

# ISSUES OF COMMON TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USED BY ADOLESCENTS IN THEIR SOCIALISATION PROCESS IN SOMANYAIN THE YILO KROBO DISTRICT OF THE EASTERN REGION OF GHANA

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ISSUES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE BY ADOLESCENTS IN THEIR SOCIALISATION PROCESS IN SOMANYA, THE YILO KROBO DISTRICT OF GHANA

## Abstract

This study, employing a rigorous qualitative approach and case study design, investigated the common types of social media used by adolescents in their socialisation process in Somanya in the Yilo Krobo District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The sample size was twenty adolescents selected through the convenience sampling technique. One-on-one interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to collect data. The significant findings from the study were that adolescents use social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. It recommends that parents socialise adolescents to conform to contemporary social interaction patterns to aid the proper use of social media. It was concluded that social media usage affects the socialisation of adolescent, thereby affecting their social behaviour.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Ghana, Social Media, Social Network Sites, Socialisation, Technology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication used to be a long process, from sending messages to others through other people to writing and posting letters and telegrams. Communication involves sending and receiving messages for social relations purposes, sometimes without the guarantee that messages reach their destinations in a timely manner (Baruah, 2012). However, communication in recent times has improved due to technological advancement. Improvements in technology have introduced new communication methods and changed all aspects of life.

There has been tremendous change in communication through technology. The production of telecommunication tools such as smartphones, iPods, and laptops has enhanced social interaction through digital means and improved the dissemination of information worldwide (Kim, 2017). Digital communication has improved social relations, considering its efficacy in linking people everywhere (Ocansey et al., 2016). Socially, relating with others is no longer limited to proximity and time; people can contact others everywhere and anytime (Frimpong & Veccari, 2015). The means of contacting other people, which was limited to face-to-face contact, has now improved to include wireless telephones and social platforms on social media through the internet. To some extent, these changes have brought about satisfaction in goods and services and information circulation sources. Sending and receiving of messages have improved compared to when messages were sent through postal services.

Chan-Olmsted et al. (2013) explained that social media creates a network of online friends and group memberships to stay in contact with current friends, reconnect with old friends, and make new friends. It also allows people to create new friends through similar interest groups. Bryant (2018) emphasises that one characteristic of social media is supporting individuals in sharing their interests with like-minded people. Photos and videos are shared on group pages between individual users. One new addition to social media is the use of video calls, which allow people to stalk others online. These fascinating features and more attract people with knowledge about the internet to opt for this communication system.

All people can use this communication system, and research has shown that adolescents worldwide are not left out (Zeitel-Bank & Tat, 2014). Asare-Donkoh (2018) has reported the presence of adolescents on social media. They mentioned connectivity, communication and educational purpose as ways adolescents use it. Predominantly, social media support many forms of communication and, as such, promote online social activities. Since it fosters accessible communication, families have accepted it as an easy way of reaching people in contemporary societies. However, how adolescents use social media cannot be interpreted because of its many functions. It is not easy to ascertain and monitor what adolescents do on social media.

Mass media as an agent of socialisation includes television, radio, newspaper and the internet. The internet opens into a broad way of communication with little supervision and easy access. Social media can be accessed on the internet through the use of smartphones. It has been discussed that social media's effects on users are both negative and positive (Frimpong & Veccari, 2015). Genner and Süß (2016) suggest that information from electronic media triggers discussion among family members, enhancing bonding. This is not the same with social media since its discussions are limited to users on the same platform.

Adolescents have online conversations with many people, both known and unknown. Manning (2014), however, emphasised that adolescents are selective about information on social media because of their aims and needs, which drive them. In this way, online activities expose them to many things parents and guardians cannot control. The issue of socialisation and how it occurs online has not been dealt with critically. Most of the literature review on social media discussed the negative and positive effects on adolescents' education, health and well-being (Petraki et al., 2013; Genner & Süß, 2016; Zeitel-Bank & Tat, 2014). Markwei and Appiah (2016) studied the effects of social media on the youth of Maamobi and Nima. Their study involved people between the ages of 13 and 25 years. Their findings reported how the youth accessed social media but did not dwell on its effects on socialisation. Other researchers have studied social media's effect on children and not on adolescents and socialisation (Zeitel-Bank & Tat, 2014). Ocansey et al. (2016) concluded from their study that the use of social media affects youth communication but does not extend it to social behaviour. It has become imperative for society to understand how social media socialisation occurs in the virtual world to ascertain its effect on traditional socialisation and social behaviour. Socialisation occurs through online interaction with people and everything they come across. Tartari (2015) explained that this process uses the adolescent's observational, information processing and cognitive skills to develop digital skills. However, behaviour change may not be an indication of what has been possibly acquired through the use of this media.

Before the advent of social media, youth in Somanya engaged in various activities, such as open-air play, peer conversations, debating and arguing, among other social group activities; these social behaviours among adolescents have reduced over time. Nonetheless, these social behaviours of adolescents are very well-known actions and activities that do not threaten the existence of the Krobo communities but rather promote socialisation in context. Adolescents socialised with others within their local communities because they did not readily have access to other people outside of their domain.

Empirical research on how social media affects traditional socialisation, which results in changes in social behaviour, is essential to understanding socialisation through the prism of modernity. In light of this discussion, this research sought to examine the common types of social media used by adolescents in their socialisation in Somanya in the Yilo Krobo District

of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study aimed to identify and examine adolescents' typical social media use.

The study was conducted at Somanya in the Yilo Krobo Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana. Adolescents from the Yilo Krobo Senior High School were involved in the study. Most of these children fall within the age limit of the study (13-19 years). These adolescents have access to mobile phones when they are on vacation and were able to give much information about the topic under study. The study is limited to finding the effects of social media use on adolescents' socialisation and social behaviour. It uses a qualitative approach to investigate the phenomenon among adolescents in Somanya.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 2.1 The Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory is a communication theory proposed by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in 1974. It was proposed to explain why people use different forms of media. The duo shifted their attention to media audiences at a time when much research was focused on media content. This theory proposes that media audiences make choices depending on their needs, satisfaction and motives. In these instances, media users were considered active participants rather than passive (Musa et al., 2015). Katz and Blumler further categorised their proposals for the uses and gratification theory under reasons and satisfaction. Thus, they further clarified the reasons behind people's media use. Musa et al., Azmi and Ismail (2015) explained that Blumler mentioned diversion and escapism, companionship and development of personal relationships, value reinforcement and exploring personal identity as the categories of needs and satisfaction demand for people to use various forms of media. Katz and Blumler, on the other hand, identified cognitive, affective, and social integrative needs as the motives for people's use of different media.

