

**Communication**

# Using Social Media to Campaign: Are Ghanaian Political Parties Getting It Right

**Emmanuel Abeku Essel**

Department of Public Administration, National University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary

**Email address:**

abeabi@yahoo.com, emmanuel.abeku.essel@hallg.uni-nke.hu

**To cite this article:**Emmanuel Abeku Essel. Using Social Media to Campaign: Are Ghanaian Political Parties Getting It Right. *Social Sciences*.

Vol. 9, No. 1, 2020, pp. 32-39. doi: 10.11648/j.ss.20200901.14

**Received:** January 11, 2020; **Accepted:** February 3, 2020; **Published:** February 11, 2020

---

**Abstract:** It is an undeniable fact that in recent years internet usage has increased in the area of information dissemination in Ghana. Indeed, when the roll call is made Ghana would not be found wanting on the league of African countries with internet penetration and social media usage. According to Ramamohanarao et al, (2007), internet usage has become one of the easiest tools for seeking information and the fastest for that matter in communicating with friends and loved ones. Due to the comparative advantage, social media has over traditional media, it has become a means by which many are using it to reach their targeted audience at the shortest possible time. The study investigates how some selected supporters of the two major political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) use social media platforms to campaign for and to woo potential voters for their respective parties. The study was undertaken as desk research and the research relied on secondary sources with particular reference to posts of some supporters of the two leading parties in Ghana, who have all in the last two to three decades have had the opportunity of ruling in the country ever since the country returned to democratic rule. The results revealed that indeed supporters of the two major political parties through social media with particular reference to Facebook use the internet to both propagate the ideologies and philosophies of their political parties, making social media a vital platform for campaigning and also allowing the Ghanaian populace to participate in political activities.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Platform, Political Parties, NPP and NDC

---

## 1. Introduction

Traditional means of campaigning by political parties over the years has been door-to-door canvassing for votes and ultimately rallies. This is done by way of chanting of party slogans and house-to-house campaigns, which involves the use of party faithful and followers gathering at a particular point for their leaders to address them and articulate their agenda to the electorates amidst drumming and dancing. Though this system has its own advantages and largely some disadvantages, its usage in recent years has dwindled owing to the influx of science and technology and its attendant social media. According to [8], "personal computers and the speed of the optic cable in the transfer of information have marked the modern revolution and almost removed the limitations of time and space".

In the last decade or more, it "Information and

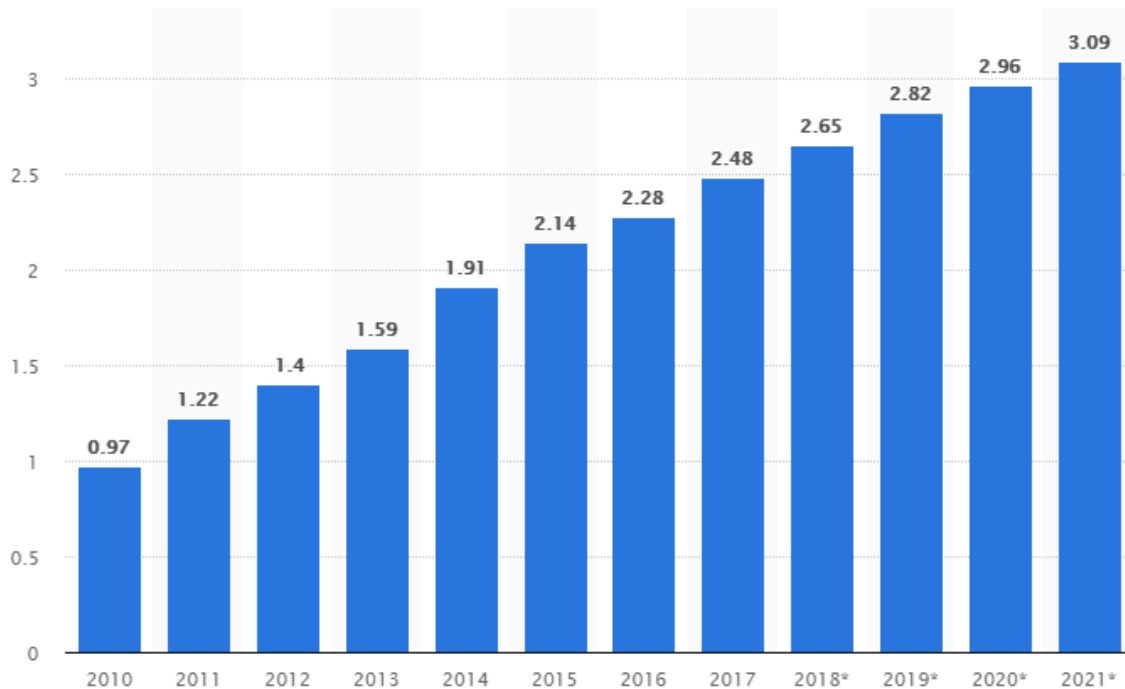
Communication Technology (ICT) has dramatically changed the world", they further added that "new media and technology have changed the interpersonal interaction, communication patterns, and social and political discussions" [2]. Undoubtedly, social media has played a major role in most social disturbances all over the world in recent times. The city streets in the Philippines in 2001, the revocation of the results of the fraudulent elections in Moldova in 2009, the M-15 movement with their accompanying camps, the demonstrations in Spain in 2011, the "Arab Spring" in the Middle East in early 2011, the "Occupy Wall Street" movement that began in New York City in the USA also in 2011, the Yellow Vests Movements in France in 2018 and on a the good and refreshing note, the campaign fundraising leading to the election of Barack Hussein Obama as President of the United States of America (USA) in 2008, all have one thing in common, the use of social media

