

**HEALTH NGOS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNICATING WITH THE
YOUTH**

BY

EVA DELALI KUMAPLEY

(10281000)

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DECLARATION

I, Eva Delali Kumapley, declare that, except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is entirely my own work and was produced from research undertaken at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Dr. Gilbert Tietaah.

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Eva Delali Kumapley
(Student)

Date:.....

.....

Dr. Gilbert Tietaah
(Supervisor)

Date:.....

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the purpose and nature of interactivity on social media platforms using the Facebook pages of Marie Stopes Ghana (MSG), Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) and Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHR). The research combined qualitative content analysis (framework method) of the Facebook pages of MSG, PPAG and ARHR from 1st January 2017 – 30th June 2017, with in-depth interviews with the managers of the individual pages. The study found that MSG, PPAG and ARHR mainly used Facebook to convey sexual and reproductive health information to their main targets - adolescents and young adults. They also used their platforms to advertise products and services they had on offer and for lobbying and advocacy purposes. Through the content analysis and the in-depth interviews, it became evident that the NGOs underutilised the interactive functions provided by Facebook. The reasons provided by the managers of the page included the NGOs budget constraints which prevented them from employing extra hands or qualified people to research and engage with followers of the Facebook pages. Nonetheless, MSG, ARHR and PPAG regularly updated their Facebook pages and, the nature of content on their platforms could be linked to their mission, vision and mandate as NGOs. This study, however, recommends that the managers of the Facebook pages of health NGOs be regularly trained on the current trends in this field which would enable them communicate more effectively while meeting the health needs of their main targets - adolescents and young adults.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, Emmanuel Kwame Sogah, whose immense support saw me through the entire course of study and to my little girl, Lady Charis Esi Sogah who has transformed me into a more determined person.

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I am grateful to God for His guidance throughout the entire course of study and particularly, for allowing me to complete this research work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations

MSG – Marie Stopes Ghana

ARHR – Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights

PPAG – Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana

STI – Sexually Transmitted Infection

SRH – Sexual and Reproductive Health

MST – Media Synchronicity Theory

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The introduction of social media networks like Facebook and Twitter have made information gathering and sharing easy due to their interactive nature. These sites are allowing individuals and organisations to engage in conversations through unique interactive features, such as sharing videos and photos, commenting on Facebook or retweeting on Twitter (Park, Rodgers & Stemmler, 2011).

The term social media broadly describes online platforms which thrive on user-generated content. These platforms have functions which allow content creators to be consumers, and for consumers to be content creators; making information sharing very easy, compared to static websites or other mass media forms (Chou, Hunt, Beckjord, Moser & Hesse, 2009). Boyd and Ellison (2008, pg. 211) describe social networking sites as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and thirdly, view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”

Even though there is a wide range of social media networking tools and platforms, according to Lipsman, Mudd, Rich and Bruich (2012), the most dominant is Facebook, with over 2.17 billion daily active users on average as at January, 2018 (Global Digital Report, 2018). In Ghana, about 4,900,000 of the population actively use Facebook (Internet World Stats, 2018). These social media sites are increasingly becoming popular with the average Ghanaian spending not less than three hours 30 minutes on the internet (Kemp, 2017).

1.1.0 Social Media for Health Purposes

Several organisations are adopting social media in their communication mainly because of the high growing rate of uptake among the public. These sites are also being adopted because of their interactive features such as feedback mechanisms and news feeds which enhance their promotional and branding activities by encouraging the repeat use of the site by visitors (Zarrella, 2009).

For health purposes, Scanfield, Scanfield and Larson (2010) observed that consumers, professionals and organisations have begun sharing knowledge and experiences, and are providing support for one another using social media networks. Similarly, consumers of health information in various online communities and on web forums admit that their participation on these platforms was providing them with effective emotional and informational support and aiding to initiate and sustain behavioural changes (Wing & Jeffery, 1999; Korda & Itani, 2013). These sites are gradually becoming a source of information on health care, and Facebook is the preferred source for those who use social media sites for health purposes (Dolan, 2011).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) remarked that even though organisations have adopted social media tools in their communication, particularly in the area of health, there are still gaps in how these communication tools could be deployed and used effectively to ensure both users and professionals benefit from them. Heldman, Schindelar and Weaver (2013) postulated that the potential for behaviour change with social media engagement exists, but there is the need for more inquiry to ascertain this possibility. This study is, in part, a response to that invitation.

1.1.1 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Use of Social Media

Non-Governmental Organisations are privately owned and are involved in relief services, promotion of the interests of the poor, protecting the environment as well as providing basic social services and community development (World Bank, 2001). They are described as non-state, non-profit oriented groups who pursue issues of public interest (Fisher, 2006) which play a vital role in Ghana's developmental process (Lawrence, 2015)

Holmén and Jirström (2000) observed that effective execution of activities of NGOs largely depends on active communication and networking with donors, stakeholders, businesses, and governments. With the advent of the internet and the rapid emergence of new and social media platforms, NGOs have more tools at their disposal than ever to overcome the challenges of communicating effectively with their various stakeholders and to sound the alarm and generate awareness. Many observers have, therefore, heralded the arrival of the internet and social media as signaling a new era in NGO effectiveness (Deibert, 2000; Earl & Kimport, 2011). The introduction of new media has aided in addressing some of the complex challenges entailed in communicating effectively with multiple stakeholders.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Internet users are increasing steadily in Africa and according to Internet World Stats, internet penetration in Ghana has increased to about 33.6% from 2000 - 2017. The statistics also indicate that almost five million Ghanaians are Facebook subscribers out of the over 10 million that have access to the internet (Internet World Stats, 2018).

Social media, with their interactive functions, are being used by some health organisation to promote behaviour changes and health interventions particularly among the youth in other parts

of the world (Bull, Levine, Black, Schmiede & Santelli, 2012). Several studies indicate that individuals and organisations are adopting social media tools in their communication (Waters, Burnett, Lamm & Lucas, 2009; Zhou & Pan, 2016) and according to Adjei, Annor-Frempong and Bosompem (2016) NGOs based in the Greater Accra Region are using Facebook in particular, to communicate with their various audiences.

Even though social media is being used to promote health interventions and behaviour change communication particularly among the youth, audience studies which have been conducted in countries where internet penetration is higher, including China and the United States, indicate that health messages provided on these platforms are not used by their targets (Hausmann, Touloumtzis, White, Colbert & Gooding, 2017; Zhang, 2012; Bull et al., 2012; Berkman, Sheridan, Donahue, Halpern & Crotty, 2011). Some of these studies showed the youth, who formed the main targets of promotional messages on social media, did not patronise those sites as expected. They raised concerns about the credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, accuracy and objectivity of health information on social media sites (Zhang, 2013; Bull et al., 2011; Hausmann et al., 2017). It is against this background that this study sought to understand the paradox of the popularity of social media among the youth on one hand, and conversely, the lack of patronage of health-related site by the youth.

The scope of this study will be limited to Greater Accra Region-based health NGOs targeting sexual awareness of the youth. This is in line with Birba and Digne's (2012) postulation that the internet is an urban phenomenon which is linked to the provision of infrastructure for energy and telecommunications. Other contributing factors for the adoption of this communication tool are the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, population density, adult literacy rate, primary education completion rate, and the proportion of households with a computer and/or internet

access (Birba & Diagne, 2012). Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber and Solnet (2013) also posit that social media usage varies from country to country due to differences in culture and technological infrastructure – and that rich people use social media in different ways than poor people. This raises research interest on the uses, nature and targets of communication on social media by organisations in Ghana, where the internet penetration is relatively lower, which promote health interventions. The current study sought answers to these questions by studying the Facebook pages of Marie Stopes Ghana, Planned Parenthood Association and the Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at assessing how Marie Stopes Ghana (MSG), Planned Parenthood Association (PPAG) and the Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHR) used social media in their communication. The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To understand the purpose for which MSG, PPAG and ARHR were using Facebook in their communications.
2. To find out the nature of interactivity of the Facebook pages of MSG, ARHR and PPAG can be improved.
3. To identify any differences in the use of Facebook by international (MSG) and local (PPAG and ARHR) NGOs.

1.4 Research Questions

To fulfil the objectives listed above, the following questions were asked:

1. What accounts for the inclusion of Facebook in the communication of MSG, ARHR and PPAG?

2. What kinds of posts do MSG, PPAG and ARHR put on their Facebook pages? What are the levels of interactivity of these posts?
3. How differently does an International NGO (MSG) use Facebook in its communication compared to local NGOs (PPAG and ARHR) and what are the reasons accounting for the distinction?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to add to existing literature on the use of social media for health communication. While there is growing literature on the general uses of social media by organisations, there are limited studies on how NGOs in Africa are using social media even though they are gradually adopting these tools.