Uses and gratifications also explain that media users' needs are satisfied by the combination of attributes of contents of different media. Different media comprise a wide range of characteristic content (topics), modes of transmission (print versus broadcasting), and place of coverage (at home, out of home, with or without others, etc.) for the audience to interpret, consequently, leading to a need for media to offer as much fulfilment to the public as possible. Karimi et al. (2014) found that using the uses and gratification theory helped identify what motivated students in higher institutions to use social media. They found in their study that social integration, the passing of time, making new friends, and seeking information were prominent in the gratification students sought in using social network sites. Whether users consume media as a distraction from everyday life, share their experiences with other participants, or find information about the world, they repeatedly and subconsciously use their chosen messages. Instead of interpreting media messages passively, the uses and gratification theory clarifies how the media's listeners and viewers seek to satisfy their needs through the media they intentionally expose themselves to. The uses and gratification approach highlights the relationship between the sender and the message and how purposes and gratifications drive people's activities about the media.

The uses and gratification theory tries to understand what people do with media channels and the aims behind their choices and actions. Katz and Blumler (1974) describe the concept as "the social and psychological origins of needs which generate expectations of the mass media and other sources which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities) resulting in need gratification and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (Katz & Blumler, 1974). It is the role of adolescents to

choose social media which provides content that satisfies the needs and requirements of the user. In this case, the use of social media depends on the personality and the interpretation of the content provided by the media. It is worth noting that adolescents have to choose from many forms of media, so their choice of a particular medium must be backed by reasons that satisfy their needs. Among the many reasons adolescents choose the media, some may be for pleasure, self-identity, companionship and other developmental needs (Musa et al., 2015). The impact of social media on the socialisation of adolescents can be explained based on the socialisation processes of social media, which may affect their social behaviour. The uses and gratification theory can explain this impact by determining the requirements and the reasons behind the choices. The information processes underline these requirements, as well as social interaction requirements and the cognitive processes needed for using social media.

This theory assumes that people's media choices are to meet particular needs and wants in their lives. Users of media are active participants and not passive. The impact of media use on behaviour depends on the culture, personality, and interpretation of the individual assigned to the use of that media (Karimi et al., 2014). All these reasons guide the choice of media based on satisfaction. Adolescents need to know that their choice of media has to do with their particular stage in life and their developmental and social needs. The availability and the ease with which the media satisfies them is a factor that cannot be overlooked. Social media is easily accessible on most phones and computers, so its use must appeal to adolescents. It is also easy to use everywhere irrespective of the time (day or night). The content of the media is also always readily available without much hindrance.

The uses and gratification theory explains why adolescents choose social media, how they interpret messages on it, how they are being socialised on it, and how interaction on social media affects their socialisation. The perspectives of the theories discussed are based on the study's objectives. Nevertheless, the discussion on what social media is and who adolescents are in this research needs to be ascertained to make the discussion more straightforward. Subsequently, it is imperative to explain why adolescents use some types of social media. This is needed to ascertain whether their selection satisfies their social developmental needs or if there are other reasons for using this media in society. This can be discussed through the lens of symbolic interaction.

## **2.2 Symbolic Interaction**

Communication on social media is a form of human interaction. It is more virtual than face-to-face because it uses technology that implicates indirect interaction between people. Studies have shown that social media affects adolescents' social development because they spend more time on these platforms (Asad et al., 2016; Christofferson, 2016). Although these studies have mentioned effects on social development, the effect on social interaction has not been concluded. Christofferson (2016) mentioned that social media has become a significant mode through which adolescents interact. The findings focused on identity development and not how social interaction on social media is affected. There is interaction among adolescents on social media, as posited by Ellison and Boyd (2013). They further pointed out the importance of social media for adolescents in terms of communication. Adolescents symbolically use it because of the purpose it serves in their communication. There is a need for the use of symbolic interaction in this study as an interaction theory.

The symbolic interaction theory chooses to explain the basis of social interaction on social media, how social interactions affect traditional (face-to-face) interaction, and how social interaction is occurring on social media. Social interaction among humans involves everyday physical communication; the meaning attached to such communication is easily

understandable (Potts, 2015). Virtual communication, on the other hand, involves complex interpretations between communicators in an abstract space, and this is void of physical barriers (Asad et al., 2016; Christofferson, 2016). The meaning and importance attached to this form of communication are seen in its symbolic use by people.

Symbolic Interaction (SI) is a theory that focuses on the social interaction of humans and how these interactions shape communication behaviour (Aksan et al., 2009). Herbert George Blumer propounded it, which centres on human social interaction and how it shapes behaviour. It talks about the meaning people attach to communication using symbols for meaningful interpretations. People assign meaning to communication processes and thus behave towards those they interact with in contextual meanings. Symbolically, individuals attach importance to communication, what they interact with, and why (Hewitt, 2002). Thus, individuals would attach meaning to who they are interacting with and then behave similarly.

The tenets of symbolic interaction are placed within the context of social relations. According to this theory, communication could be in the form of language or signs, while interaction involves language, signs and association with things and the environment. Humans interact with each other and objects based on meanings and perceptions derived from the interaction (Hewitt, 2002). The actions in the social environment are all a result of some interaction which produces satisfaction in one way or another or ends some sort of result that affects the social environment. The meaning of an object cannot be measured unless they are acted upon by some social factors (Hewitt, 2002). The object symbolises interaction at which an action can be directed. The interaction symbols can be an object, event or phenomenon; the meaning attributed to these is how the individual perceives them (Hewitt, 2002). The understanding of these symbols is featured in the level of representation of interaction within the constructed meaning. People control the symbolic meaning, and its relationship is in what it represents and how it has been created and shared among people (Hewitt, 2002).

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Social media is a communication tool created and used for interaction by people with a common purpose. Its primary purpose was to create and share information with users on the internet (Boyd & Ellison, 2013). These and some other activities draw people to gather on this virtual platform to make meaning of events. Symbolically, the interaction on social media is a phenomenon in which people participate due to its meaning. The symbolism of using social media for interaction is in its contents. People interpret the contents of social media (videos, pictures, messages, etc.) with the meaning they have attached to online communication (Christofferson, 2016). Characteristically, social media promotes personal and trustworthy communication among people. Content shared on it is primarily private and is delivered on time without many interruptions. Gradually, online interaction has added to face-to-face communication, which has made social media necessary for human interaction. Adolescents attach importance to social media and interact on platforms because of its importance in their interaction and the role it performs (Ellison & Boyd, 2013).

Symbolic interaction applied in this study examines how mediated interaction on social media affects traditional (face-to-face) interaction and, consequently, socialisation. The investigation focuses on how social media fosters social interaction through technology (Aksan et al., 2009). Adolescent interaction on social media leads to some socialisation that cannot be defined within the context of its usage because of its virtual nature. Interaction in the social environment is pointing to changes in forms of communication. Patterns of communication are emerging through the help of improved technology. People are now communicating with many people through social media. There have been changes in

behaviour among adolescents who use social media. This can be drawn from the vast number of participants that social media presents for interaction.

