot of gender differences in the usage and practice of blogging which is a diffused and an adopted innovation in Ghana.

2.1.2 The Liberal Feminist Theory

The liberal feminist theory focuses primarily on women's ability to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. The liberal feminist theory argues that society holds the false belief that women are by nature less intellectually and physically capable than men hence it tends to discriminate against women in every sector of life.

The main thrust of the liberal feminist theory is that 'female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance and/or success in the so-called public world' (Tong, 1995: 2).

Tong (1995) goes on to argue that both women and men should be given the same educational opportunities and civil rights and then this should be measured to see the outcome of usage of these opportunities by both genders.

Among the many issue of concern to liberal feminist is women's equal participation in the usage of ICTs. Liberal feminist believe that when women are given equal opportunities in terms of ICTs just as men, women will equally make an impact in society.

The liberal feminist theory is relevant to this research work because the study seeks to explore how Ghanaian women are using blogs and their impact in society through the blogs.

2.1.3 The Sense of Agency and Community

The sense of agency is the personal awareness that one begins and controls their thinking or thoughts. It is the personal sense or feeling that one is in control or in charge of something. The sense of agency gives one a sense of ownership of an action or activity.

The sense of community is the feeling of belonging to a particular group or community. This community is not necessarily bound geographically but by a form of membership, influence, integration, fulfilment of needs and shared emotional connection (Stavrositu & Sundar, 2012) which gives one a sense of belongingness.

Somolu (2007) asserts that blogging gives women some form of agency and community as they produce their own blog contents, interact with the community of bloggers and receive comments from other women who may have experienced similar situations.

Through the exercise of their will and power of their own through blogging, women are empowered and feel a part of society especially when their blogs receive comments from other women in the blogosphere. The sense of agency and sense of community has been associated with the phenomenon of blogging as a way of empowerment especially for women (Somolu (2007).

2.2 Various Works on Blogging

Herring et al. (2006) conducted a longitudinal content analysis of weblogs and examined how blogging changes over time and how external events change the practice of blogging in the US. The research was conducted between March 2003 and April 2004, a period when there were severe political issues in the US. During that period, there were issues between US and Iraq, as well as the US presidential elections.

The primary goal of Herring et al.'s (2006) research was to find out whether the contents or characteristics of blogs change or remain the same during the period of topical issues as the ones stated above.

They did a content analysis of active, English language, text-based blogs and found out that the issues happening around that time were what the men blogged about while the women still blogged about their personal lives without contributing to the issues happening around that time.

This study showed that gender influences the usage of blogs as what men blog about is different from what women blog about.

Schler et al. (2005) also did a content analysis of blogs in the USA to determine the effects of age and gender on blogging. After studying several thousands of blogs (in order to get a variety of demographic attributes) in USA, they found out that younger bloggers were mostly females and older bloggers were mostly males and each gender had a different blogging style.

They further found out that male bloggers, regardless of their age, did filter blogging while female bloggers did a personal journal kind of blogging. Schler et al.'s (2005) research work findings support that of Herring et al. (2006) which established that women blogged about their personal lives while men blogged about social, political, economic, etc issues.

Pedersen and Macafee (2007) did a study to find out if there are gender differences and inequalities in the blogging behaviour of the British people just as was evident in the US. They sampled forty-eight (48) female and male British bloggers who answered a questionnaire about their blogging practices and attitudes. They realized that both sexes derived satisfaction in blogging and also blogged as a leisure activity even though more women blogged as a medium for creative work.

They also found out that women's blogs were less noticed and commented upon whereas men's blogs were more visible. They concluded that their findings support the various reasons given for the lower profile or representation of women bloggers by other researchers. This reason is that women's blog contain more personal contents while men's blogs contain informative contents specifically on social, political, economic, etc issues.

Pedersen and Macafee (2007) claim that their study agrees with North American research that suggested that the motivations for women bloggers, the content of their blogs and their technical ability is as a result of their lower profile in representations of the blogosphere.

Somolu (2007) conducted a study on women blogging in Africa and explored how women in Africa have embraced the blogging phenomenon and how it can be used to empower them. Somolu (2007) sampled 92 blogs by African women and did a review of 21 of those blogs. Bloggers who range in age from 21-47 years and highly educated were reviewed based on their contents that talked about a range of subjects especially those on social change and women empowerment.

The study was originally meant to review blogs from African women living specifically in Africa but due to the low response from these women, it ended up using blogs from those living outside Africa as well.

Nineteen (19) respondents had an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification, one had a high school certificate and the other was in the university. Nine (9) lived outside Africa, eleven (11) lived in Africa and one moved in and out of Africa and they all had white-collared jobs.

The review showed that the bloggers blogged about their personal experiences – the whole concept of living in Africa as an African woman which include cultural expectations of women's

role in life, sexual harassment from men, pressure on women to look attractive, societal pressure on women to marry before the age of thirty (30), etc.

Somolu (2007) observed that the content of the blogs of African women amassed a lot of responses or comments from other women, probably because it was not filter blogs or because they shared in those experiences. Also, Somolu (2007) found out that even though some of the blogs reviewed were from African women living outside Africa, their contents or experiences were no different from those living in Africa.

These findings by Somolu (2007) are no different from that of Herring et al. (2006), Schler et al. (2005) and Pedersen and Macafee (2007) about the type of blog women did or what they blogged about. Somolu (2007) observed that most women internet users in developing countries are just an educated few, which is not representative of women in the country on a larger scale and this confirms the gendered nature of ICTs.

Somolu (2007) argues that the motivation for women blogging could be to tell their own stories to the world just as they are experiencing it or experienced it in order to bridge the low and inappropriate representation of women in the mainstream media. This argument by Somolu (2007) affirms Pedersen and Macafee 's (2007) assertion of the low representation of women.

Somolu (2007) believes that when African women blog and share their experiences with others, it encourages other women and help these women to improve upon the quality of their lives, thus, a sense of community is shared among these women.

The findings of Somolu (2007) reveals that women find empowerment in what they initiate on their own and not what society expects them to do. Women are able to exercise their sense of agency when they do so. Therefore, the creation of personal journal blogs by most women is empowering enough for them.

Li and Lin (2012) did a survey of Hong Kong university students to understand young generations' blogging behaviour based on two general motivations: extrinsic and intrinsic motivations.

Extrinsic motivation in that study was defined as the social-oriented motivations in search of satisfaction from exterior social environments and intrinsic motivation was also defined as bloggers inherent satisfaction or private emotions rather than external rewards.

Li and Lin (2012) sampled individual students in the City University of Hong Kong who maintained their personal blogs. A total of one hundred and eighty-six (186) students responded to the questionnaire.

After the survey, they found out that reasons for initiating blogs were motivated intrinsically among all students. However, gender had significant influence on behaviour. Females tended to put more self-restriction on expression than males.

Again, gender and age had a larger effect on predicting blog usage pattern. Compared with males, females tended to update blogs more frequently and spent more time on each blog article.

Hollenbaugh (2009) also explored bloggers motives for maintaining personal journal blogs (blogs that resemble diaries about one's personal life) which most women have been tagged with. He did a cross-sectional survey of two hundred and ninety-nine (299) active English-speaking bloggers who were mostly Caucasian or American.

After the survey, he found out that the frequent motive for maintaining personal journal blogs were for archiving or organizing, followed by helping or informing, then social connection and feedback. He realised that professionalism was the least reported motive for maintaining personal journal blogs.

Hollenbaugh (2009) further found out that age, gender, loneliness and disclosiveness predicted the particular motive for maintaining personal journal blogs and realised that women were more likely than men to blog to archive and organize their thoughts. Surprisingly, Hollenbaugh's (2009) research revealed that men equally created personal journal blogs, just as women do, except that the motives were different with each gender. And this is contrary to most assertions that portray women as the only ones who do create personal journal blogs.

Stavrositu and Sundar (2012) did a study to ascertain the extent to which blogging provides women with an increased sense of agency and an enhanced sense of community. They randomly assigned two hundred and fourteen (214) female university students to write either a personal or issue-related blog (referred to as filter blogs) and also surveyed a random sample of three hundred and forty (340) female bloggers chosen from a Web directory of woman-authored blogs. The number of blog visitors and comments were each randomly manipulated to be high or low.

They found out that personal journal blogs gave the bloggers some form of psychological empowerment through an enhanced sense of community while filter blogs did same through an increased feeling of agency.

