



A Research Analysis of Online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) and Social Behaviour at University of Ghana (UG), Legon, Accra, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

University of Ghana is Ghana's premier university and has a mission to develop world-class human resources and capabilities to meet national development needs and global challenges through quality teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination in the areas of Business, Science, Technology and Commerce. This paper is a descriptive research which adopts a case study analysis of the perceptions some Bachelor Degree students in University of Ghana have about Online Social Networking Sites (SNSs). The paper also outlines the importance of online SNSs in education. The research methodologies adopted for this paper were literature review and quantitative approaches. Questionnaires were administered to Bachelor Degree students of University of Ghana in order to solicit information about their perceptions on the use of online social networking in their education. Results and outcome of the study revealed that online SNSs are currently being used by students of University of Ghana mostly for a variety of purposes other than education, therefore training of students regarding usage of online SNSs for the purposes of education is required.

Keywords: *Online, Social Networking Sites (SNSs), University of Ghana (UG), Skype, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Internet*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social networks through the tremendous growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Internet have become excellent tools for education and can be used socially and collaboratively between learners and teachers as well for educational purposes. Social networks establish means of communicating between teachers and learners. The internet network and current ICT trends are providing accessibility to online services such as social networks and this enables collaboration among students/people and contributes a lot to social learning activities. Collaborative and social learning activities have improved as a result of the rapid growth of social networks.

Since 2004, Proliferation of web 2.0 technologies, commonly understood as web technologies that allow collaboration amongst users of social networks [2] has improved collaboration of teachers and students in educational activities through Online SNSs such as Facebook, Skype and Yahoo Messenger.

After teaching and learning through educational modes such as traditional face-to-face, m-Learning and e-Learning interactivity and collaboration of students with fellow students individually or in groups as well as students with teachers without meeting at a particular location is now possible through Online SNSs. This save time, money, risks and also improves communication among students and teachers. It is important for educational establishments to encourage the use of Online SNSs in an educational way to improve teaching and learning. As discussed in Section 2 of this paper, it must be noted that Online SNSs can be used for other activities other than education.

Therefore students should be specifically and specially briefed and thought on how to use SNSs educationally.

This paper is formulated and structured respectively as follows: Section 2 presents the Problem Statement and Motivation of the paper. The objectives of the research study are outlined in Section 3. Literature Review of the paper is presented in Section 5. Section 5 Discusses Overview of the Internet and Online Social Network Sites, followed by Section 6 which discusses Importance of Online Social Networking Sites in Education and Section 7 presents Related Work of the paper. The Research Methodology of the Paper is presented in Section 8 and Analysis of the Research Findings is presented in Section 9. Section 10 presents a discussion on the found research analysis of the paper and Section 11 concludes the paper with a recommendation.

1.1 Background of the University of Ghana

The University of Ghana (UG), Legon, Accra, Ghana was founded in 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast on the recommendation of the Asquith Commission, on Higher Education in the then British colonies. The Asquith Commission, which was set up in 1943 to investigate Higher Education, recommended among other things, the setting up of University Colleges in association with the University of London. This was followed up by a number of separate Commissions in different regions. The West Africa Commission was under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot [1].

In the 1960-61 academic year, the College Council made a request to the Government of Ghana for legislation to constitute the University College into a University with the



power to award its own degrees. The Government appointed an International Commission to examine the problem. On the recommendations of that Commission, the University of Ghana was set up by an Act of Parliament on October 1, 1961 (Act 79) [1].

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND MOTIVATION

Online SNSs have taken over the world and Ghana by storm and are in no doubt becoming part and parcel of our everyday life. Online SNSs are currently being used for communication through socializing and collaborative activities.

They are not only used purposely for communication but can also be used for other purposes such as education, advertising and finance. Communicative, socializing and collaborative purposes of online SNSs in the realm of education (teaching and learning) remains a challenge for training institutions. There is a saying that 'knowledge shared is better' and contribution of knowledge amongst students through socializing and collaborations preferably in groups always gives a better output of teaching and learning than an individual study. The importance of social/collaborative learning as part of an educational mode scenario or situation cannot be overlooked by training institutions and this research paper aims to analyse the online SNS scenarios and social behaviours in a training institution (University of Ghana) in order to ascertain the actual behavioural situations in this educational establishment.