### **2.3 Relevance and Application of the Theories to the Study**

The Gratification Theory shows that people select media for specific purposes and needs (Musa et al., 2015). Accordingly, adolescents are likely to choose types of social media to satisfy some of their communication needs and purposes. This theory has been chosen as a theoretical guide to study why adolescents choose a particular media for some purposes. Symbolic interaction explains the meaning and importance that people attach to social interaction. Social media advances social interaction virtually, and adolescents like interacting with themselves (Steinberg, 2015).

Adolescents' choice of social media types is necessary to aid their interaction with others. The significance of the theories selected is to look at options that adolescents are likely to choose from and to establish how their social developments are affected. Uses and Gratification Theory gives insight into the needs that drive adolescents to use social media, whilst symbolic interaction highlights the importance that adolescents attach to the use of social media. These two theories, however, do not highlight the effect that adolescents are likely to face out of the needs and importance they attach to the usage. Musa et al. (2015) concluded in their study that the Uses and Gratification Theory proved why individuals use a particular type of social media. Their study highlights the importance of leaving out the effect of choosing the types.

### **2.4 Concept of Social Media**

The use of social media in contemporary times is on the rise, and it is now known that people have integrated it into their daily activities. Adolescents have incorporated social media into their daily activities, and their day starts and ends with social media (Markwei & Appiah, 2016). Adolescents have been fascinated by the characteristics of social media, although other writers have attributed its usage to the purpose it serves in society (Zeitel-Bank & Tat, 2014). Many people are logging on to social media sites to connect with others. There are many types of social media, but their usage is determined by their level of importance and the user's competence. Among the many types, adolescents are used to ones which use more pictures than texts (Ellison & Boyd, 2013). Zeitel-Bank and Tat (2014) explain that content generation also determines the users. It is imperative to conceptualise this media to determine its usefulness and ability to socialise adolescents.

Social media is an internet-based tool used by online participants for communication purposes. These communication patterns are seen in the conversational nature of the tool, creating and sharing audio-visual information and web content. There seem to be signals of socialisation features among users. However, these factors are not so clear as there are complex connections of activities among users online. Some definitions point to these media as developed for social purposes, but the indicators are unclear. This section of the literature review looks at various aspects of social media and how it enhances users' social activities that promote socialisation.

| Social media has been defined in many ways. Chan-Olmsted [et al.](#), [Cho](#), and [Lee](#) (2013) explained social media as a group of applications with standard features and contents developed through the Internet and used online. According to Taprial and Kanwar (2012), social media is an online technology that involves sharing content among users. It is described as a collection of digital platforms promoting social relations through online interactions. Manning (2014) elaborated that social media is a web-based platform where

people interact. Ackland and Tanaka (2015) defined it as a web platform that promotes communication by generating and sharing content, ideas, and information among users on the internet through the use of computers. The implication of these definitions for the current study is the social use of the platform rather than its technological aspect. The technological aspect seems to be a means of transmission through which the interface works. This can be deduced from Taprial and Kanwar's definition (2012), which describes it as an application that enhances the creation and sharing of content among online users. This assertion has been supported by Kietzmann et al. (2011), who explained that social media's functions include linking and connecting people and providing information for users. These functions of social media facilitate the creation of online social networks, likely to have originated from physical social networks. It was also described as a web-based platform. Wolf et al. (2018), observed that social media uses both applications and websites. The web is defined as a network platform spanning all connected devices to consume and remix data from multiple choices (Allen, 2009).

Social media are all digitally created using Web 2.0 technology for social and human purposes. It is rich in media content and uses notifications to disseminate information. Notifications from sites can be accessed on both mobile phones and desktop computers. So, social media is a digital tool that complements the characteristics of face-to-face interaction, which is social motivation. As an interactive medium, social media refers to the various ways in which people process and exchange knowledge over the internet. It is designed to communicate and connect with users in a way non-interactive media cannot.

Zeitel-Bank and Tat (2014) expatiated on other basics that define social media. According to him, social media includes interaction among people where exchanges, sharing and creating of content occur on virtual platforms. The interaction on social media goes beyond the one-to-one type of communication. However, it expands on one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many types of communication, which means that many people can be reached and decisions can be made within a short time. Social media has emerged as a subset of information technology in a way that increases the circulation of information. Information technology has impacted the communication of individuals, organisations and even societies. These impacts have driven the direction of rendering services, receipt of information, and societal interaction, and they are rigorous.

Social media is used in social terms to explain its sociability purposes. That is to say that it is used for sociability purposes. They are promoting mutual interactions among many people and setting them up for a common purpose in an unintentional manner. This can be seen in the distinct features of social media tools. First, many types have been revealed, including social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, MySpace, Snapchat, etc. Emails, Texts, Blogs, connection sites and others were stated by Boyd and Ellison (2007). Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) mentioned Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, MySpace, and Yahoo Messenger as the favourite types of communication among students in Ghana. One common feature of the cited types is that they allow for two-way communications, sending and receiving messages. This attribute of social media distinguishes it from the traditional media type that could use one-to-many or many-to-one communication styles.

#### 2.4.2 Types of Social Media social media

Different types of social media are used all over the world. Their selection has been affected by the satisfaction needed by the user and what they offer. Manning (2014)

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identified some common and popular forms of social media, but these types are not popular in Ghana (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015). The types have been categorised based on how they are used.

Manning (2014) identified blogs as social media, which are very common in the Western world. They are also common in Ghana and are used to discuss issues related to politics, entertainment, fashion, and sports (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015). Blogs are designed by creative writers who use them to disseminate information on many topics. Entertainment news discusses artists, actors, actresses, musicians and fashion designers. It is a web page created by individuals and sometimes groups to share information with many people over the internet, ranging from politics to fashion and even entertainment. People who create blogs are sometimes called bloggers. A blogger makes and posts ideas on a chosen topic to share with other interested people. Blogs are updated frequently with the latest or current information. The post then generates interaction between participants and the blogger. Feedback is received on a forum among all interested parties, and discussions are opened on the topic. Some stories on blogs can lead to serious debate, so sometimes, to limit participants and protect the information and for the sake of identification, some blog sites demand log accounts. Presentations on the blogs come from many parts of the world, and their accessibility is not limited to any specific region. Bloggers worldwide can post things on their sites, which are available online.

Social networking sites (SNS) are websites and applications that are actively interactive (Ellison & Boyd, 2013). It communicates with people through the internet and with the help of mobile phones and computers. It usually has a profile, a list of connections (friends, family relations, known and unknown people), and functional abilities to traverse connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2013). The standard social networks people use are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, [MySpace Myspace](#), Friendster, Hi 5, and Ahmad (2011). However, Markwei and Appiah (2016) found from their research that Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Twitter are the standard social media used by young people in Ghana. Ocansey, Ametepe, and Oduro (2016) mentioned Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Instagram, Snapchat, Google+, and Twitter as students' standard social networking sites. Markwei and Appiah (2016) identified WhatsApp as the popular social network site used by adolescents in their study. The designation of a profile is a shared feature of social networking sites, which is the creation of a digital identity used to identify members. The user creates a unique identity with some demographic information for easy identification. Information provided by users may be accurate or not, depending on the individual. Since there are many users, people are influenced by what others do. In recent times, technology has advanced to the level where profiles can be updated as much as the user wants. Markwei and Appiah (2016) and Ocansey, Ametepe and Oduro (2016) found from their research that adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 years are using social networking sites and that 78% to 90% of this group own some profile on SNS. Facebook and WhatsApp seem to be the most popular platforms, such as Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, Instagram, Skype, Snapchat, and Yahoo Messenger.