Stavrositu and Sundar's (2012) work confirms that of Somolu (2007) that said that blogging can empower women. This is because women have been known to produce personal journal blogs which according to Stavrositu and Sundar (2012) gave bloggers some form of psychological empowerment.

Mazman & Usluel (2011) did a study on gender differences in using social networks, specifically facebook and looked at the role gender plays in social networking. Mazman & Usluel (2011) surveyed 870 facebook users between the ages of 18-25yrs and with some level of formal education.

They found out that, generally, people's purposes for using social networks were maintaining existing relationship, making new relationships, academic usage and following an agenda. However, they realised that females used the social networks for maintaining existing relationships, academic purposes and following agenda higher than males while males used it for making new relationships higher than females.

This finding shows that males use social networks mostly for making new friends and relationships while females use it mostly for finding their old friends and keeping in touch with the existing ones but not necessarily looking for new friends.

According to Mazman & Usluel (2011), the reason for this finding could be that females tend to hide their identities and personal information to keep their privacy in the internet environment.

They said that some research (Bolukbas & Yildiz, 2005; Fallows, 2005) show that females do not disclose themselves to people they do not really know because of social pressure and the traditional social roles of women. Also, some research (Mazman, Usluel & Cevik, 2009) according to Mazman & Usluel (2011), found that social influence on the decisions of females in the use of the internet is higher than their personal decisions while the opposite is true for males.

In conclusion, Mazman & Usluel (2011) assert that social and traditional roles of women influence their purposes in the use of the internet and this reveals the gender nature of ICTs.

Pedersen (2007) investigated the differences and similarities between the blogging practices of UK and USA bloggers in the winter and spring of 2006 to 2007. The aim of her research was to find out how the late arrival of the British bloggers to the blogosphere has impacted on the ways in which they blog in comparison to US bloggers who started the blogging phenomenon.

Pederson (2007) did a survey of sixty (60) UK and sixty (60) US bloggers who were selected randomly through two blog directories: Britblog and Globe of Blogs. The survey was distributed equally among both genders and data was collected directly from the survey respondents' blogs and by means of online tools. Pederson (2007) investigated these areas: average time spent blogging and when that blogging occurs; the promotion of blogs; attitudes to blogging and issues of privacy and openness related to the use of photographs and other personal materials.

Perdersen (2007) found out that there are noticeable differences between US males and the rest of the blogosphere. The US male bloggers dominated the rankings in all the areas investigated as far as links, use of images, amount of words and overall popularity was concerned. Again, the content of the US male blogs also focused on an interest, business or hobby and not on personal journal or diaries. Also, the US bloggers were on average older than the UK bloggers.

However, female bloggers in both countries identified financial gain as a motivation for blogging. These are evident that gender plays a vital role in the blogging phenomenon.

Most of the literature reviewed above reveals that there are gender differences in the practice or attitude towards blogging. Evidently is that women, unlike men, are the ones who keep personal journal blogs about their everyday life experiences.

The literature reviewed above has given some insight on the various dimensions of blogging between genders. The motivations, types, age, gender, etc of some bloggers have been known through the literature reviewed.

2.3 CONCLUSION

According to the literature review, Jones et al. (2009), Stavrositu and Sunder (2012), and Henning (2003) assert that more women have been claimed to dominate the blogosphere and have the ability to keep blogs for a long time. This reveals that blogging has diffused and have been adopted by women as per the theory of technology diffusion and adoption. This theory helps to explore the question ‘which kinds of Ghanaian Women are blogging’. It grounds the research question of which members of the social system have adopted the blogging phenomenon.

Also, Herring et al. (2006), and Schler et al. (2005) reveal that men blog about current affairs issues happening while women blog about their personal lives regardless of the issues happening around them. The liberal feminist theory shows that women are able to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. Therefore, whatever issues women are blogging about are as a result of their ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. The liberal feminist theory’s assertion that when women are given equal opportunities in terms of ICTs, they will make an impact in society will be revealed or refuted through the research questions of what is the purpose(s) of Ghanaian women’s blogs, what subjects/themes are Ghanaian women blogging about and how do Ghanaian women treat their themes/subjects.

Further, Pedersen and Macafee’s (2007) study contradicts that of Somolu (2007) which claims that women blogs receive a lot of comments from others in the blogosphere. Pedersen and Macafee (200) assert that women blogs were less noticed and commented upon. So then, do Ghanaian women blogs have a strong presence in the blogosphere as asserted by Somolu (2007) or are less noticed as asserted by Pedersen and Macafee (2007).

The sense of agency and community brings out the assertion of Somolu (2007) and Stravrositu and Sunder (2012) that women exercise their will and power through the creation of blogs and publishing their own blog content, and are empowered to feel a part of society.

Finally, Li and Lin (2012) revealed that females tended to update blogs more frequently. Could this assertion be true of Ghanaian women bloggers? The question of how often Ghanaian women update their blogs is grounded in Li and Lin's (2012) study.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section shows how the research was conducted as well as the various tools and techniques that were employed to gather or collect data for analysis. The section includes the research design, population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection tools or instrumentation and the method of data analyses.

3.1 Research Design

The research employed the qualitative research method but was supported by a few descriptive statistics. Qualitative research uses several methods of data collection which allows the researcher to observe the phenomenon under study in its natural environment. Although the qualitative research method has been criticized as subjective in nature, it is still ideal to explore and understand opinions and have in-depth understanding of a problem. It provides abundant information and prerequisites for deeper knowledge of current problem (Zikmund, 2000).

Content analysis was the specific research method used for the data collection and analysis. Content analysis has been defined as a “systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information” (Walizer and Wienir 1978, cited in Wimmer and Dominick 2011). The research approach was a summative content analysis, which started with the counting and review of blogs by their manifest content and then the analysis was extended to include latent meanings and themes. This approach seemed quantitative in the early stages, but the objective was to explore the usage of the words, themes and language in an inductive manner while also obtaining some descriptive statistics.

Content analysis is a widely used research method for objective, systematic and quantitative examination of communication content (Berelson, 1952, cited in Kim & Kuljis, 2010). The method has been employed not only in the field of traditional communication but also in studies of human-computer interaction such as web based applications, norms of behaviour and cultural values (Okazaki & Rivas, 2002). Qualitative content analysis involves a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation. This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison (Patton, 2002). The qualitative content analysis in this study was complemented by some descriptive statistics of the blog posts specifically, the themes or subjects, language use, and tone of Ghanaian women bloggers.

Content analysis was chosen as the research technique in this study because Wimmer and Dominick (2011) assert that content analysis is useful for discovering and gaining insights into users' preferences and behaviour as well as into complex social and communicational trends and patterns generated by users. However, applying content analysis to web-based content brings about some challenges such as sampling and coding. The complexity of the mixture of various media characteristics within the blogs affected generalization and representativeness of findings from this study.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

3.2.1 Population

The population for a study is that class or category of people or objects on which a researcher wants to conduct a research. Castillo (2009) identifies a population as a well-defined collection

of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. He said that there is usually a binding characteristic or trait common with these individuals or objects.

For this research, the population was Ghanaian female authored blogs which have been active for some time. Active blogs in this study means blogs which have five or more blog posts and have been in existence for the past one month. This criterion was adopted to ensure that inactive blogs or experimental blogs were not included in the research.

3.2.2 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the major element of a content that will be measured and used for the analysis. It is the main focus of a study upon which the research analysis will be based. The unit of analysis for this study therefore, was the blog posts of Ghanaian women blogs.

3.2.3 Sample Size

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), a sample is a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population. A sampling frame, which is a list of all the population, is usually used by researchers to aid them in the selection of a sample. The sampling frame for the population of this study was BloggingGhana. BloggingGhana is a blogosphere that consist of bloggers in Ghana, both male and female. However, it was not a representative of all the bloggers in Ghana since some bloggers, specifically Ghanaian women bloggers, may not be part of this community. Also, it was difficult to get a sampling frame of all Ghanaian women bloggers since they were not obliged to be members of a particular community.

Nonetheless, BloggingGhana provided a frame for the selection of the sample. Therefore, a sample size of fifty (50) was selected from this frame for the study (that is, five (5) blog posts of ten (10) bloggers).