This study aims to highlight the perspective of generators and managers of content of social media sites since existing literature places emphasis on audience use and their perception of social media for health communication (Hausmann et al., 2017; Zhang, 2012; Bull et al., 2012).

1.6 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been operationalized:

Aims: The motivation behind the creation of Facebook pages by MSG, ARHR and PPAG. This aims to uncover the reasons the NGOs set up a Facebook page.

Creating: The setting up of Facebook pages by MSG, PPAG and ARHR and also, ensuring there is constant engagement between the health NGOs and their audiences on the platform.

Nature of Communication: The interchange of thoughts or information between the MSG, PPAG and ARHR and their audiences. This assesses the kind of messages which are sent to the NGOs' audiences on Facebook.

Interactivity: This is the level of exchange, responsiveness and engagement between MSG, PPAG and ARHR and their audiences on Facebook. It refers to nature of information exchange between the health NGOs and their audiences and if the Facebook messages are designed to draw their audiences in.

Including: This assesses the NGOs incorporation of Facebook as an additional mode of communication.

Differences: The factors accounting for the distinction in the uses of Facebook by MSG (international NGO) and PPAG and ARHR (local NGOs).

Audiences: The main targets of the MSG's, PPAG's and ARHR's Facebook posts or messages.

International NGO: NGOs whose policies and systems are from their headquarters based outside of Ghana (Adjei, 2016).

Local NGO: NGOs that had headquarters and operations in Ghana (Adjei, 2016).

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the background to the study. It gave an overview of social media use particularly for health purposes and by NGOs. The chapter also presented the statement of the problem, objectives of this study, research questions and the significance of the study. The chapter concluded with operational definitions for this study.

The next chapter consists of the literature review and conceptual framework of this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Organisations are gradually adopting social media as a communication tool and the non-governmental sector is not an exception. NGOs use of social media particularly for health purposes is a relatively new area of study being conducted by several scholars in different fields and mostly in developed countries.

This chapter is in two parts. The first part reviews current literature on NGOs use of social media and the benefits, limitations and theories backing the use of this medium for health communication purposes as related to the current study. The second part of this chapter presents a conceptual framework which underpins this study.

2.1 Related Literature

The section reviews current literature on NGOs use of social media and the benefits as well as limitations of social media for health communication.

2.1.1 NGOs Use of Social Media

Several studies have been conducted in other parts of the world on NGOs use of social media. One of such studies was conducted by Waters et al. (2009) who investigated how organisations engaged stakeholders through their profiles on Facebook. The objective of the study was to examine how these social networking sites were being used to advance the mission and programs of the organisations. Even though organisations were gradually accepting the phenomena of social media use because it offered them the advantage of providing options for building

relationships, those which were studied did not make good use of the interactive feature offered by Facebook.

In Asia, Zhou and Pan (2016) explored how Chinese NGOs used Sina-Weibo or Weibo - a social media platform which is similar to Facebook and Twitter but only used in China. They adapted Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) framework to examine the Weibo pages of NGOs which were focusing on rural education. Their emphasis was on rural education because it provided a form of service to citizens and was likely to be active on social media. Additionally, the number of stakeholders involved in this sector were numerous, implying NGOs in the sector needed to interact with them at all levels. The Zhou and Pan (2016) study is important to the current study because it provides justification for the selection of NGOs use of social media for health communication. Given that the health sector, like the education sector, has numerous stakeholders, social media platforms like Facebook should similarly serve the purpose of reaching out to these audiences. Similar to studies that were conducted by Waters et al. (2009), Zhou and Pan (2016) concluded that most NGOs in China used Weibo for one-way communication or providing information despite their interactive function.

In Ghana, Adjei et al. (2016) studied the use of social networking sites among NGOs in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study showed that majority of NGOs in Accra used social media platforms and the extent of use was determined by ownership of the websites and their perceived usefulness. These findings are related to Zhou and Pan's (2016) which also established the use of social media in China was influenced by the organisational strategies and capacities of NGOs. The study conducted by Adjei et al. (2016) provides a broad overview of social network use among NGOs in the Greater Accra Region, although there are important points of departure in the current study. While the Adjei et al. (2016) study was conceptualised to test the tenets of

the Technological Acceptance Model, and thus, to predict the extent of use of social media by NGOs in Accra, the current study adopted the Information-Community-Action framework to assess the nature of use to which Facebook was employed as a health communication tool. Accordingly, while methodologically the Adjei et al. (2016) study employed an exclusively quantitative method to assess the extent of adoption of social media by the NGOs studied, this study combined two qualitative methods – content analysis and in-depth interviews – to study the interactive nature of communication on the Facebook pages of MSG, PPAG and ARHR.

2.1.2 Uses and Benefits of Social Media for Health Communication

One of the very first content analyses to be conducted on the use of social media for health communication was by Farmer, Holt, Cook and Hearing (2009). Their research objectives were to ascertain whether Facebook had user groups that were connected with common medical conditions, and to classify these user groups while enumerating on the number of individual users. The researchers used both medical and non-medical terms to search for non-communicable diseases on Facebook and identified four groups – patient groups which were the largest group, followed by support and fundraising groups. They also identified groups that were associated with research and research collaboration and, stakeholder education. Farmer et al. (2009) were able to establish that social media platforms served as health communication tools and had been accepted by the youth and young adults. Therefore, NGOs that were targeting the reproductive health of these young ones used this medium of communication.

Similarly, Bender, Jimenez-Marroquin and Jahad (2011) sampled the use of Facebook pages by breast cancer groups but avoided the pages of organisations. Through their analysis, they discovered the breast cancer groups on social media were predominantly for fundraising, creating awareness, promoting external websites and for providing support. These findings were

contrary to Farmer et al. (2009) who discovered the most predominant groups on Facebook for health communication were patient and caregiver support groups. Bender et al.'s (2011) findings also suggest that Facebook plays an important role in facilitating public engagement in health promotion and fundraising activities, particularly among the youth. Both studies conducted by Farmer et al. (2009) and Bender et al. (2011) depended largely on the user-generated content of the Facebook pages for chronic diseases. User-generated content is the information taken directly from the social media pages. A limitation of depending solely on this kind of data as observed by Bender et al. (2011) is the possibility of the information being erroneous or fabricated. This current study bridged that limitation by conducting an in-depth interview with the administrators of the pages to verify the purposes they had in creating their Facebook pages.

Another limitation identified in the works of Farmer et al. (2009) and Bender et al. (2011) was the lack of conceptual or theoretical frameworks to analyse open-ended questions and themes which run through their studies. Both studies generated their own codes even though the researchers admitted that introducing frameworks to analyse themes could influence the results of a study of such nature (Farmer et al., 2009; Bender et al., 2011; Zhang, 2013). However, the current study builds on this observation by adopting the Information-Community-Action framework to analyse the basic themes running through this study. Both Farmer et al. (2009) and Bender et al. (2011) were interested in studying and classifying health groups on social media. Their studies, however, did not include organisations even though the sector plays an important role in health communication. Hence, the findings of these scholars cannot be generalised for all Facebook pages. This current study filled the gap by focusing on organisations, particularly, in the non-governmental sector.

A study which used the mixed methods approach to evaluate sexual health promotion on social networking sites was conducted by Nguyen, Gold, Pedrana, Chang, Howard, Ilic and Stoove (2013). Their main objectives were to analyse the reach and engagement of a sexual health promotion project through social media that targeted young people between the ages of 16-29. It identified the benefits of using social media in health communication as they facilitated two-way communication, where information was delivered to ‘where the people are.’ They added convenience and the reduction of geographical barriers to reach like-minded people and the potential for reaching large populations as some of the benefits of using social media for health communication.

Nguyen et al. (2013) established the prominence of sexual health education for young people as an important area to research and concluded that social networks were a novel avenue for health promotion, with the potential to reach and engage a large number of young people. However, further research is needed to understand how to use social networks for health communication, a gap which is being filled by the current study.

Moorhead et al. (2013) reviewed selected studies published between 2007 and 2012 on the uses, benefits and limitations of social media as a health communication tool. Their findings were similar to Bender et al.’s (2011) validation of the role played by Facebook in facilitating public engagement for health promotion and fundraising activities, particularly among the youth. Moorhead et al. (2013) identified the key uses of social media for health communication as providing health information on a range of conditions to the general public, patients and health professionals. The platforms provided answers to medical questions, allowing information to be presented in modes other than texts which are comprehensible to audiences with special needs. Social media also facilitated patient-to-patient communication as and patient-to-health

professional communication. Certain social media platforms were more useful for data collection on patient experiences and opinions. Such platforms could be used for delivering health interventions by providing social support/influence to promote certain health behaviours and lifestyles. Examples of such behaviour include smoking cessation and abstinence from certain harmful behaviours. These platforms are used for the dissemination of information on a range of health issues. The insights that this study provides for the current study are: what kinds of messages do health NGOs in Ghana provide on their social media platforms; in what modes are such information provided? What, if any, interactive possibilities and feedback are available on the platform?