Social media was the tool employed by the organisers of

these demonstrators to court support and to systematically execute and carry out their vision of protest and mobilise people for their course. If the success rate of the above named social media programmes is anything to go by one is not far from right in alluding to the fact that social media has come to stay and is the commonest tool used to reach thousands in no time to achieve the desired goal. [14]

Put simply, it is a fact that social media has become a global

marvel and a very vital means of communication among peers, families and all manner of persons. The most common social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and mobile instant messaging services (IM) such as WhatsApp, Viber and IMO and other video calling services like Skype have become popular means of communication in the world in recent years.



Source: [5]

**Figure 1.** Number of social network users worldwide from 2010 to 2021 (in billions).

According to Statista, social media users in the world over are estimated to be two billion in 2019 with an expectation to get to three billion in 2021. [1], Based on the statistics, one can firmly say that social media has changed the way people communicate and has become more common than the traditional media.

The main objective of this paper was to find out how the two main political parties in Ghana, the NPP and the NDC who have all had the opportunity of ascending the reigns of government in the country, ever since the current Fourth Republican Constitutional era was ushered in 1993 are using social media as a platform for wooing voters or disseminating messages to the voting public.

## 2. Methodology

The study was taken as desk research and the researcher randomly surfed the internet for the Facebook accounts of people who based on their posts and writings showed support for the two main political parties in the country. Either, the study took into consideration their profile pictures, by way of displaying the insignia of their respective political parties or some personalities in the party they admire based on the

comments or things they have posted which goes to affirm their support direct or indirectly. The study also considered their comments, which showed support or threw shades at their opponents to project their party's ideologies or philosophies and support for their leaders, in order to woo voters or disseminate activities of their respective political parties. Out of the lot, the researcher selected four followers each from the two dominant political parties in Ghana the, NDC and the NPP. The period of assessment on this was from 1<sup>st</sup> October-31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, when the study was undertaken. The researcher randomly selected three posts each from the selected supporters, one from each month taking into consideration the number of likes comments and shares of the posts they posted to buttress the fact that, Facebook communication is thriving in sending needed information to the desired target. The comments of the selected population were analysed as to whether they are wooing voters or not based on the various comments people passed under the posts.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Definition of Social Media

Social media can be defined as "a public web-based service

that permits users to create a personal profile, identify other users with whom they can relate to or have a connection with, read and react to posts made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly" [4]. Kuss and Griffiths on the other hand also defined Social media as "virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet other people based on shared interests." [11]

Added to that, Gruzdz, et al. also said, "social media tools are commonly associated with what is referred to as web 2.0 technologies and the presence of user-generated content". They further added that "the term web 2.0 was first used in the early 2000s. It was used to describe an emerging way of using the internet, with more participatory and collaborative surfing of the web as well as the creation and modification of online content by internet surfers". [10] Based on their study, they concluded that some examples of early social media include tools like blogs and wikis, joined later by social networking sites like Friendster, Myspace, and Facebook.