3.2.4 Sampling Technique

Two major sampling techniques – Probability and Non-Probability sampling – have been identified by Wimmer and Dominick (2011). Probability Sampling is a technique where every individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected as a subject for the research and the Non-probability Sampling is a technique where not every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Castillo, 2009).

This research employed the non-probability sampling technique and specifically used the purposive non-probability sampling, which is an example of the non-probability sampling.

The purposive sampling technique is a method of non-probability sampling where a researcher selects respondents/ unit of analysis based on a particular criteria. As such, the unit of analysis for this study was selected based on criteria.

The criteria for the selection of the blogs for this study were the blogger's nationality and gender (being a Ghanaian and a female), number of blog posts (having five (5) or more blog post) and how long the blogger had been blogging (at least for a month). Ten (10) Ghanaian women blogs were selected from bloggingGhana's blogger directory based on these criteria. One Ghanaian woman's blog was identified on bloggingGhana and a hyperlink to another Ghanaian woman's blog was clicked from the first Ghanaian woman's blog to get the second Ghanaian woman's blog, and then this process continued till all the ten (10) Ghanaian women's blogs were selected. These blogs were identified as unit of analysis for the study based on the criteria through the biographical information provided on the blogs. The biographical information revealed whether the author was a female or not and a Ghanaian or not.

Five (5) blog posts on each blog were used for the content analysis. The first five recent blog posts (in reverse chronological order) were selected. This was to ensure that the recent information or trend of Ghanaian women blogs was collected for analysis.

3.3 Instrumentation (Data Collection tool)

Instrumentation is the process of data collection with specific data collection tools. The data collection tool for this study was a coding guide. The coding guide contained the various categories for the analysis and the interpretation of these categories which was developed based on the research questions. The variables on the coding guide are:

1. Purpose (P): The reason for which the blog was created.
2. Blog type (BT): The category/ genre of the blog based on the two types of blogs which are filter and personal journal blogs.
3. Bloggers demographics (BD): personal information about the blogger which will include the revelation of name or not, age or no age, occupation or no occupation, level of education or not, position at work or not, marital status or not. This data will be got from the home page of the blogs.
4. Themes/ Subjects (T/S): The particular thing or topic being discussed in the blog.
5. Treatment of themes/ Subjects (TT/S): The time period the blogger spends blogging about a theme (how long a theme is blogged on).
6. Language use (LU): The words, sentences and idioms used for blogging.
7. Tone (T): The type of voice used by the blogger in writing about the theme.
8. Structure (S): The arrangement of the homepage of the blogs. The arrangement will be based on presence or absence of images, hyperlinks and links to other blog post.

This data will equally be got from the homepage of the blogs.

9. Frequency of updating blogs (FUB): How often the blogs are updated.

The coding categories were the blogger's demographics (to get personal information about the author), blog type (to identify the type of blog engaged in by the author), structure (to determine dominate features of the blog), purpose (to establish the reason(s) for blogging), themes/subjects (to determine the particular issue of discussion on the blogs), treatment of themes/subjects (to determine how long a particular issue is discussed), language use (to ascertain the language use of the bloggers as polite, rude or both), tone (to determine the tone of the blogs as harsh, soft, sad, happy, depressed or others), and frequency of updating blogs (to determine how often the bloggers create blog posts).

A coding sheet was used to make the entry of the data for analysis. The variables/categories were put in the column section of the coding sheet and the blogs were put in the row section. The row section contained spaces for all the five (5) blog posts of each respondent and a last row was made to indicate the dominant features identified on the blog of each respondent.

Appendix A is the coding guide based on which the blog posts were analyzed (Page 59).

Appendix B is the coding sheet on which the appropriate category was entered (Page 63).

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The analysis of the data was based on the research questions and issues arising from the content analysis. On the coding sheet, there is a column for the dominant features of each blog and these dominant features were used for the analysis. The dominant features of a blog are the dominant characteristics of all the blog posts. The analysis of the data therefore has been presented in the

form of sentences, descriptive paragraphs with quotes from the blog posts where necessary and some descriptive statistics.

The data collection and analysis commenced with downloading a copy of all the five (5) blog posts on each blog since web-based contents can and do disappear after a while. These blogs were saved as complete webpage to preserve content and structure. The blogs were then coded using the coding guide.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the data obtained from the 10 selected blogs and 50 blog posts of Ghanaian women bloggers. The data were obtained through a web content analysis, coded and summarised into a coding sheet. The analysis of the data is presented in subsequent sections and the discussions are supported with extracts from the blogs.

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Social Demographics of Ghanaian Women Bloggers

In order to find out the social demographics of Ghanaian women bloggers, each blog used in the study was examined for identifiable personal information such as name, age, occupation, level of education, position at work and marital status. All the women blogs examined in this study had provided a name and a picture. Majority of the women bloggers had identified themselves by their full name as well as their pictures but there was a single incidence of the use of a first name. Two other women bloggers used pseudonyms. One of such pseudonyms being used by a woman blogger was “Afia English”. The names were either on the homepage of the blogs or were used to signoff the blog post as the structure of most blogs requires bloggers to provide a name in the ‘posted by’ section.

All the women bloggers did not explicitly or implicitly provide their age, level of education, position at work and marital status. The same can be said of their occupation, with the exception of one blogger who indicated on her blog that she was an epidemiologist.

4.1.2 Type of Blogs Created by Ghanaian Women bloggers

After a careful examination of the blog posts, it became evident that majority of them contained information related to the personal life of the blogger and can thus be described as personal journal blogs. About 74 percent of the blogs analysed for this study were in this category. The other category of blogs created contained world events or social happening not related to the personal life of the blogger which can be described as filter blogs. About 26 percent of the blogs analysed for this study were filter blogs.

In terms of personal journal blogs that were created, the introductory paragraph, content and the continuous use of ‘I’ and ‘my’ gave an indication that the blog posts contained information related to the personal life of the blogger. Some of the blog posts were exclusively personal. For example, extracts from a blogger writing on dating on Facebook had an introductory paragraph of “I’ve had quite a number of friends and relatives tell me.....” and the continuous use of ‘I’ and ‘my’ in instances such as “I can’t imagine building a friendship.....”, “What am I missing?”, or “Despite my own hesitation.....” gave a clear indication that it related to the personal life of the blogger. In most instances, all the analysed blogs classified as personal journal had all the blog posts containing information about the personal life of the blogger.

Although filter blogs were in the minority in terms of the blogs analysed, the subjects or themes of the filter blogs were usually on social or political issues that corresponded with the month of the blog posting. Blog post on issues like the “I have a dream speech” of Martin Luther King, the supreme court verdict on the 2012 Presidential elections petition of Ghana and Nelson Mandela’s legacy dominated some filter blogs in the month of August 2013 when these issues were also at the centre of world news and discussions.

4.1.3 Structure of blogs

With respect to the structure of the blogs analysed, it was deduced from the content analysis that most of these blogs were similar in structure in terms of the use of images, hypertext links to other information and blog links between bloggers. Most blogs commenced with the images that sought to graphically introduce the theme or subject matter of the blog post.




Titles of blog posts such as “Facebook Dating”, “Closure: To Call or Not to Call”, ““I have a dream” @ 50”, “Same Script Different Cast” and “That 4 letter Word.....” could easily be traced to their respective images above and the images themselves gave an indication to any reader of the theme of the blog post.

Another structural feature that the blogs adopted to provide further information on some issues they were blogging on was hypertext linking of their blogs with sources of information. Although this was not extensively used in all blog posts examined, some blogs incorporated hyperlinks in their blog post as a way of directing readers to a news story they were blogging on. For instance, a blogger reacting to a *Time Magazine* report on the menace of illegal gold mining by Chinese migrants ended the blog post with “Read more:<http://world.time.com/2013/07/04/africa-or-bust-chinese-gold-miners-take-huge->

[risks/#ixzz2YCo7vcUc](#)” which gave readers that chance to click and read the full story on the *Time Magazine* website. Another blog post on the topic “To Thine Own Self Be True” added “Check out this article (very interesting): [Hypocrisy Rooted in High Morals](#)” at the end of the blog post and gave readers the opportunity of reading another blogger’s post on the same subject. Others used hypertext links within the body of the blog post to help readers find additional information on name or subjects of their blogs. For example, a blog post on Martin Luther King had the hypertext which linked Martin Luther King’s name to his full profile on Wikipedia so that readers can access it. There were also few instances where the blogs had hypertext links to provide multimedia resource like videos.

