

Behaviour of students on social media sites : The Ghanaian Context

Nasir Koranteng Asiedu*, Donus Worlanyo Buadi**, Ebenezer Martin–Yeboah***

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 03 March 2022

Revised 12 August 2022

Accepted 20 September 2022

Keywords:

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour, Social Media, Technological Determinism, Students, Ghana

ABSTRACT

Behaviour on social media sites need to be clearly defined so that students would know the clear distinction between the acceptable and unacceptable acts they are supposed to exhibit whenever they get on social media platforms. With the adoption of the survey approach, this study randomly selected 204 students from two renowned universities in Ghana to participate in the study. Using the theory of Technological Determinism, the results of this study indicated that technology has the power to influence human behaviour in a positive and negative manner. The results also brought out the acceptable and unacceptable behaviour that should or should not be exhibited on social media sites by students. The study established the importance of the theory of Technological Determinism to media use. It also gave a vivid description of what is right and not right on social media sites.

1. Introduction

The evolution of the universe from one stage to the other is a natural phenomenon that needs to be embraced. This has gradually led to the development of the world which is now characterized by the use of sophisticated technologies in running and managing affairs (Hauer, 2017). The emergence of these sophisticated technologies in the form of personal communication devices and web 2.0 applications have all contributed in altering the way we behave, interact or communicate among ourselves in the society. The modern world from all indications depend largely on these technologies for its engagements and dealings (Thompson, 2017).

It is therefore, not surprising that, this advancement by the society has led to the advent of online communication platforms like social media sites which people all over the world extremely rely on in their day-to-day activities (Goodman-deane, et al., 2016). It must be acknowledged that

* Head, University Library, C.K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Upper East Region, Ghana (nasiedu@cktutas.edu.gh) (First and Corresponding Author)

** Head of Unit, Research Support, ATU Library, Accra Technical University, Greater Accra Region, Ghana (dwbuadi@atu.edu.gh) (co-author)

*** Assistant Librarian, Clients Services Department, Central Library, University of Cape Coast, Central Region, Ghana (emartiny@uwo.ca) (co-author)
International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology, 13(2): 071-088, 2023.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5865/IJKCT.2023.13.2.071>

the coming of these communication devices and applications have enhanced the structuring of the society thereby ensuring that the world becomes compact and complex. It is believed that, it has also influenced society's way of reasoning and way of life (Szabo, 2014).

As social beings, frequent usage and dependence on a communication application like social media in almost every facet of our lives definitely has its own repercussions either positively or negatively. Technology was created to aid in the social, economic and political dealings of people around the globe. It was to help reduce information sharing gap among people; enhance interactions and promote more social engagements but there seem to be a split on the good and bad of its role in shaping or dictating the social activities of people (Kaimal, Sajja, & Sasangohar, 2017).

Social media has been found to have positively impacted human social values, norms, and culture by aiding the process of socialization among others (Abbas, 2019; Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2017; Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi, 2015). For instance, Butt (2020) found that aside from leisurely use of social media such as from enjoying music, movies on YouTube to chatting and sharing via WhatsApp and Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, there is also the use of the platform for academic searches. However, of late, the ongoing narrative, points to how social media has adversely impacted students or the adolescent and young adult community. These ranges from an observed decrease in students' academic output (Hoffmann & Bublitz, 2017), worrying decline in offline socialization and communication skills (le Roux & Parry, 2017), as well as a burden on physical and mental health (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2019; Blachnio, et al., 2018).

According to recent and past surveys, the popularity of communication technologies has increased among the youth and adults. For instance, a survey conducted in Britain revealed that over 91% of British homes use smartphones (Dutton & Blank cited Goodman-Deane, et al., 2016). Similar survey conducted in the United States of America also showed that over 95% of Americans mostly teens use smartphones (Monica, Anderson, & Jingjing, 2018). In Africa, specifically Ghana, in 2002, 8% of Ghanaians were reported to own mobile phones but a survey conducted in 2014 indicated that 83% of Ghanaians now owned smartphones which they depend on from time to time to conduct their daily businesses (Bell, et al., 2015). The findings from these surveys show that the world is so attached to these devices that support the use of applications like social media. Social media is a web 2.0 application that ensures sharing, sending, receiving, communication and exchanging of files from one person to the other. It is one of the most well received technological applications of all times by the society (Hruska & Maresova, 2020). It should be noted that young adults and teenagers are the most ardent users of this communication technology (Asiedu & Badu, 2018). Additionally, Sutherland, et al. (2018) have noted that students start using social media in the early ages, with lots of them connecting with strangers thus raising concerns about the type of behaviour exhibited on social media sites right from that age to young adulthood.