The benefits of social media in health communication as identified by Moorhead et al. (2013) in their content analysis include providing more available, shared and tailored information for a specific group, wide access for the general public who may not easily acquire health information via traditional methods like younger people and ethnic minorities, provision of valuable peer, social and emotional support for the general public and patients. They also allow the discussion of sensitive and complex information with professionals who can provide help. Communication is provided in real time and at relatively low cost and they are useful in the collection of data about patient experiences and monitoring public reaction to health issues. Moorhead et al.'s (2013) study is important to the current study as it compiles the uses and benefits of social media as a health communication tool for organisations while demonstrating the areas of its usefulness and in other jurisdictions. Even though they identified these uses and benefits, they believed that further technological advances will provide more opportunities to use social media for health communicating, thus, endorsing the significance of this study.

2.1.3 Limitations and Low Acceptance of Social Media for Health Communication

Moorhead et al.'s (2013) content analysis identified several benefits in the use of social media for health communication but also suggested that content put on these platforms required information monitoring for quality and reliability, maintaining users' confidentiality and privacy. Other limitations which were identified included concerns raised about the quality of content, inability of users to verify the reliability of information on these platforms since authors of such content are often unidentifiable or numerous, the large volume of information available through social media and the possibility for inaccuracies posted on these sites present challenges when validating information. There were concerns about privacy and confidentiality, data security, and the potential harms that emerge when personal data are indexed. Potentially, there could be information overload for the user since there were materials which were readily available. There was also the danger of users not correctly applying information found online, hence, suffering adverse health consequences.

These limitations identified by Moorhead et al. (2013) run through other studies that were conducted to understand young adults' perceptions of social media as a health communication tool. Audience studies which have been used by other researchers provide reasons for the low acceptance of social media for health communication. For instance, Hausmann et al., (2017) studied how young adults and adolescents used social media to share health information with the objective of assessing their attitudes towards this media type. The group admitted the benefits they derived from social media for health included the advice and support provision which was similar to Farmer et al.'s (2009) findings that social media groups mostly provided support and care to their members.

Also, Zhang (2013) conducted an audience study on college students' perceptions of social media as a health and wellness tool. Similar to Hausmann et al.'s (2017) findings, all the participants in this survey admitted using Facebook (95%) and on a daily basis. Participants of these surveys raised concerns about the credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, accuracy and objectivity of health information on social media sites (Zhang, 2013; Bull et al., 2012; Hausmann et al., 2017). Other concerns that were raised included the lack of medical knowledge of whoever put the information on social media, the possible social risks and invasion of privacy. Zhang (2013), therefore, concluded that using social networking sites for health and wellness information was not popular among college students who fell within the youth range. Therefore, social networking sites seem not to be well-perceived platforms for health and wellness information.

In Bull et al.'s (2012) study, Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial was used to measure the extent to which social media delivered sexual health interventions were applied by the youth. Their study's analytics showed that engagement with the set-up page by the young people was low. The participants who were recruited for the study stayed exclusively on their personal pages and rarely left to the set-up page. This observation supports Zhang's (2013) and Hausmann et al.'s (2017) findings that the youth used social media to comment on friends' status, photos and send private messages to individuals. There was little evidence to show the youth who were recruited for the study engaged with the organisation to seek health information. This raises questions on the uses of social media by organisations which deliver health interventions for the youth and young adults. Do they specifically deliver messages intended to change the behaviour of the youth or they have other purposes for setting up these social media platforms? These are questions which will be answered by the current study.

Bull et al.'s (2012) study like Farmer et al.'s (2009) and Bender et al.'s (2011) relied on self-report for their primary outcomes. Therefore, Bull et al. (2011) recommended that the validation of responses from participants for a study could influence the findings. The current study, however, combines interviewing the administrators of the pages and content analyses of the Facebook pages of the health NGOs, to avoid solely relying on self-reported data. The three studies (Bull et al. 2012; Farmer et al., 2009; Bender et al., 2011) also concluded that there was no evidence to support young people engaging with organisations to seek health information. This raises the questions on social media usage for health purposes by organisations in countries where internet penetration is relatively lower. How are organisations which target the health needs of the youth using social media in their communication? Are there any differences in the responses they receive from the Facebook audiences? This study sought to find answers to these questions.

2.1.4 Theories backing Social Media for Health Communication

Mano Rita (2014) investigated the differences in the use of online health information and social media and how they affected the provision of online health services. Even though the study has no direct bearing on the current study, the researcher presented several frameworks which provided evidence of the potential benefits of social media for health communication.

Citing Dennis, Fuller and Valeich (2008), Mano (2014) used the Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) to emphasize the capacity of web communication to support the concurring or coordinated exchange of information and behaviour among individuals who share a common interest. She argued that media types which allowed simultaneous exchanges among users had the potential of having the desired outcome through constant interactions. This implies that social media platforms which allow quick exchange of information are more likely to have the resultant

effect on their user. This current study, therefore, chooses to study Facebook, not only because it is one of the most dominant social media platforms (Lipsman et al., 2012) but also because it allows synchronicity or coordinated exchange of information. Facebook also has the potential of having the resultant effect on their users, therefore, making it a suitable platform for effective health communication, hence, its selection for this study.

The Media-System Dependency hypothesis mentioned in the same study suggests “the more dependent one becomes on a specific Computer Mediated Communication medium, the more important its role in that person’s life, therefore, the more influence it will have on individuals’ behaviour” (Mano, 2014, p. 405). This ascertained the prospect of using social media to achieve the desired outcome particularly on targets who have accepted them. It also proves that individuals who accept social media or Facebook may rely on the messages on these pages by visiting them regularly.

The ‘preferential attachment’ model which implies that not all social media are likely to be equally attractive to individuals was also used by the author. Persons may prefer certain social media platforms based on specific interests and concerns, relying on the platform’s ‘cumulative advantage.’ This concept proves, for example, an individual could use Facebook for reasons known to him but may not use other social media platforms frequently. According to Mano (2014), not all social media are conducive for changing health behaviour. Social media platforms which allow synchronicity or interactivity are the most useful for health communication, therefore, endorsing Facebook as platform for behaviour change communication, hence, its selection for this study.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the Information-Community-Action framework which was developed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). This framework is used to describe organisation-public communication and it supports the extraction of themes from social media conversations. The framework is broken down into three parts – Information, Community-Building and Action messages. The Information function involves one-way interactions and contains factual content transmitted by the organisation on their Facebook pages. It allows the exchange of information from the organisation to the public and may include the organisation's activities or anything which is beneficial to potential followers. This function covers information about the organisation's activities, highlights from events, or any other news, facts, reports relevant to an organisation's stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

The Community-Building messages reflect social engagement; they are dialogic and include posts which foster relationship building, create networks and build communities. Such messages promote interactivity by sparking conversations and dialogue and are basically used to bond with followers. The Community-Building function is further broken down into four categories. The first two categories (giving recognition and thanks and, acknowledgment of current and local events) according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) primarily help in building communities. The last two categories (responding to public messages and responding to solicitations) are directly associated with creating a dialogue with the community. This category measures the level of interactivity of an organisation's social media site.

Action messages are explicit calls for taking actions (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012). Its central purpose is to get followers to do 'something' ranging from donating to a cause, buying a product, attending an event and joining a movement or a protest. Such posts are basically for promotion

and mobilisation and for the purpose of this study, messages prescribing positive health behaviour could fall under this category (Neiger, Thackeray, Burton, Thackeray & Reese, 2013). This function is further broken down into seven other categories – event promotion, donation appeal, selling a product, call for volunteers and employers, lobbying and advocacy, join site or vote for the organisation and learn-how-to-help messages which call for support of any form and not exactly for money. The work by Neiger et al. (2013) showed the applicability of this framework to health content on social media. Zhou and Pan (2016) adopted this framework to explore the behaviour of Chinese NGOs in rural education on social media on Sina-Weibo. Other researchers including Auger (2013) and Guo and Saxton (2014) have used the Information-Community-Action framework to study the uses of social media pages of NGOs and public institutions. Based on the three main functions, Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) made a broader classification of posts on the social media pages of organisations, therefore an institution could be an Information Source, Community Builder, or Promoter and Mobiliser.

The Information-Community-Action framework is used in this study to categorise Facebook messages of ARHR, MSG and PPAG. By examining the relative frequencies of messages under any of the three categories, the framework can be used to determine the nature of communication of the Facebook posts of ARHR, MSG and PPAG and whether there exist, for instance, any truly dialogic organisations. Categorising posts under these three functions helps measure how health-related organisations are incorporating dialogue or interactive communication in their messages, which is a distinguishing feature of social media. For health communication also, interactivity enables social networking sites to facilitate consumers' understanding of health information (Nutbeam, 2000).