Further, a key feature of all blogs, including those analysed under this study, was the comments section. This section gave readers the chance to add their voice to the subject matter of the blog post. It was obvious from the content analysis of the blog posts that this option was not usually used by readers. In most instances, there were no comments received for the blog posts. However, some blog posts had some responses or comments, with the highest recorded comments in a single blog post being seven (7).

A final feature of some of the blogs was the social networking sharing buttons. Some blogs gave readers the opportunity to share the blog post on social networking websites like Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Reddit, MySpace and Digg by providing a button for these websites. A classic example is a blog by Boakyewaa Glover (www.boakyewaaglover.com) which has the

following buttons  and captioned “Share This” to encourage readers to share the blog posts with the social networks.

4.1.4 Frequency of update

Most of the blogs analysed had at least a monthly update or a new blog post made on the blog each month. Three out of the 10 blogs examined had a new blog posting in the month (August) of the content analysis and all the remaining blogs had had a new blog post in the previous month before the period of the content analysis with the exception of one blog whose last blog post was five months prior to the content analysis.

4.1.5 Purpose(s) of Blogs

The purpose of each blog was traced from the labels, content and theme of each blog post. Whereas all the blog posts in some of the blogs were directed towards a singular purpose, other blogs had multiple purposes. It must however, be noted that each blog had a dominant purpose which could be traced to three or more blog posts on that blog. An example is a blog that had three of the blog posts' purposes to be to inform and the remaining two blog posts purposes to educate and to criticise.

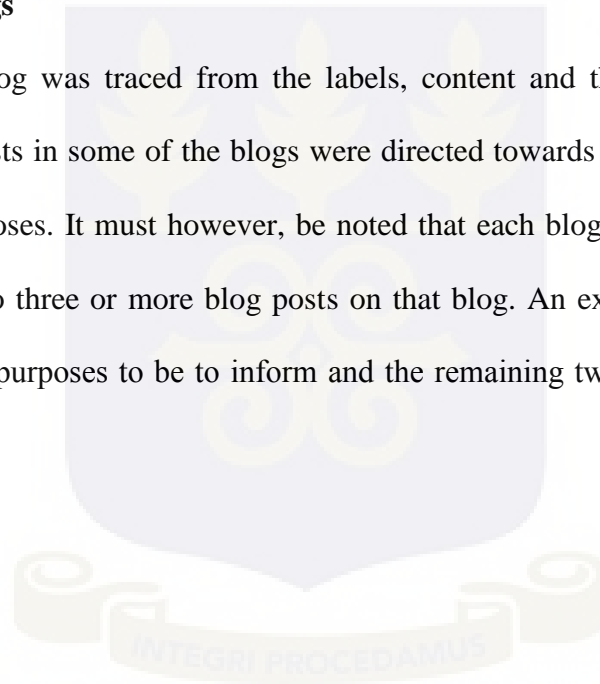
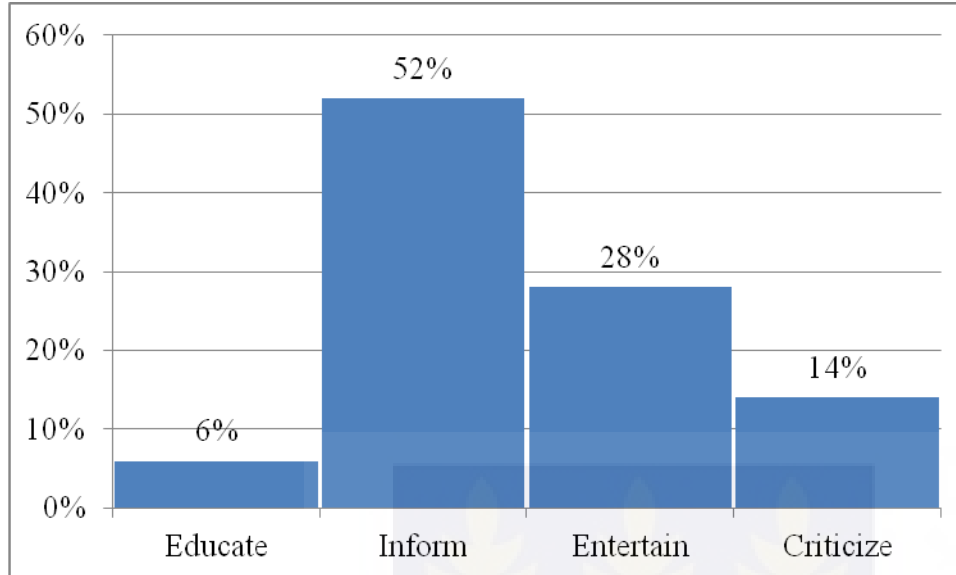


Figure 1: Purpose of Ghanaian Women Blogs



Based on the individual analysis of the blog posts, it became evident that most of the blog posts were meant to inform. It can be seen from figure 1 that 52% of the blog posts were intended to inform, 28% were to entertain, 14% were critiques of issues and people and 6% were meant to educate the audience.

The blog posts that were meant to inform (creating awareness or giving facts about something or someone) were prevalent in blogs that sought to bring out some unfortunate trends in the Ghanaian political system, highlight an upcoming event or put the spotlight on some qualities that the society was losing track of. One blog that sought to inform for instance was dedicated to upcoming entertainment events. Examples are [BAAM! DJ Gaddafi Drops Ghanaman Mix](#), [THE OMINOUS RIDDIM By The Tech Head Records](#), [Coptic Presents The Rising Stars Concert](#) (afiaenglish.wordpress.com).

Also, one of the blogs that sought to entertain audiences had all the five blog posts dedicated to a story of a couple with each blog post titled “Eli’s Wife” (azedi.blogspot.com). This entertaining story was a series on a couple who were forced to marry. Another entertaining blog post recounts several humorous life incidents of the blogger, example, ‘the Christmas hen’ (carolineadzogble.blogspot.com).

Some blog posts were meant to educate audience or readers. One of such blog post sought to educate readers on the shelf life of foods. The blogger pictorially provided the length of time that various food categories can be stored on the shelf, in the refrigerator or the deep freezer.

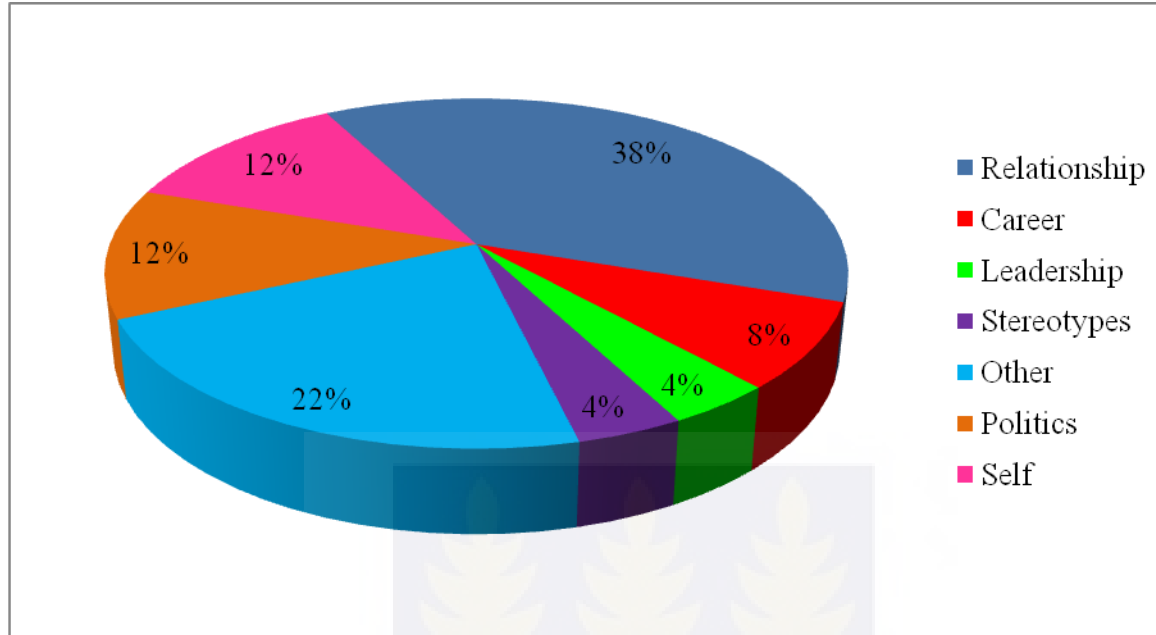
4.1.6 Themes/Subjects of Blogs

With regards to the themes or subjects of the various blog posts analysed, the results indicated that extremely diverse themes or subjects were blogged on. For the purpose of coding and analysis, the themes or subjects were categorised into the following:

- Relationships (Marriage, Love, family, friendship)
- Career (Job, business)
- Parenting (Having children, raising children)
- Leadership (Leading a group of people or an organization)
- Stereotypes (A widely held idea about someone or something which may not necessarily be true)
- Others (indicate)

The results were then used to design Figure 2.