Electronic mail is a social media type used for sending and receiving messages by logging onto an account. They are available on the World Wide Web (WWW) and provided by internet service providers. To a large extent, emails have replaced the system of posting letters through the post office. Organisations use it as an official means of communication within staff. Individuals can also create email accounts to receive and send information. Emails are used for sending and receiving messages. Just like a letter used on a personal level, only the owner can see the contents. However, a group forum for discussion is allowed. The addresses of owners are categorised and saved for future use. This medium has not been

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identified in most of the literature as being used by adolescents in Ghana. However, it has been identified as one of the requirements for creating accounts on the SNSs.

### 3. **METHODOLOGYS**

The fundamental set of expectations that guide research is a philosophical assumption (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The epistemological basis of the approach is social constructivism. The social constructivist is of the view that people seek understanding in the social environment they live in (Creswell, 2014). Numerous realities in this study were constructed through interaction between the researchers and the participants. There were the multiple social realities of adolescents' traditional and virtual socialisation through social media. Through the information given by the participants, realities were studied. A discourse between the researcher and participants in this study created new realities after interpreting and analysing the data collected. There was a need to capture the experiences of virtual socialisation resulting from social media use.

The qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. The researchers, through exploration, learn from participants in their natural environment, thereby offering the chance to see issues from the view of participants rather than from the researcher's view (Creswell, 2012). This is very important because it reduces manipulation of the natural setting, there is no control of behaviour, and there is no imposition on the participants. In this instance, the effect of adolescent social media use on socialisation can best be studied in the social environment where traditional socialisation occurs. In order to ascertain the processes of virtual socialisation, it was imperative to study how adolescents use social media. This environment offered the study the chance to ascertain how adolescents' use of social media sites affects their socialisation and behaviour.

This study employed a case study design to explore how social media usage affects adolescents' traditional socialisation and social behaviour in Somanya.

The setting of the study is Somanya, the capital town of Yilo Krobo Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana, which was created on 6th February 2012 (Population and Housing Census, 2021). The population of Yilo Krobo Municipal, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, is 122,705, representing 3.3% of the total Eastern Region population. Males constitute 59,656, and females represent 63,049. In 2013, Somanya had a settlement population of 20,596 people. Somanya encompasses a collection of smaller communities around a bigger one because several farming communities surround the town to the north. For this study, areas from Trom to Sawyer have been considered. Out of the total population of this area, children aged 12 years, representing 43.5%, use mobile phones (Housing Census, 2020). There are two Senior High Schools in Somanya: Yilo Krobo Senior High School and Somanya Secondary Technical High School. One must understand their cultural practices to study the effects of social media use on adolescents' social behaviour in Somanya. Somanya populace offers an environment where it is easy to observe the people's traditional socialisation and understand how social media use's effects on adolescents are emerging. Also, the availability of adolescents who could be accessed quickly and interviewed formed a basis for the study in this area.

The population of the study was adolescents who were students in Somanya. There are two Senior High Schools in Somanya, namely, Somanya Technical School and Yilo Krobo Senior High School. The total population of students in the two schools are 2,150. There are 2,000 students in Yilo Krobo Senior High School and 150 in Somanya Technical School. The target population refers to the specific group of individuals or elements a researcher is interested in

studying and drawing conclusions about (Babbie, 2016). It is the group that the researchers wants want to make inferences about based on the data collected from a sample of that population. Students from Somanya Technical Senior High and Yilo Krobo Senior High Schools were the target population. This population consists of adolescents from Somanya who use social media.

The accessible population comprises individuals or elements from the larger target population that can be easily reached, contacted and included in the study (Babbie, 2016). It is the group from which the researcher can realistically draw a sample for their research study. Practically, students from Yilo Krobo Senior High School made up the study's sample since it might not be feasible to include everyone from the target population due to time constraints and other logistical challenges. Adolescents from this school are representative of the accessible population and, by extension, the target population. This research set out to study the effects of social media use on adolescents' socialisation and social behaviour in Yilo Krobo Senior High School. Thus, the study focused on the adolescents in that school. The characteristics that identified the population included adolescents who use social media frequently through mobile phones, personal computers, and commercial internet access shops and are students in these two schools. The accessible population was comprised of third-year students, who included both males and females. The sample for this study was conveniently chosen from the third-year students. Third-year students were intentionally selected because they use social media for various reasons. The sample was selected from among students because most of them fall within the age bracket stipulated in the research and because they are residents of the study setting. Twenty students out of the total population were selected for the study. The sample included 11 girls and nine boys.

Convenience sampling was used to select the study's sample. Neuman (2013) explained that it is a convenient way to gather data for research. This sampling technique involves available and willing participants. The technique was appropriate for this study due to the participants' geographical proximity, availability at the time of the study, and willingness to participate.

Due to geographical proximity, the participants were sampled from students at Yilo Krobo High School from 3 classes. As of the time of data collection, the students were in school, so they were available for the study. Also, they were willing to participate in the study when the researcher approached them. These students have been using social media, and subsequently, they socialise online. In addition to these motives, the students are people from Somanya who have gone through traditional socialisation from childhood, so they know the norms of this society.

Many of these students who use social media can provide the in-depth knowledge and experience needed to answer the research questions. Twenty students out of the 2150 adolescents were selected. The 20 students were selected to participate in the study because they were available, willing and had enough time to participate. Since the selection was mostly done on the school premises, the 20 readily available students during data collection were selected. The researcher avoided participants who were unwilling to partake because the population was homogeneous, so any students qualified to be selected.

Although the sample was selected from the school the interview sessions were usually done after class hours. Out of the 20 participants selected, 17 were boarders, and 3 were day students. Only 3 of the day students were selected because the day students approached declined to partake in the study, so the number of willing participants was involved. The boarders were interviewed on the school premises, while the day students were interviewed at

various homes. The study involved the boarders because they use social media at home. These students could give the information needed because they use social media most at home and are not concerned with school work. All 20 participants were interviewed, and issues that needed further discussion were noted for the focus group discussion.

This study's data collection instruments were interview guides for one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion checklist. Five of the students were selected for the focused group discussion. This study intended to interview participants with diverse backgrounds. Since focus group discussion brings more participants together, it provides the opportunity to gather participants with multiple perspectives. The 5 participants simultaneously provided multiple realities from diverse backgrounds, which fostered discussions. The researcher observed and noticed participants eloquently explaining the discussed issues during the one-on-one interview. These participants went out of their way to bring issues to the fore, which were later discussed in the focus group. The focus group was selected from this group of participants. The 5 participants selected had different experiences, knowledge, and attitudes, which led to a more comprehensive understanding of the research subject.