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the current literature on NGOs use of social media, the benefits of social media as a health communication tool, and the limitations or reasons for the low acceptance of social media for health communication. The Information-Community-Action framework which has been adopted for the current study was also discussed. The next chapter introduces the methodology used in undertaking this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology for this study. It discusses the research setting and design, population selection, sampling technique and unit of analysis. It also discusses the data collection procedure as well as its validity and reliability measures.

3.1 Research Population

The population of a research refers to a group or class of objects, subjects or units (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). The population of this study, therefore, were the content on the Facebook pages of MSG, PPAG and ARHR from 1st January 2017 – 30th June 2017. Based on the NGOs core mandates and the purpose of this research, these three Facebook pages were considered for this study. They were also chosen based on the vibrant nature of their Facebook pages. The vibrancy of their pages was determined by the frequency of posts, the response rates to queries, the number of followers and fans of these pages and their star-ratings.

3.1.1 Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights

The Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHR) is a local NGO established in 2004 to promote the rights-based approach to reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health. ARHR promotes and protects the rights of the poor, young and disadvantaged through advocacy, capacity building and research. It is made up of over 40 partners working across the ten regions of Ghana (–About ARHR,” 2016). ARHR was purposively chosen for this study because it is a local NGO promoting adolescent reproductive health and had a vibrant Facebook page.

3.1.2 Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana

Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) is a local NGO which has been in sexual and reproductive health education and services for the past 50 years for people living in Ghana but their targets are mainly the young and venerable youth. PPAG is owned by volunteers of the Association and managed by a team of staff. This NGO operates clinics across the country and runs several projects in different communities (–About Us,” 2017). PPAG was selected for this study because it is a local NGO which focuses on promoting the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, youth and young adults. The NGO started posting on Facebook from July 2012 and has 4.3 out of five stars from people who have used their services. The high rate signifies the sentiments their followers have towards the NGO (Kohler, 2016).

3.1.3 Marie Stopes Ghana

Marie Stopes Ghana (MSG) has been operating in the country since 2007 and built a strong reputation for consistently delivering quality, voluntary family planning services across the country. They provide services through their centres using a wide range of delivery methods. MSG also offers services to those who cannot afford nor access their services. This is to support the Government of Ghana to reduce unsafe abortion and provide access to contraception, particularly for the youth. They are located in all ten regions of Ghana and provide information to the country’s hard-to-reach communities (–Who We Are,” 2016). MSG was one of the selected NGOs for this study because it promotes reproductive health rights of adolescents, the youth and young adults. This NGO can be described as an international one because they work in 37 other countries in the world. MSG has been on Facebook since May 2014 and has been rated 4.1 out of five stars by the followers of the page that have used their products and services. This signifies they offer valuable products and services to their targets (Kohler, 2016).

3.2 Research Design

This study conducted in-depth interviews with the administrators of three NGOs - MSG, PPAG and ARHR to understand their purpose for creating the Facebook pages. This method was accompanied with a qualitative analysis content of the individual Facebook pages of these health NGOs, using the framework method. The framework method largely encompasses ‘analysis methods termed thematic analysis or qualitative content analysis’ (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood, 2013, p. 2). Its differentiating feature is the matrix output that allows the researcher to put summarised data in rows and columns by providing a structure which systematically reduces the data, for analyses purposes (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). It is commonly used in health research and allows the researcher to use pre-existing codes and themes based on previous literature and theories (Gale, 2013). The nature of communication was analysed using the Information-Community-Action framework as proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) and adopted by Zhou and Pan (2016). This research, however, uses the deductive approach since it uses already-existing themes and codes from the Information-Community-Action framework. The framework method is not aligned with any epistemological, philosophical, or theoretical approach and can be used on any qualitative data (Gale et al., 2013).

3.3 Sampling Technique and Units of Analysis

A sample refers to the subset of a population that is selected for a study and which represents the larger population (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001). Krippendorff (2004) defined sampling as the reduction of the whole of available objects of analysis to a manageable corpus which is representative of the whole set (p. 86).

This study used the purposive sampling technique to select the Facebook pages of the health NGOs. This is a non-probability method used to select respondents, subjects, or elements with

specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Purposiveness also guided the selection of respondents for the in-depth interviews namely: Prince Dugbazah, Head of the Marketing and Communications Department (MSG), Isaac Nyampong, Communications Officer (ARHR) and Michael Tagoe, a volunteer with the Management Information System (MIS) unit (PPAG).

However, for the content on the various Facebook pages of the NGOs, a census was used to study the posts from 1st January, 2017 – 30th June, 2017. This is in line with Park and Thewal (2003) who posited that although there was no established sampling technique for social media, experts who have published extensively on sampling in mass media use a census sample. This means that the sampling frame included all wall postings on the identified health organisations' Facebook pages that met the sampling criteria (Park et al., 2003).

Unit of analysis refers to the elements that are examined in a study to enable the researcher make generalisations of all such units and to be able to explain the differences between them (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). The unit of analysis for this study was all the textual content on the individual Facebook pages of the three health NGOs and responses from the page managers.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Two methods were used in collecting data for this study as stated earlier. The qualitative content analysis allows subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It is a research method which allows data to be presented in words and themes, making it possible to draw some interpretation of the results (Bengston, 2016) and the framework method, being a flexible tool, was adapted in this qualitative research to generate these themes (Gale, 2013).

Based on the findings of the qualitative content analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with the administrators of the three health NGOs. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research method that provides detailed background from respondents (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). It involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Interview guides were used to solicit the opinions of the administrators of these Facebook pages respectively: Prince Dugbazah, Head of the Marketing and Communications Department (MSG), Isaac Nyampong, Communications Officer (ARHR) and Michael Tagoe, a volunteer with the Management Information System (MIS) unit (PPAG).

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

As stated earlier, the research used two methods – qualitative content analysis using the framework method and in-depth interviews. In a qualitative content analysis, a given category may be applied to textual materials of quite different lengths (Babbie, 2013). The framework method, similar to thematic analysis, uses an analytical framework that offers a systematic and flexible approach to analysing qualitative data. Through interpretive concepts or propositions, they describe or explain aspects of the data, which become the final output of the analysis of the whole dataset through comparisons (Gale et al., 2013).

In this research, however, the analytic or conceptual framework based on Zhou and Pan's (2016) adaptation of the Information-Community-Action framework was used to study the manifest content on the Facebook pages of MSG, PPAG and ARHR from 1st January to June 2017. Manifest content stays very close to the text, uses the words themselves, and describes the visible and obvious in the text (Berg, 2001).

Under the Information-Community-Action framework, adapted by Zhou and Pan (2016) the first function – Information – had the sub-categories of posts on the organisation's performance, praising volunteers and other people who had set examples, unrelated information and general or public information. The Community-Building function broadly included posts aimed at promoting dialogic messages. It had four sub-categories including acknowledging current and local events, giving recognition and thanks, soliciting conversational responses and replying to messages on these social media pages. The third function, Action, included messages that required responses from the followers and fans of these pages. The sub-categories under this function were – calling for volunteers and employers, promoting an event that the NGO is involved in. This category also included messages that were directed towards ways of learning how to help the organisation and appeal for donations. This function also had the sub-categories – join another site or vote and, lobbying and advocating. Zhou and Pan's (2016) framework included the sub-category 'selling a product' but for the purpose of this study, it was broadened to include 'advertising/selling a product or service' since they all fall under promotional strategies (Park et al., 2011).

Table 1: Summary of Lovejoy & Saxton’s (2012) Information, Community, Action Framework, adopted by Zhou & Pan (2016)

Information	Community	Action
Organisation's performance posts inform the general public of the NGOs successes over a period of time.	Communicating with other organisations posts are designed to interact with fans and followers of the NGO.	Call for volunteers & employees posts announce vacancies in the NGO.
Praising volunteers & setting an example posts commend volunteers of the NGO and other people in the society who had achieved notable feats.	Acknowledgement of current & local events posts are designed to recognise on-going events or happenings (in-line with NGOs mission) both locally and internationally.	Promote an event posts announce programmes which will be taking place and are in line with the vision of the NGO.
Unrelated information is posts that are not directly related to the mission and vision of the NGO.	Giving recognition & thanks posts appreciate people in the society for their diverse contributions to the NGOs mission.	Learn how to help posts inform audiences of the different ways they could be support the NGO.
Public Information posts provide the public with general information including announcements, links to stories, etc.	Response to solicitation posts seek a conversational response from followers of the Facebook page.	Donation appeal posts directly ask followers and fans of the page to give cash or kind to a cause.
	Response to reply messages posts answer individuals who write on the NGOs' Facebook wall.	Selling/advertising products/services posts make the followers of the page aware of what they can purchase from the NGO.
		Join another site or vote posts include links asking followers and fans to like other sites or vote

Information	Community	Action
		Lobby & advocacy posts are directed to push an agenda, particularly, to cause policymakers to take certain decisions.