While extant literature abounds with studies on students' rate of adoption and use of social media (Butt, 2020; Sharma, Joshi, & Sharma, 2016) and how these impact (positively or negatively) on them (Abbas, et al., 2019; Balakrishnan & Gan, 2019; Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2017; Hoffmann & Bublitz, 2017; le Roux & Parry, 2017), there is generally a dearth of research or empirical studies on what are considered as acceptable and unacceptable social media behaviours by students. Moreover, searches conducted on the internet returned with no literature on acceptable and unacceptable

behaviour of students on social media sites in Ghana. Students, as already stated, spend several hours on social media sites engaging in a number of activities that give them the needed gratification (Sharma, Joshi, & Sharma, 2016; Asiedu & Badu, 2018). However, the kind of activities they engage in, on social media sites lead to the exhibition of certain behaviours whether knowingly or unknowingly. This study attempts to find out and bring to the fore those behaviours students consider as acceptable and unacceptable on social media sites.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours students engaged in, on social media sites. For the purposes of this study, acceptable behaviour on social media sites would be defined as those actions that promote tolerance and respect while unacceptable behaviour on social media sites would be defined as those actions that seek to embarrass and cause low self-esteem among social media users.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- (a) To find out what students classify as acceptable and unacceptable behaviours exhibited on social media sites.
- (b) To examine the kind of activities students, engage in on social media sites.
- (c) To test the relationship between behaviour and motivation in social media use.

1.3 Research Questions

- (a) What are the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours exhibited on social media sites?
- (b) What kind of activities do students engage in on social media sites?
- (c) Is there any relationship between behaviour and motivation in social media use?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This paper is guided by the theory of Technological determinism. A term coined by Thorstein Veblen, an American sociologist and economist in the 1920s. Later in 1964, Marshall McLuhan became a leading proponent of this theory. The theory postulates that human actions, feelings and thoughts are influenced by technology which also has the power to shape or direct human behaviour in the society.

As the theory suggests, technologies are built by humans yet they tend to determine our way of life. In trying to throw more light on this theory, Marshall McLuhan in 1964, is known to have stated that “The medium is the message”, meaning much attention should be paid to the medium because it is the one carrying the message. In this case, the advent of the internet has created the platform for the emergence of social media sites. These are channels through which communication and other social activities occur. Moreover, these communication technologies have

the power to influence social interactions and social behaviour (Antonucci, Ajrouch, & Manalel, 2017). Furthermore, people's actions on social media sites need to be understood from a deterministic perspective so that one would be able to appreciate the good and bad of the exhibition of certain behavioural attitudes by consumers or users of social media sites (<https://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~goguen/courses/275f00/s2.html>).

It is also important that, this theory is situated in the context where the medium (social media) gives people the opportunity to not only interact but also to exhibit certain acceptable or unacceptable behaviours.

According to the theory the concept "determinism" could be viewed from either the angle of hard determinism or soft determinism. Hard or strong determinism is the believe that technology has the power or will to influence social activities by exerting a very powerful influence which makes it difficult for an individual to have control over the outcome. Soft or weak determinism unlike its counterpart suggests that although technology has a powerful will over individuals in the society, such power is passive and so one has the will to resist being controlled totally by the power of technology (McLeod, 2013).

As applied to this study, the theory has the potential to bring out a clear understanding of behaviour on social media sites and also bring to bear those acceptable and unacceptable actions exhibited on social media sites.

2. Literature Review

Overview of Social Media

Owing to the quest for connectedness and interconnectedness, the internet, together with devices and platforms connected to it have become essential in everyday life of the average person. Over three billion people are estimated to use social networking sites on regular basis with Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, and Skype being the most popular (Azizi, Soroush, & Khatony, 2019; Bauer & Schedl, 2019; Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015; WeAreSocial, 2018). The leaps and bounds of the Internet's impact in contemporary times has been facilitated by increased adoption of social media, especially by the youth (Alahmar, 2016; Guedes, et al., 2016). Hossain, et al. (2019) singled out university students as the population cohort mostly influenced by social media especially in the areas of collaboration, information sharing and information consumption. Students have been identified as a core group that uses social media since most of them are around the period of young adulthood which is characterized by the need to develop and maintain (new) social relationships (Lu & Hao, 2017; Ukomadu, 2018). In a study of 284 undergraduate students in Pakistan, Butt (2020) noted that students relied mostly on Facebook to connect with friends and discuss diverse topics than with their real-life friends. Similarly, in the observation of Butt (2020), social media platforms have impacted the lives of college/university students as seen in how online self-expression and self-presentation have rendered real-life offline friendships literally

becoming redundant. Aside from the fact that students spend up to ten hours a day on social media, Knight-McCord, et al. (2016) reported that in most cases, students use social media platforms for posting multimedia files than using professional social network platforms.

2.1 Defining Behaviour

Behaviour as a concept, is very broad. However, several attempts have been made by different authors to define and explain it. In the view of Bicard, Bicard, and The Iris Center (2012), behaviour refers to those actions that can be detected, measured and repeated. From a different perspective or view, behaviour is seen to be the alteration in the character of an entity with particular reference to the environment. Furthermore, any change that can be detected externally of an individual is known as behaviour. The kind of behaviour exhibited in the society by people could be viewed as acceptable or unacceptable, normal or abnormal depending on the norms of that particular society (Arturo, Norbert, & Julian, 1943). It should also be added that, behaviour is backed by motivation. It works as a facilitator on people by making it easier for them to freely exhibit certain types of actions or conducts (Harackiewicz, et al., 1997). For the purposes of this study behaviour would be defined as those acceptable and unacceptable actions or social activities users exhibit on social media sites.