Trustworthiness or rigour of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study. In each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers (Amankwaa, 2016). Many qualitative researchers accept the criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These criteria include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The researchers employed strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to increase the trustworthiness of the study's findings. These criteria include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

The data was audiotaped and needed to be transcribed into written text. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder for the sake of consistency in analysing the data. Recordings from the participants generated a large amount of text. On completing the interview of participants, the data was transcribed.

The participants were given pseudonyms for the sake of anonymity. However, their responses were attached to their pseudo names for easy referral to information. The data was analysed from the different responses of participants to create multiple realities from the themes generated and interpreted in the context of the participants' views. This was done based on the interview and the focus group discussions. The responses were broken down into logical facts that explained the concepts of the phenomenon under study. The interpretation of the data was done considering the environment of the study, which is the natural setting of the occurrence of the phenomenon. The analysis was done using Weft QDA version 1.0.1 (2017). The software assisted in terms of coding, identification of patterns, generation of categories, and creation of themes from the data. This was the final phase of the data analysis.

Ethically, none of the participants were forced to participate in the study. During the interview sessions, the participants were allowed to select their time and a convenient place, and those who wanted to be interviewed later at home were attended to as expected.

#### **4. FINDINGS**

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the common types of social media used by adolescents in their socialisation process. Participants' responses and interview feedback gave valuable insights into the study's guiding question. The data provided valuable information

about using social media as a communication tool for social interaction. In this section, the findings from the data collected are presented with supporting evidence, including quotations and participant feedback. The presentation is done under themes derived from the data and put into sub-themes for easy discussion and understanding. Quotes from students were included to illustrate examples of their views about the themes.

#### **4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants**

This research focused on common types of social media used by adolescents in their socialisation process in Somanya in the Yilo Krobo District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. A category of adolescents needed to be selected for the study. In selecting participants, the factors considered included their sex, age and the device used to access social media; all of these together constituted the study's demographic factors.

Twenty students, representing 100%, were selected for the study. Nine were males, representing 45% of the participants, whilst 11 females represented 55%. Their ages ranged from 15 to 19. Two participants each represented the ages 15, 16, and 19, 10% of the total participants. Eight out of the 20 were 17 years old, and three were 18 years old, which adds up to 20 participants. The age range of the participants depicted adolescents of school-going ages who use social media.

The device used by participants to access social media was also considered, as this determined the frequency of media usage. Nineteen participants reported using mobile phones to access social media, whilst one reported using a laptop and mobile phone. This means that all the participants used their mobile phones to access social media; this represented 100% of the study participants. This finding is consistent with that of Ocansey *et al.*, Ametepé and Odure (2016), whose study found that 72% of their senior high school and university participants used smartphones to access social media, and 56% also used laptops to access social media.

All 20 (100%) participants were involved in the face-to-face interview, while five out of the 20 were selected for a focus group discussion. Eleven females and 9 (45%) males were interviewed face to face, and 3 (15%) males and 2 (10%) females constituted the focus group. This selection was based on the students' willingness to participate in the study and their frequency and consistency in social media usage.

#### **4.2. Social Media Types and Activities**

One of the objectives of this study was to identify the types of social media used by adolescents in Somanya. To achieve this objective there was the need to ascertain the activities that occurred on social media as this determined the types of social media. Hitherto, the activities on social media were identified through the varieties used by adolescents. The activities on social media were grouped into sub-themes, which are discussed further. The factors underlying activities on social media include types of social media, social media content, creation and sharing of content, types of communication, communication patterns and communication protocols. The information below describes the various types of social media that support ongoing online activities.

Participants were asked about the types of social media that they used, and the responses indicated that 6 out of the 20 participants used WhatsApp and Facebook. Seven of them use WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Two use WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; four indicated they used WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snap Chat and Instagram, whilst one uses WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter,

LinkedIn and Tinder. Participants were asked how the chosen types determined their usage of social media for communication. The responses have been classified based on the types of social media participants mentioned and how they explained their usage. The report showed that participants used Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat and YouTube. Below are their responses:

### **Facebook**

Participant K (female; age 18) said: With my Facebook account, I send and receive friend requests and post videos, photos, comments, questions, and answers. I also post stories of myself and others who share blogs of interest. I can do many things on Facebook, such as instant and private messaging. I connect with friends from my past and even day-by-day friends. I also use it to post locations, suggest friends and share photos. There are some adverts on Facebook, so marketing activities are ongoing there. I purchased items through a Facebook advert, which was easy.”

Participant L (female; age 17) also corroborated: Yes, I ‘like’ the pictures of my friends and my own pictures and ‘share’ other content-related information on Facebook. I also comment on what people post on their walls. I also joined groups related to my niche, and this helped me interact with others and new followers.

When asked about what ‘like’, ‘share’ and ‘comment’ means on this type of media, these are some of the explanations they gave:

Participant M (female; age 17) said: Like is clicking on the thumbs-up icon, whilst Share is clicking on the share button. With comments, you write your opinion in the comment space.

Participant L (female; age 17) further explained that the ‘likes’ are the thumbs-up emoji on Facebook that show whether a person likes something there. So, you have to click on that emoji for your view to count.

You can share information by clicking on the share button and choosing the location you want to share it. For commenting, you write your views in the comment space and post them for the public to read. This happens on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

### **WhatsApp**

All the participants also mentioned WhatsApp, and some explained how they use it.

Participant R (female, age 17) explained how she uses WhatsApp: I use WhatsApp to send instant messages and voice messaging. WhatsApp is also for video calls, photos, and video sharing. It promotes group formation, and I can chat with anybody anywhere in the country and the world. I am on many group chats on WhatsApp. It uses less data and allows for multiple chats among my friends and me. WhatsApp is fast and easy to use.

Participant J (female; age 17) said: I use WhatsApp for messaging, video calls... and share photos and videos to my contacts.

Participant T (male, age 17) said: I do multiple chats on WhatsApp by chatting with many friends at the same time. WhatsApp is mainly to chat and post status of myself because it uses less data and works at places where network is not even good.

### **Twitter**

Participants also cited Twitter and Instagram. Seven participants said they use Twitter while eight of them also said they use Instagram. In their description of these types of social media they expressed their views on how they are used.

Participant T (male; age 17) said: With Instagram I post stories using videos and photos. I have created highlights of my education on Instagram which is like a diary in a way. I also follow, comment and share other users' information.

Participant S (male; age 17) expressed his view on Twitter and stated: I send short posts and I receive some as well and follow people on Twitter.

### **YouTube**

This is what some of the participants have to say about YouTube.

Participant P (female; age 17) explained that: YouTube is for watching videos. Everything that I want to learn about has videos available on YouTube. YouTube uses only videos for various reasons including teaching and learning. I watch videos on YouTube to learn many things.