Figure 2 Categories of themes/subjects of Ghanaian women blogs



It can be seen from figure 2 that the dominant theme or subject of most of the blog posts analysed in this study was relationships. The other category included blog posts on issues like faith, life, nutrition and poetry. Some were also on politics, leadership and career.

The titles and contents of blog posts helped to determine the theme or subject matter of the blog post. The nature of images accompanying the blog posts also gave some indication of the theme or subject of the blog posts. Blog posts on relationships and love were usually accompanied with heart shaped images or images with the word 'love' in them. Some titles of blog posts such as "Facebook Dating" (www.boakyewaaglover.com), "Making My Blue Heart Red Again" (enyos-place.blogspot.com) and "Eli's Wife" (azedi.blogspot.com) gave an immediate indication that the blog post was about relationships or family but for others it was the introductory paragraphs which indicated that. Some blog posts commenced with introductory statements like "To some waking up to cute texts and messages is what love is all about" (carolineadzogle.blogspot.com) and this immediately gave the reader the impression that the blog post was about love. Blog

posts on family were also permeated with words or phrases like “daddy” “my mummy” and “my sis”. Labels like “broken heart”, “Couples”, “heartbreak”, “love”, “marriage”, “weddings” were very common with relationship themed blogs.

Blogs with political themes were usually based on prevailing political issues that occurred in the month of the blog post. Titles like “Nana Addo saddened by Court Verdict, Calls time out”, “T'was the night before Judgement Day and all through the land...” (afiaenglish.wordpress.com) characterised blog posts in the pre and post period when the Supreme Court ruled on Ghana’s 2012 Election Petition. Political blog posts were usually tagged as politics by the blogger.

Some themes or subjects were written in a poetic form. An example of a blog post written in a poetic form is shown in the extract below:

“When we first met, I didn't think it possible
My heart, so cold was frozen by the past hurt
It was kept under lock and key
But with all the strength I had
I couldn't fight the feeling deep within

I tried not to think of you
To tell myself that what I felt was a mistake
That I was fine being all by myself
A lie, even I could not convince myself was true...” (www.enyos-place.blogspot.com)

The treatment of themes or subjects (which is the time period the blogger spends blogging about a theme or subject) varied from one blogger to another. From the content analysis, it was obvious

that most of the bloggers blogged on one theme in less than a month. Only two of the bloggers had blogged on one issue for more than a month. One of such bloggers, blogging on a love story titled “Eli’s Wife” (www.azedi.blogspot.com) commenced the story on Thursday, July 11, 2013 and as of Thursday, 22nd August, 2013, she had made five weekly blog posts and was still blogging on the same story with “to be continued

4.1.7 Language Use and Tone

The language and tone of the blogs of Ghanaian women and the colloquial style of writing used by some of the bloggers gave an indication that they were targeting their peers. From the content analysis, the language used by most of the bloggers was very civil with very few of them using a rude language. To appear endearing, some bloggers occasionally employed informal terms which are common among peers. Also, due to an extensive use of social networking chats or language, some bloggers adopted the shorthand writing style which is prevalent among younger people. Most of the bloggers with their peers as their audience, resorted to the use of slang and terms or phrases like “Na waa ooo...”, “Lol!”, “SMH”, “Hmmm... haven't we all”, “Yep” and “the messages I get are kinda lame” since they are of the view that these phrases or terms would appeal to their peers or target audiences.

There were instances where some bloggers used very rude language. Some, in an attempt not to use the “f word” on their blogs, found a different way of incorporating it in their blog posts. Such bloggers used phrases like “.....but don’t they say assumption is the mother of all eff ups”, “what the eff happened?” or “Are you effing kidding me?” (www.boakyewaaglover.com) as a means of conveying their message without conspicuously using derogatory words.

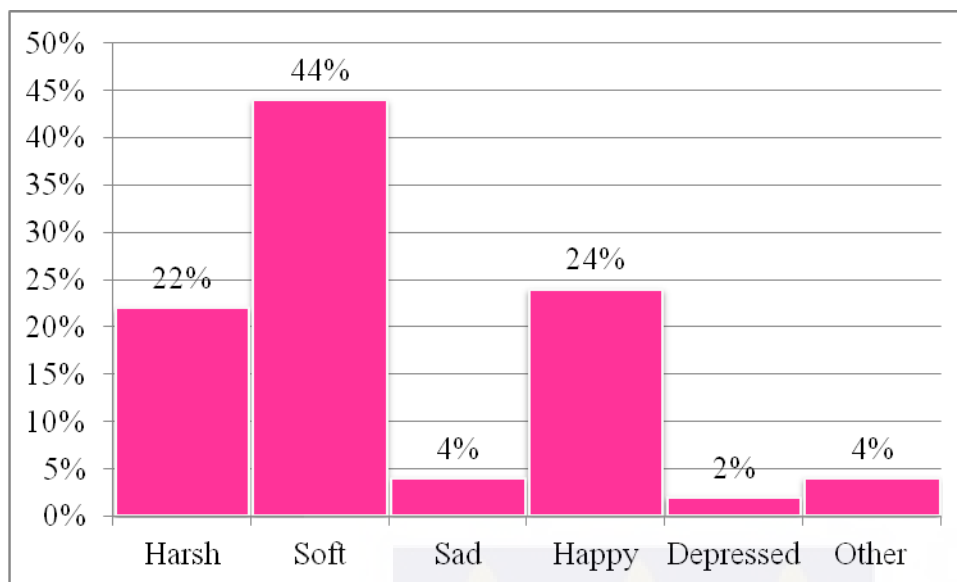
The emotions exhibited by the bloggers varied based on the theme of the blog and the target audience of the blogger. Whereas the emotions of some bloggers were not explicit and would have to be deduced from the tone of the language used by the blogger, others explicitly indicated their emotions. The explicit indication of a blogger's emotion was provided in three different formats. Bloggers would either write how they were feeling and place them in harsh tags or asterisks, use a text-based emoticon or symbol such as ^ . ^ or ^_^ which means smile or happy or a figure-based emoticon such as 😊.

An example is '...as always, you can use a fake name to share your story, but do share. Make a believer out of me 😊 (www.boakyewaaglover.com)'.

For the purpose of coding and content analysis, the emotions of the bloggers were categorized into six (6) items based on the tone of their blog post or explicit indication of their emotion:

- Harsh: Represents blog posts with severe or stern tone.
- Soft: Tender or gentle tone.
- Sad: Feelings of sorrow.
- Happy: Feelings of excitement, pleasure or contentment.
- Depressed: Dejected or low spirit.
- Others: Representing any emotion other than the ones above.

Figure 3 Emotions exhibited in blogs of Ghanaian women



It can be seen from figure 3 that a soft tone (tender and gentle) was associated with 44% of blog posts of Ghanaian women. This was followed by blog posts that exhibited the happy tone (excitement, or contentment of the blogger). Sometimes the opening statement of a blog post gave an indication of the emotional state of the blogger. For instance one blogger commenced her blog post as follows: “It’s 12:15am and I can’t sleep just yet. There are way too many questions burning in my mind... (www.boakyewaaglover.com)” and that indicated the emotional state of the blogger. Others explicitly stated their emotional state with words like “Hysterical!”, “*Naughty chuckle*” “*smiling*” and “Sigh!” Others used emoticons or symbols like this 😊 to indicate their emotional state.

The tone used in the blogs was mostly informed by the theme or subject of the blog posts. However, the tone used in some blog posts with the same themes varied from blogger to blogger. Most of the bloggers writing on relationships adopted a soft or happy tone, although one blogger writing on a blog post titled “Best Friends Forever” which falls under the theme of relationship used a harsher tone because she was examining the misconception associated with people

assuming that another person was their best friends while that person may not share the same view. Notwithstanding this exceptional instance, the soft and happy tone was prevalent among most blog posts that wrote on the themes or subjects of love, family and marriage.