Source: Lovejoy and Saxton (2012)

During the qualitative content analysis phase, the individual Facebook pages of the health NGOs were broadly categorised under the Information-Community-Action Framework adopted by Zhou and Pan (2016) to bring out the themes. Since the focus of this study is the Facebook posts of ARHR, MSG and PPAG, their pages were visited individually. On the individual Facebook walls, where they have posted a variety of messages and information for their followers publicly, textual content posted from 1st January 2017 - 30th June 2017 was extracted. The content was categorised based on their core functions – Information (organisation performance, praising the volunteers and setting an example, public education and unrelated information), Community-Building (communicating with other organisations, acknowledgement of current and local events, giving recognition and thanks, response solicitation and response to reply messages) and Action (call for volunteers and employees, learn how to help, donation appeal, selling a product, promoting an event, join another site or vote for organisation and lobby and advocacy). The posts were then analysed for distinct themes and concepts, and their primary functions. After settling on the basic function of a post, it was then copied and placed under its sub-category on a spread sheet which had rows and columns based on the conceptual framework. For each sub-category, tables of quotes were generated from the analysis to provide a quick overview of the identified themes following the recommendations of Bengston (2016). The nature of the posts

was grouped according to the categorisation scheme in Appendix III and the findings are discussed in the fourth chapter.

During the interviewing process, the different administrators were contacted and informed that their participation was voluntary. The interviews with the administrators of the Facebook pages were conducted on different days over the phone. The questions bordered on the purpose and usefulness of Facebook as a communication tool for these NGOs. These interview questions were semi-structured or mostly open-ended in nature to allow the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewees' responses. With the help of the interview guide, the researcher ensured the respondents stayed within the limits outlined by the aims of the study. The phone calls were recorded, and their respective responses transcribed. The content was analysed to generate meaningful data and were categorised thematically with patterns drawn according to the research questions raised in this study.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity means results reflect the phenomena being studied and reliability requires the same result will be obtained if the study was replicated (Bengston, 2016). To ensure that this research was valid and reliable, the researcher ensured the questions asked were clear, concise and understood by the respondents. The interviewees knew that if any uncertainties occurred during the data collection process, a call back for clarity and a more descriptive explanation will be required.

To ensure validity and reliability in the content analysis, the Facebook posts were categorised with two other assistants as suggested by Mouter and Vonk Noordegraaf (2012). One researcher read out the post, copied and pasted it in a spread sheet and examined it the second time to draw

out the nature of the message based on the test. This process was repeated by the first assistant, who also went through the posts and discussed common concepts. The second assistant participated to help reconcile any differences that arose from the discussion. As a result of their collaboration, the posts on the Facebook pages of ARHR, MSG and PPAG were categorised under the Information-Community-Action framework.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research design, the choice of Facebook pages, data collection techniques and instruments, the period of study, population, sampling techniques and size. The unit and methods of analysis as well as validity and reliability measures of this study were discussed. The next chapter presents the findings and discussions of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the study. The objectives of this study were to understand the purpose for which MSG, PPAG and ARHR were using their Facebook pages, the nature of interactivity on these pages and to assess if there were any differences between the way the platform is used by an international and local health NGOs. The data was collected using a content categorisation scheme and interview guides. The themes and patterns were categorised and presented in headings in relation to the Information-Community Building-Action framework as adapted by Zhou and Pan (2016) to effectively address the research questions.

4.1 Research Findings

The findings of this study are broadly categorised under the Information-Community-Action framework as adapted by Zhou and Pan (2016). The Information function includes posts which are not interactive. Posts under this function are one-way and used to update followers on the organisation's performance, praise volunteers and other people who had set examples. They involved general or public information and sometimes had content which was not related to the mission of the NGOs. The Community-Building function of the framework promotes dialogic messages. These posts acknowledge current and local events, giving recognition and thanks, responses to solicitations and reply to public messages on these social media pages. Finally, the Action function, included messages which mobilised followers of these pages to do something. These included calling for volunteers and employers, promoting an event that the NGO is involved in, helping or appealing for donations, joining another site or vote and, lobbying and advocating and advertising/selling a product or service.

The Facebook posts of the three health NGOs were categorised under the three main functions of the framework using their manifest content. Based on the relative frequency of posts under a category, the organisations could be characterised as Information Sources, Community-Builders or Promoters and Mobilisers.

4.1.1 Information Function

These are one-way posts with four sub-categories mainly used to update followers on the organisation's performance, praise volunteers and other people who had set examples and they include general or public information as well as other materials which may not be related to the mission of the NGOs (Zhou & Pan, 2016).

Table 2 Summary of Information posts for ARHR, PPAG and MSG

ARHR		
Category	Example	Percentage (%)
Unrelated Information	<i>Read this and stay away from Tobacco</i>	2
Public Information	<i>Sexuality Education does not encourage children and young people to have sex. It enables them to make informed choices when they need to</i>	52
Acknowledgement of current & local events	<i>We at @arhrghana wish all women a Happy International Women's Day. Let us be #BeBoldForChange</i>	3
Giving recognition & thanks	<i>Thanks to @pai_org @achildsgraham for supporting & @cmghana @arhrghana for facilitating the process to build our capacity today</i>	2
Total (N=177)		59%

PPAG		
Category	Example	Percentage
Praising volunteers & setting an example	<i>Meet one of the finest and dedicated PPAG Volunteers. The Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana was established on 4th March 1967 making her 50 years this year. Though this man is not yet 50, right from the late nineties till date he has remained a committed volunteer.</i>	12
Public Information	<i>It's so unfortunate that a lot of people continue to buy drugs from peddlers in their communities and from the drug stores to terminate their pregnancies. Some hospitals and clinics that provide Comprehensive Abortion Care do not ensure the safety of client's next pregnancy...</i>	69
Total (N=16)		81%
MSG		
Public Information	<i>Every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth."</i>	31
Total (N=36)		31%

Source: Field Work (2017)

Based on the content analysis as displayed above, the NGOs used their Facebook pages for information dissemination. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) the information function explicitly has no agenda but to inform fans and followers of a Facebook page of activities of the NGO. From the table above, the three NGOs had quite high numbers of posts in this category during the period of study, particularly, PPAG. According to the initiators of this concept, even though most literature maligns the Information function, it plays an important role for the

organisation. This function helps organisations to connect with their stakeholders, especially, if they keep them in the loop on the organisations' activities. NGOs which connect with their publics on this level are seen as accountable and trustworthy and that forms an essential base for more complex actions (community-building and action) to be built (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). However, the MSG, ARHR and PPAG limited the scope of this function to public information, which were mainly health-related posts and ways the youth could access their services. Public information plays an important role by connecting an organisation's constituents to relevant resources and that function seemed core to MSG's Prince Dugbazah who is the Head of Marketing and Communications. He admitted MSG's content on Facebook, indeed, were mostly informational:

We have direct specific messages and we have general information. With the general information are what we call the myth basket so, we are able to identify some misconceptions that people have and then we provide the right information. But generally, out of 10, about 7 of them are direct messages that tell our followers what to do when they found themselves in certain situations.

For the Communications Officer with ARHR, Isaac Nyampong, the NGO used the Facebook pages for two main purposes:

We usually put out information about what we do. About women, children and their health, relating to our current projects. For example, we could be undertaking projects in either malaria, maternal or adolescent health, family planning and any other area. Sometimes, we also do surveys online, where we ask people for their opinions on certain things. These are some of the things what we use our social media for not just for the

information but the information is a greater part of what we do. Sometimes we use it for our surveys.

The three health NGOs had different ways of assessing the information needs of their stakeholders which culminated in the how their posts were designed. According to the Communications Manager of ARHR, Isaac Nyampong, the NGO is able to identify the information needs of their followers through their interactions with the stakeholders on different projects which they undertake:

We work with them, so all the projects that we do, they are our target audience. Whether it's family planning or maternal health or whether it's adolescent health, our focus are these people - the vulnerable in the society, mostly women and children so based on our programmes that we have with them, we develop messages for online consumption.