Participant Q (female; age 18) also said: YouTube uses videos to disseminate information on social media. I visit YouTube to search for videos on cooking so that I can learn how to cook. There are times that I need information on some issues I want to learn about so I go there to search for videos that can answer my questions. I also watch movies and music videos there to entertain myself.

### **Snap chat**

Participant N (female; age, 17) explained that: Snapchat comes with filters that apply makeup to your face. These filters include eyelashes, eyebrows flowers, crowns, spectacles wigs and others. When you log onto the platform it loads the filters, then you choose your desired filter and take your pictures, like 'selfies' and group pictures. The same thing applies to videos too. Maybe if you want a song, you can add it while taking the video. So, while the music is playing you can record whatever you want to video. Snapchat is popular among us adolescents because of the photos and videos which we use to communicate.

### **Tinder**

Participant E (male; age, 18) explicated that: Well, on Tinder you create a profile; you connect with others and share various information and visuals. Tinder is used to find and engage with other people that share similar interests and are located in the same region as you are. You can filter people by age, gender, and location. In using Tinder just hook up with random users you are interested and start a conversation. The whole application is designed for one-on-one conversations. You are shown a picture of a random person. If you would like to start a conversation with him/her, you just swipe the picture to the right. If no, then swipe left and look for another picture. If both, you and the person on the other side of a screen swipe to the right, then you have a match and can start a conversation.

#### 4.2.1. Generation of social media contents

The contents of social media are the means through which messages are circulated on the social media. These contents are generated for communication among users and by users. Social Media combines verbal, non-verbal and face-to-face communication virtually. The participants hinted that they have all shared and received content on social media. They were asked about the content that they had generated. All the participants mentioned chats, videos and pictures as the contents that circulate on social media. Five participants (I, T, M, Q and F) cited audio, and seven (Q, R, P, O, N, J, K) participants also revealed the posting of Bible and motivational quotations as contents generated in addition to the previous types mentioned. These contents are circulated in ways that define activities on social media. The participants mentioned ways through which they generate the content for communication. Participant K mentioned taking pictures, recording personal and social videos, and recording audio for transmission. Fifteen out of the twenty participants mentioned taking pictures and recording videos. Five mentioned that they prefer to send more audio during chats for better clarification, especially when they cannot express themselves in the English language. Users create and share social media content (Ellison & Boyd, 2013). Participants explained further how they go about these activities and these are some of their responses:

Participant J (female, age 17) explained that I get some of the videos from other platforms and save them. Sometimes, I create my videos and take 'selfies' of myself to post on WhatsApp.

Participant I (female, age 17) asserted that I create my social media content. I take lots of pictures just in case I need to post some. I also record videos of events and sometimes everything that interests me.

The participants explained how they use these contents: commenting, sharing, liking, messaging and tweeting. All the participants indicated they performed one or more of these activities using content. Fifteen participants said they commented, liked and shared posts, sent messages and watched videos on WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Five participants hinted that they like tweeting in addition to the activities mentioned above. Social media contents are shared, sent and posted using photos, videos and audio. The messages that are communicated on this media are sent using photos and videos. Social media activities are characterised by communication through creating and sharing content among users (Boyd & Ellison, 2013). However, the different types of social media used determined the content generated.

#### 4.2.2. Communication patterns

Social media communication is not face-to-face as it is in real life. It, however, inculcates aspects of real-life conversation through video calls, although it is heavily limited to messaging and chatting through a transmission interface on the internet. The social media has generated virtual group of conversers who spend time online discussing and relating with themselves in several ways. It was mentioned that they connect, link and interact with other users online, as explained by participant F who said: To connect with friends who are not so close I use WhatsApp... Participant J asserted that:

Conversation is one of the common activities that I and my friends in Somanya engage in on the social media.

Participant S said:

We send messages and receive replies instantly through WhatsApp and sometimes Facebook.

They explained how they engage each other in this activity online.

Participant A (female, age 15) said: I chat with my friends online. Sometimes, I video call those people I miss.

Participant H (male, age 18) said he uses WhatsApp to connect with friends who are not close. His replies to messages on WhatsApp are prompt and do not delay unless there are issues with the network.

Participant I (female, age 17) said: I message people on Facebook using Facebook Messenger, but with this one, the messages are replied to when people come online to link up with old friends and find new friends.

Participant N (female; age 17) shared: I find WhatsApp to be a convenient tool for staying connected with friends and keeping tabs on others. Our discussions cover a wide range of topics, from things my friends bring up during our chats to news about mutual acquaintances. Instead of making calls, I prefer to chat online. It's not only cost-effective, but also allows me to send pictures and videos to better illustrate my points.

Conversations on social media are characterised by using videos, pictures, messaging and calls to talk. These are not normal communication means, but they are peculiar to social media because this process is supported by technology that has created an interface for online social interaction. This finding is consistent with the finding of Ackland and Tanaka (2015), who found that social media had been created using a technology that fosters interaction among many people, creating social communities virtually. This communication pattern uses standard symbols for users of a particular social media platform. Its effect can be seen in how the content is generated- preparation towards content generation. The symbolism in this communication is in the meaning attached to the symbols (photos and videos) of interaction. For instance, participant P explained that stories are told on Instagram using only photos. The arrangement of the photos explains it all. Selected photos are used to create videos which are played to tell stories.

#### **4.2.2.1. Virtual interaction**

All the participants indicated the use of social media combinations, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook. They combined WhatsApp and Facebook with Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Twitter. All the adolescents interviewed hinted that they use social media for chatting, receiving and sending messages. Participants (B, S, T, E and M) mentioned that they send messages to many people simultaneously and can receive many messages from many people at once. They also mentioned that they can simultaneously use the different Apps on social media. Participant B (male; age 19) reiterated that he can use WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter concurrently because he switches between the Apps and does different things on different Apps at the same time. Participant S (male; age 17) said virtual interaction allows people to cross boundaries and creates interaction patterns that are not restricted. Thus, he can talk to many people in any part of the world.

#### **4.2.3. Communication Protocols**

Participants indicated that Social Network Sites (SNS) have atypical rules of engagement that allow people to use them. According to participant (D), one necessity for accessing social media is the construction of profiles for user identification by users and the interface. As a

result, all users of this media were required to create profiles before being authorised to use it. Participants explained what profile creation entails.

Participant E (male; age 18) explained that you would be required to upload a photo and write your username and password where necessary. With Facebook, you need all these things, but with Twitter, all you need is a profile photo, your name, and your phone number or e-mail address.

Participants also discussed the ethics of social media as a protocol. Participant B mentioned that face-to-face interaction demands some courtesies that pave the way for the outset of communications. As such, participants were required to explain how they approached people on social media for conversations (conversation protocols). Participants (H, E, and G) gave their views on this topic.

Participant H (male; 18) explained that communication protocols are the code of ethics binding rapport among members of the same media platform.