Taking into consideration the above definitions, one is not far from right in alluding to the fact that, social media is a new information network and information technology using a form of communication utilising interactive and user-produced content and interpersonal relationships that are created and maintained. Gruzdz, et al again affirmed that "typical social media network services could be content sharing, web communities, and Internet forums" [10] and gave five major features that social media are easy to identify with:

1. Social networking and social interaction
2. Participation
3. The use of different providers (e.g. search engines, blog spaces, etc.)
4. Openness
5. Collaboration (between both users and user groups)

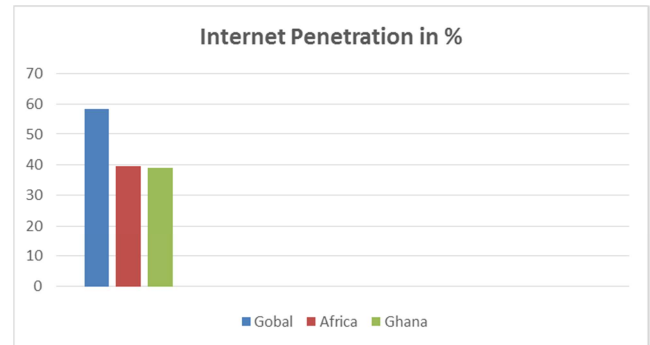
Indeed one cannot, but agree that, "today's social media have helped make real the idea of a "global village" [7], first put forward by communications theorist Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s, and suggests the claims of a "flat world" by twenty-first-century essayist Thomas L. Friedman are true.

### 3.2. Social Media Penetration

According to [1], as of June 2018, globally, internet penetration is 58.6% representing a population of 4.5 billion. Out of this, 2.1 billion are Facebook users. In Africa, the penetration is at 39.6% representing a population of 522.8 million, representing 204.3 million who are Facebook users. Ghana, on the other hand, has a penetration of 39.0% representing a population of 11.7 million out of which 4.9 million are Facebook users.

Though aside Facebook other social media outlets such as You Tube WhatsApp Facebook Messenger, Skype, WeChat, Instagram, Reddit, Twitter, QQ, Qzone and Douyin/TikTok exist according to the (Statista.com) the most widely used, is Facebook with a total number of 4 billion users as at October 2019. It is on the strength of this that Facebook becomes the bases in analysing how supporters of

the two parties are using it to achieve the goal of wooing voters or otherwise.



Source: [6]

Figure 2. Internet penetration in percentage.

Despite having, a lower internet penetration compared to the continental average, Ghana's social media users have increased by almost 83% from 1.2 million to 11.7 million making social media a fertile ground for political parties to engage with supporters

Table 1. Ghana's growth of internet users.

Year	Users	Population
2018	11,700,000	28,300,000
2010	1,297,000	24,339,838
2009	997,000	23,887,812
2008	880,000	23,382,848
2007	609,800	21,801,662
2006	401,300	21,501,842
2005	368,000	21,029,850

Source: Quarshie and Narh, 2012

## 4. Analysis of Posts of Selected Party Faithfuls on Social Media

The posts of NDC supporters whose post were first analysed are as follows:

### 4.1. Alhassan Jaato

From the onset, one can easily say that this person belongs to the NDC family, this is because aside his personal photograph there is also a photograph of the NDC flag as his cover picture. His first post within the period of the study was on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 with the post "*I stand for JDM what about you.*" This post exposes him as a supporter of the opposition NDC party and its presidential candidate, John Dramani Mahama. This post attracted seventy-seven (77) likes and twelve (12) comments. Out of the twelve (12) comments eight (8) people agreed with him, three (3) disagreed with him and one person who perhaps has a personal acquaintance with him, asked how he was doing.