This assertion is not different from PPAG's but MSG had a more systematic way of assessing the information needs of their online community and Prince Dugbazah, who is in charge of their communications, says:

Our primary audiences are our clients so they are the key stakeholders. We use data from the Ghana Health Service report. We call something DHMS – District Health Management Systems - which reports on monthly, quarterly and annual bases. The indicators that we look out for are the contraceptive prevalence rates, the fertility rates, teenage pregnancy rates and abortion rates and all that. Since the Ghana Health facilities are in the district and local areas, they capture those data and they make them available in monthly reports. When we study those reports, the trend in each indicator gives us a clue on what we need to put out there. For instance, if our posts for this month

are on teenage pregnancy or unsafe abortions, it is because we studied the reports and within the cohorts of our clients, this is our gap and so our net need is to 1. Educate them 2. Try to influence their behaviour. So, we're talking about the prevention, what you do when you are in this or that situation and we will give you the option of a call-to-action and that is to the call centre. So, these monthly and quarterly reports guide our choice of subject area to inform our clients. As for our external stakeholders like other NGOs and the Ghana Health Service, we have stakeholder engagements and stakeholder meetings. We communicate with them appropriately and not on social media.

Although there are other sub-categories under the Information function, the three NGOs focused mainly on informing the youth on what they needed to know to improve their sexual health as well as other campaigns and projects they may be involved in.

4.1.2 Community-Building

Community-Building posts are interactive, dialogic and ultimately promote the creation of an online community. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), Community-Building posts play two important roles: first, they are dialogic in the sense that they spark conversations between the organisation and its publics. This can be seen in posts which are designed to solicit responses from the followers and also, when organisations reply to public messages. The second important role played by this function is to foster community-building. Such posts say things which do not necessarily invoke conversations but strengthen the ties an organisation has with its stakeholders. They are seen in posts which give recognition and thanks as well as those which acknowledge current and local events and from the content categorisation, MSG, PPAG and ARHR had low numbers under this function:

Table 3: Summary of Community-Building posts for ARHR, PPAG and MSG

ARHR		
Category	Examples	Percentage
Response to solicitation	<i>At the age of 13, #girls should be studying, not learning how to be wives. RT if you agree that we must #EndChildMarriage! #LetGirlsLearn</i>	6
Response to reply to public messages	<i>Thank you too @ImprovingPHC</i>	1
Total (N=177)		7%
PPAG		
Response to solicitation	<i>IS IT TRUE THAT MORE GUYS ARE SHY WHEN IT COMES TO BUYING OF CONDOMS???</i>	6
Total (N=16)		6%
MSG		
Acknowledgement of current & local events	<i>A happy Africa Union Day to all our cherished clients.</i>	17
Response to solicitation	<i>Let's help our friend Aaron here. He needs an advice on what to do</i>	3
Total (N=36)		20%

Source: Field Work (2017)

Even though the most distinguishing feature of social media is its interactivity function that facilitates community-building, ARHR, PPAG and MSG had lower number of posts under this category. The managers of the Facebook pages admitted that social media played an important role as a communication tool for them and some of the benefits they derived from using this

medium of communication included its affordability as compared to other forms of mass media, its wider reach and its higher rate of interactivity. Other benefits as identified by Michael Tagoe, a volunteer with the Management Information System (MIS) unit of PPAG include:

Most importantly, it's a medium that has become a popular culture among the youth and even adults. People help by tagging or sharing the messages with their friends either on the same medium or other social media platforms, the information or message stays on forever, messages can be read anywhere and at any time because of smart phones.

Apart from the benefits mentioned above, MSG's Prince Dugbazah stressed on the personal feel Facebook provided, which allowed the NGOs to own their information. ARHR, on the other hand, used Facebook because of its low-cost implication and wider audience reach. They also cited Facebook as a useful platform for engaging with the youth that also had interactive features. Although interactivity is mentioned as one of the benefits or motivations for the use of Facebook by ARHR, the content analysis clearly showed a low number of dialogic or community-building posts during the period of study. When the question of how they ensured interactivity on the Facebook pages was posed, Isaac Nyampong of ARHR responded:

We have developed a communications strategy which highlights how we use social media. That section of the document has that information. Usually, what we've realized is that people will usually look at messages that have a lot of pictures and designs so as much as possible, we try to design our messages in such a way that it looks a bit attractive. So, we use a lot of pictures/graphics. That is our strategy to ensure interactivity. So as much as possible, we don't just put out the raw thing but, we spark it with some designs to catch the eye of people. So, we usually design our messages using different softwares.

For Prince Dugbazah of MSG, even though Facebook has all the interactive features to ensure community-building, their primary audience on the platform have determined the level they must go to ensure interactivity:

Unfortunately, the adolescent who are our focal clients are not a lot on Facebook. In terms of the number of followers we have, when we did the ratio, those between the ages of 25 and 35 years form about 40% of our entire audience as against those who are below 25 years who are around 15-17%. In terms of our core target audience on Facebook, they are low. We are unable to get those interactions from them, the way we had anticipated. Otherwise if the situation had turned upside down and we had a lot of adolescents rather engaging us, then we would have given Facebook a 9 over 10, but I would say there is more room for improvement. With the launch of our recent campaign, you can see a trend of an upward increase in the number of adolescent who get in touch with us.

Although MSG has issues with the age bracket of their target audience, when the question of paying to Facebook to ensure a lot of younger people see their posts or what is popularly referred to as boosting was posed, Prince Dugbazah explained and the reasons he gave was as follows:

We are trying to build our audience base organically for some time before we do the paid ads, otherwise, then it will mean that anytime we did not do ads, we do not get our messages across. And that will amount to coercing the figures that we have. We have decided to strategically leave it at the organic level for some time to measure how our clients respond to us whenever we post on Facebook.

Even though MSG raised issues with the relatively lower percentage of their target audience being online, the NGO confirmed they still received messages from the youth in relation to safe

methods for pregnancy terminations as well as queries on where their clinics and other facilities could be located. PPAG's and ARHR's saw the process of responding to enquiries of this nature as a way of measuring interactivity on their platforms.

4.1.3 Action

Action posts are used to get followers of a page to do something. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), this function is the most tangible because followers are seen as a resource and are involved in the mobilisational and promotional use of the Facebook pages. With this function, followers aid the organisation to reach its goals. Posts under this category ask followers of the page to attend the organisation's events, take certain actions or donate to a cause. They push followers from "informed individuals to members of a community to activists and donors" (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 345). Even though the content analysis showed that MSG, PPAG and ARHR hardly used their Facebook pages to seek for funds and ask for donations, they had posts under the other sub-categories during the period of study.

Table 4 : Summary of Action-oriented posts for ARHR, PPAG and MSG

ARHR		
Category	Example	Percentage
Promote an event	<i>ARHR and her partners will be organising a National Forum on Universal Health Coverage tomorrow Tuesday 17th January, 2017. You can follow our feeds/ updates here on this page.</i>	9
Lobby and advocacy	<i>We call on government to pay attention and expand KATH Maternal Block to reduce congestion at the block...</i>	25
Total (N=177)		34%

PPAG		
Category	Example	Percentage
Promote an event	<i>Join PPAG outreach team as we storm the studios of Eagle FM to discuss the challenges and more importantly what must be done and done differently to yield a positive result. Volunteers of PPAG, Anthonia, Elizabeth, Louisa and Abena Esia-Donkoh talked about the causes and gave out practical steps in dealing with defilement cases.</i>	13
Total (N=16)		13%
MSG		
Promote an event	<i>There can't be an Easter festivity without visiting Kwahu in the Eastern region. Meet us at the Obomeng Clinic from 13th to 16th April 2017 so we take you through the Long Acting Reversible Methods of family planning and then choose any of them for FREE! It's #KwahuEaster celebrations... See you there!!!</i>	22
Selling/advertising products/services	<i>February is the month of love and Marie Stopes Ghana wants to show that love. Every contraceptive you take is half the price plus FREE GIVEAWAYS! It's available at selected centers and a community near you. Call now to know more. Don't miss this opportunity. It's valentine!</i>	19
Lobby and Advocacy	<i>In Ghana, #HIV prevalence rate is higher in urban areas while #syphilis is higher in rural areas (Ghana Aids Commission). Get tested! Be protected!! #MarieStopesGh #MarieCall</i>	8
Total (N=36)		49%

Source: Field Work (2017)

Despite the three NGOs having less than half of their posts under the Action category, they used the pages to mostly promote their events during the period of study. Promoting events under this sub-category included providing information on time, venue or price/rates, while encouraging followers to attend those events. When posts of this nature had none of the above characteristics, they were placed under the Informational function. MSG, PPAG and ARHR hardly used their posts to appeal for donations or to call for volunteers and employers, join other sites or vote for the organisation or ask for any form of help during the period of study. It is evident that MSG, PPAG and ARHR did not use Facebook to talk about their organisation itself during the period of study. Their posts were designed mainly to get their target audiences to live healthier lifestyles by equipping them with the information they needed.