2.1 Research Questions

The main research questions pertaining to this paper include:

- How important are online SNSs in the realm of education to warrant its inclusion in the learning scenarios of students?
- What is the current social behaviour of the selected University of Ghana students in terms of education?
- Do the selected University of Ghana students engage in communication through socializing and collaboration using online SNSs?
- Which methods and procedures can be used to contribute and improve social behaviour of students through online SNSs?

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this research paper are to:

- Analyse how some selected University of Ghana students behave socially regarding Online Social Networking Sites (SNSs).

- Discuss, suggest and contribute to improvements of the found behaviour of students regarding usage of Online SNSs.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW - HISTORY OF SOME ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK SITES (SNSs)

4.1 Facebook

Facebook was launched by a student, Mark Zuckerberg, at Harvard in February 2004. At the beginning, Facebook was just a student directory, the goal of which was to provide an important information and communication services to a pre-existing offline community. In the early days of Facebook, only users who could verify they had a .edu e-mail address for the college they attended could register. This restriction was made to ensure trust between the offline community and the online service created. Since then, Facebook has acquired over 300 million users and is the fourth largest site in the world after Google, Microsoft and Yahoo sites [3].

4.1.1 Facebook Target Group

Facebook provides a social network for all regular PC Internet users and recently also mobile users. Facebook's statistics page offers interesting information on user profiles and engagement. According to the statistics, more than 40 million users update their status every day, and they spend more than 6 billion minutes on Facebook every day. The average user has 130 friends on the site. The fastest growing segment is made up of people above 35 years of age. More than 70% of Facebook's users are outside the United States [4].

Since Facebook has been made available as a mobile service, more than 65 million active users access Facebook through their mobile devices. This kind of growth has important implications for infrastructure and for advertisement companies [4].

4.2 Skype

Skype, an online communication program that uses both Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and chat via Instant Messaging (IM) has definitely taken the internet by storm. Skype - an eBay company, headquartered in Luxembourg (with several offices located throughout the world) began in 2003, and was founded by Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis.

Skype is an online communication tool that you can use to talk to anyone anywhere in the world. Skype can be used for an instant messaging service, or as a telephone using a special Skype phone or traditional headset. Skype also works for video calls and conferences. Calls to and from other Skype members are free. Calls made to and from cell phones or land line phones are



charged at a per-minute rate. There are also plans for unlimited international use. Since the dawn of the first version of the program, the Skype community continues to grow, offering a wide variety of features and services used in conjunction with the program [5]. These are:

- **Voice and Videoconferencing:** This feature was introduced in 2006 and allows customers to hold video conference calls with other Skype users.
- **Skype To Go:** The newest feature available to Skype Pro users, allows people to make international calls from their mobile phones, at the Skype-Out rate they use for all calls from their computer.
- **Skype Mobile:** In April 2008, Skype released Mobile Skype, compatible with around 50 different phones. The list of compatible phones continues to grow as programming and technology continue to synchronize.
- In 2009, SIP or Skype for Business was released.
- In April 2009, eBay announced a plan to spin off of Skype.
- In May 2010, Skype 5.0 BETA was released.
- In May 2010, Skype for Apple's iPhone app was released

Throughout the last five years, Skype has grown from a small program that very few people knew of to a very useful program with lots of features that millions of people all over the world use each day [5].

4.3 You Tube

YouTube is an Internet based public video-sharing service, where the end-users upload and share video clips. In YouTube people can experience varying degrees of engagement: One can chose only to view the available content, or also to share videos with others and even to develop social relationships. YouTube was created in mid-February 2005 by three former PayPal employees: Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim [3].

4.4 Twitter

Twitter is a social network based on a micro blogging platform allowing users to post short message and read messages from others. Twitter was founded in March 2006 and was introduced as a public service in October same year [3]. Users are heavily represented only in a dozen countries [6]. Twitter is most popular in North America, where 45% of the users are located [7]. In 2008, Twitter introduced a Japanese version. Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco are the major cities with high adoption rates of users. In spite of this staggering growth, Twitter is still much less widespread than the most popular US Social network sites Facebook and MySpace.