Some extracts from different blog posts as presented below gave a clear indication of the harsh tone of some blogs posts on political and social issues:

“He tore the last shred of African dignity left by painting a bleak picture of invading and barbaric black hordes assembled outside the pearly gates of Europe (Abena Serwah, ‘The King and I: Reflections on the Brotherly Leader as he hovers on the brink’ from www.Chardonas.blogspot.com) .”

“What is the use of talking and talking, making so much “noise” on social media and on the platforms of media houses when our own leaders are not paying heed? We need implementers at the helm of affairs, visionary leaders who will walk the plenty talk. We need to see some real work on the ground (Efua Sintim, ‘Same Script Different Cast’ from www.Efuasintim.blogspot.com)”.

“I walk in expecting royal treatment,
But what I get is nothing but ordinary,
So ordinary it’s not worth talking about,
Everything they do is irritating and annoying, (Michelle Kangah, ‘That Bank’ from www.mkangah.blogspot.com)”.

“My pet peeve is the capitalist folk who are gradually seeping through the pores of governance and public service all in the guise of being socialist or social democrats (like they like to call themselves). I just don't get these people. Some of these so-called public officials were men of straw... (Efua Sintim, ‘Same Script Different Cast’ from www.Efuasintim.blogspot.com)”.

These extracts are but a few of the harsh tone used by some bloggers to indicate their dissatisfaction with several issues in the Ghanaian society as they attempted to highlight these issues on their blogs.

4.2 Discussions of findings

The results of the study show that Ghanaian women bloggers have adopted the blogging phenomenon and are comfortable blogging just as other women in other countries. The results show that many blogs are being authored by Ghanaian women.

Majority of the Ghanaian women bloggers whose blogs were analysed for this study identified themselves by their full names as well as their pictures. There was a single incidence of the use of first name and two instances of the use of pseudonym. This finding is in congruence with Herring et al., (2006) who found in their study that most blog authors provide some identifiable personal information and this tendency is increasing over time. Herring et al., (2006) added that the use of first names is increasing over time whereas the use of pseudonyms and blogs in which no name is given is decreasing gradually.

This finding suggests that most Ghanaian women engaged in blogging have no privacy issues in terms of revealing their names as well as their picture and so want to be identified by using their names and pictures to blog. Herring et al., (2006) in their longitudinal study of blogs found that majority of bloggers gave some indication of their occupation, either explicitly or implicitly but this is not true of Ghanaian women bloggers. There was only one incident where the blogger provided her occupation. However, no other demographic information about the Ghanaian women bloggers could be explicitly or implicitly obtained from their blogs.

The findings on the types of blogs created by Ghanaian women also support the various classifications of blogs as filter blogs and personal journal blogs (Herring et al. (2006); Schler et al. (2005). A significant number of the blog posts of Ghanaian women that were analysed had all

the features of a personal journal blog which indicates that Ghanaian women blogs are personal journal blogs.

Again, the findings on the type of blogs created by Ghanaian women bloggers support the earlier findings of Herring et al., (2006) that the issues happening around that time were what the men blogged about while the women still blogged about their personal lives without contributing to the issues happening around that time.

Through this study, it has been established that indeed women, specifically Ghanaian women, create personal journal blogs. However, the type of blogs created by men cannot be established because blogs created by men were not considered in this study.

With regards to the structure of Ghanaian women blogs, the prevalence of links and comments in blog entries remained low in most of the blogs analysed for the study. Some blogs had as low as one comment or none at all. This finding is contrary to the popular characterization of the blogosphere as interconnected and conversational (Herring, et al., 2005 & Technoratti, 2012). The interconnectivity of the blogosphere cannot be said true of the Ghanaian women blogs. This supported the findings of Herring et al., (2006) who studied several blogs over a thirteen (13) month period and found that blogs have become less connected to each other and to the rest of the web, as the average number of links per entry decreased over the period of the study.

Further, few comments were provided by readers to the blog post of Ghanaian women and this was also contrary to the findings of Somolu (2007) that the content of the blogs of African

women amassed a lot of responses or comments from other women probably because they were not filter blogs or because they shared the same experiences.

Rather, the findings of this study agrees with Pedersen and Macafee (2007) who found out that women's blogs were less noticed and commented upon. Pedersen and Macafee (2007) said that their findings support the various reasons given for the low profile or representation of women bloggers as compared to the high profile or representation of men bloggers by other researchers.

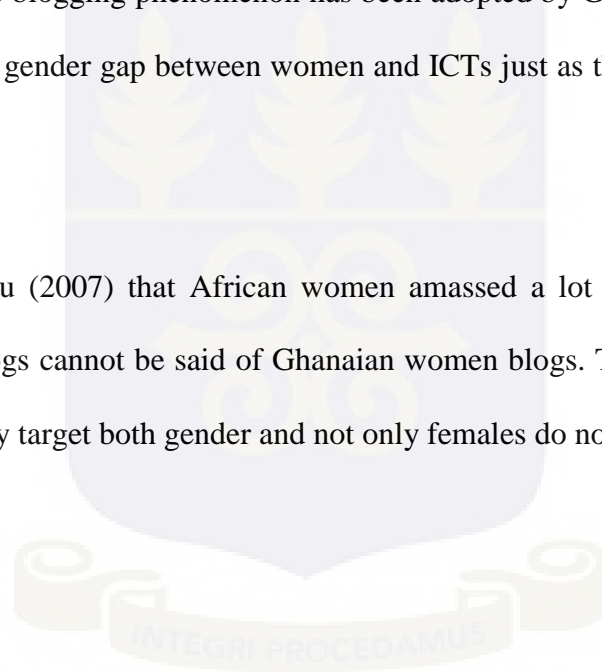
The themes or subjects of most blog posts of Ghanaian women were based on family, love and relationship. This seems to be an overt attempt by the Ghanaian women to share their life experiences publicly and thereby inform their fellow women on these issues. This finding supports the theoretical framework of Somolu (2007) as well as the theoretical underpinning of this research work that women have a sense of agency and community when they blog because they are able to speak their personal thoughts out and receive comments from other women who may have experienced similar situations.

With regard to the language, tone and emotions of Ghanaian women bloggers, it became evident from the study that Ghanaian women bloggers expressed their emotions with their blog posts. This was done by a text-based emoticon, a figure-based emoticon or by expressly writing their emotional state. These findings can be linked to that of Chen et al., (2012) who found that bloggers employ an emoticon for the purpose of expressing emotion and friendliness so as to create a closer relationship between the blogger and the readers. They concluded that a possible reason for using text-based or figure-based emoticons is that they provide a short-hand way to express ideas, thus saving time.

The purposes of Ghanaian women blogs, which predominantly are to inform, agrees with Somolu (2007)'s assertion that African women are using blogs to tell their stories or make known their experiences. It became evident that Ghanaian women want to inform others about their life experiences.

Ghanaian women told their stories to others by frequently updating their blogs as was shown in the findings. The frequent update of blogs by Ghanaian women shows that Ghanaian women are actively using blogs. The blogging phenomenon has been adopted by Ghanaian women and they are using it to bridge the gender gap between women and ICTs just as the liberal feminist theory asserts.

The assertion by Somolu (2007) that African women amassed a lot of responses from other women through their blogs cannot be said of Ghanaian women blogs. This is because Ghanaian women blogs though they target both gender and not only females do not receive much feedback.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATION OF STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Conclusions

The study sought to investigate women and social media by examining Ghanaian women blogs. Among its objectives, the study sought to examine the social demographics of Ghanaian women bloggers, identify the purpose(s) of the blogs which are created by Ghanaian women, investigate the themes or subjects they wrote on and identify how each blogger treated these themes or subjects. Further, the study sought to find out the language use, tone and structure of Ghanaian women blogs.

Although the study adopted a qualitative approach, some descriptive statistics were used to present some findings. The main research technique used was content analysis. This involved condensing raw data from the Ghanaian women blogs into categories or variables based on valid inference and interpretation.

Based on this technique, categories and variables that emerged from the data through careful examination and constant comparison of the content of the blogs were used as data for the study. Content analysis was chosen as the research technique in this study because it is useful for discovering and gaining insights into users' preferences and behaviour as well as into complex social and communicational trends such as blogging among Ghanaian women.