Participant E (male, age 18) believed it was the starting point of conversation; he said it was the process of initiating conversations with people online.

Participant G (male; age 18) said the protocols for a conversation on social media involve the means of starting a chat with someone online; for instance, you can start by using polite words such as please, hello, hi, hey, and another statement to introduce yourself and start conversations.

The participants reported on their adherence to the protocols they talked about. Participant B disclosed that he did not invade other users' privacy, but he broke the protocol when he urgently needed to talk to someone. He said it was only on a few occasions that he did that. Participant D adduced that he does not barge into people on social media; he typically sends greetings first, and depending on the response from the other party, he would either continue with the chat or stop.

Participant E (male; age 18) said: I chat with people whether they are ready or not because there are some people who will never give you the audience that you require. Sometimes, when the people I want to chat with are older than me, I just leave a message so that I would not offend the person, but as for my mates, I 'hi' them until they reply to my message.

Participant F (female; age 16) said: Well, I do not force myself on people on WhatsApp; I wait till they are ready to talk to me by sending polite words and greetings.

## **5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study sought to answer the research question: What are the common types of social media adolescents use in Somanya? The significant findings highlight the following: The study found that adolescents in Somanya used Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat chat and Tinder. However, the commonly used types are Facebook and WhatsApp. These types determined the activities and communication patterns on social media.

### **5.1 Types of Social Media Used by Adolescents**

This section of the report answers the question of the types of social media adolescents use. In the first chapter, the research question was categorising the types of social media

adolescents use in Somanya. The categories were identified and analysed based on the information provided by the participants. Though the study set out to find categories of social media, it turned out that it could not be identified easily without ascertaining its types. The types were identified through the online activities performed by adolescents. The study revealed that online activities determined the type of social media to use. The types determined the communication protocol and online contents generated, which also revealed the communication pattern, and all these led to virtual interaction. Thus, the social media types showed the categories adolescents mostly preferred.

### **5.1.1 Types of social media**

The purpose of creating social media was mainly for social communication. This type of communication has been technologically designed to resemble social interaction in the real world (Ackland & Tanaka, 2015). However, social media has been classified into many types based on their various purposes of use (Boyd & Ellison, 2013). The activities on social media are mainly geared towards interaction through sharing information. This is accomplished through photographs, films, texts, and audio. Generally, utilising the right apps for such posts enhances the sharing and posting such messages. One of the determinants of activities on social media is the types used.

The study found that adolescents in Somanya used Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, YouTube, LinkedIn and Tinder. Six of the twenty participants use WhatsApp and Facebook. Seven of them use WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Two use WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; four indicated the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, whilst one uses WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and Tinder. This finding shows that adolescents in this study use more than one type of social media. This shows they do multiple online activities when using social media and shuffle between the Apps to share content. This situation has been termed multi-tasking: it is the situation whereby adolescents combine online and offline activities and shuffle between social media Apps.

The types of social media adolescents use in this study are predominantly Social Network Sites (SNS). This finding is consistent with the findings of Boyd and Ellison (2013), and Ocansey, Ametepe and Oduro (2016), who found that most adolescents in their study used social networking sites. They named these Apps Social Network Sites because they support online social interaction like face-to-face. Social media use photos, videos and audio to share information. WhatsApp is a messaging App that combines photos, videos and audio to share information. Facebook and Instagram use photos, videos, and text messages to share information. Snapchat and YouTube use videos, whereas Twitter and LinkedIn combine photos and text messages to interact. In this study, these apps have been categorised into interactive, combinative, and webbing apps.

This study also found that none of the twenty participants used only one type of social media. However, all the twenty participants used Facebook and WhatsApp in addition to other social media types. The results revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp are common among adolescents. This analysis confirms the conclusion of Ametepe, Ocansey and Oduro (2016) and Markwei and Appiah (2016) that Facebook and WhatsApp are popular social media types adolescents use in Ghana. This result confirmed the presence of adolescents on social media, according to Dapaah (2015), in addition to the types and how they use them. The results also showed that the online activities performed mainly by adolescents were posting pictures, sharing videos and messaging, indicating social interaction. The data

suggests that adolescents use interactive social media types, and it is evident that they prefer interactive social media because of the content they share.

### **5.1.2. Communication protocols**

The results from the participants showed that there are communication protocols which check users' activities. Participants explained that communication protocols are the rules governing interaction on social media. Media ethics and required processes, such as profile creation, fall under these protocols. This finding confirms the results of Ocansey, Ametepe, and Oduro (2016), who found that adolescents in Ghana have profiles on social media. However, this study has shown that creating profiles is part of online protocols. This finding is inconsistent with the finding of Ellison and Boyd (2013), who discovered that social media profiles are used for identification purposes. The finding of this study is different due to the constant changes and additions to social media. Explanations of protocols also extend to how adolescents decently start conversations and discussions. For social interaction, it is a way of getting the attention of other users when an individual wants to engage others in conversation. This study, however, found that in addition to this information, users have to conform to media ethics. Although most people do not check this, the various types of social media provide ways for users to enforce ethics.

The results from this study indicated that some adolescents do not follow online communication etiquette by requesting permission from other social media users to communicate with them. Invariably, because of social media features, people tend to communicate anyway, whether their counterparts are ready or not. This situation is sometimes considered to be disrespectful, considering the social norms of Ghanaian society. This finding suggests that because social media interaction is not face-to-face, it is possible for users to break communication ethics, thereby offending other users.

The data results indicate that its users determine their activities on social media based on the types of social media used. The type used determines the type of posts. WhatsApp and Facebook are commonly used to send texts, audio, and other media, such as photos and videos. Snapchat and Instagram use photos and videos only, whilst Twitter and Tinder combine texts and photos. Social media usage introduced participants to boundless interaction on media without boundaries, thereby opening communication with countless people. Participants reported that they sometimes break the communication ethics by invading the privacy of other users. Some of the activities on social media revealed in this study are sending messages, posting and sharing information, photos, videos and texts. This study found that adolescents are active in online activities. They performed activities such as sharing photos and videos and posting pictures. This finding means that adolescents are active online members; they contribute to online activities. The finding is in line with Manning's (2014) finding that there are active and passive social media users. This finding is essential in determining how adolescents use social media and the type of content they create on it. The activities on social media show that this media combines two types of interactions: mediated and mediated-quasi-interaction. Thompson (1995) explained that mediated and mediated-quasi-interaction use limited symbolic cues and are available in time and space. However, it can be oriented towards specific others and an indefinite range of people. This contention supports this finding because social media activities are devoid of symbolic cues, and messages can be sent from one person to many people on a one-on-one basis.