5. OVERVIEW AND DRAWBACKS OF THE INTERNET IN GHANA AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK SITES (SNSs)

The internet can be an educational and business tool as well as a potential threat. Almost anything including research, selling, purchasing and entertainment can be done using the internet. Despite the internet being very useful and beneficial, it also has considerable disadvantages and demerits. Because of the case of likely inventions of humans, the internet has become a tool for good and also for evil. Cybercrime (popularly called 'sakawa' in Ghana) is a major concern, unlawful pornographic sites are easily accessible on the internet for free, individuals and organizations are constantly exposed to malicious programmes that can cause severe damage to their computer systems with hackers also posing a constant threat. One of the major internet related issues that has become an important and growing topic in the education world is the use of online SNSs by students to enhance productivity. Online SNSs such as Skype, Facebook and Yahoo Messenger play an important role in education but needs to be applied in an educational sense to realize their potential. For example Skype which can be used for chatting with friends' i.e. one-to-one communication, can also be used in an educational sense for student group communications to discuss a lecture lesson either through video or audio through a conference call.

Online Social Media has proliferated over the years and has taken the world and internet user by storm. Because popular social networks such as Facebook, Skype, LinkedIn and Twitter allow individuals and organizations to share information quickly through collaboration the name Online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) was developed. The growth of online SNSs is phenomenal; Facebook alone has 250 Million active subscribers/users worldwide with over 120 million logging on at least once a day [8]. The use of the internet in Ghana for social functions and purposes is growing especially with the younger generation and students. Facebook, Skype, Yahoo Messenger and other such web based programs are becoming very popular amongst young Ghanaians. As noted by [9], Ghana was among the first countries in Africa to introduce the Internet into its ICT market; however the general number of internet users in Ghana is still low. Not only are internet access rates in many African countries below 5%, but in many rural areas electricity is not available or is only available for a few hours a day [12]. University of Ghana, which is the case study of this research paper, has an ICT Directorate that provides internet connectivity on campus through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) which is accessible by both staff and students. Telecommunication companies in Ghana such as Airtel, MTN and Tigo sell plug and play USB Modems which can be purchased by subscribers to access the internet. Once there is internet connectivity either through wireless or wireline means, online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) can be accessed for their educational purposes.



6. IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) IN EDUCATION

Online SNSs are important in a lot of ways in relation to education. Factors such as risk avoidance, improvement of communication and pedagogy, improvement of interactivity and collaboration, convenience of group study and communication, time and money savings make Online SNSs a necessity in education. Elaborations on these factors are below:

- **Risk Avoidance:** Teaching and learning activities that involve a group discussion without Online SNSs will normally involve the student group members meeting at a particular location to have the group discussion. Travelling and commuting to meet at a particular location and have a discussion will involve travelling risks especially for those who are coming from a far place to the location point or venue of the discussion. Online SNSs when employed will avoid such risks provided group members have internet connectivity to access SNSs.
- **Convenience of Group Study Location and Communication:** With the availability of the internet and Online SNSs, risk is avoided as discussed above, which results in more convenience of group study location because the group study is not dependent on time and can take place at each group member's convenience and location. If there was no Online SNSs available it will mean a particular time in consideration for group members staying far should be agreed for the group meeting.
- **Improvement of Communication and Pedagogy:** Online SNSs improve communication among student/learners and also among teachers and students. Naturally some students are shy and can't express themselves well in a face-to-face educational mode and classroom lesson. Using audio or video communication through an Online SNS will help such students in their studies and enhance productivity in their education. Teachers who travel and cannot be physically around may wish to discuss further topics or new findings of a previous lesson or explain an assignment to different groups of students. This can be done through Online SNSs. Teachers can post or upload assignment through Online SNSs during an online video or audio discussion and explain the guidelines of the assignment to students. Online SNSs improve pedagogy of teachers tremendously in a variety of ways as discussed above and should be encouraged for effective educational delivery.
- **Enhancement of Interactivity and Collaboration:** Without Online SNSs interactivity and collaboration among students/learners and teachers/tutors only occur mainly in the classroom or seldom in the teacher's/tutor's office. Interactivity

and collaboration is important as it helps both teachers and students to fill educative loop holes and increases knowledge on how to acquire more information in the teaching and learning process. As discussed above, collaboration and interaction of students and teachers using Online SNSs is not dependent on location. This depicts the importance of Online SNSs..

- **Time and Money Savings:** From the discussions above risk avoidance through the use of SNSs will allow members of a group study to save time in travelling to meet at a particular location. Also money required and used for taxi or bus fares to travel to the location point for a group study discussion is also avoided and can hence be saved or used for other purposes.