His second post was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, 2019 which has to do with a news item he got from Ghanaweb, a news portal in Ghana under the heading, "*Group petitions Akufo-Addo to remove Deputy E. C. Chair from Office*". The

news item was about a pressure group alleged to be aligned to the opposition NDC, The Centre for Democratic and Accountable Governance (CEDAG) petitioning the president to have a Deputy Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, Dr Bossman Asare removed from office owing to a series of misconduct on his part. This post had four (4) likes with no one commenting on it.

The third post was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 where he posted a disfigured picture of a Ghanaian actress, Matilda Asare with the inscription *“if Kumawood has this brainless personality in Matilda Asare, why won't Kumawood collapse? How can you ask a political party that has a flag bearer to produce his vice while your own party doesn't even have a flag bearer yet. Are only people with 12MB brain who talk like that? I don't blame her, maybe she hasn't taken her medication yet”*. Due to the fact that the writing came with a picture of the actress, one is not left in doubt that, this was a direct attack on the actress because she is alleged to have questioned the flag bearer of the NDC when he was going to outdoor his vice presidential candidate after he was elected a year and over.

#### 4.2. Vincent Assanful

Perhaps what gives this person out as a supporter of the NDC has to do with his posts. He has a picture of himself and a lady and a picture of BZZworld as the profile. The first posting the study relied on was one he shared on his wall on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 from one Citizen Sawa Jnr. This was a picture of the president of the Republic of Ghana at a conference dozing off. The write-up accompanying the picture was *“they said he wasn't sleeping. Look and say picture no lie.”* The post received three (3) likes, five (5) comments and one share. For all intent and purpose, the post one can affirm was to make a mockery of the president as someone who is not strong to undertake the duties of a president, but as someone sleeping on the job.

The second post for the study was another post he shared on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 from one Dzifa Gunu, which is in support of the National Communication Director of the NDC who was a member of a panel discussion on Multimedia Group Limited platform programme, ‘Newsfile’. The post read, *“Sammy Gyamfi addressed the press & was called to News file today. Nana B addressed the press and Gary was called instead, Multimedia still consider Nana B as a substandard panellist”*. The post depicted clear support for the communication director of the NDC and an attempt to throw shades at the National Youth Organiser of the NPP as someone who was denied the opportunity as a panel member on the show because he was deemed to be of substandard to the standards of panellists invited to the programme.

The third post the study took into consideration was on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, 2019 which was also another post from one Kpodo Kormigah Dzidepo which has to do with an eight (8) grid picture in one, under the heading *“Lordina Foundation distribute goodies”*. Clearly, any Ghanaian who sees the page will have nothing to say, than to conclude that the user of the page is someone who supports the NDC and he is trying to

project the wife of the flag bearer of the NDC as someone who is a philanthropist and has the needy in the Ghanaian society at heart

#### 4.3. Henry Nii Kpakpo Allotey

The Third person of the NDC stock the study looked at was one Henry Nii Kpakpo Allotey. He has a picture of himself in a car and a picture of a child whose hand is stretched to have it shook by someone. Even though his profile does not portray him as a supporter of the NDC his posts say otherwise.

The first post the study looked at was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2019, which has to do with a one-minute video he shared of some nursing students on demonstration in which some of them have been arrested and handcuffed.

In the said video, those in handcuffs were questioning their crime as to why as peace-loving, harmless, and peaceful demonstrators in a democratic Ghana they could be treated in such a manner. The comment that accompanied the video was *‘Under the rule of tyrannical Akuffo Addo and his authoritarian government, it has become a crime to embark on peaceful protests and picketing. And we are told this Nebuchadnezzar was a Human Rights lawyer? Naaaa, he is the most vindictive and intolerant President this Republic has ever seen!! What a wicked country we now live in!#Kingslayer’*<sup>1</sup>

The video received Nineteen (19) likes four (4) comments three (3) shares and four Hundred and Nineteen (419) views. Out of the comments, two supported him, one was in disbelief and another questioned what was happening?