Whereas the NGOs admitted they posted regularly to engage with their audiences, they admitted they were under-utilising Facebook's potential. Isaac Nyampong of ARHR provides reasons for his statement:

The potential is there but we can still do more to harness that but we are under-utilizing it. It requires time, someone who will be able to design the messages in a format that will look attractive or social media friendly and you'll have time to respond to feedback and those stuff. I do the updates sometimes and there is an assistant who also does it so we all have the access to it so based on what we want to do, any of us can do it. But what we really need is somebody who is dedicated to just the social media bit. At a point we were even thinking of outsourcing it to a private person to do it but the money involved was also a lot for us as an NGO. Sometimes the use of social media goes beyond just putting up a message but you need time to develop the content as well because content

development is very important. You need to know what you are putting out there. You should have your facts so it's a lot of work.

In addition to hiring extra hands, Michael Tagoe of PPAG cited the lack of face-to-face interactions with their audiences as one of the challenges of using Facebook. He further explained that since the NGOs were dealing with issues relating to the sexual health of young adults and adolescents, face-to-face interactions could lead to more personal conversations, leading to building of relationships and trust. Another striking limitation identified from the interview with the administrators of the Facebook pages was the issue of low internet penetration making the information they put on social media inaccessible to some youth in towns in some parts of Ghana which do not have access to this infrastructure.

Again, information on social media as identified by the administrators of the Facebook pages had limited reach, since they are only accessible to the population with some level of education.

Prince Dugbazah of MSG puts it as:

Such information is targeted towards our more media savvy clients so those with no education cannot access it.

That notwithstanding, the three health NGOs saw social media as an effective means of communication which could be improved over time. MSG, for instance, had put in place certain strategies to ensure their target audience subscribed to the social media channels to increase their target audience:

On all our communication materials, be it outdoors or information/communication materials, we have our Facebook and Twitter accounts advertised. So, on our billboards and directional signs, our facilities signages, on our T-shirts and fliers, we ensure we have our

social media handles advertised. And on every occasion that we find ourselves on radio, we advertise our accounts and through our call center as well.

4.2 Discussion

Social media is forming an important part of organisations' communication worldwide and the non-governmental sector in Ghana is no exception as confirmed in this study. The motivation behind the adoption of this tool and the nature of interactivity of these platforms specifically for health purposes and to communicate with the youth was investigated in this study. Although the research was qualitative with a smaller sample, the researcher believes the findings provide some insight and are reflective of social media usage by health NGOs in the Greater Accra Region.

4.2.1 Information

The results of the qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews showed MSG, PPAG and ARHR used their platforms largely for informational purposes. The information they put across ranged from the projects and campaigns they were involved and also, other behavioural change communications. What was absent on the pages of the three health NGOs were the disclosure of information pertaining to the organisation's performance and other reports. The Information function is not limited to educating the public or to direct them to resources they could use but to keep them in the loop of the organisations' reports and how they were performing in other areas. Providing followers with information of this nature gives the organisation a human face (Zhou & Pan, 2016) and according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012, pg. 343) –when an organisation sends information about its activities or its history, vision, or objectives, or detailed information on its finances, performance, governance policies, or ethical standards, it can connect a broad array of stakeholders to its mission and help to boost accountability and public trust.” Unfortunately, information of this nature was absent from the Facebook pages of MSG, PPAG and ARHR

during the period of study. This development can be attributed to the fact that all of the three NGOs had websites in addition to the social media platforms. The websites were used often to communicate with other stakeholders such as the Government, other NGOs and partners. As the Head of Marketing and Communications of MSG stated, their Facebook pages were purposely used to communicate with the youth who are known to be present on this platform while they had physical meetings with other NGOs, the government and other stakeholders. Therefore, social media is not the only means of communication for the three NGOs which were studied in this research. The Facebook pages were additional modes of communication for MSG, PPAG and ARHR which were used to reach their more youthful population.

4.2.2 Community Building

Even though the Community-Building function is what distinguishes social media from other mass media forms, this was the most under-utilized. For health communication purposes, interactivity enables social networking sites to facilitate consumers' understanding of health information (Nutbeam 2000) while encouraging users to pass along the content and share testimonies about healthcare products. The three NGOs, during the period of study, had few posts under this function. MSG, PPAG and ARHR mentioned the relative low cost of using social media but they also admitted that to ensure real-time communication or to remain interactive and ensure dialogue on this platform, an organisation required extra staff whose role will primarily be social media management. For these NGOs who had a relatively smaller human resource, managing social media becomes the role of a volunteer or an additional task for a member of staff who has other duties. Hence, researching and developing content, especially on health which will generate dialogue becomes a challenge. Even when an interesting post is put on Facebook to generate conversation, an organisation must have a member of staff online to

respond or moderate. When interests are not sustained, followers of the page may move on to other stimulating conversations making the organisation's page less interactive. These posts, as recognized by the NGOs are better presented graphically, which implies that the NGO must employ the services of Graphic Designers and that comes at an extra cost. As the Communications Officer of ARHR puts it, his NGO considered outsourcing the management of the social media platform but due to the high cost involved, they decided otherwise. This is where MSG (International NGO) does things a little differently from the PPAG and ARHR (local NGOs). MSG constantly researched into who their target audiences are and whether they were present on the platforms they were using. The creation of Facebook posts was guided by a standardized document which was being used in 36 other countries worldwide and according to the Head of Marketing and Communications, Prince Dugbazah, the NGO has contracted the services of a graphic designer to create visual content of some of the messages in the standardized document. It can, therefore, be deduced that the international NGO invested more resources into the use of social media compared to the local NGOs, as gathered in this study. The cost of setting up and managing a Facebook is inexpensive but maintaining it and ensuring constant and relevant communication, and in real-time, is a little costly for the local NGOs which were studied. This also explains the assertion made by the NGOs that Facebook had a lot of potential but due to logistical challenges, some of the NGOs were under-utilizing the platform.

4.2.3 Action

This forms the apex of any organisation's relationship with its publics. The Action function is when an organisation has moved from just informing the public to building a community through constant dialogues to mobilising fans on their Facebook pages to do things which will help it in achieving its goals. Like every relationship, when followers are well-informed and properly

engaged online, it is easier for the organisation to ask them to attend their events, make donations or purchase any of their products or services because followers would like to be part of the solution. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012, pg. 350), “Information could be seen as a core activity to attract followers, Community-focused messages serve to bind and engage a following of users, and Action-oriented messages serve to mobilise the resource—that is, the community—that has been developed through informational and community-oriented communication.” As it was seen in the findings, MSG, PPAG and ARHR used their Facebook pages to advertise, promote and mobilise their followers to help them achieve their missions. This was very typical with posts from MSG, who always encouraged their followers to call their centres where they had representatives on stand-by to advise them appropriately. This seemed very focal to PPAG to ARHR also. In their posts, the local NGOs used the Facebook to lobby and call on government and other policy makers to take steps to ensure positive changes in the health sector, although the in-depth interviews revealed the primary audiences of these NGOs on social media were the youth.

Nevertheless, Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) observed that while Information sources formed the base and Action-oriented posts formed the apex, none of the functions was superior. They suggested that a more appropriate way/strategy to use social media will be one which reflects the mission of the organisation. This study realised that MSG, ARHR and PPAG used their Facebook pages for all of these three purposes, however, the nature of these posts was influenced strongly by the organisation’s own strategies and their missions or mandates. MSG used its platform to promote its products and services while encouraging the youth to call for contraceptive methods which was in line with their mission – *Children by Choice, not Chance* (“Who We Are,” 2017).

Even though ARHR also qualified as an informational source during the period of study, they had most of its posts targeted towards pushing the government to improve the nation's primary and universal health care systems. This was in line with their mission - *We work to ensure that women, children and adolescents health is achieved through Advocacy, Research and Capacity Building for inclusive, responsive, accountable and equitable delivery of health service* (–About ARHR,” 2016).

PPAG, on the other hand, used their platform to inform their followers and fans of activities their volunteers were taking part in. These activities were in various parts of the country and could be linked with the NGOs vision - *All people in Ghana, especially the young population, and vulnerable groups, have unhindered access to and utilize Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services* (–About Us,” 2017).

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter comprised of findings and discussion of this study. It presented results of the content analyses and the in-depth interviews with the administrators of the Facebook pages of MSG, ARHR and PPAG. The findings were discussed to answer the research questions designed for this study and were linked to the Information-Community-Action framework.

The next chapter summarises the findings, discusses the limitations of this study, makes recommendations on areas for further studies of this nature and concludes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This study sought to understand aims behind the creation and utilization of Facebook by NGOs promoting reproductive health rights of the youth. The study further sought to identify the nature of interactivity of these platforms while investigating if there were any differences in the usage of Facebook by international (MSG) and local NGOs (PPAG and ARHR).