2.2 Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior on Social Media Sites

Akubugwo and Burke (2013) conducted research among graduate students at Salford University. The mixed method approach was used in their study. The results of this study listed distasteful comments and harassing messages that lead to embarrassment as actions that are unacceptable on social media sites. As clearly observed, such acts, as indicated are still in existence on social media sites and highly exhibited by the youth of today. Such kind of behaviours are unacceptable and shows disrespect to the accepted norms and values of the society. Similarly, Hooper and Kalidas (2012) also conducted a study on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour on social networking sites among students using the qualitative research approach. The findings of this study showed that polite postings, tolerating the views of other users are those actions that should be termed as acceptable behavior on social media platforms. The same study conducted by Hooper and Kalidas (2012) also revealed that students agreed on the following as unacceptable actions on social media platforms; postings meant to embarrass other users, the use of rough or harsh language on the platform, disclosing private and personal information, invading the privacy and harassing other users on the platform. The youth have taken over social media and live most of their lives on the platform knowing that, that is the only place they can exhibit these unwanted behaviors contrary to the accepted societal values.

Additionally, Chretien, et al., (2009) confirmed in their study that students engage in such undesirable acts like, the use of profane language and posting of sexually explicit materials on social media platforms. Weisskirch and Delevi (2011) indicated that the introduction of the internet which in turn has led to the coming of social media sites has aided in the exhibition of unacceptable behaviours

like the creation, sharing and spreading of sexually explicit messages, pictures and videos. Additionally, the authors stated that this activity has become popular with the help of smart phones and other handheld devices. As much as one acknowledges the contributions made by these smart devices towards the enhancement of communication and sharing, they are also seen as the source of motivation for young adults to participate in all manner of activities on the online community with some leading to the display of unwanted behaviours. In the view of Zafarani and Liu (2014), social media has made it possible for users to exhibit such general behaviours like, posting, liking, commenting and making friends with so much ease. Ruiz-Junco (2011) shared similar view in a study and indicated that students engage in such activities like, playing games, tagging, posting, commenting, watching pictures and videos. Likewise, Jin, et al. (2013), posits that online social network activities include those social activities that users or consumers exhibit online. These activities include friendship creation, browsing people's profiles and commenting. Users' activities on online social networks according to the same study could be either legitimate or malicious. Moreover, users do not display single or simple behaviour on social media platforms particularly due to man's intrinsic nature. Some users are full of enthusiasm and express themselves by updating their pages almost every day and uploading pictures and videos (Feldman, et al., 2006). Correspondingly, Essougou (2013) and other authors (McLaughlin & Vitak, 2012; Ededegbe, 2013; Akpan, Akwaowo, & Senam, 2013; Manjunatha, 2013; Yeboah & Ewur, 2014) contend that when students and other social media users visit the platform, they engage in similar behaviours enumerated above. Genuinely and ideally, these kinds of activities that do not seek to harm or embarrass other online users in the online community are what the society in totality expects from young adults of today but for some strange reasons, these group of people find ways and means to engage in other activities that seek to cause discomfort for their peers and other online users.

2.3 Motivation and Behavior in Social Media Use

Chen (2012) conducted research on the relationship between motivation and behaviour of social media users. The main objective of the study was to find out whether behaviour is independent and that motivation has no influence on it. The study tested the following types of motivation (instrument and information motivation, entertainment and aesthetic motivation, social connection motivation, altruism motivation, ascription and identification motivation and intrinsic motivation) by the following elements of behavior (time, frequency and level). The findings of the study concluded that there is a relationship between motivation and behaviour in social media use. In other words, motivation influences behaviour. This finding could be extended to also mean that, those actions or behaviours exhibited by social media users particularly young adults do not happen in a vacuum.

3. Methodology

The survey methodology was used in this study. Final year undergraduate Sociology students from University of Ghana, Legon (UG) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi (KNUST) were randomly selected to participate in this study. Firstly, the population for the study consisted of final year social science undergraduate students. The choice of final year students stemmed from pre-observation, where it became clear that most of them fell within the age bracket commonly labelled as “young adults”. Additionally, being millennials and digital natives, they were considered the age group most familiar with the use of social media tools, since it became popular in Ghana during that period. Also, they were selected because the researchers were of the opinion that, they were the undergraduate group with much experience on campus as compared to their counterparts in level 100, 200 and 300. Secondly, sociology students were used as the target population for this study because of their analytical background in understanding social issues such as social behaviour of people in the society. The target population for this study was 679. In the view of Neuman (2007), if the population is larger than 1000, a sample size of 10% should be adequate for the study but if the population is less than 1000, a sample size of 30% and above should be enough for the study. Consequently, thirty percent (30%) of the total population (679) was used and this gave a result of 204.

The following formula was used to get the proportionate sample sizes for both Universities:

$$P.S = \frac{\text{Number of final year Sociology students in each school}}{\text{Total number of Sociology students in both school}} \times 204$$

Table 1. Sample Size

Department	UG	KNUST	Total
Sociology	428/629*204 = 129	251/679*204 = 75	129+75=204

3.1 Data Collection

Copies of paper-based closed-ended questionnaire were sent out to solicit subjects’ views on the topic. The researcher had access to the students ‘course list. This served as the sampling frame based on which subjects from the two institutions were randomly selected to participate in the study. The questionnaires were administered, together with the course representatives of the two institutions, to the students some minutes before the start of their lectures using the sampling frame and the adopted sampling technique (random sampling).