The second post was on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019, which reads *the NDC supporters must understand that the coming referendum will itself be a referendum on Nana Addo and John Mahama. If the 'Yes' vote wins, it means Nana Addo is still popular and will likely win the 2020 election. If the 'No' vote wins, clearly the NDC is coming back to power! So go out there and vote 'No'! A message must be sent to Nana Addo that his government has failed on all fronts! Vote 'No'! #Kingslayer*’

The post, one can say is informed by the botched referendum that was to have taken place in Ghana on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 to pave way for political parties to have taken part in the district level elections and the election of District Chief Executives (DCE's). The post received fifty-two (52) likes, twenty-three (23) comments and two (2) shares. Out of the 23 comments, one person said ‘Hi’, five (5) people had a standoff with him, eight (8) did not agree with him at all, while the remaining nine (9) agreed with him.

His third post the study looked at was on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 2019, which happened to be the Christmas day, and he did offer a Christmas gift to one Nana Boateng (Nana B) the National Youth Organiser of the NPP, the person he wrote about.

*“Waaa look at these idiots. Instead of bringing the Eku*

1 The link to the video is on: [https://www.facebook.com/Kingslayer1981/videos/2599922496761207/?epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/Kingslayer1981/videos/2599922496761207/?epa=SEARCH_BOX)

*Juice to the market so that ordinary Ghanaians can buy in order to promote Made in Ghana products, these pigs are sharing it for themselves! Drink all and urinate. Buluuu!"#Kingslayer* This post one can say in relation to a picture accompanying the write-up showing the national organiser of the NPP Nana B standing by a refrigerator sipping a juice drink made in Ghana under the name Eku juice.

The reason for the unwarranted insult on the youth organiser of the NPP was the fact that the writer cannot fathom why the said juice drink has not been released to the market for all to buy, but as he puts it Nana B, and his allies are having access to the said drink even though it is Christmas period where the drink should have been around for all to buy. The post received forty (40) likes and sixteen (16) comments and one (1) share. Out of the 16 comments one person laughed at it, another person had exchanges with him on it, another person was not happy with the insulting words in the post, 5 people out rightly disagreed with him and 8 people agreed with him on everything he had written.

#### 4.4. Reign Kweku Boahen

Under his Facebook profile is a picture of himself with an insignia of the NDC party in it indicating that he is an NDC member. The first post that the study looked at was on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019. He shared a post from YEN.COM.GH under the heading '*Ghana's debt levels leading country to HIPC - World Bank Country Director.*' His comment accompanying the post was '*things are getting serious. What happened to Ghana beyond Aid?*' This post received nine (9) likes and four (4) comments. Out of the 4 comments, no one agreed with him. The publication he picked from Yen.Com was published by the news portal on July 26<sup>th</sup> 2019.

The second post was on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019 where he posted a post of the flag bearer of the NDC with six (6) pictures showing a visit by the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II at his residence doing a visit by the latter. The comment was as follows: '*His Excellency John Dramani Mahama received a royal visit from His Imperial Majesty, Otumfo Osei Tutu.*' This comment received ten (10) likes and no comment.

The third post was on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, where he posted a video with the following comment: '*After a fantastic presentation by JM yesterday. I'm live on Solid FM 103.7 to re-echo the good works and vision of JM Victory for JM. Emma4Suame.*'<sup>2</sup>

The said video showed Mr Reign in an FM station studio answering questions and as stated in the above comment he was in the studio re-echoing his sentiments on the Facebook live interaction the NDC flagbearer had with the Ghanaian populace. The post also showed that he intends to contest the Suame constituency as a parliamentary candidate on the ticket of the NDC. The post had thirty-five (35) likes, one hundred and seventy-five (175) views and ten 10 comments. The reaction on the comments was as follows: One greeted him, 6

agreed with him and 3 did not agree with him.

#### 4.5. NPP

From the NPP side, the following were those whose posts were looked at:

##### 4.5.1. Paa Kwasi Akomapah

On his profile is a picture of the Minister for Energy, John Peter Amewu accompanied by a thumb printed sign by the picture. The background is another picture of the president of Ghana seating in the presidential ceremonial chair in Ghana's parliament in an exciting mood. A look at the pictures leaves no one in doubt, than to conclude that he is a supporter of the NPP and trying to rally support for the energy minister who wants to contest the Hohoe constituency as a parliamentary candidate on behalf of the NPP

The first post the study looked at was on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2019, where he posted a picture of the Vice President of Ghana with an accompanying press release on the Vice President's travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to attend the Third Session of the Future Investment Initiative. The reason for this post, one can say is to let the Ghanaian public see the Vice President as a hard-working person who is doing his best to bring investment and investors to the country. This received twenty-four (24) likes, four (4) shares and five (5) comments. All the 5 commentators supported the post.