Prominent among the findings of the study is the fact that quite a number of Ghanaian women are actively engaged in the blogging phenomenon. This affirms the theory of technology diffusion and adoption. Those engaged in the practise are also making themselves known by

using their names and pictures in their blog posts. However, other demographic data like occupation, age and marital status continue to be absent from the blogs of Ghanaian women.

In terms of the type of blogs and structure of blogs created by Ghanaian women, the preferable blog type created is personal journal blogs. Most blogs continue to be text based although some bloggers made a deliberate effort to introduce every blog post with an image. Other multimedia attributes were usually missing except one blog that linked to a video. The use of hypertext links was also not very predominant although some bloggers used it extensively.

Another observation which is worthy of note is that most of the blogs examined had not been commented on by readers. Those which had received comments also had very few comments.

The purpose of each blog was traced from the labels, content and theme of each blog post. Whereas all the blog posts in some Ghanaian women blogs were directed towards a singular purpose, other blogs had multiple purposes. Majority of the blog posts sought to inform the audience thus, creating awareness or giving facts about something or someone. Some blog posts which sought to inform the target audience brought out some negative or bad trends in the Ghanaian political system, highlighted an upcoming event or put the spotlight on some qualities that the society has lost or is losing track off.

Relationship based themes such as love, marriage, friendship and family dominated most of the blog posts by Ghanaian women. These themes were mostly explored through stories or based on experiences of the blogger while others were based on other people's experiences. Most bloggers therefore adopted a soft and happy tone in the treatment of their subjects although some

relationship based themes like breakup were treated with a depressed or sad tone. The latter was in the minority. Those who used harsh tones mostly blogged on political issues or some societal excesses they had identified.

The language used by most Ghanaian women bloggers was very civil although there were very few instance of rude language. Also, due to an extensive use of social networking chats among some bloggers, they adopted the shorthand writing style which is prevalent among their peers. Most bloggers targeting their age mates as their audience resorted to the use of slang terms or phrases.

Based on the results of the content analysis as well as the objectives of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Ghanaian women created either a personal journal blog or filter blogs. However, most Ghanaian women bloggers created personal journal blogs which chronicles events in their life with only a few women creating filter blogs on world issues that affect the society.
- Apart from the name of bloggers and their pictures which is likely to be the real identity of the bloggers, other social demographics of Ghanaian women bloggers cannot be obtained from the blogs as most of them opted not to disclose personal information like age, occupation and marital status.
- Ghanaian women created blogs to inform, entertain, educate and criticize. Blogs created to inform and entertain dominated the purposes for which Ghanaian women created blogs.

- The themes or subject being blogged about by Ghanaian women were diverse. Notable themes were relationship, politics, career, stereotypes and leadership in their order of preference. Other themes or subjects like poetry, faith and nutrition were also identified among the blog posts. However, the dominant theme blogged about was relationships.
- The diverse nature of the themes also resulted in diverse treatment of these themes. Most Ghanaian women bloggers blogged about a particular theme for a very short period of time although those who adopted the long period treatment of a particular theme did that very extensively.

5.1 Limitations of the study

This study was challenged with some limitations. One such challenge was in getting related studies that were carried out in Ghana. Most of the literature was from outside Ghana, specifically from the Western countries. This did not make it possible to compare the findings with other research from the same socio-cultural background.

Also, due to the time constraints, this study depended solely on one research method which did not allow the researcher to explore other areas like motivations of Ghanaian women bloggers and to conduct a proper audience survey to determine who was reading women's blogs and for what purposes. A combination of two or more research methods would have helped to unravel a lot of information about Ghanaian women bloggers.

Finally, there was difficulty in getting a sampling frame of all Ghanaian women bloggers and this is because bloggers in Ghana are not obliged to register their blogs or form an association which will help to get a reliable data of the number of Ghanaian bloggers specifically women bloggers in order to select a representative sample size for a study.

5.2 Recommendations

The study concentrated on a few Ghanaian women bloggers. However, it is recommended that a more comprehensive study into the blogging phenomenon among Ghanaian women should be undertaken with an expanded sample size and diverse research methods. That would reveal further findings that this study may not have obtained due to the small sample size, usage of one research method and short period of study.

Blogs can serve as one of the means by which Ghanaian women can network, inform and educate themselves in the blogosphere. This means that the practise must be encouraged among women. Some media attention should be devoted to educate Ghanaian women on the benefits of creating blogs and how these blogs can be networked to create a shared information platform for Ghanaian women in diverse occupation and social status.

Finally, the findings of this study can be a window for gender activist to become more aware of the day to day challenges of the Ghanaian woman and use them as a basis for their advocacy. The messages posted in the blogs provide a means of monitoring and understanding the experiences of the women as they communicate among themselves. Thus, gender advocates and policy makers at the Gender and Social Protection Ministry can monitor some of these blogs as a way of gaining feedback on some of the issues affecting women in the country so as to be able to refine some of the policies that affects women in the Ghanaian society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Africa Partnership Forum (2008). ICT in Africa: Boosting Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Tokyo, Japan.

Berelson, B. (1952). Content Analysis in Communication Research. Free Press: New York.

Borgatti, S. (1997). Research Glossary. Accessed on September, 27, 2013 from www.analytictech.com/mb313/index.html.index.htm.

Castillo, J. J. (2009). Research Population. Retrieved August 23, 2013 from Explorable.com: <http://explorable.com/research-population>.

FAO (2012). Gender Inequalities in Rural Employment in Ghana. Retrieved on 17th October, 2013 from www.ghananewsagency.org.

Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in the Information Society [GenArdis]. (2010). Small grants that made big changes for women in agriculture. San Francisco: Association for Progressive Communication.

Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing [GINKS]. (n.d). Women in ICT: Challenges, Successes and the Way Forward. Retrieved on August 26, 2013 from www.ginks.org/...GetBizFormFile.aspx?filename=4bab

Government of Ghana [GoG]. (2003). The Ghana ICT for Accelerated development policy. Retrieved on August 26, 2013 from www.nca.org.gh/downloads/Ghana_ICT4AD_Policy.pdf

Guadagno, R. E., Okdie, B. M. & Eno, C. A. (2007) Who blogs? Personality Predictors of Blogging. *Computer in Human Behaviour*, doi: 10.1016/j.chb.

Gurumurthy, A. (2004). Gender and ICTS. Institute of Development Studies: UK.

- Herring, S. C., Scheidt, L. A., Kouper, I. & Wright, E. (2006). A Longitudinal Content Analysis of Weblogs (In press). In M. Tremayne (Ed.) *Blogging, Citizenship & the future of Media*. London: Routledge.
- Hollenbaugh, E. E. (2009). Motives for Maintaining Personal Journal Blogs. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking*. Vol 00(0) DOI: 10.1089
- Huffaker, D. (2005). The Educated Blogger: Using Weblogs to Promote Literacy in the Classroom. *AACE Journal*, 13 (2), 91-98.
- Kenix, L. J. (2009). Blogs as Alternative. *Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication 14*: 790-822. International Communication Association.
- Kim I. and Kuljis J. (2010). Applying Content Analysis to Web-based Content. *Journal of Computing and Information Technology - CIT* (18) 4: 369–375
- Kobayashi, M. (2011). Blogging and the Globe: Motivations, Privacy Concerns and Social Networking. IBM Research – Tokyo.
- Kwapong, O. (2007). Factors Influencing Information Delivery Technology Choice by Women in Deprived Regions in Ghana. *Journal of community informatics*, 3(2), 1-10.
- Madanda, A. (2007). ICT Liberalization and Changing Gender Relations in Contemporary Uganda: A research agenda. Department of women and gender studies, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.
- Maier, S. And Nair-Reichert (2007) Empowering Women through ICT-Based Business Initiatives: An overview of best practices in e-commerce/e-retailing projects. *Journal of information Technologies and International development*. Vol 4(2) pg 43-60. MIT Press Cambridge, MA, USA.
- Mazman, G. S. and Usluel, Y. K. (2011). Gender Differences in Using Social Networks. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*. Vol 10(2).
- Nardi, B. A, Schiano, D. J., Gumbrecht, M. and Swartz, L. (2004). ‘Im blogging this’: A Closer Look at Why People Blog. *Communications of the ACM*.