7. RELATED WORK

Research on Online Social Network Sites (SNSs) is ongoing and has also been conducted by various researchers.

In (*Brady et al. 2010*) [10] discussions relating to how Distance Education as a primary means of instruction is expanding significantly at the college and university levels are presented. Simultaneously, the growth of social networking sites (SNSs) including Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace is also rising among today's college students. An increasing number of higher education instructors are beginning to combine distance education delivery with SNSs. However, there is currently little research detailing the educational benefits associated with the use of SNSs. Non-commercial, education-based SNSs, such as Ning in Education, have been recently shown to build communities of practice and facilitate social presence for students enrolled in distance education courses. In order to evaluate the largely unexplored educational benefits of SNSs, (*Brady et al. 2010*) [10] surveyed graduate students enrolled in distance education courses using Ning in Education, an education-based SNS, based on their attitudes toward SNSs as productive online tools for teaching and learning. The results in (*Brady et al. 2010*) [10] suggest that education-based SNSs can be used most effectively in distance education courses as a technological tool for improved online communications among students in higher distance education courses.

In (*Ferguson, 2010*) [11], elaborations are given on how the profession of college admissions is compelled to implement innovative recruiting strategies (e.g. online social networking sites), because of increased competition among higher education institutions for best-fit students, which may impact college access and persistence in the United States. This qualitative study involved in (*Ferguson, 2010*) [11] examined the reasons why two distinct higher education institutions implemented college-created social networking sites (SNSs) as a way to recruit undergraduate students. Interviews, social network site observations, and document analysis were the primary methods used to investigate the following research questions in (*Ferguson, 2010*) [11]: (1) Why did the institution explore the phenomenon



of social networking sites as a recruiting strategy; (2) how did it implement a college-created networking site for the purpose of recruiting undergraduate students; and (3) based on a comparison of admitted applicants to enrolled student yield rates between SNS members and nonmembers, how effective was that site as a recruiting strategy. *Ferguson (2010)* [11] found out that the institutions explored the phenomenon of social networking as a recruiting strategy because Online SNSs are a popular platform that college and high school students use to engage in conversation during their college choice and study process.

Technological advancement has led to significant changes in the way university education is being provided in the developed countries. Whilst their universities have made great strides in addressing issues of access, cost of higher education and quality through e-learning, Africans are in the 21st century still grappling with these issues. Although the University of Ghana has as one of its strategic directions, the introduction of e-learning, very little information has been provided on its policy direction. The study in (*Tagoe, 2012*) [13] which is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), examines students' perceptions on incorporating e-learning into teaching and learning. Using survey research, a total of 534 responded to the survey which relied on the questionnaire. Results from the study in (*Tagoe, 2012*) [13] show that students entered the university with computer skills which are critical to the introduction of e-learning; male students were more likely to use the internet than female students; there was a relationship between the length of time students have been using the internet and frequency of use of the internet; students preferred mixed mode and web supplemented courses in the immediate future than web dependent and fully online courses. To make e-learning a reality (*Tagoe, 2012*) [13] emphasizes that there should some further strategies to improve access to personal computers and improve the broadband width. Special efforts should be made to target female students to use the internet to improve their computer skills.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted exploratory and integrated literature. Literature such as current ICT usage in education, the Internet and Online Social Networking Sites that can be used in education were examined, in order to establish a general overview of Online SNSs usage in the University of Ghana. Questionnaires (Appendix A) consisting of 13 closed-end and 2 open-end questions totaling 15 questions were also administered to some selected students of the University of Ghana and further details of the distribution and responses to these questionnaires are discussed below in Section 9.

9. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

The questionnaires were constructed and adopted to solicit information about the current patronage of Online SNSs by University of Ghana students. The population comprised of Undergraduate (Bachelor) students of University of Ghana. The University of Ghana undergraduate student population is 15,761, comprising the following programmes and number of students: Bachelor of Arts (12,047); Bachelor of Science (2555); Bachelor of Science in Administration (1052); and Bachelor of Science in Engineering (107) [13]. Using stratified sampling a sample size of one hundred and twenty (150) questionnaires were administered selected Bachelor Degree students of University of Ghana students. One hundred and twenty (120) representing 80% accurate and precise responses were received. Tables and charts were used for the results of the analysis.

Question 3 (Q3) of the questionnaire asked about the Educational Level of the Student Respondents and the Bachelor Students that responded were 120 as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Educational Level of Student Respondents (Q3)

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	NUMBER
Bachelor	120
TOTAL	120

- Question 1 (Q1) of the questionnaire asked about the Gender of the Student Respondents. As shown in Table 2, male student respondents were 74 (61.7%) representing more than female student respondents 46 (38.3%).

Table 2: Gender of Student Respondents (Q1)

GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	74	61.7%
Female	46	38.3%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 2 (Q2) of the questionnaire asked about the Age Category of the Student Respondents. As shown in Table 3, 114 of student respondents which formed the majority were between 19-28 years (95%) followed by 6 students that fell between an Age Category of 29-39 years (5%).

Table 3: Age Category of Student Respondents (Q2)

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
40-50 years	0	0%
29-39 years	6	5%
19-28 years	114	95%



15-18 years	0	0%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 5 (Q5) of the questionnaire asked whether Student Respondents have Internet Access on University of Ghana Campus. As shown in Table 4, the study revealed that 116 of student respondents have Internet Access on campus (96.7%) and a very little minority of students (4) don't have Internet Access on campus (3.33%).

Table 4: Internet Access on Campus of Student Respondents (Q5)

INTERNET ACCESS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	116	96.7%
No	4	3.33%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 6 (Q6) of the questionnaire asked about the Source of Internet Connectivity of the Student Respondents on University of Ghana Campus. As shown in Table 5, the study revealed that 76 of student respondents which forms the majority, have Internet Access on campus through University of Ghana ICT Directorate (63.3%). The study also revealed that, 34 Student Respondents (28.3%) have Internet Access through a Personal Modem From an ISP. 2 of the students receive internet connectivity through both ICT Directorate and Personal Modem From ISP. 8 students responded to not receiving internet connectivity from any/either source.

Table 5: Internet Connectivity Source of Student Respondents (Q6)

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY SOURCE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
ICT Directorate	76	63.3%
Personal Modem From ISP	34	28.3%
Both	2	1.7%
Non	8	6.7%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 7 (Q7) of the questionnaire asked whether Student Respondents access important educational

websites on the Internet. The study as shown in Table 6 revealed that 118 of student respondents forming a majority of the students (98.3%) access educational and important websites and a very little minority of students (2) don't access on important educational websites on the internet (1.7%).

Table 6: Internet Access of Educational and Important Websites of Student Respondents (Q7)

ACCESS OF EDUCATIONAL AND IMPORTANT WEBSITES	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	118	98.3%
No	2	1.7%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 8 (Q8) of the questionnaire asked whether Student Respondents access Online SNSs. The study as shown in Table 7 revealed that 118 of student respondents forming a majority of the students (98.3%) access Online SNSs and a very little minority of students (2) don't access on important educational websites on the internet (1.7%).

Table 7: Internet Access of Online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) of Student Respondents (Q8)

ACCESS OF ONLINE SNSs	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	118	98.3%
No	2	1.7%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 9 (Q9) of the questionnaire asked about the type of Online SNSs accessed by Student Respondents. The study as shown in Table 8 revealed that 100 of student respondents access Facebook, 52 access Yahoo Messenger, 28 access YouTube and 22 access Skype. 6 of the respondents accessed Twitter, LinkedIn and Others SNSs and 4 respondents accessed none of the SNSs. A further elaboration of the type of Online SNSs accessed by student respondents is shown below in Figure 1.

Table 8: Types of Online SNSs Accessed by Student Respondents (Q9)

SNSs	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Facebook	100	44.6%
Skype	22	9.8%
Yahoo Messenger	52	23.2%



Twitter	6	2.7%
LinkedIn	6	2.7%
YouTube	28	12.5%
others	6	2.7%
Non	4	1.8%
TOTAL	224	100%

- Question 11 (Q11) of the questionnaire asked reasons why some of student respondents don't access Online SNSs. The study as shown in Table 10 revealed that 1 student didn't see the necessity of Online SNSs while another student responded that it is too expensive for him/her to access Online SNSs.

Table 10: Non Access to Online SNSs of Respondents (Q11)

REASONS FOR NON ACCESS TO ONLINE SNSs	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Not necessary/Don't see its use	1	50%
Too expensive/cannot afford	1	50%
TOTAL	2	100%

- Question 12 (Q12) of the questionnaire asked about what student respondents use Online SNSs for. The study as shown in Table 11 revealed that most students use Online SNSs for Exchanging messages and chatting with friends and colleagues (70) and 66 student respondents use Online SNSs to access current affairs and new information. 2 of the student respondents Watching video lectures (many-to-one) from a Lecturer and another two (2) Audio communication and interaction (one-to-one) with Lecturer. 18 of the student respondents participated in Group video discussion using Skype, Facebook or Yahoo Messenger and 10 of the student respondents participated in Group audio discussion using Skype, Facebook or Yahoo Messenger. 38 of the students also read e-books and articles using Online SNSs. A further elaboration of Table 11 is depicted in Figure 2.

Table 11: Online SNSs Usage –Student Respondents (Q12)

ONLINE SNSs USAGE	NUMBER	%
Group video discussion using Skype Facebook or Yahoo Messenger	18	8.7%
Group audio discussion using Skype, Facebook or Yahoo Messenger	10	4.9%
Audio communication and interaction (one-to-one) with Lecturer	2	1%
Video interaction and communication (one-to-one) with Lecturer	0	0%

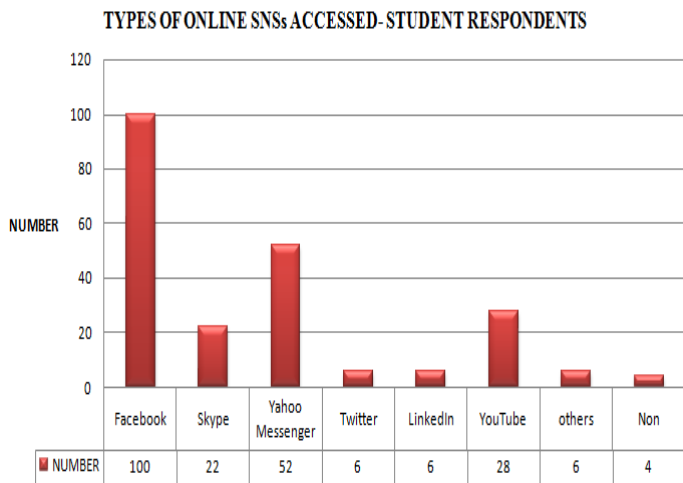


Figure 1: Types of Online SNSs Accessed – Student Respondents

- Question 10 (Q10) of the questionnaire asked about the most popular Online SNSs accessed by Student Respondents. The study as shown in Table 9, revealed that Facebook is the most popular Online SNS accessed by the student respondents (73.3%) followed by Yahoo Messenger (16.6%). However, patronage of Skype (3.3%) and the other SNSs by the student respondents weren't high (1.7%).

Table 9: Most Popular Online SNSs Accessed by Student Respondents (Q10)

MOST POPULAR ONLINE SNSs ACCESSED	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Facebook	88	73.3%
Skype	4	3.3%
Yahoo Messenger	20	16.6%
Twitter	2	1.7%
LinkedIn	2	1.7%
YouTube	2	1.7%
Non	2	1.7%
TOTAL	120	100%



Watching video lectures (many-to-one) from a Lecturer	2	1%
Reading eBooks and articles	38	18.4%
Exchanging messages and chatting with friends and colleagues	70	34%
Accessing current affairs and new information	66	32%
TOTAL	206	100%

study revealed that 99 of the student responded in the affirmative (90.8%) and 10 responded “No”. This analogy is further depicted in Figure 3.

Table 13: Online SNSs Interest of Student Respondents as Part of their Studies (Q15)

ONLINE SNSs INTEREST	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	99	90.8%
No	10	9.2%
TOTAL	109	100%

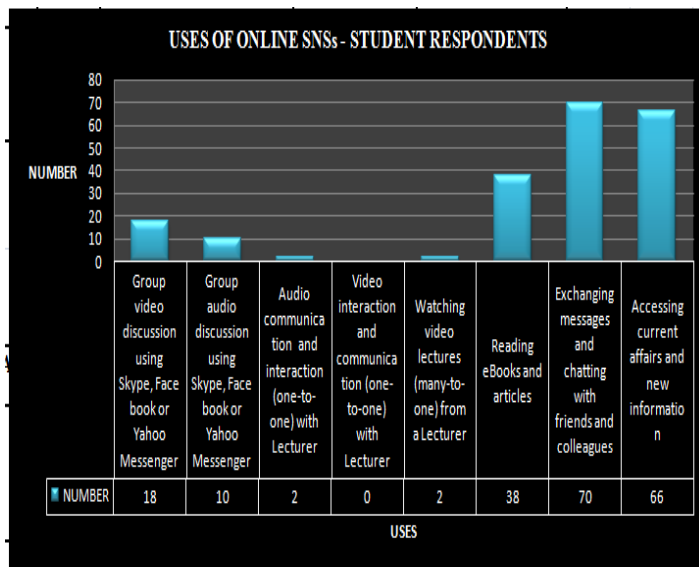


Figure 2: Online SNSs Usage –Student Respondents

- Question 13 (Q13) of the questionnaire asked whether Online SNSs is involved in their studies at University of Ghana. The study as shown in Table 12, revealed that most (109) student respondents don't use Online SNSs for their studies (90.8%) while 11 students use Online SNSs for their studies (9.2%).

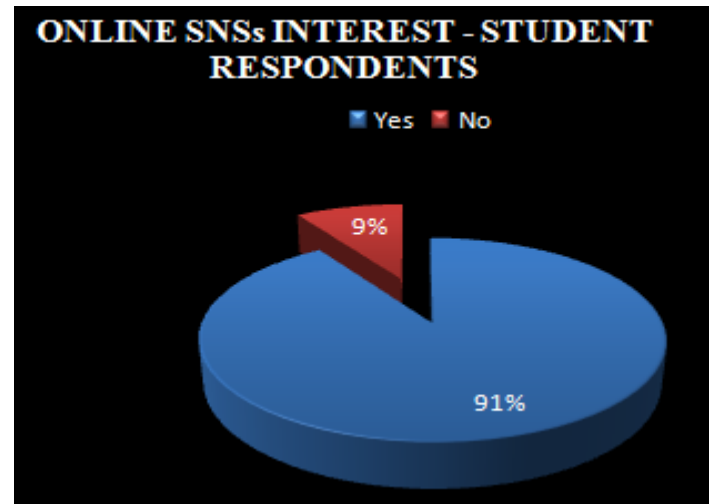


Figure 3: Online SNSs Interest – Student Respondents

- Question 4 (Q4) of the questionnaire asked about the educational stage of student respondents. From Table 14, the study revealed that 70 of student respondents which formed majority (58.3%) were in their final (fourth) year. This is followed by 24 year three students (20%), 16 year 2 students (13.3%) and 10 year one students (8.4%).

Table 12: Students Response to Involvement of Online SNSs in Studies at UG (Q13)

ONLINE SNSs IN STUDIES AT UG	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	11	9.2%
No	109	90.8%
TOTAL	120	100%

Table 14: Educational Stage of Student Respondents (Q4)

EDUCATIONAL STAGE (Bachelor)	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Year One (1)	10	8.4%
Year Two (2)	16	13.3%
Year Three (3)	24	20%
Year Four (4)	70	58.3%
TOTAL	120	100%

- Question 15 (Q15) of the questionnaire further asked whether the 64 students who didn't involve themselves with Online SNSs in their studies at University of Ghana would be interested to do so. From Table 13, the



10. RESEARCH DISCUSSIONS

As elaborated in Section 6 of this paper, Online SNSs are very important in education. This research has revealed from Tables 4 and 5 that University of Ghana provides internet access on campus through its' ICT Directorate and that many of the student respondents have access to the internet on campus either through the ICT Directorate or the personal Modems from and ISP or even both. Internet accessibility on University of Ghana campus as revealed by this research study is not a problem. This research study also revealed from Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 that educational websites and Online SNSs are accessed by majority of the students and that the most popular Online SNS accessed by the students is Facebook.

The results of research study however revealed from Table 11 and Figure 2 that the students who access Online SNSs hardly use it for educational purposes. Group video and audio communication with Skype or Yahoo Messenger which is important for collaborative and social learning had low numbers and percentage ratings. Exchange of messages and chatting had high numbers and percentage. Audio communication and interaction (one-to-one) with Lecturer was only 1% and video interaction and communication (one-to-one) with Lecturer was 0%. In the educative sense, the category of student respondents that was on the high side was reading e-books and articles (38%).

11. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

11.1 Conclusion

In this research paper, a presentation and analysis of Online SNSs and social behaviour of selected students in the University of Ghana was conducted. The research showed that Internet Connectivity is accessible and available in University of Ghana and patronage of Online SNS by students is high and very few students don't use Online SNSs. The study also revealed Facebook as the most popular SNS used by students followed by Yahoo Messenger, Skype and YouTube. Most of the student respondents use Online SNSs for purposes other than education and have not realized the importance of Skype and Yahoo Messenger especially in the area of education. This non-realization could be as a result of their lecturers not using Online SNS for social/collaborative education. From table 12, 109 students who responded that their studies doesn't involve the use of Online SNSs reaffirmed in figure 3 (91%) that they would be interested in involving Online SNS in their studies at University of Ghana. Therefore it is important for University of Ghana as well as other training institutions in Ghana and Africa through management and teaching staff to implement strategies for teaching and learning using online SNSs.

11.2 Recommendation

This paper recommends that stakeholders of University of Ghana as well as other educational establishment in Ghana and Africa, should embark on procedures to implement and realize the importance online SNSs in Education. Lecturers especially should be trained and educated on how online SNSs will help their students in collaborative and Social Learning. Lecturers should further be trained on how to educate students better and conveniently using ICT delivery in education. Stakeholders of institutions should stress on the very importance of online SNS in education as well as for other communicative purposes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Ms. Victoria Dowokpor, a Teaching and Research Assistant (TRA) of the University of Ghana, who helped me with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to the students that filled the questionnaires. Their contributive responses pertaining to this research helped me to know the current situations regarding Online SNSs usage by students educationally and gave me good research directions in order to produce this research paper.

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ABOUT AUTHOR



Nana Yaw Asabere, received his BSc in Computer Science from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana in 2004 and MSc in ICT from Aalborg University, Denmark in 2010. He has eight (8) years of teaching/lecturing experience at tertiary level of education in Ghana and is currently on Lectureship Study Leave granted by Accra Polytechnic, Ghana pursuing his PhD in Computer Science at Dalian University of Technology, Dalian, P.R. China. His research interests include: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Software Engineering, Expert Systems, Mobile Learning, E-learning, ICT in Education, Information Systems, Social Computing, Wireless/Data/Mobile Communication and Computing Technologies.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION

A research in bid to analyze Online Social Networking at University of Ghana, Legon, Accra is being conducted by a researcher: Nana Yaw Asabere (NYA). The research methodology and analysis requires of your generous and kind attention regarding a questionnaire below. Thank you for your attention.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNIVERSITY OF GHANA (UG) STUDENTS

- Q1. What is your gender? Male Female
- Q2. Which of the following falls within your age category?
40-50 years 29-39 years 19-28 years 15-18 years
- Q3. Which level of education are you pursuing currently?
Doctoral Masters Bachelor
- Q4. What level/stage have you reached in your education?



1 2 3 4

Q5. Do you use have access to the internet on campus?

Yes No

Q6. If Yes to Q5, what is the source of your internet connectivity?:

Through UG ICT Directorate’s wireless/wireline (cable) connectivity or
Through your personal modem connection from an Internet Service Provider e.g. Vodafone, MTN etc.

Q7. Do you access educational and other important websites on the internet?

Yes No

Q8. Do you use the internet to access online Social Networking Sites (SNSs)?

Yes No

Q9. If Yes to Q8, which type of online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) do you access?

Facebook Skype Yahoo Messenger Twitter LinkedIn YouTube

Q10. If Yes to Q8, which **ONE** of the following online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) do you access popularly most?

Facebook Skype Yahoo Messenger Twitter LinkedIn Other

Q11. If No to Q8, why don’t you use SNS?

Not necessary/Don’t see its use Too expensive/cannot afford No Access to Internet

Q12. If Yes to Q8, which of the following do you use online SNSs for?

- A. Group video discussion using Skype, Facebook or Yahoo Messenger
- B. Group audio discussion using Skype, Facebook or Yahoo Messenger
- C. Audio communication and interaction (one-to-one) with Lecturer
- D. Video interaction and communication (one-to-one) with Lecturer
- E. Watching video lectures (many-to-one) from a Lecturer
- F. Reading eBooks and articles
- G. Excahnging messages and chatting with friends and colleagues
- H. Accessing current affairs and new information

Q13. Does your study of any course/subject at University of Ghana involve online SNSs?

Yes No

Q14. If Yes to Q13, how have SNSs improved your studies at University of Ghana?

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Q15. If No to Q13, would you like to use online SNSs in your studies? Please give reasons why or why not?

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