His second post was on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019, which happens to be a post he re-posted of 9 pictures with an accompanying press release from the presidency of the president's visit to Pwalugu for the Sod cutting ceremony for the building of 993 million dollars Pwalugu Dam and Irrigation project... The post one can say leaves one without doubt that, the president of the day is doing a lot to improve the lot of the Ghanaian citizenry. The post received twenty-six (26) likes, one comment and two (2) shares. The one who commented was in agreement with the post.

His Third post was on 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 under the heading '*God bless president Akufo-Addo*'. This received twenty (26) likes and four (4) comments. All the 4 commentators supported the post.

##### 4.5.2. Oheneba Elisha

His profile has a picture of himself in a pensive mood with nothing of him showing that he is a supporter of the NPP. However, a follow up on his post thread gives him out as such. His first post the study picked was on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, where he posted a video on the day one of the president's three-day tour to the Eastern region of Ghana with the caption '*God bless the President #4More4Nana*'.<sup>3</sup> As seen in his post, clearly one can say he supports the president and believes in him and given four more years by the Ghanaian electorates from what the video portrays, he would do more for the country. This received one (1) like and over thirty-eight thousand (38,000) views with no comments.

2 The video link here: <https://www.facebook.com/boahen.emmanuel.5/videos/2896905367006420/>

3 The video link: <https://www.facebook.com/nakufoaddo/videos/2133464566959480/UzpfSTEWMDAxMTA0MTIzNjM5Nzo5NDZNTY2OTk2NzU2OTY/>

On November 10<sup>th</sup> 2019, his second the study looked at was a picture from YouTube.com of one Gary Nimako Marfo a member of the NPP Communications team under the heading 'Everyone appointed by Akufo Addo is fit and qualifies to be in government.' The write up of his comment was "Stop the unnecessary rants and critique of family and friends. Those appointed by the President are credible and up to the task" - Gary Nimako Marfo Esq'. The post was in response to comments by the opposition NDC party that the president has only appointed his family members and friends into the government. This post had nineteen (19) likes, seventeen (17) comments and one (1) share. All the 17 commentators agreed with him on the post.

The third post was on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 with the caption: 'Parliament approve GHc 443m for the new credible voters' register. Me: That's the end of yaanom☺'. The post one can say for all intent and purpose is an attempt to mock the NDC who have said they would not support the passage of the budget of the Electoral Commission to have new a voters register compiled. This post received twenty-seven (27) likes and forty-eight (48) comments, no shares. Out of the 48 commentators, he had a banter with 20 people and 28 of them agreed with him or supported the post.

#### 4.5.3. Robert Ossmana Ennu-Dadzie

His profile is a picture of himself in an interaction mood with two other people and another picture of a Ghanaian meal on the background. His first post selected was on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019, where he reposted a post from one Agyemang Richard with the following sentiments: 'Journalist who takes a bribe to work for the opposition. Going around the country organizing demonstrations for uncompleted road projects, which had been abandoned since 2009. Yet the same person had been a journalist throughout all these years. Some persons went round in 2008 doing School under Trees. Eight years down the line, the same schools are under trees. Now they are checking abandoned road so their paymaster can go outlying they gave the entire Ghana roads under contract while asking the government to pay contractors. If giving contracts without payment is the order of the day, who else could not have done that?' A closer look at the post shows the writer lamenting the work of Ghanaian journalist in how apolitical they have become in their reportage. This post had three (3) likes, and three (3) comments, out of the comments 1 person agreed with him.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2019, he posted the following: 'So, the NDC cannot give us one policy before the year ends?' His post was a shade at the NDC who in his opinion have not provided any policy alternative as the basis for which Ghanaians should vote for them, this received four (4) likes and nine (9) comments. All those who commented agreed with

him.

The third post was on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with the post 'Is it true that the bauxite deposits in Nyinanyini Forest are worth \$460billion?' This post it could be said was informed by the alleged award of the entire deposit of the country's bauxite ore by the former president of the country now the flag bearer of the NDC to his brother. This had thirteen (13) likes, eighteen (18) comments and no shares. All 18 commentaries agreed with him and questioned why such a thing should have happened in the country.

#### 4.5.4. Anthony Arku Korsah

He has the picture of the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Robert Ahomka Lindsay as his profile picture and another picture of a young boy on the background. The mere display of the deputy minister's picture gives him out as a supporter of the NPP and he like others is trying to rally support for the minister who has made his intentions known to contest the Cape Coast North Constituency as a parliamentary candidate on behalf of the NPP. His first post for the study was on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019 where he shared a post from PulseGhana.com under the heading "NPP's huge spendings on Free SHS compromising quality education – Mahama" with the following remark "so what does he mean by review of SHS? JM indeed has no message. The post is informed by the current free Senior High Education (SHS) programme running in the country, which the NDC is somewhat not fully in support of it. The post received two (2) comments and they all disagreed with him.

His second post the study looked at was on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019, where he shared a post by one Kwabena Daya with 4 pictures of tractors and their accompanying parts with the heading "Big boost for planting for food and jobs. One good term deserves another". His post one can clearly say is direct support of the government of the day's agricultural flagship programme, named "planting for food and jobs". This post had two (2) likes and two (2) shares with no comments.

The last and final post of him the study considered was on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2019, under the caption, "Cape Tech is under the free SHS policy, so what are you going to make free? Mr Ex-President". This post one can say is informed by the NDC flag bearer's live Facebook interaction with the Ghanaian public on his vision for the country and his promise that, aside the second cycle institutions enjoying free education he is also going to make technical education too free. However, the writer is of the view that what the former president intends to do should he win the next election is already free. The post-received five (5) likes and seven (7) comments, out of the comments, 3 agreed and 4 disagreed with him.

Table 2. Posts of Party Faithfuls Reviewed (Likes Comments and views).

Party	Supporters reviewed	Number of posts	Likes	Comments	Views
NDC	4	12	249	74	594
NPP	4	12	150	114	38,000
Total	8	24	399	188	38,594



Based on the analysis, the NPP related posts elicited more reaction online pointing to the fact that more social media users are interested in the NPP affairs as compared to the NDC

## 5. Recommendations

The study has attempted a simple study on how social media has gained prominence in information dissemination in comparison to traditional media. It is an undeniable fact that as [8] put it, “personal computers and the speed of the optic cable in the transfer of information has marked the modern revolution and almost removed the limitations of time and space”. Social media has come to stay and at any time anyone can post whatever he or she likes to enable him or her communicate with the intended audience. However, in order to deal with miscreants, it is about time the country's laws are made to regulate how social media is used taking into consideration instances where some of the issues that have been posted on the platforms had turned out to be false and outdated

Added to that, a closer look at the posts from the various personalities leaves one with no doubt, that social media could be used to manipulate audiences, because there are no strict regulations on its usage as seen in the case of the various demonstrations across the globe to push governments to do the needful as in the case of the Arab Spring and the Yellow Vests Movement in France. As noted by [15] and also collaborated by [16], though the internet is a good means of sharing information, “it is also used to promote terrorist activities, attracting new members into terrorist organisations” [12]. This is something that must be of concern to the security agencies in Ghana to live up to expectations in their efforts at combating cybercrimes.

Further to that because social media is opened to everyone, that, it is being negatively used without looking at the balance of positives thereby generating intolerant behaviour among users. [9] has acknowledged this and asserted that ‘there is a heightening sense of intolerance towards dissenting views on social media.’ He adds that ‘*when you hear surrogates of one party or the other, paid or unpaid propagandists, communicators of whatever...when you hear them make light of a journalist’s experience, it is disturbing. So a journalist posts something about an experience and then there is this quick reaction trivializing their experience.*’

Under Ghana’s fourth republican rule, the libel law has been repealed and freedom of expression introduced, however some levels of checks ought to be put into place to curtail excesses in the use of social media, particularly Facebook, which is used to malign people and by extension cause panic situation in the country. Those found culpable should face justice for their actions and be charged if found guilty.