- Okazaki, S. and Rivas, J. A. (2002). A Content Analysis of Multinationals' Web Communication Strategies: Cross-cultural Research Framework and Pre-testing. *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy*, 12(5): 380–390.
- Paterson, C. & Doctors, S. (2013). Participatory Journalism in Mozambique. *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 34 (1):107-114.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pedersen, S., & Macafee, C. (2007). Gender Differences in British Blogging. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), article 16.
<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/pedersen.html>
- Pedersen, S. (2007). A Comparison of the Blogging Practices of UK and US Bloggers. Conference on electronic publishing- Vienna, Austria.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: Free Press.
- Schler, J., Koppel, M., Argamon, S., & Pennebaker, J. (2005). Effects of Age and Gender on Blogging. American Association for Artificial Intelligence (www.aaai.org)
- Severin, W.J., & Tankard, J.W. (2001). *Communications Theories: Origins, Methods, and Use in the Mass Media*. New York: Longman.
- Sifry, D. (2005). State of the blogosphere, Part 1: Growth of blogs. Sifry's Alerts: <http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000298.html>. Accessed 24 August 2013
- Somolu, O. (2007). Telling Our Own Stories: African Women Blogging for Social Change. *Gender and Development* Vol. 15 No.3 November 2007.
- State of the blogosphere (2012) <http://www.Technoratti.com>
- Stavrositu, C. & Sunder, S. (2012). Does Blogging Empower Women? Exploring the Role of Agency and Community. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 17: 369-386.
- Tony, R. (1997) *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*, London: Routledge.
- Trammell, K. D. and Keshelashvili, A. (2005). Examining the New Influencers: A Self-Presentation Study of A-list Blogs. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*,

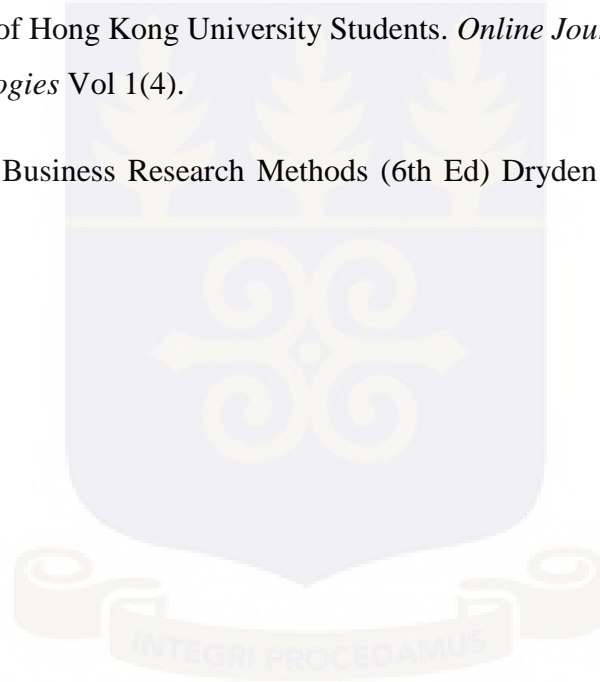
82 (4), 968-982.

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women [DAW]. 2002. Information and Communication Technologies and their Impact on and Use as instrument for the Advancement and Empowerment of Women. Retrieved on August 26, 2013 from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/ict2002/reports/EGMFinalReport.pdf>

Wimmer, D. R. and Dominick, J. R. (2011). Mass Media Research: An introduction. 9th Edition. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Ying, L. and Gongcheng, L. (2012). Exploring the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Blogging: a survey of Hong Kong University Students. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* Vol 1(4).

Zikmund, W.G. (2000). Business Research Methods (6th Ed) Dryden Press Corp., Fort Worth TX.



APPENDIX A

VARIABLES:

10. Purpose (P): The reason for which the blog was created.
11. Blog type (BT): The category/ genre of the blog based on the two types of blogs which are filter and personal journal blogs.
12. Bloggers demographics (BD): personal information about the blogger which will include the revelation of name or not, age or no age, occupation or no occupation, level of education or not, position at work or not, marital status or not. This data will be got from the home page of the blogs.
13. Themes/ Subjects (T/S): The particular thing or topic being discussed in the blog.
14. Treatment of themes/ Subjects (TT/S): The time period the blogger spends blogging about a theme (how long a theme is blogged on).
15. Language use (LU): The words, sentences and idioms used for blogging.
16. Tone (T): The type of voice used by the blogger in writing about the theme.
17. Structure (S): The arrangement of the homepage of the blogs. The arrangement will be based on presence or absence of images, hyperlinks and links to other blog post.

This data will equally be got from the homepage of the blogs.

18. Frequency of updating blogs (FUB): How often the blogs are updated.

CODING CATEGORIES:

1. Bloggers demographics

- i. Name a. available b. unavailable
- ii. Age a. available b. unavailable
- iii. Occupation a. available b. unavailable
- iv. Level of education a. available b. unavailable
- v. Position at work a. available b. unavailable
- vi. Marital status a. available b. unavailable

2. Blog type

- i. Filter blogs (blogs containing world events or social happening not related to the personal life of the blogger).
- ii. Personal journal blogs (blogs containing information related to the personal life of the blogger).

3. Structure

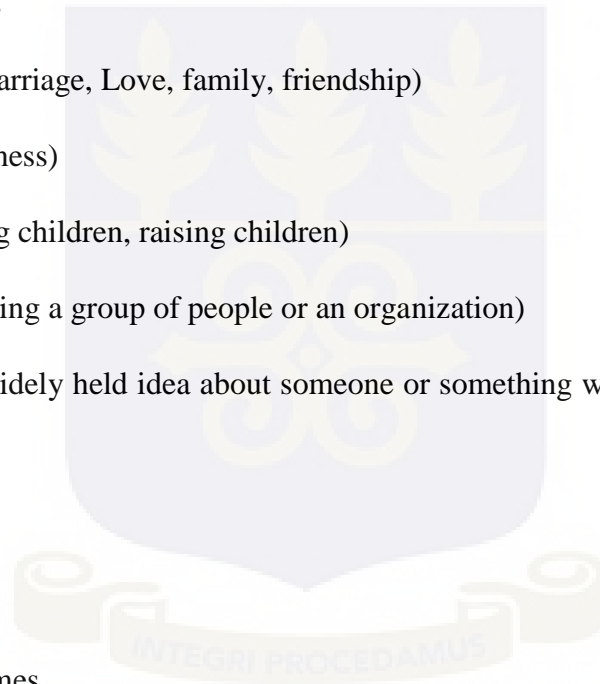
- i. Use of images a. available b. not available
- ii. Hyperlinks a. available b. not available
- iii. Links to other bloggers a. available b. not available

4. Purpose:

- i. To educate (teaching or giving instruction about something)
- ii. To inform (creating awareness or giving facts about something/ someone)
- iii. To entertain (creating humour or amusement)
- iv. To criticize (speaking against something or pointing out flaws)
- v. Other (indicate)

5. Themes/ Subjects

- Relationships (Marriage, Love, family, friendship)
- Career (Job, business)
- Parenting (Having children, raising children)
- Leadership (Leading a group of people or an organization)
- Stereotypes (A widely held idea about someone or something which may not necessarily be true)
- Others (indicate)



6. Treatment of themes

- i. Long (over month)
- ii. Short (less than a month)

7. Language use

- i. Civil (polite/ courteous)
- ii. Rude (impolite/ unmannered)
- iii. Mixed (contains both element)

8. Tone

- i. Harsh (severe/ stern)
- ii. Soft (tender/ gentle)
- iii. Sad (feeling or showing sorrow)
- iv. Happy (feeling or showing pleasure or contentment)
- v. Depressed (dejected/ low-spirited)
- vi. Others (indicate)

9. Frequency of updating blogs

- i. Give the date of each blog post



APPENDIX B - CODING SHEET

| CATEGORIES/ VARIABLES | | BD | | | | | | BT | S | | | P | T/S | TT | LU | T | FUB |
|------------------------------|------|----|----|-----|----|---|----|----|---|----|-----|---|-----|----|----|---|-----|
| | | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | | I | II | III | | | | | | |
| BLOG 1 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 2 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 3 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 4 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 5 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 6 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 7 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 8 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 9 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BLOG 10 | BP 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | BP 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOMINANT FEATURES FOR BLOG 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |