Influence of Social Media on Social Behaviour of Youth in the Tamale Metropolis, Ghana

Yakubu Abdul-Aziz, Ayisha Maigah

Faculty of Economics and Business, University Malaysia Sarawak 94300 Kota Samarahan Sarawak
Email: maigahayisha1@gmail.com
Corresponding Author Email: abdulaziztace@gmail.com

Abstract
Social media usage among people is on the increase these days. With so many teenagers and adolescents using social media, it makes sense to be worried about the positive and negative repercussions on user behaviour. There is no denying the benefits and drawbacks of social media for student's academic and social lives. Social media's influence on students' social and academic lives is probably well-considered. This study is designed to examine social media usage and its effects on the academics and social behaviour of young graduates. The researcher decided to employ a mixed method to carry out an exhaustive and precise inquiry. The quantitative and qualitative research designs are the two main categories into which research designs are divided. A mixed technique approach that integrated qualitative and quantitative paradigms was employed to collect data. To gather demographic data from respondents, a quantitative design was used. The research methodology includes the population and sampling, study design, technique, data gathering instrument, data collection methods, and data analysis. The results show that recreational and relational goals are the main perceived advantages of social media. The study discovered that using technology can increase students' perceptions of stress in their lives and can result in a need or addiction to feeling connected. It also demonstrated a noteworthy influence on how students nowadays form bonds with their friends and family. The findings of this study may inform policymakers and other interested parties on trends in young people's social media usage, and problems associated with it, and suggest ways to encourage its effective and responsible use. The results of this study could support more in-depth research projects that try to develop intervention plans to optimize the advantages and minimize the hazards of social media use. The current study used mixed methods and therefore suggests that future research employs longitudinal methodologies to monitor how social media influence the evolving behaviour of students.
 Keywords: Adolescents, Social Media, Social Media Advertising, Academic Performance, Students, Social Life

Introduction

Social behavior is viewed as an individual's attempt to create a certain condition of things, either by bringing about a change from one state to another or by maintaining an already existing one. Bergner (2011) asserts that behavior is deliberate if the agent has a desire for an outcome, a belief that it will result in that outcome, an intention to carry it out, the ability to carry it out, and awareness while carrying it out. Leedom (2014) added that the idea of social behavioral systems, such as attachment, caregiving, dominance, and sex, and their interactions, as well as connecting these to social structure, lead to a unified explanation of human social behavior. According to a study by Khoo (2014) on the characteristics and behavior of social media users, younger users are more likely than older users to utilize social networking sites. Women are more likely than men to use social media more frequently, and they are also more likely to use Twitter and Instagram. According to behaviour theories, young girls use social media to preserve relationships, but young boys use it more to make new contacts making addition possible (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). More elements contribute to student social media addiction. Some of them may become addicted to social media because of easy access to the Internet at home and have parents with high incomes. Thus, they can readily use the Internet thanks to the availability of Internet services and social media platforms.

Social media platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and many others. Facebook and WhatsApp will be used as examples of the different social media platforms. One of the most significant social trends of the previous ten years was the launch and growth of the social networking site Facebook (Caers et al., 2013). On the Facebook website, users can register for an account. Users have the option of posting anything to their status, and friends can respond by liking it or leaving text comments. New Facebook users can start sending friend requests and seeking pals. Once Facebook approves their request, the two people are connected by being able to see each other's profile pages and having their activity appear in each other's news feeds. In 2019, there are 26, 009,000 active Facebook users in Malaysia, according to (Wee et al., 2020). Facebook users engage in four main activities: information sharing (receiving and sharing information and developing ideas), sharing for educational purposes (learning, problem-solving, and sharing work), social purposes (retrieving personal information about others or themselves, chatting, making appointments, and generally keeping in touch), and leisure activities (gaming and relaxing) (Wesseling, 2012; Al-Dheleai & Tasir, 2017). WhatsApp employs local area networks or mobile network data to send and receive messages, according to (Kumar and Sharma, 2016). Users can quickly share images, videos, and audio messages in addition to text messages. Students use social networking apps on their smartphones five hours a day on average to interact with others (Walter et al., 2012; Kumar & Sharma, 2016). According to Kumar and Sharma (2016), using Facebook and WhatsApp together accounts for more than a half-hour of the daily time spent using cell phones. Via WhatsApp, users may have private conversations with anyone. With friends and family, WhatsApp has created a sense of intimacy, distance, and belonging. They have developed a psychological awareness of caring and keeping their distance (Kumar & Sharma, 2016). In social networking, youths are currently using WhatsApp to create, share, and exchange information.

Social networking services, which debuted less than ten years ago, have drawn a lot of users, particularly young people. While engaging in social networking in person is feasible, it is more prevalent online, particularly in businesses, colleges, and high schools. It might become a center for training young people in immoral behaviors if deviants always have many

peers. Students who consider a deviant to be a friend are more likely to be influenced by them on social media. Social media friendships have the potential to lead to antisocial behavior. Teenagers in general and students use social media to connect with friends, share knowledge, redefine their identities, and start off their social lives. Al-Dheleai and Tasir (2017) conducted a study on the relationship between Facebook use among students for interaction and academic performance. Using social media, a student can ask questions, share knowledge, and interact with others when they are having difficulties with their studies or assignment preparation. Lack of comprehension of the effects and adoption of social media in Ghana, particularly among university students, is a significant shortcoming in the present literature on the topic. Yoo and Gretzel (2010) argue that as personality has been demonstrated to play a significant role in a wide range of human behaviors and decisions, it is crucial to investigate the effects of personality in the context of social media. The study aimed to explore the ways social media usage influences the social life and behaviour of students in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region.

Methodology
The research approach employed for the investigation will be described in this part. Research methodology is the general plan or approach that aids in achieving the intended aims and objectives of the study.

Research Design
To conduct a thorough and accurate investigation, the researcher decided to use a mixed method. The two major groups that research designs fall within are the quantitative and qualitative research design categories. Data collecting used a mixed technique approach that combined qualitative and quantitative paradigms. The quantitative design is to extract respondents' demographic information.

This research also used a qualitative methodology for its research design. For analysing characteristics like human behaviour, tastes, and thinking, it is most frequently employed. This is significant because not all phenomena can be quantified by entering them into predetermined mathematical formulas. This sort of study design includes, for example, case studies, surveys, and interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to create the research. This study measures student behaviour to examine the effects of social media on them, which is why this design was chosen. Human behaviour is extremely unpredictable and varies widely. It cannot be determined mathematically. Akubugwo et al (2013) claim that combining a quantitative and qualitative technique is a promising way to overcome some challenges in educational research and carry out a thorough and accurate investigation.

Procedure and Instrument of Data Collection
A structured interview protocol guide was used as the instrument in this study to collect qualitative data from the respondents. The interview protocol guide was put into sections. Section A was on the demographic profile of respondents, thus' personal details like gender, age, educational background, and occupation. Section B was on the effects of social media on respondents.

To collect qualitative data, 10 students from both genders (male and female) from the same population were randomly selected and interviewed. The examples of questions asked to the ten students were mostly about the effects of the usage of social media on their social

behavior. The data from the interview session is described in the findings section. In summary, the instrument used is the interview protocol.

Population and Sampling
Ten local students were picked at random from the youth population who have accounts on any of the social media platforms. This is a precaution to make sure that the research had adequate information to accomplish its goals. The interview was conducted with 10 students from Tamale Metro using the same questions.

Ethical Concern
One of the study's ethical concerns is the potential for some of the respondents to have been the victims of online bullying, in which case the interview guide may have made it difficult for them to reply to the questions. The researcher included contact information in the form of a contact number in case any respondents wanted to contact the researcher about any aspect of the questions to address any unknown concerns of harm this study may cause the respondents. The completed interviews were kept in a secure location, and all digitally recorded data, including the USB key and the laptop used, was password protected to protect the identity of the participants.

Media Dependency Theory
Media Dependency Theory offers a framework for understanding the social and individual factors that affect how important media is to people in their daily lives. Ball Rokeach and De Fleur (1976 cited in Nawi et al., 2020) were the first to present the media dependency theory. The purpose of this section is to use this theory to describe how young people use social media and its influence on their behaviour. According to Lin (2015), is a methodical approach to the investigation of the effects of mass media on audiences and the interconnections among media, audiences, and social institutions. The theory has to do with the influence of media consumption on the development and manifestation of human behavior. In contemporary culture, people depend on their personal networks and connections to help them grasp social issues and make decisions about how to behave and pass the time (Nawi et al., 2020). With the help of this theory, the media's influence on students at different levels of their everyday usage of social media can be assessed. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's (1989) definition of media dependence theory, a person will depend more on the media when their requirements are met. By applying the Media Dependency Theory, researchers can examine the use of new media by considering the function that the media plays in society. There is a relationship between the media, audience, and social system regarding need fulfillment. It should be viewed as interdependent interactions. According to (Joo and Teng, 2017; Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's, 1989; Nawi et al., 2020). Ball Rokeach and De Fleur (1976 cited in Nawi et al (2020); Akubugwo et al (2013) the influence of media on users' views and behaviours increases as individuals become more reliant on it. According to this line of research, as media moves into cyberspace and individuals' motivations for using social media change, so should their reliance on these platforms. Social media has an impact on users' views and behaviours as a result of the revolution in how the media is utilised by users. A recent study by Ma et al (2023) indicates that the reliance of individuals on media will have a disproportionate impact and the achievement of objectives will be determined by the information that social media provides at the micro level. By providing content that can satisfy the audience's desire for comprehension, enjoyment, and knowledge, media attracts people.

As such, people are becoming more reliant on social networking platforms like Twitter and Facebook (Burrus, 2010; Joo & Teng, 2017). It is to keep up with friends' latest news and to build relationships with friends and family. Within the research domain, wireless networks are employed, and the primary social media platforms extensively embraced by users for identity formation, marketing, and communication are Facebook and WhatsApp. This demonstrates how, in terms of time spent on Facebook, users are becoming more reliant on it. They may become heavily reliant on Facebook due to information, happiness and misery, social life, and cohesion. According to the media dependence theory, the influence of the media on users' beliefs and behaviors increases as their reliance on it grows.

Literature Review

Social Behaviour is defined as an individual's attempt to create a certain condition of things, either by bringing about a change from one state to another or by maintaining an already existing one (Ossorio, 2006; Bergner, 2011). A behaviour is deemed to be deliberate if the agent has a desire for and belief that the goal will be achieved by the action, an intention to act, the ability to do so, and awareness while doing it (Malle, 2004; Bergner, 2011). The idea of social behavioural systems, such as attachment, caregiving, dominance, and sex, and their interactions, as well as connecting these to social structure, lead to a unified explanation of human social behaviour (Leedom, 2014). A person's action is social when its causes and effects involve the behaviour of others, according to (Schmitt, 1998). In situations where two people act in a certain way, one or more of the following three sources may be used to determine the effects of each person. Secondly, a person's actions may have ramifications for them, such as reinforcement from watching television, reading a book, or eating food. The other two sources, which make up the two primary types of interdependence, mediate consequences on a societal level. For instance, one person can provide other reinforcers like acceptance, help, or money. For the second source, outcomes are influenced by both persons' actions in some way, and these outcomes are solely based on combined behaviour. In other situations, combining responses increases the impact of the consequences. Schmitt (1998) further noted that studies of dependency in real-world settings are challenging because social interactions are frequently influenced by both individually mediated and socially mediated factors.

Social media platforms provide channels for people to connect, engage, and communicate with one another. They also offer sources of behavioral data. A considerable portion of the time is spent on social media by certain Africans, particularly Ghanaians, who post films, send and receive messages, and upload images. It has been discovered that posting research findings and reading news are not significant social media activities. According to Gbagonah (2012), most young people use social media to connect with existing friends, establish new ones, share information, improve their status, and maybe even for emotional and psychological gratification rather than for academic work or study (Amofah–Serwaa & Dadzie, 2015). In their study, Raju et al (2015) found that Facebook usage in India was 5.42% higher than the national average and 69.35% more than the average for Internet users. In India, there were a total of 63692540 active Facebook users, most of whom were men. Around 30474220 of these users were between the ages of 18 and 24 (Social Bakers, 2013; Raju et al., 2015). Many students use Facebook virtually daily, making it the most popular online social networking platform. The main benefits of using online social networking sites are to make new acquaintances, maintain existing connections and social networks, and refresh one's image (Zwart et al., 2011; Raju et al., 2015). According to a selected Nigerian

university undergraduate survey, 31.0% of respondents checked their Facebook accounts every hour. Only 15.4% of users had access to their accounts every week, whereas 22.3% and 22.0% of users had access to their accounts every two hours and daily, respectively. Approximately 76.7% of college students were deemed to have a low level of Facebook addiction, 21.7% to have a moderate level, and 1.6% to have an extremely high level (Raju et al., 2015). Wells and Link (2014) found that only 49.9% of the sample consisted of recent Facebook users, which is substantially less than what has been reported in undergraduate student sampling studies. Also, their research showed that throughout the course of the four weeks, these users visited Facebook on average 9.7 days and spent 22.0 minutes per day there. Throughout the course of the 28 days that were tracked, Facebook users used the site for an average of 5.4 hours. Based on how frequently they used Facebook over the course of the study, participants were divided into three groups of roughly equal size within this larger community of Facebook users.

Technology affects the current generation, making it a component of the chronosystem from an ecological perspective. According to Russo et al (2014), the expansion of internet access and instant messaging has made technology a part of how people connect in our microsystems of family, friends, and education. Today's adolescents rely heavily on the Internet to improve their social lives and relationships with family and friends (Lenhart et al., 2001; Russo et al., 2014). While non-students rely much on calls, students reported chatting more with their parents on the phone and texting their peers more regularly, according to (Russo et al., 2014). The usage of technology can lead to a sense of dependence or addiction to feeling connected and can enhance students' perceptions of stress in their lives. It also has a significant impact on how today's students develop relationships with their family and friends.

Students use Facebook for a variety of things, and how they use it varies from student to student (Wesseling, 2012; Russo et al., 2014; Lenhart et al., 2001; Russo et al., 2014; Russo et al., 2014; Raju et al., 2015; Wells and Link, 2014; Zwart et al., 2011; Raju et al., 2015). Raju et al (2015) found that students use Facebook in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. The percentage of students who use these sites for social purposes is 70.1%, while the percentage who use them for information exchange is 70.2%. Besides, 49.7% of students use Facebook for educational purposes, according to the survey. These figures demonstrate that students utilize Facebook to stay in touch with one another. It might also imply that Facebook plays a role other than a social one. The fact that the students initially met at a university and have a relationship with education means that they are in contact with one another. This suggests that the categories of Facebook users that are for informational and social purposes were the most popular. However, almost half of the respondents claim to use Facebook for learning. According to research done by Al-Dheleai and Tasir (2017), students regard contact with their peers through Facebook for educational purposes favourably.

Affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects have an impact on a person's attitude, according to the model of attitude. Mahadi et al (2016) investigated how social media use affects undergraduate students' attitudes. However, Mahadi et al (2016) discovered that affective and behavioral factors were significant influencers on a person's attitude and were interconnected. The most intriguing discovery of their investigation was how social media had an impact on young people's manners. The findings indicated that some respondents find it difficult to apologize to others when they make a mistake. Furthermore, they express their anger through social media rather than confront the person directly. They behave hastily and without considering the effects of their words and actions when expressing their opinions.

According to Madhi et al (2016), most undergraduate students are unable to contemplate how to appropriately welcome teachers and exhibit no remorse while using abusive language in the classroom. According to Akubugwo et al (2013), 78.08% of respondents agreed that social media can easily lead users to bad social habits, particularly with online nude photos, copying bad slang from online friends, inciting riots or chaos, developing an addiction, and giving up academic pursuits. Their research showed that 15% of the students have encountered unsolicited social media solicitation. Social media platforms have a significant impact on students' attitudes because of offensive remarks posted to harass peers (Kord, 2008; Akubugwo et al., 2013). The findings of this study show that Facebook contact among students and academic performance is positively and significantly correlated.

Results and Analysis
This part concentrated on the findings on how social media use affects students' lives and behaviour. The researcher was able to interview both male and female students. The youngest of the respondents is 20 years old and the oldest is 36 thus one respondent is from the students. All the students were on further studies thus most of them were on the top-up program and are therefore identified by the researcher as student nurses or student teachers. They already identified or aligned themselves to those professions as their occupations as shown in the table below.

Table 1
Demographic profile of respondents

	STUDENTS				
No	Names	Gender	Age	Education	0ccupation
1	Mijo	Male	26	Tertiary	Nurse
2	Oriq	Male	36	Tertiary	Teacher
3	Izzy	Female	34	Tertiary	Nurse
4	Door	Female	34	Tertiary	Teacher
5	Bark	Female	34	Tertiary	Teacher
6	Sul	Male	24	Tertiary	Fashion Designer
7	Vinc	Male	23	Tertiary	Used clothes dealer
8	Bamb	Male	26	Tertiary	Teacher
9	Juyal	Female	28	Tertiary	Nurse
10	Nanfa	Female	25	Tertiary	Provisions store operator

Themes of Effects of Social Media
The researcher generated several themes and regrouped them into broader themes like expensive mobile data/bundle, exposure to social vices, and social media as a double-edged sword among others as presented.

Educational Purpose
There are a lot of trending issues on social media platforms that can be downloaded to reused for academic purposes. For instance, information about all kinds of academic disciplines is shared with the masses in local, national, and international communities. Most of the platforms are flexible with different kinds of activities that are educative in nature. The

general public can be tagged or tag others with important information either concerning them or other communities. For instance, one of the respondents indicated that:

> *Facebook for trending issues is shared with the masses, locally, nationally, and internationally Community I download tutorial videos from YouTube to watch. I use TickTok for information about trending issues.*

The aftermath of the covid-19 witnessed a shift in school instructions from face-to-face to virtual platforms. Almost all social media platforms serve as educational tools for both teaching and learning making learning fun and interesting. One of the students revealed that:

> *I used WhatsApp to monitor my school or course platform to be able to have access to information since most of the information is shared on WhatsApp groups. I use YouTube to learn especially some of the challenges I have in other courses and for information about the topics I'm searching on I also use YouTube to learn skill works such as beading and other things etc. I download tutorials from YouTube*

As indicated earlier, most users send and receive messages via WhatsApp and others reported using TickTok to learn and watch videos from other TickTok content creators. A respondent shared that

> *I use TickTok for learning and watching videos of educational information, promoting of my business, receiving course bulletins and course materials (slides) sports news, and entertainment.*

Reliable and Affordable
Every product on the market has its side attraction so does social media. The general public gets attracted or influenced by certain features of the social media platform for which reason they use that platform. The consumers of products being rational will be looking for value for money and will want to maximize the meager resources at their disposal. For example, affordability, simplicity, and reliability might be some of the features that attract social media users as indicated by some of the respondents. In the words of AA:

> *WhatsApp is very simple and reliable for my work. TickTok for trending issues, I use WhatsApp because it is reliable and affordable. WhatsApp Is very easy and convenient to use. On this platform, information can be shared between and among individuals and groups. Secrecy confidentiality can be assured. It also consumes less data. WhatsApp is very easy and convenient to use. Information can easily be disseminated. Social media allows my business to flourish.*

Expensive Mobile Data/Bundle
When the researcher enquired about the amount of money spent to access the social media platform in terms of data credit or airtime, it was revealed that respondents spent as much as 400 Ghana cedis (40USD) and as little as 3GHs per week. Most of them (11) spent not less than 30 and 400GHs being the highest per week.
Even though some of them do not have any regular income but still spend to be part of the system.

According to 6

> *It's addictive, Waist time and money makes you not appreciate what you have, and*
> *It makes you needy in life. (Bamb)*

Exposure to Social Vices

Every society has its cherished values and beliefs of how the community members should behave. However, most of the respondents think that using social media has an impact on their behaviour and that of children in the metropolis. They may as individuals like social media but the fact that it exposes the nakedness of people particularly women against the norms and values of the Ghanaian society or community. It is also common knowledge that social media is a promoter of stealing, gambling prostitution, and not dressing properly. According to respondent 18

> *It promotes laziness among the youth. In this 21st century youth prefer sitting*
> *down and punching their phones than working to end a lively hood. Some married*
> *women lent techniques on how to satisfy their partners on bed on social media*
> *platforms. In attempt to practice what they learned, it ended up causing problems*
> *in their marriages and sometimes can lead to divorce because the husband feel*
> *that the wife is now practicing new things, hence the wife is either following bad*
> *friends or is now a prostitute*

The most disturbing issues that most Ghanaian societies might dislike about social media may include social vices like lying about the personal profile, false representation, deception, live exposure of nudity, pornographic pictures and videos, fake news, scamming, and hacking into people's accounts. Respondent 11 indicated that:

> *It kills the writing skills of students, false information is spread faster, watch … yes*
> *waste of time and money, it is highly addictive and can lead to poor performance*
> *of students.*

Some people also express their emotions in a certain disturbing manner or post certain graphic pictures, or videos especially accident victims without warning to viewers' discretion. Respondent 8 shared that

> *It promotes social vices such as exposure of nudity when an accident occurs instead*
> *of people rescuing the victims, they are rather videoing and posting … yes it them*
> *on social media.*

Social Media as Double-Edge Sword

In responding to a question about the general experience many viewed social media positively and negatively. It could be used for educational purposes, social networking by linking up with friends and loved ones, means of communication and entertainment among other things as well as learning bad habits and joining bad groups. According to Respondent 1

> *I lent that social media platforms can be used both positively and negatively.*
> *Positively in a sense that, some people use it to read journals and articles.*

Negatively in the sense that others use it to scam people and watch pornographic pictures and videos

Respondent 7 also shared that

I realise that social media is good as well as bad. It is good in … why … because that … yes, I can easily meet my old friends through social media. It is bad in the sense that most men when they see young girls on social media quickly pick up your contact and start calling you and by the time you realise, they will use you and damp you.

Social media makes it possible for people with a common interest to come together on platforms for deliberations of issues at a reasonable cost and at their convenience. The flexibility and convenience of the various social media platforms really make businesses and careers flourish beyond imagination. Based on the trending issues help to improve people's skills and professions, especially education, and trade, regarding fashion and design impacting positively on their lives. 6 shared an interesting opinion with the researcher that:

It's fun but if you are not careful you end up living people lives thinking you are living yours. And if you not very careful too u can make wrong decision, like buying wrong thing online or being fraud.

As revealed from the field, social media is neither good nor bad, but it must be used with caution. For instance, students have limited time and should therefore avoid spending much of their time on these platforms at the expense of study.

Some people post the sorrow they are going through on social media and that is what disgust me. Others post their marital issues(problems) on the social media which has led to the dissolution of so many marriages (resp 3)

People turned to exhibiting or demonstrating actions that are not good on social media thus living pretentious lives just to steal from others. With social media, it is easy to impersonate but very difficult to tell people's real identities since everything is possible with technology. It is even more worrying when the public took to online buying and selling properties and all sorts of items. Respondent 5 shared that:

A young lady duped me on social media, she requested for clothes I told her to send me the money before I sent her the clothes but she promised to send me the money after she received the clothes, I sent her the clothes but she never sent me the money, she even blocked me from contacting her

Discussion
The discussion focused on research objectives including the type of social media and the number of time students and non-students spent on social media platforms as well as the effects of their usage.

There are varying ways that individual students and non-students use social media. The study has shown different responses on the purpose for which each of the social media plats

is used. It was revealed that WhatsApp is used for advertisement and for entertainment by most of the respondents. Studies confirmed that companies and individuals adopt social media advertising campaigns to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals in a market (Li et al., 2019; Teng et al., 2022). The types of platforms and the specific activities they perform on those platforms were amazing considering the sort of activities and the number of platforms both students and non-students belong to and utilise them. Some of them also use social media for leisure by engaging friends for a chat just to spare themselves from idling or for entertainment. Pure entertainment values are offered by users based on consumers' perspectives thus companies or celebrities engage attractive titles or pictures to showcase their entertainment on social media (Steyn et al., 2011; Teng et al., 2022). The public shares videos and pictures so some respondents indicated that they spent time viewing pages with such content on the platforms that are popular in hosting those materials. A recent study indicates that the multiple motivations relevant to social media use encompass using it to learn about current events, social interaction by socializing with family and friends, entertainment to pass time and engage in enjoyable activities (Carlson et al., 2022).

All social media platforms have where to showcase yourself by putting your basic information, including uploading your own picture. As part of activities and usage of social media, viewing other people's profile pictures or what they decide to put to identify own is practiced by many social media users. Recent studies have shown that social media platform followers will not reduce their admiration toward influencers when realise that he or she is promoting a sponsored activity or product and that checking the latest update on social media and watching new videos, especially on YouTube has become a staple leisure activity for many (Leskin 2020; De Jans & Hudders, 2020; Lou, 2022). Issues that moved most respondents are activities like sharing, commenting, or showing love for other people through the action icons beneath individuals' profiles on the home page. Social media is a source to release stress by either making voice or video calls or watching videos on whichever platform the individual is so attracted to. Based on the responses from the informants and how they use these platforms, the researcher thinks that everyone uses social media platforms differently and for different purposes.

There are a lot of trending issues on social media platforms that can be downloaded to reuse for academic purposes. For instance, information about all kinds of academic disciplines is shared with the masses in local, national, and international communities. Most of the platforms are flexible with different kinds of activities that are educative in nature. Studies have shown that the use of social media by college students may lead to the development of learning resources and networks which enhance access to information that improves their self-esteem (Ellison et al., 2011; Deng et al., 2022). The general public can be tagged, or you can be tagged by others with important information either concerning them or other communities or people. For instance, the aftermath of the covid-19 witnessed a shift in school instructions from face-to-face to virtual platforms. Almost all social media platforms serve as educational tools for both teaching and learning making learning fun and interesting. By accessing news posts by individuals and organisations on social media, students stay up to date in their fields of study or interest as well as accessing library collections, educational resources, bibliographic databases, and visual resources on social media (Parmar & Desai, 2018; Kutu & Kutu, 2022). As indicated earlier, most users send and receive messages through WhatsApp and others reported using TickTok to learn and watch videos from other TickTok content creators. For instance, social media gained significant popularity as a communication

tool in the recent time since it allows people to communicate regardless of their actual location.

Every product on the market has its side attraction so does social media. The general public gets attracted or influenced by certain features of the social media platform for which reason they use that platform. The widespread use of social media will initially depend on additional evaluations of their reliability, dependability, and the creation of tools to process and evaluate the enormous and continuously expanding volume of data generated daily by social media users (Gippet et al., 2022). The consumers of products being rational will be looking for value for money and will want to maximize the scarce resources at their disposal. For example, affordability, simplicity, and reliability are some of the features that attract social media users as indicated by some of the respondents.

In response to the activities on social media platforms, varying activities ranging from trading to entertainment, education, and contemporary issues among others were discovered. Apart from sending and receiving messages, businesses are advertised, and items are bought and sold on social media. Access to social media and buying power was regarded as important environmental factors that influence the response of students and non-students (van der Bend et al., 2022). Social media users have different interests as all of them do not belong to the same trade, occupation, or job and therefore share the same interest.

In looking at the amount of time and hours spent daily on social media platforms, it was observed that varying times were spent on social media. The least time spent was 'close to an hour' and twenty-four hours moving from one platform to another. For example, studies revealed about 50 million content creators on YouTube and about two billion active users monthly and other users who watch about one billion hours of videos on this platform daily (Omnicore, 2020; Lou, 2022). On average, the majority (10) spent at least three to eight hours on social media in a day as revealed in the current study. There are some who belong to more than one social media platform and therefore spend more time than those who operate only one. The three most popular platforms among both students and non-students that take much of their time were Facebook, WhatsApp, and TickTok as these are platforms on which they spent much time. As much as some spend time buying and selling goods on social media, others log in to view friends' statuses and watch videos. Some respondents revealed is not only a student but also business-minded people and therefore spent a lot of time on social media platforms to promote their businesses to support their education. Some also reported spending the most time watching funny videos on TickTok for entertainment reasons.

The amount of money spent to access the social media platform in terms of data or credit or airtime revealed that as much as 400GHs and as low as 3GHs per week were spent. Most of them (11) spent not less than 30 and 400GHs being the highest expenditure on internet bundle per week. Even though some of them do not have any regular income but still spent to be part of the system. The result from the field showed that most of the respondents both students and non-students spent more than half an hour on social media per day which means that more bundle is required to stay for such a long time. Adolescent students who depend on their parents for financial support might witness recurring conflicts due to the cost involved in using social media. For instance, students and parents may ultimately become emotionally separated as a result of ongoing arguments over social media costs (Mulisa & Getahun, 2018). The interview with students found that they spent a minimum of one to two hours per day on WhatsApp or Facebook for educational activities. It is proven that WhatsApp and Facebook are becoming essential in the daily lives of members of society thus both literate and illiterate. For instance, studies have shown that social media is important for

students because it can be used for educational purposes despite the cost of securing the bundle or internet data.

Every society has its cherished values and beliefs of how the community member should behave. However, most of the information from the field revealed that using social media has an impact on their behaviour and that of children in the metropolis. According to research by Patterson et al (2017), there is evidence that those who have bad social media experiences are affected by some anxiety and feel under pressure to intervene in cases. However, few people actively defend online victims (Sarmiento et al., 2019). For instance, bullying and cyber fraud directly affect individuals as well as other youngsters who are present on the same platforms (Steinert et al., 2022). They may as individuals like social media but the fact that it exposes the nakedness of people particularly women is against the norms and values of the Ghanaian society or the research community. It is also common knowledge that social media is a promoter of stealing, gambling, prostitution, and how not dressing properly as the youth watch, read, or listen to the trigs on these activities. As such, the most disturbing issues that most Ghanaian societies dislike about social media may include social vices like lying about personal profiles, false representation, deception, live exposure of nudity, pornographic pictures and videos, fake news, scamming, and hacking into people's accounts. The results showed that it is difficult to develop real big data to identify false online information on digital media platforms because of hidden motives. The volume of fake information on digital media, enormous unstructured data, the rapid propagation of false news on digital media, and fraudulent user accounts are the order of the day (Shahzad et al., 2022). Some people also express their emotions in a certain disturbing manner or post certain graphic pictures, or videos especially accident victims without warning to viewers' discretion. Studies have shown that concerns are raised among viewers by the complex nature of fake news and the usage of questionable images or videos in social media comments. Social media data includes inaccurate information, phony accounts, and fake news (Darwiesh et al., 2022; Nakamura et al., 2019; Murayama, 2021).

In the general experience, many viewed social media positively or negatively. It could be used for educational purposes, social networking by linking up with friends and loved ones, means of communication and entertainment among other things as well as learning bad habits and joining bad groups or denting images of people. According to Al-Yazidi et al (2022), social media plays a very crucial role in maintaining the status of individuals and companies even though it could also be an immediate threat to the reputation of the individuals or organisations if not taken seriously. Social media makes it possible for people with a common interest to come together on platforms for deliberations of issues at a reasonable cost and at their convenience. The flexibility and convenience of the various social media platforms really make businesses and careers flourish beyond imagination. Based on the trending issues help to improve people's skills and professions, especially education, and trade, regarding fashion and design impacting positively on their lives. In addition to providing users with a platform to connect with others and build social capital, social media use allows users a flexible means to deal with the unique difficulties and experiences of college life, which is another aspect in which the study has relevance for higher education institutions (Deng et al., 2022). As revealed from the field, social media is neither good nor bad and must be used with caution. For instance, students have limited time and should therefore avoid spending much of their time on these platforms at the expense of study. People turned to showing or demonstrating actions that are not good on social media thus living pretentious lives just to deceive or steal from others. With social media, it is easy to impersonate but very difficult to tell people's real

identities since everything is possible with technology. It is even more worrying when the public took to online buying and selling properties and all sorts of items.

Conclusion

This situation is reflected in this research in that most respondents depend on social media platforms for their daily lives. Students use most social media platforms to read articles and news. This study also showed that there was no difference between students and non-students in the usage of social media regarding the amount of time spent. The amount of time students spend on social media does not have any effect on students' cognitive, affective, and behaviour. The effects of the usage of Facebook or WhatsApp depend on how the users use it. This is because these platforms can have a great impact if the user uses them in a good way. Concerning future research, this study provides strong groundwork and foundations for a more in-depth study. A qualitative study would be recommended to investigate people's attitudes and beliefs toward the use of social media. A study to investigate the reason behind research from different countries displaying different results about the effects of social media on people's social behaviour, and to also get to know if an individual's culture and religion are also significant variables, would also be recommended.

References

Akubugwo, Ijeoma & Burke, M. (2013). Influence of social media on social behaviour of post graduate students: A case study of Salford University, United Kingdom. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *3*(6), 39-43.

Al-Dheleai, Y. M., & Tasir, Z. (2017). Using Facebook for the purpose of students' interaction and its correlation with students' academic performance. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 6*(4).

Al-Yazidi, S. A., Berri, J., & Hassan, M. M. (2022). Novel hybrid model for organizations' reputation in online social networks. *Journal of King Saud University-Computer and Information Sciences*, *34*(8), 5305-5317.

Amofah–Serwaa, N., & Dadzie, P. S. (2015). Social media use and its implications on child behaviour: A study of a basic school in Ghana. *International Journal of social media and interactive learning environments*, *3*(1), 49-62.

Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M. L. (1989). *Theories of mass communication*. 5th Ed. New York: Longman.

Bergner, R. M. (2011). What is behavior? And so what?. *New Ideas in Psychology, 29*, 147-155.

Burrus, l. (2010). Let's talk about social media dependency. Retrieved from http://www.mediaoutreach.com/2010/09/lets-talk-about-social-media-dependency/

Caers, R., Feyter, T. D., Couck, M. D., Stough, T., Vigna, C., & Bois, C. D. (2013). Facebook: A literature review. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258173969_Facebook_A_literature_review

Carlson, J. R., Hanson, S., Pancras, J., Ross Jr, W. T., & Rousseau-Anderson, J. (2022). Social media advertising: How online motivations and congruency influence perceptions of trust. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *21*(2), 197-213.

Darwiesh, A., Alghamdi, M., El-Baz, A. H., & Elhoseny, M. (2022). Social media big data analysis: Towards enhancing competitiveness of firms in a post-pandemic world. *Journal of Healthcare Engineering*, *2022*.

De Jans, S., & Hudders, L. (2020). Disclosure of vlog advertising targeted to children. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *52*(1), 1-19.

Deng, X., Fernandez, Y., & Zhao, M. (2022). Social media use by first-generation college students and two forms of social capital: a revealed causal mapping approach. *Information Technology & People*, *35*(1), 344-366.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2011). Connection strategies: Social capital implications of Facebook-enabled communication practices. *New media & society*, *13*(6), 873-892.

Gbagonah, P. (2012) *An Evaluation of the Level of Addiction of Ghanian Students to Social Media Sites: A Case Study of the University of Ghana, Legon*, unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Ghana, Legon.

Gippet, J. M., Sherpa, Z., & Bertelsmeier, C. (2022). Reliability of social media data in monitoring the global pet trade in ants. *Conservation Biology*.

Joo, T. M., & Teng, C. E. (2017). Impacts of social media (Facebook) on human communication and relationships: A view on behavioral change and social unity. *International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology, 7*(4), 27-50.

Khoo, C. S. G. (2014). Issues in information behaviour on social media. *Ibres, 24*(2), 75-96.

Kumar, N., & Sharma, S. (2016). Survey analysis on the usage and impact of WhatsApp Messeger. *Global Journal of Enterprise Information System, 8*(3), 53-57.

Kutu, J. O., & Kutu, F. I. (2022). The use of social media for academic purposes by postgraduate information studies students: a case of University of KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-28.

Leedom, L. J. (2014). Human social behavioral systems: Ethological framework for a unified theory. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264235807_HUMAN_SOCIAL_BEHAVIORAL_SYSTEMS_A_UNIFIED_THEORY

Lenhart, A., Rainie, L., & Lewis, O. (2001). *Teenage life online: the rise of the instant-message generation and the Internet's impact on friendships and family relationships*. Washington, D. C.: Pew Internet and American Life Project.

Leskin, P. (2020). I spent a day following an Instagram influencer around New York City to see what her job was really like. Business Insider, January. https://www.businessinsider.com/influencer-day-in-the-life courtkellycourtney-seamon-photos-2019-10.

Li, H., Fang, Y., Lim, K. H., & Wang, Y. (2019). Platform-based function repertoire, reputation, and sales performance of e-marketplace sellers. *MIS quarterly*, *43*(1), 207-236.

Lou, C. (2022). Social media influencers and followers: Theorization of a trans-parasocial relation and explication of its implications for influencer advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *51*(1), 4-21.

Ma, M., Raza, S. H., Yousaf, M., Zaman, U., & Jin, Q. (2023). Investigating the Psychological, Social, Cultural, and Religious Predictors of COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake Intention in Digital Age: A Media Dependency Theory Perspective. *Vaccines*, *11*(8), 1338.

Malle, B. (2004). *How the mind explains behavior: Folk explainations, meaning, and social interaction.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mulisa, F., & Getahun, D. A. (2018). Perceived benefits and risks of social media: Ethiopian secondary school students' perspectives. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, *3*, 294-300.

Murayama, T. (2021). Dataset of fake news detection and fact verification: A survey. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2111.03299*.

Muscanell, N. L., & Guadagno, R. E. (2012). Make new friends or keep the old: Gender and personality differences in social networking use. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*(1), 107-112).

Nakamura, K., Levy, S., & Wang, W. Y. (2019). r/fakeddit: A new multimodal benchmark dataset for fine-grained fake news detection. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1911.03854*.

Nawi, N. W. M., Alsagoff, S. A., Osman, M. N., & Abdullah, Z. (2020). New media use among youth in Malaysia: A media dependency theory perspective. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, *17*(9), 3097-3112.

Omnicore. (2020). YouTube by the numbers: Stats, demographic & fun facts. https://www.omnicoreagency.com/ youtube-statistics/.

Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Parmar, J. M., & Desai, M. D. (2018). Internet use among postgraduate students with reference to type of faculty. *Indian Journal of Community Psychology*, *14*(2), 402-409.

Raju, N. J., Valsaraj, D. B. P., & Noronha, D. J. (2015). Online social networking: Usage in adolescents. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(22).

Russo, T. J., Fallon, M. A., Zhang, J., & Acevedo, V. C. (2014). Today's university students and their need to connect. *Brock Education, 23*(2), 84-96.

Schmitt, D. R. (1998). *Handbook of research methods in human operant behavior*. New York: Plenum Press.

Shahzad, K., Khan, S. A., Ahmad, S., & Iqbal, A. (2022). A Scoping Review of the Relationship of Big Data Analytics with Context-Based Fake News Detection on Digital Media in Data Age. *Sustainability*, *14*(21), 14365.

Steinert, S., Marin, L., & Roeser, S. (2022). Feeling and thinking on social media: emotions, affective scaffolding, and critical thinking. *Inquiry*, 1-28.

Steyn, P., Ewing, M. T., Van Heerden, G., Pitt, L. F., & Windisch, L. (2011). From whence it came: Understanding source effects in consumer-generated advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, *30*(1), 133-160.

Teng, T., Li, H., Fang, Y., & Shen, L. (2022). Understanding the differential effectiveness of marketer versus user-generated advertisements in closed social networking sites: An empirical study of WeChat. *Internet Research*.

van der Bend, D. L., Jakstas, T., van Kleef, E., Shrewsbury, V. A., & Bucher, T. (2022). Making sense of adolescent-targeted social media food marketing: A qualitative study of expert views on key definitions, priorities and challenges. *Appetite*, *168*, 105691.

Walter, U. Y. S., Aadilah, M. I. A., Gary, J. J., Haythem, V. S. (2012). Smartphone application usage amongst students at a South African University. *IIMC International Information Management Corporation.* Retrieved from http://www.ist-africa.org/home/outbox/ istafrica_paper_ref_60_doc_4812.pdf

Wells, T., & Link, M. (2014). Facebook user research using a probability-based sample and behavioral data. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 19*(4).

Wesseling, N. (2012). How Students Use Facebook, In *WEI International Academic Conference Proceedings* (pp. 20-25).

Yoo, K. H., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Influence of personality on travel-related consumer-generated media creation. *Computers in Human Behavior, 27*(2), 609-621.

Zwart, M. D., Lindsay, D., Henderson, M., & Phillips, M. (2011). *Teenagers, Legal Risks and Social Networking Sites.* Victoria: Monash University.