After a period of three weeks, 197 questionnaires were retrieved representing a response rate of 97% and as opined by Babbie (2005), a response rate of 70% is good for analysis. In order to ensure compliance with the ethics of research, the anonymity of subjects was kept confidential

and any information obtained from them was used solely for the purpose in which it was collected.

Using the five-point Likert scale, subjects were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with various statements on behavior. Chi-square test less than or equal to 0.05 ($X^2 \leq 0.05$) was used to assess the existence of relationship among variables of interest.

4. Analysis and Findings

Data collected from the study was analyzed with SPSS version 20 and results generated from the analysis were presented across cases. Data analysis technique used was descriptive analysis. Simple frequency tables of the main variables were generated.

Out of the 197 subjects, 83 were males whilst 114 were females. These are presented below.

Table 2. Gender of Respondents in both Institutions

		INSTITUTION					
		KNUST		UG		Total	N=204
Gender		Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Total Number of Students	Total Percentage of Students
Male		50	24.5%	33	16.2%	83	42.1%
Female		18	8.8%	96	47.1%	114	57.9%
	Total	68	33.3%	129	63.2%	197	100.0%

42.1% of those who responded to the questionnaire in both institutions were males whereas 57.9% who answered the questionnaire were females. This indicates that there were more female respondents than their male counterparts.

Table 3. Age of Respondents in both Institutions

		INSTITUTION					
		KNUST		UG		Total	N=204
Age		Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Total Number of Respondents from both Institutions	Total Percentage
18-24		64	31.4%	118	57.8%	182	92.4%
24-29		4	2.0%	10	4.9%	14	7.1%
30+		0	.0%	1	.5%	1	.5%
	Total	68	33.4	129	63.2	197	100

A significant number of respondents in both institutions were between the ages of 18-24years.

This shows that majority of the subjects who are between this age group falls within the accepted age bracket for young adults.

Table 4. Responses on Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviors in Social Media use from both Institutions

STATEMENTS					
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Behavior of students at home should be the same on social media platforms	71(36%)	45(22.8%)	53(26.9%)	19(9.7%)	9(4.6%)
Postings and comments should be polite on social media platforms	114(57.9%)	42(21.3%)	20(10.1%)	13(6.6%)	8(4.1%)
Consent of friends should be sought before sharing their photos and videos on social media platforms	114(57.9%)	43(21.8%)	20(10.1%)	9(4.6%)	11(5.6%)
The privacy of people on social media platforms should be respected	142(72.1%)	31(15.7%)	11(5.5%)	6(3.1%)	7(3.6%)
Comments posted on social media to embarrass others should not be promoted	140(71.1%)	22(11.2%)	20(10%)	9(4.6%)	6(3.1%)
Intimate and detailed personal information should not be shared on social media platforms	101(51.3%)	39(19.3%)	42(21.2%)	9(4.6%)	7(3.6%)
People and their comments on social media platforms should be tolerated	47(23.9%)	67(34%)	44(22.3%)	24(12.2%)	15(7.6%)
The use of coarse language should be discouraged on social media platforms	92(46.7%)	44(22.3%)	39(19.8%)	14(7.1%)	8(4.1%)
Stalking on social media platforms is not acceptable	110(55.8%)	41(20.8%)	18(9.2%)	16(8.1%)	12(6.1%)
Sexually explicit materials should not be posted on social media platforms	125(63.3%)	23(11.7%)	21(10.7%)	7(3.6%)	21(10.7%)

In an attempt to find out the acceptable and unacceptable actions students exhibit on social media sites; several questions were posed to them. Adopting the five-point Likert scale for this exercise, the following views or thoughts were gathered from the subjects.

On a scale of 1-5 (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree. Respondents were asked to share their opinions and indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to various statements on behaviour in social media use.

Regarding the statement, "Behaviour of students at home should be the same on social media platforms" slender majority of respondents 58.8% (36% strongly agreed and 22.8% agreed) across cases agreed to this statement whilst the second highest response of 26.9% opted to be neutral to this statement. Over, 14.3% respondents also disagreed to this statement. This in effect indicates that majority of the respondents support the notion that students should exhibit the same behaviour expected of them at home on social media platforms.

Respondents from both institutions were also asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement “Postings and comments should be polite on social media platforms”. The results revealed that 79.2% respondents agreed (57.9% strongly agreed and 21.8% agreed) whilst 10.7% respondents disagreed (6.6% strongly disagreed and 4.1% disagreed). About 10.1% of the respondents were neutral to this statement. This result therefore implies that majority of the respondents were in favor of the view that polite postings and comments should be encouraged on social media sites.

Furthermore, respondents’ views were sought on the statement “Consent of friends should be sought before sharing their photos and videos on social media platforms”. The results across institutions showed that majority of the respondents 78.7% (57.9% strongly agreed and 21.8% agreed) agreed to the statement whereas 10.2% of the respondents disagreed (4.6% strongly disagreed and 5.6% agreed). Over 11.1% of the respondents were neutral to this statement. The significance of all these is that majority of respondents in both institutions accept that people’s consent should be sought before their photos and videos are shared on social media platforms.