Additionally, owing to the numerous role the internet plays, [3] opined, “social media has primary and secondary roles”. He in the first instance propounded that its status in the interaction between recruiter and potential member, the

internet becomes the main way for giving out messages and also as a propaganda tool and social media becomes the outlet. In the second instance, he was of the view that social media is for broadcasting. In view of this, since whatever that is posted on the pages invariably reflects the positions of the political parties and an attempt at projecting the ideologies and a subtle campaign for them, though it will be something very difficult to be done, the leadership of the political parties must take steps to control whatever these party apparatchiks post for the consumption of the general public because, whatever that is posted is to their benefit or otherwise.

Lastly, old news could be rehashed and be reposted as fresh news to create confusion and also achieve an evil political agenda hence responsibility lies on those who share and repost messages from news portals, friends etc. to authenticate the veracity or otherwise of the messages they repost and share on their walls

## 6. Conclusion

It is an irrefutable fact that social media remains significant due to the fact that it has not only become a means to be used as a last and a cut-rate and an effective means to publish written, audio and video messages. Taking into consideration the role social media played in the Arab Spring and the Yellow Vests Movements, and also as a fundraising activity tool by the Obama campaign team, Ghanaian political party members and followers must leverage its usage in getting the best out of it based on what they post, repost and share on their walls as a way of wooing potential voters to their camps.

## References

- [1] Africa Internet Users, 2019 Population and Facebook Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved December 27, 2019, from <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>
- [2] Ahmad, T., Alvi, A., & Ittefaq, M. (2019). The Use of Social Media on Political Participation Among University Students: An Analysis of Survey Results From Rural Pakistan. *SAGE Open*, 9 (3), 215824401986448. doi: 10.1177/2158244019864484
- [3] Bockstette, C. (2010). Terrorist exploit information technologies. Use of Strategic Communication Calls for United Response. *CONCORDIAM*, 1 (3).
- [4] Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13 (1), 210-230.
- [5] Clement, J. (2019, August 14). Number of social media users worldwide 2010-2021. Retrieved December 27, 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>
- [6] Clement, J. (2019, November 21). Global social media ranking 2019. Retrieved December 27, 2019, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

- [7] Eysenbach, G. (2008). Medicine Social Networking, Collaboration, Participation, Apo mediation, and Openness. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 10 (3). Retrieved December 23, 2019, from <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/online-terrorists-prey-vulnerable>
- [8] Friedman, T. (2007). *World Is Flat A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. Picador.
- [9] Growing intolerance of dissenting views on social media worrying - H. Kwasi Prempeh. (n.d.). Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/December-30th/growing-intolerance-of-dissenting-views-on-social-media-worrying-h-kwasi-prempeh.php>
- [10] Gruz, A., Staves, K., & Wilk, A. (2012). Connected scholars: Examining the role of social media in research practices of faculty using the UTAUT model. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28 (6), 2340–2350. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.004
- [11] Kuss, D. J., Griffiths, M. D., & Binder, J. F. (2013). Internet addiction in students: Prevalence and risk factors. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29 (3), 959–966. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.024
- [12] Online Terrorists Prey on the Vulnerable. (2008, March 5).
- [13] Ramamohanarao, K., Gupta, K. K., Peng, T., & Leckie, C. (2007). The Curse of Ease of Access to the Internet. *Information Systems Security Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, 234–249. doi: 10.1007/978-3-540-77086-2\_18
- [14] Social Media and Politics - The New Power of Political Influence. (2012, December). Retrieved December 27, 2019, from <https://www.martenscentre.eu/publications/social-media-and-politics-power-political-influence>
- [15] Thomas, T. L. (n.d.). Al Qaeda and the internet: The Dangers of “Cyber Planning.” Retrieved December 23, 2019, from <http://7.iwar.org.uk/cyberterror/resources/cyberplanning/thomas.pdf>
- [16] Weimann G., (2016) Onlineterrorists prey on the vulnerable, YaleGlobal Online, 5 March 2008 <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/online-terrorists-prey-vulnerable> (23/12/19)