### **5.1.3 Social media content**

Social media has been described as a place for sharing content. Taprial and Kanwar (2012) said it is an application that enhances online content sharing. This study found that social

media contents are the things posted and shared among users online. The results show that adolescents posted pictures of themselves and others, videos, texts and audio for informational, recreational, business and social purposes on social media. This result suggests that adolescents use social media for other purposes aside from interaction, and it confirms the findings of Kietzmann et al. (2011), who mentioned in their study that social media is used for business, sending information and social interaction. These tools serve as the supporting system for distributing social media activities. Boyd and Ellison (2013) explained that adolescents prefer social media types that use pictures because they are easy to use and serve their purposes. The social media content seen in this study includes videos, photos, audio and text messages.

The result shows that participants needed pictures and videos they could post on social media. The participants showed frequency in taking pictures and finding relevant videos that could be shared. Fifteen out of the twenty participants mentioned taking pictures frequently and recording videos. Five mentioned that they prefer to send more audio during chats for better clarification, mainly when they cannot express themselves well in English. This means that adolescents are developing behaviours consistent with the demands of content creation on social media. Implicitly, they have attached importance to social media interaction. Adolescents are mainly ready to take pictures and videos anytime as much as they can to post them online anytime. Their social development implies that social media gives them a chance to be creative in online interaction and also suffices their psychological need for satisfying physical appearance. This finding is in line with Steinberg's (2005) conclusion, which stated that the physical outlook of adolescents is important to them, so they pay attention to their physical appearance. This social media content generation situation gives adolescents reasons to take care of their physical appearance. This data has not just shown the presence of adolescents on social media as presented by Asare-Donkoh (2018), Markwei and Appiah (2016) and the Ministry of Information (2017) but has established how they are using the different types to interact online.

#### **5.1.4 Communication Patterns**

The communication patterns on social media are one-to-many, many-to-one, many-to-many and one-to-one connections. It also uses visuals such as videos, recorded audio and photos of users, which are disseminated on the internet through technological devices such as mobile phones. This finding expatiates on the types of interactions identified by Thompson (1995). Although social media does not fall under any types of social interaction cited, it integrates face-to-face interaction, mediated interaction, and mediated-quasi interaction, considering their characteristics. The data gathered shows that social media is not bound by time and distance; it can use multiple symbolic cues to send videos and pictures and is conversational. Thus, messages can be sent from one person to many people, and many people can send a reply to that message to one person using a combination of texts, photos and videos. Social media uses multi-sympic cues due to the form of communication patterns it inculcates. Certain words (chat, send, receive) have been identified as being used repeatedly among adolescents interviewed. This indicates intention and focus on communication that does not involve face-to-face encounters. Boyd and Ellison (2013) mentioned that social media users must create profiles to join the platform.

The results show that social media uses symbols in online social interaction. Social media comprises communication patterns that do not conform to physical communication. The communication pattern on social media is not physically represented (Ahn, 2011). Its reality is seen in the symbolic content created to share information and messages among users. It is interactive yet it is invisible. People cannot see the other partner they may be communicating

with. It uses nonphysical meetings on platforms that are supported by technology. Many people can meet at a time without moving physically and the use of social media has advanced this.

All the participants mentioned photos, videos and audio as content they generated to share on social media. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ahn (2011), who elaborated that social media circulates content such as graphics and motion pictures to disseminate information. From this finding, the communication patterns on social media have been stimulated through pictures, videos, texts and audio, which are sent via technological platforms. This finding also shows that communication on social media removed the distance limitation among users; thus, participants did not need to travel to interact with others. Another communication pattern found in this study involves attaching meaning to photos and videos (symbols) without words. Thus, symbols are used in communication in this media. This finding confirms Thompson's assertion (1995) and further explains that social media is a mediated-quasi-interaction type that uses symbolic cues to narrow the distance between users. Participants understood the meanings of videos and photos shared and reacted appropriately. For instance, Participant P explained that stories are told on Instagram using only photos. The arrangement of the photos explains it all. Selected photos are used to create videos which are played to tell stories.”

This brings to the fore the reality of symbolic interaction, where communication is based on the meanings attached to signals in communication and hence brings out the importance attached to the means of communication (Aksan, 2006). Although the symbolic interaction theory focused on face-to-face interaction among people, the inception of social media has added other means of interaction without physical meetings. Symbolically, communication means (videos and pictures) are used on social media to disseminate information that can reach many people at a time and carry the messages intended to the right source. At the same time, they create interactive platforms for communication. It also fosters one-to-one communication, which is protected on this media. For adolescents in Somanya, this means of interaction is faster and better because their messages get to the right people. This study has extended the communication symbols to include the meanings of online interaction. This study found that social media users use symbols to make online communication interactive and realistic. Relatively, adolescents attached meaning to online communication symbols (photos and videos), making it a vital communication pattern.

### **5.1.5 Virtual interaction**

This study shows that participants interacted with people from far and near, resulting from virtual interaction. This type of communication allowed adolescents to interact with many people at the same time online. Participants (B, S, T, E and M) mentioned that they send messages to many people simultaneously and can receive many messages from many people at once. Participant B (male; age 19) hinted that he could use WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter concurrently because he switched between the apps and did different things on different apps at the same time. These situations have been made possible due to the invisible social media platforms that have no boundaries. The relational level allowed on social media is boundless; there are no fixed rules in terms of the number of people an individual can interact with at a time. This finding implies that adolescents cannot be monitored by anyone, especially while online. Who they interact with on social media is not clear, so it is difficult to correct any interactional anomaly. Coupled with this is the multi-purpose use of social media apps, which may take their attention away from activities in the real world. Virtual interaction occurs online.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The types of social media selected by adolescents were mainly social network sites. This study found that adolescents in Somanya use different social media types, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, LinkedIn and Tinder. Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular among the different types. This study revealed that content generated on social media depended on the type used. Adolescents selected the types based on the content they wanted to generate. These types were selected based on their activities on social media. Also, different communication patterns were identified due to the format of messages posted and shared. The types of social media determined the pattern of communication and the symbols used for communication. The use of social media led to social media socialisation. Adolescents use social media for peer influence, connectivity, communication, group activities, education, and research. It was discovered that the format of messages posted included text messages, photos, videos and audio, and these determined the interaction patterns online. The types of social media have created an abstract system of social interaction. It was established that friendship is the primary reason why adolescents use social media. Adolescents value friendship, so they accept their friends' suggestions to use social media.

Therefore, society members (parents, pastors, Imams, and teachers) must consider adolescents' social development paramount in socialising them. Given this, adolescents need to be counselled on social media and learn how to use it properly. Teachers should educate adolescents on the implications of misusing social media and its effects on their social development. This would guide them to make informed decisions on how to use this media.

In contributing to knowledge, this study has developed a guiding principle on how social media types socialise adolescents in Somanya. For adolescents to become online citizens on social media, they need to identify the types of social media to use, acquire the necessary digital skills, learn to perform activities with the acquired skills and integrate them onto the platform to perform online activities. This gives a clear picture of how social media socialised adolescents in Somanya. This study has also revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp are social media types that do not have control features to check how adolescents use them. This information would help other users to consider adolescents in terms of what they post online.

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