Respondents in both institutions 87.8% (72.1% strongly agreed and 15.7% agreed) indicated that, “The privacy of people on social media platforms should be respected” whilst 6.7% respondents from the two institutions disagreed (3.1% disagreed and 3.6 strongly disagreed). 5.5% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement. This result means that a significant number of the respondents feel that breaching people’s privacy on social media sites should not be accepted.

Regarding the statement, “Comments posted on social media to embarrass others should not be promoted”, 82.3% (71.1% strongly agreed and 11.2% agreed) of the respondents across institutions agreed whereas 7.7% (4.6% disagreed and 3.1% strongly disagreed) respondents forming minority disagreed. Over 10% respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement. This result shows that images, videos, messages and comments that are posted on social media platforms to embarrass people should not be encouraged.

Subjects’ opinions were sought on the statement “Intimate and detailed personal information should not be shared on social media platforms”. The results across institutions showed that 70.6% (51.3% strongly agreed and 19.3% agreed) respondents agreed whilst 8.2% respondents disagreed (4.6% disagreed and 3.6% strongly disagreed). 21.2% respondents opted to remain neutral to this statement. The overall results therefore indicate that respondents from both institutions support the view that intimate and detailed personal information that are shared on social media sites must not be encouraged.

With regard to the statement, “People and their comments on social media platforms should be tolerated”, the results across institutions gave an indication that 57.9% (23.9% strongly agreed and 34% agreed) respondents agreed whilst 19.8% respondents disagreed to the statement (12.2% disagreed and 7.6% strongly disagreed). About 22.3% respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement. The result in this case shows that majority of the respondents assented that peoples’ comments should be tolerated on social media platforms.

In relation to the statement, “the use of coarse language should be discouraged on social media platforms”. The results across institutions indicate that 69.0% (46.7% strongly agreed and 22.3% agreed) respondents agreed with this view whereas 11.2% respondents disagreed (7.1% disagreed and 4.1% strongly disagreed). 19.8% respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement.

According to this result, majority of the respondents agreed that coarse language should not be tolerated on social media sites.

Another statement that was posed to respondents was, “Stalking on social media platforms is not acceptable”. The results of this statement across institutions proved that majority of the respondents 76.6% (55.8% strongly agreed and 20.8% agreed) agreed whilst 14.2% of the respondents disagreed (8.1% disagreed and 6.1 strongly disagreed). 9.2% respondents also chose to neither agree nor disagree to this statement. Taking into account the views of the respondents on this particular statement, it could easily be deduced that majority of the respondents are not in support of stalking on social media sites.

Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “Sexually explicit materials should not be posted on social media platforms”. The results across institutions proved that a significant number of the respondents 75.2% (63.5% strongly agreed and 11.7% agreed) agreed to the statement whereas 14.3% (3.6% disagreed and 10.7% strongly disagreed) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. 10.5% forming a minority of the respondents opted to be neutral on this statement.

Based on the analysis, it could clearly be deduced that respondents from both institutions agreed that the following should be considered acceptable and unacceptable on social media platforms.

Acceptable Behaviour on social media platforms:

1. Polite postings and comments
2. Seeking the consent of friends before sharing their photos and videos on social media
3. People’s views and comments should be tolerated

Unacceptable Behaviour on social media platforms:

1. Breaching the privacy of people on social media platforms
2. Posting of images, videos and messages to embarrass other people on social media sites
3. Sharing of intimate and detailed personal information on social media platforms
4. Stalking people on social media platforms
5. Sending of sexually explicit materials on social media platforms
6. The use of coarse language on social media platforms

Table 5. Responses on activities mostly engaged in on social media sites

Activities respondents mostly engage in when they are on social media platforms	KNUST		UG		Total Number of Respondents	Total Percentage of Respondents in both Institutions
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage		
Posting and sharing	31	15.7%	41	20.8%	72	36.5%

Tagging and commenting	13	6.6%	26	13.2%	39	19.8%
Browsing through people's profile	3	1.5%	13	6.6%	16	8.1%
Chatting and looking for old friends	11	5.6%	28	14.2%	39	19.8%
Befriending people without necessarily knowing them	1	.5%	8	4.1%	9	4.6%
Downloading music/movies and playing games	9	4.6%	13	6.6%	22	11.2%
Total	68	34.5%	129	65.5%	197	100%

One of the questions that was posed to the respondents was to find out from them the kind of activities they mostly engage in, on social media platforms.

The breakdown of the collated views shared by the subjects show that majority of respondents from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and University of Ghana (UG) engage in posting and sharing on social media platforms whilst few of them befriend people on social media sites without necessarily knowing them.

Table 6. Relationship between motivation and behaviour in social media use

Factors that motivate the use of social media	Time spent on social media every day N=204			
	30-1hr	2-3hrs	4-5hrs	More than 6hrs
	Response	Response	Response	Response
Entertainment	40	32	29	41
Passing time	19	15	19	26
Information seeking	43	40	27	44
Academic Advancement	43	23	22	29
To satisfy my emotional needs	8	6	5	7
To chat and keep in touch with loved ones and maintain distant relationships	42	39	35	42
To find someone I can share a relationship with	7	8	2	7
Others	0	3	1	1
Total	202	166	140	197
X² = 49.647 DF=24 Significance = 0.002				

One of the objectives of this study was to find out whether there is a relationship between motivation and behaviour in social media use. In an attempt to find out the existence of any relationship between the two variables, “factors that motivate the use of social media” were selected to represent motivation and “time spent on social media every day” was also selected to represent behaviour.