This chapter summarises the key findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for further studies and the conclusion.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

Social media sites, especially Facebook, are gradually forming an integral part of communication for organisations including those in the non-governmental sector in Ghana, particularly, in the Greater Accra Region. Organisations are including social media in their communication because they have a more targeted and measurable reach and are more affordable to use compared to the traditional modes of communication. For MSG, PPAG and ARHR, social media tools are used in their communication because their targets, who were adolescents and young adults had accounts, hence, information relating to their reproductive health goes where they are found. The platform was also used to advertise and sell products and services and has interactive functions which allowed them to receive instant feedback from their audiences who are mostly the youth and adolescents. However, these sites were barely used to address other stakeholders because the NGOs utilised other platforms like their websites, traditional media and physical meetings for the more formal communication.

Using the Information-Community-Action framework (Zhou & Pan, 2016) to tease out the themes, this research deduced that MSG, PPAG and ARHR used their Facebook pages largely for informational purposes. These one-way posts were targeted at educating their followers, who were mostly the youth, while encouraging them to adopt healthy sexual lives. Even though social media provided an interactive platform which augments the building of online communities, MSG, PPAG and ARHR had fewer posts that performed this function.

Some of the reasons provided by the NGOs for not providing information in real time included their low budget and the lack of other resources, including personnel with the time and skills to research and create engaging posts. Other limitations identified by the NGOs include the relatively low level of internet penetration in Ghana, low percentage of their main target audience who are available online and the accessibility of the information by individuals who have some level of education. These reasons prevented both the local and international NGOs from fully utilizing the functions of social media. The three NGOs also used the conventional forms of media to communicate with their other audiences, making social media an additional mode of communication and not the main one.

Each NGO had a unique way of using Facebook. MSG, an International NGO with branches in 36 other countries, created Facebook posts according to a standard document designed for all countries. The NGO had also contracted the services of a graphic designer who created visual content for their Facebook pages, implying that social media formed an integral part of its communication, therefore, MSG's investment into its use. The local NGOs (PPAG and ARHR) on the other hand, seemed to be investing less in the use of this communication tool. PPAG, for instance, used the services of volunteers to update their social media pages while ARHR confirmed the organisation needed extra hands to manage their social media page but due to

budget constraints, other members of staff were managing the platform as an additional task. This clearly showed the differences in the use of social media by an International and local NGO – while MSG invested more in the use of social media, conducted more research into its use, ARHR and PPAG, on the hand, did not do same.

Even though the Information-Community-Action framework by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) was used to categorise MSG, PPAG and ARHR according to their uses of Facebook, the actual uses of social media could be linked to their mandates, visions and missions of the NGOs.

5.2 Limitations

- The Information-Community-Action framework was unable to measure the level of responsiveness of an organisation's Facebook platform. The level of an organisation's responsiveness as well as its quality could be a measure of its interactivity. Now, this can be done easier on Facebook as the platform automatically provides the average time organisations use to respond to messages from followers. A way of incorporating that feature into the framework will be useful for studies of this nature.
- The framework focused on quantifying posts under a particular function but did not measure the reaction of followers. An engaging post attracts different reactions from followers and for Facebook, the responses followers can express include that of like, love, surprise, sadness and anger. Facebook, like every other social media platform, also allows followers of a page to share interesting content to their own pages and with friends but this framework is not able to measure that level of interaction.
- For health communication purposes, it will be interesting to discover or develop a framework which assesses the quality of the information being transmitted by an

organisation on its Facebook page. The current framework used in this study focused more on the quantity but could not capture the quality of the information.

5.3 Recommendations and Areas for Further Studies

- This research can be conducted quantitatively by widening its scope to include all NGOs in a particular region. It can also be broadened to include other organisations and for a longer duration to paint a better picture of the actual uses of social media for health communication.
- The Information-Community-Action framework was unable to measure the level of interactivity in other forms of the NGOs' Facebook pages. A framework which measures the interactivity of Facebook including their responsiveness to queries from their audiences could be used in further studies.
- A research which will measure the quality of health information on social media pages of organisations should be undertaken.
- Ghana is gradually accepting social media for health communication yet there is limited literature in this area. A quantitative study seeking the perception of Ghanaians on social media for health communication could be a way of filling this gap.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy

Social media platforms are gradually becoming an integral part of health communication. This study however discovered that these pages were being managed by individuals with little or no medical knowledge. Social media managers of NGOs focused on health communication should be trained regularly on the current trends in this field. This training could be offered by both Ghanaian social media consultants and health professionals. There are some health professionals who are also using this tool and understand how it works. These individuals can offer

consultative services to these NGOs. The trainings can be done at a physical location, at an affordable cost, for the social media administrators or they could be done through online resources like webinars, Facebook live, Skype among others. These trainings would broaden the scope of the Facebook managers of these NGOs and enable them use these communication tools more effectively, while meeting the health needs of their various targets.

5.5 Conclusion

This study was able to show that health NGOs, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, were using social media in their communication. MSG, PPAG and ARHR which were studied used these platforms because some of their target audiences could be found there. Their relative affordability, level of interactivity which ensured real-time communication were some of the reasons MSG, PPAG and ARHR used social media in the communication even though some of their targets do not have access to this infrastructure.

MSG, PPAG and ARHR largely used their platforms to provide health information to their target audiences. Although Facebook has interactive features which promoted dialogue and enhanced community-building and ultimately, encouraged followers to take actions which help organisations to achieve their goals and missions, MSG, PPAG and ARHR had fewer posts under this function. The same reasons which were cited as the benefits of social media were some of the reasons the NGOs provided for not using Facebook to its fullest capacity. Ensuring interactivity on Facebook implied a member of staff being available online to provide responses and interact with followers. That person will be responsible for researching to create engaging and attractive content but the low budget and resource constraints prevent the NGOs from hiring additional hands to manage their Facebook pages and other social media platforms.

MSG which is an international NGO used social media a little differently than ARHR and PPAG (local NGOs). They conducted more research to understand who accessed their Facebook pages and spent more resources employing the services of additional staff to ensure there was constant communication flow, while ensuring they reached more of their target audiences. The local NGOs spent a little less on their social media platforms citing budget constraints as some of the reasons their pages were less interactive.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTION GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

1. What is the primary purpose of having social media presence particularly a Facebook page?
2. What are the reasons for resorting to social media instead of the traditional media?
3. What are some of the benefits you derive from using social media?
4. What are some of the limitations/challenges of using this medium?
5. What communication strategies do you have in place for the Facebook page?
6. What strategies do you have in place to recruit these fans?
7. How do you ensure regular engagement with your target audience?
8. How do you determine the information needs of your various stakeholders?
9. How well do you use the interactive functions of your Facebook pages?
10. How would you assess the general public's acceptance of Facebook as one of your medium of communication?
11. What specific features on Facebook do you use to ensure your messages reach your various stakeholders?
12. Would you say your Facebook pages potential are being fully used?

APPENDIX II

CATEGORISATION SCHEME FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

1. Name of NGO

1. Marie Stopes Ghana
2. Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights
3. Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana

2. Date of posts

3. Type of posts

Information Function

1. Organisation's performance – posts informing the general public of the NGOs successes over a period of time.
2. Praising volunteers & setting an example – posts designed to praise volunteers of the NGO and other people in the society who had achieved notable feats.
3. Unrelated information – posts that are not directly related to the mission and vision of the NGO.
4. Public Information – posts providing the public with general information. Such posts include announcements, links to stories, etc.

Community Building Function

1. Communicating with other organisations – posts designed to address other organisations directly.
2. Acknowledging current and local events – posts that are designed to recognize on-going events or happenings both locally and internationally.
3. Giving recognition and thanks – posts designed to appreciate people in the society.
4. Responding to solicitations – posts designed to seek a particular kind of response from followers of the Facebook page.
5. Responding to reply to messages – posts replying to individuals who write on the NGOs' Facebook wall.

Action-Function

1. Calling for volunteers and employers – posts announcing employment opportunities in the NGO
2. Promoting an event – posts announcing events that the NGO is participating in. This could be an event being organized by the NGO or one that the NGO is taking part in.
3. Learning how to help the organisation – posts designed to inform audiences of the different ways they could be of help to the NGO.
4. Appeal for donations - posts asking followers and fans of the page to give cash or kind to a cause.
5. Advertising/selling a product or service.- posts that advertise or sell products and services being offered by the NGO.
6. Join another site or vote - posts that include links asking followers and fans to like other sites or vote.
7. Lobbying and advocating – posts directed pushing an agenda, particularly, to cause policymakers to take certain decisions.

APPENDIX III

CATEGORISATION SHEET FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Name of NGO:				
Date of post:				
INFORMATIONAL				
Organisation's performance	Praising volunteers & setting an example	Unrelated information	Public Information	
COMMUNITY BUILDING				
Communicating with other organisations	Acknowledgement of current & local events	Giving recognition & thanks	Response to solicitation	Response to reply messages

ACTION						
Call for volunteers & employees	Promote an event	Learn how to help	Donation appeal	Selling/advertising products/services	Join another site or vote	Lobby & advocacy