These variables were cross tabulated and Chi-square test less than or equal to 0.05 ($X^2 \leq 0.05$) was used to determine the existence of association between them. The result disclosed that there is a significant relationship between factors that motivate the use of social media and time spent on social media every day at a significance level of 0.002. Similarly, the result also indicates that, there is a relationship between motivation and behaviour in social media use. Furthermore, an inference could also be made from **Table 6** that the higher the motivation, the higher the amount of time spent on social media.

5. Discussion

Behaviour on social media needs to be clearly defined so that students and users of the platform would know the acceptable actions they are supposed to exhibit and the ones they are supposed to refrain from; this was the main focus of the study.

In order for sanity to prevail on social media sites, the study asked the respondents to indicate those actions they considered acceptable and unacceptable on the platform. This exercise yielded significant results as students were able to come up with actions that should be considered acceptable and unacceptable on social media sites. The following were agreed by students as acceptable; polite posting and comments, seeking the consent of friends before sharing their photos and videos and lastly, tolerating people’s views and comments. The students on the other hand indicated that certain behaviours should not be encouraged on social media platforms and these are; breaching the privacy of people, posting of images, videos and messages to embarrass other people, sharing of intimate and detailed personal information, stalking people on social media, sending sexually explicit materials on social media platforms and the use of harsh or rough language on social media sites. These results strongly support Hooper and Kalidas (2012) study which indicated that behaviours like respectful posting and comments, tolerating the views of people and seeking the consent of people should be promoted on social media platforms. However, activities like breaching the privacy of people, posting images and videos to harass people, using bad language and disclosing personal information should not be encouraged on social media platforms. Similarly, Chretien, et al. (2009) also noted in a study that students engage in such unacceptable acts like the use of profane language and posting of sexually explicit materials on social media platforms. Additionally, this result also supports Akubugwo and Burke (2013) study which indicated that, such unacceptable activities like the use of distasteful comments and harassing messages that lead to embarrassment must not be encouraged on social media sites.

One of the objectives of this study was to find out the kind of activities students engage in, on social media sites. Tagging and commenting, posting and sharing, browsing through people’s

profiles, chatting and looking for old friends, befriending people without necessarily knowing them, downloading music/movies and playing games were found to be the activities engaged in by students. Most of these activities or actions engaged in by students or young adults are neither harmful nor unacceptable except that, they must be cautious on the aspect of befriending people without necessarily knowing them because the online community is full of untrustworthy people. On the other hand, students' engagement in these activities help to relieve them from boredom as it was found that posting and sharing is the activity, they mostly indulge in. The most possible explanation for this could be that posting and sharing on social media brings some form of recognition and also makes people feel belonged especially when their post and what they shared receive a lot of comments and likes by other social media users. This result corroborates Essoungou (2010) and Ededegbe's (2013) study which indicated that when students go online with their smart phones, they engage in such activities like posting and sending. Chau (2011) also added that sharing of information is one of the major activities carried out on social media sites.

Another objective of this study was to find out if there is a relationship between motivation and behaviour in social media use. This was done to test the popular notion that "to every action, there is a motive", likewise, motivation influences behaviour and that people's actions or behaviours are precipitated by a motivation. With this, factors that motivate or drive the desire to use social media (entertainment, passing time, information seeking, academic advancement, chat and maintain distant relations, satisfy emotional needs and to find someone I can share relationship with) were selected to represent "motivation" and time spent on social media every day was also selected to represent "behaviour". These two variables were then tested with chi-square at a level of X². The results however revealed that there is a relationship between the two at a significance level of 0.002. This goes to affirm the popular notion that motivation influences behaviour. This finding therefore is consistent with a study by Chen (2012) who also found that there is a relationship between motivation and behaviour in social media use.

6. Conclusion

This study has revealed that students from both institutions exhibited similar behaviours on social media sites whether acceptable or unacceptable. Some also indulged in acts without knowing that those kinds of actions are unacceptable on social media platforms. All these go to strengthen the point that technology has the power to influence people's actions and so the needed attention must be attached to the influence it exerts on our lives. Additionally, it goes to confirm the assumptions of the theory of technological determinism which states that technology has the will to influence or shape the behaviour or actions of people. In sum, this study has pointed out and given a clear distinction as to what should be considered acceptable and unacceptable on social media sites in terms of behaviour.

References

- Abbas, J., Aman, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019). The impact of social media on learning behavior for sustainable education: Evidence of students from selected universities in Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1683. doi:10.3390/su11061683
- Akpan, U., Akwaowo, E., & Senam, N. (2013). Uses and gratifications of social networking websites among youths in Uyo, Nigeria. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 3(2), 353-369. Retrieved from <https://archive.aessweb.com/index.php/5007/article/view/2422>
- Akubugwo, I., & Burke, M. (2013). Influence of social media on social behaviour of post graduate students. A case study of Salford University, United Kingdom. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 3(6), 39-43.
- Alahmar, A. T. (2016). The impact of social media on the academic performance of second year medical students at College of Medicine, University of Babylon, Iraq. *Journal of Medical & Allied Sciences*, 6(2), 77. doi:10.5455/jmas.236927
- Al-Sharqi, L., Hashim, K., & Kutbi, I. (2015). Perceptions of social media impact on students' social behavior: A comparison between Arts and Science students. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 2(4), 122-131. Retrieved from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1050.6866&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Antonucci, T. C., Ajrouch, K. J., & Manalel, J. A. (2017). Social relations and technology: Continuity, context, and change. *Innovation in aging*, 1(3), igx029. doi:10.1093/geroni/igx029
- Arturo, R., Norbert, W., & Julian, B. (1943). Behaviour purpose and Teleology. *Philosophy of Science*, 10(1), 18-42
- Asiedu, N. K., & Badu, E. E. (2018). Motivating issues affecting students' use of social media sites in Ghanaian tertiary institutions. *Library Hi Tech*, 36(1), 167-179. doi:10.1108/LHT-10-2016-0108
- Azizi, S. M., Soroush, A., & Khatony, A. (2019). The relationship between social networking addiction and academic performance in Iranian students of medical sciences: a cross-sectional study. *BMC psychology*, 7(1), 1-8. doi:10.1186/s40359-019-0305-0
- Babbie, E.R. (2005). *Basics of Social Research, 3rd edition*. USA:Wadsworth
- Balakrishnan, V., & Gan, C. L. (2016). Students' learning styles and their effects on the use of social media technology for learning. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33(3), 808-821. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2015.12.004
- Bauer, C. & Schedl, M. (2019). *A cross-country investigation of user connection patterns in online social networks*. Proceedings of the 52nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS 2019), Grand Wailea, Maui, HI, 8-11 January, pp. 2166-2175.
- Bell, J., Carle, J., Cuddington, D., Deane, C., Devlin, K., Drake, B., & Zainbulbhai, H. (2015). Cell phones in Africa: communication lifeline. *Pew Res Cent*, 1-16.
- Bicard, S.C., Bicard, D.F. & The Iris Center (2012). *Defining behaviour*. Retrieved on 10 September, 2015 from http://www.iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/case_studies/
- Błachnio, A., Przepiorka, A., & Pantic, I. (2016). Association between Facebook addiction, self-esteem and life satisfaction: A cross-sectional study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 701-705.
-

doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.026

- Butt, A. (2020). University students' preference regarding social media content, internet usage and online friendship patterns. *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*, 15(2), 239-249. doi:10.1108/AAOUJ-01-2020-0002
- Cayari, C. (2011). The YouTube Effect: How YouTube Has Provided New Ways to Consume, Create, and Share Music. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(6), 1-28. Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v12n6/>
- Chen, H. (2012). Relationship between motivation and behaviour of social networking sites user. *Journal of Software*, 7(6), 1265-127.
- Chretien, K. C., Greysen, S. R., Chretien, J. P., & Kind, T. (2009). Online posting of unprofessional content by medical students. *Jama*, 302(12), 1309-1315. doi:10.1001/jama.2009.1387
- Chukwuere, J. E., & Chukwuere, P. C. (2017). The impact of social media on social lifestyle: A case study of university female students. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15(4), 9966-9981. Retrieved from <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC-c1e3ae5f6>
- Ededegbe, N. (2013). *The Effect of social networking sites on students' academic performance in Grine American University, North Cyprus*. Retrieved on 25th September, 2015 from <http://www.ydemokrat.blogspot.com/2013/05/the-effect-of-social-networkingsites.html?m=1>
- Essoungou, A.M. (2010). *A social media boom begins in Africa*. Retrieved on 20th February, 2019 from <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2010/social-media-boom-begins-africa>
- Feldman, M., Papadimitriou, C., Chuang, J., & Stoica, I. (2006). Free-riding and whitewashing in peer-to-peer systems. *IEEE Journal on selected areas in communications*, 24(5), 1010-1019. doi:10.1109/JSAC.2006.872882
- Goodman-Deane, J., Mieczkowski, A., Johnson, D., Goldhaber, T., & Clarkson, P. J. (2016). The impact of communication technologies on life and relationship satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 57, 219-229. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.11.053
- Guedes, E., Sancassiani, F., Carta, M. G., Campos, C., Machado, S., King, A. L. S., & Nardi, A. E. (2016). Internet addiction and excessive social networks use: what about Facebook?. *Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health: CP & EMH*, 12, 43. doi: 10.2174/1745017901612010043
- Harackiewicz, J. M., Barron, K. E., Carter, S. M., Lehto, A. T., & Elliot, A. J. (1997). Predictors and consequences of achievement goals in the college classroom: Maintaining interest and making the grade. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*, 73(6), 1284. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.73.6.1284
- Hauer, T. (2017). Education, Technological Determinism and New Media. *INTED2017 Proceedings*, 1(2), 10026-10030. doi:10.21125/inted.2017.2401
- Hoffmann, C., & Bublitz, W. (2017). *Pragmatics of Social Media*. De Gruyter: Berlin
- Hooper, V., & Kalidas, T. (2012). Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour on social networking sites: A study of the behavioural norms of youth on Facebook. *Electronic Journal of Information Systems Evaluation*, 15(3), 259-268. Retrieved from <https://academic-publishing.org/index.php/ejise/article/view/227>
-

- Hossain, M. A., Jahan, N., Fang, Y., Hoque, S., & Hossain, M. S. (2019). Nexus of electronic word-of-mouth to social networking sites: a sustainable chatter of new digital social media. *Sustainability*, 11(3), 759. doi:10.3390/su11030759
- Hruska, J., & Maresova, P. (2020). Use of social media platforms among adults in the United States—behavior on social media. *Societies*, 10(1), 27. doi:10.3390/soc10010027
- Jin, L., Chen, Y., Wang, T., Hui, P., & Vasilakos, A. V. (2013). Understanding user behavior in online social networks: A survey. *IEEE communications magazine*, 51(9), 144-150. doi:10.1109/MCOM.2013.6588663
- Kaimal, D., Sajja, R. T., & Sasangohar, F. (2017, September). Investigating the effects of social media usage on sleep quality. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting* (Vol. 61, No. 1, pp. 1327-1330). Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publication s. doi:10.1177/1541931213601814
- Knight-McCord, J., Cleary, D., Grant, N., Herron, A., Lacey, T., Livingston, T., & Emanuel, R. (2016). What social media sites do college students use most. *Journal of undergraduate ethnic minority psychology*, 2(21), 21-26.
- le Roux, D. B., & Parry, D. A. (2017). In-lecture media use and academic performance: Does subject area matter?. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 77, 86-94. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.08.030
- Lu, J., Jing, M., & Hao, Q. (2017). Adolescent social media behavior, personality factors and academic performance: A path analysis. In Paper Present at American Education Research Association. St. Antonio, TX
- Manjunatha, S. (2013). The usage of social networking sites among the college students in India. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(5), 15-21.
- McLaughlin, C., & Vitak, J. (2012). Norm evolution and violation on Facebook. *New media & society*, 14(2), 299-315. doi:10.1177/1461444811412712
- McLeod, S. (2013). *Free will and Determinism*. Retrieved on 10th May, 2017 from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/freewill-determinism.html>
- Monica, Anderson & Jingjing, J. (2018). *Teens, Social Media & Technology*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved on 2017 from www.pewresearch.org
- Neuman, W. L. (2007). *Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (6th ed.)* Pearson.
- Ormrod, J.E. (2010). *How motivation affects behaviour and cognition*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/motivation-affects-behaviour-cognition>
- Owusu-Acheaw, M., & Larson, A. G. (2015). Use of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(6), 94-101. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1083595>
- Ruiz-Junco, N. (2011). “Losing Neutrality in Your Everyday Life” Framing Experience and Activist Identity Construction in the Spanish Environmental Movement. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 40(6), 713-733. doi:10.1177/0891241611420842
- Sharma, S. K., Joshi, A., & Sharma, H. (2016). A multi-analytical approach to predict the Facebook usage in higher education. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 340-353. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.09.020
-

- Sutherland, K., Davis, C., Terton, U., & Visser, I. (2018). University student social media use and its influence on offline engagement in higher educational communities. *Student Success*, 9(2), 13-24. doi:10.5204/ssj.v9i2.400
- Szabo, L. V. (2014). The future of communication: From new media to postmedia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 163, 36-43. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.283
- Thompson, P. (2017). Communication technology use and study skills. *Active learning in higher education*, 18(3), 257-270. doi:10.1177/1469787417715204
- Ukomadu, C. (2018). The role of social media in community development in Nigeria: the owe unity forum (oaf) model. *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 23(5), 34-43. doi:10.9790/0837-2305083443
- WeAreSocial. (2018). *Global Digital Report 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www.wearesocial.com/uk/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>
- Weisskirch, R. S., & Delevi, R. (2011). "Sexting" and adult romantic attachment. *Computers in human behavior*, 27(5), 1697-1701. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2011.02.008
- Yeboah, J., & Ewur, G. D. (2014). The impact of WhatsApp messenger usage on students performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana. *Journal of Education and practice*, 5(6), 157-164. Retrieved from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.821.8411&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Zafarani, R. & Liu, H. (2014). Behaviour Analysis in social media. *IEEE Intelligent systems*, 29 (4), 1-4.

[About the authors]

Nasir Koranteng Asiedu is a Librarian at C. K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Ghana. He holds Master of Philosophy degree in Information Studies from University of Ghana. His research interests include, leadership, knowledge management, social media, information literacy, information seeking behaviour and social influence of technology on society.

Donus Worlanyo Buadi is a Librarian at Accra Technical University, Ghana. He holds Master of Arts degree in Information Studies from the University of Ghana and another Master of Arts degree in Organization Development from the Organization Development Institute, University of Cape Coast. He has worked as a Librarian for over 7 years and as an (OD) Consultant has consulted for both public and private organizations for not less than 5 years. His research interests include social media and technologies in the information profession, information management, information behaviour, organization development practices, and most recently, the role of information in migration studies.

Ebenezer Martin-Yeboah is a Librarian at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He holds Master of Philosophy degree in Information Studies from University of Ghana. He is currently offering his PhD in Canada at Western University, Faculty of Information and Media Studies.
