

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**EXPLORING AUDIENCE INTERACTIVITY IN TV REALITY SHOWS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF TV3 DATE RUSH**



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**202122368**



**A Dissertation in the Department of Development Communication, School of  
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in the University of Education, Winneba.**

**JUNE, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, **Anita Able Adimazoya**, affirm that this dissertation, except for the quotations and references derived from previously published works, which have been fully cited and recognized, is entirely my original work and has not been submitted for any other academic degree or in part elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:



DATE: .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION



I declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised by the guidelines for dissertation supervision established by the University of Education, Winneba.

**SUPERVISOR'S NAME:** ABENA ABOKOMA ASEMANYI

**SIGNATURE:**.....

**DATE:** .....

## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my beloved parents, Patricia Apodita Amoshie, Mrs. Jean Evelyn Aduum,  
and Edward Akologo Adimazoya.



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My sincerest gratitude goes to the Almighty for His grace, protection, and wisdom throughout my time at the university. Without His support, I would not be able to reach this point. Thank you.

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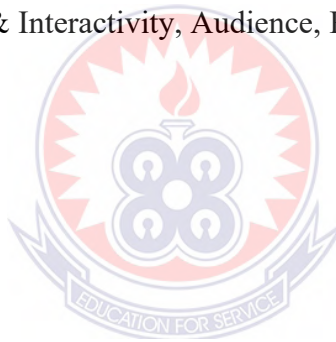
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## ABSTRACT

This study delves into the evolution of the television reality show, TV3 Date Rush, investigating the factors that impact audience interaction and the changing nature of interactivity within the context of a TV reality show. With the rise of social media, fans of popular entertainment programs continue to engage with shows through new and diverse platforms, as part of an increasingly interactive economy. In 2020, TV3 Date Rush pushed the boundaries of this participatory culture by leveraging new forms of media such as Twitter to foster multi-platform consumption by the show's fans. This qualitative research examines audience engagement in live reality events to gain insight into the various aspects of engagement and their relationship to current understandings of interactivity. The methodology used for this study was qualitative content analysis and online observation, which involved the analysis of Twitter posts made by audience, while online observation actively observed and analyzed the behavior, interactions, and activities of individuals of TV3 Date rush on Twitter. The theories underpinning this research was the fourth-place theory, Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotion and Empirical evidence of sentiments and sentiments analysis on social media. The findings suggest that viewers have a greater ability to participate in the production process and hold implications for the future of reality TV experiences.

Key Words: Inter/active & Interactivity, Audience, Reality TV Show, TV3 Date Rush, Social Media



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The present chapter serves as an introduction to the study, highlighting the contextual background and presenting the statement of the problem, research objectives, and relevant questions. The chapter also delineates the significance of the study, outlines its delimitations, and provides an overview of the overall organization and structure of the research.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Dimmick et al. (2004) argue that the advancements in information technologies and communication applications have undergone rapid development over the past two decades. The Internet has become a crucial tool for information sharing and communication, with social networking sites playing a significant role in this regard. This is a result of the emergence of Web 2.0, which has brought about a shift in the power dynamic and altered the usage patterns of the Internet. This development, sometimes referred to as a revolution, has narrowed the gap between the various stakeholders involved in a reality TV show, such as the audience, producers, participants/contestants, sponsors, and the recipients of the message. This is a departure from the traditional media landscape, as highlighted by Kolbitsch et al. (2006). The influence of social media has undergone a shift, as consumers have been granted a platform to express their opinions and exert a greater sense of agency. Through social media, individuals can interact with a wider audience, and share their thoughts, experiences, and knowledge as both content producers and active participants

(Kolbitsch et al, 2006). Reality television, in particular, has emerged as a highly active form of media on social networking sites (McBride, 2015).

The origin of television dates back to the 1960s and can be traced to the convergence of various preexisting technologies, such as telephones, telegraphs, moving and still photography, and sound recording (McQuail, 2010). Television's innovative nature can be attributed to its ability to transmit both images and sound in real-time, effectively functioning as a "window on the world" (Marwick, 2010). Furthermore, the intimacy and personal involvement fostered between on-screen actors and participants is another defining feature that has contributed to its groundbreaking nature (McQuail, 2010).

Delli et al. (1994) posit that television is a virtual medium that blurs the distinction between fictional and non-fictional programming, making it difficult for audiences to distinguish between "real life" issues. Adia (2014) argues that television can simulate various forms of sociability, including direct forms such as chatting with friends and family during a reality TV show, as well as indirect forms such as discussing a reality TV episode with coworkers. Morrison and Krugman (2001) also emphasized the distinction between the "internal social function" of television viewing, which promotes social interaction within the home, and its "external function," which facilitates interaction with those not physically present.

### ***1.1.1 TV Reality Shows***

Reality television has emerged as a dominant genre in contemporary television programming, frequently occupying prime-time slots and dominating ratings during all seasons (Andrejevic, 2008; Nielsen Media Research, 2013). These popular programs are typically unscripted, featuring nonprofessional actors in real-life situations, and are known for their interactive nature, engaging viewers to participate. Despite its sustained

popularity, reality television as a genre has received limited academic attention, with no clear definition existing (Hall, 2009; Nabi, Biely, Morgan, & Stitt, 2007). The term "reality television" serves as an umbrella phrase, encompassing a variety of programs from daytime talk shows to unscripted game shows (Johnson-Woods, 2002). Efforts to define reality television have been inconsistent, ranging from narrow to overly inclusive.

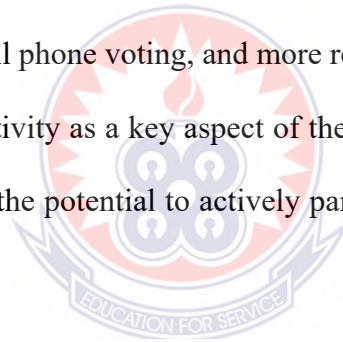
This research provides an operational definition of reality television as a type of unscripted program that captures real people amid their everyday lives, without a pre-determined script. To further clarify the format of reality television, two defining attributes are put forth: the utilization of real people as characters and an absence of scripting. Additionally, for certain reality programs, audience participation is a key aspect of the shared experience or lived reality of the program. The level of audience engagement reflects an individual's selective approach to media consumption and their involvement with the content (Rubin, 1993). Unlike other television genres that do not require interaction with the program, reality television offers a participatory experience to its audience (McBride, 2015). This genre of programming stimulates engagement both during the viewing experience and beyond, by encouraging involvement with ordinary people in unique and extraordinary situations (Hall, 2006; Nabi et al., 2003; Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006). As a result, audiences are more likely to develop a mental and emotional connection with the participants, leading to increased identification (Ekman, 1999).

The widespread availability of websites provides opportunities for viewers to access program videos, view unaired footage, obtain supplementary information about the program and its participants, engage in discussions with other viewers regarding various events and strategies, and participate in various voting polls. Some interactive

programs also enable viewers to exert control over the program's direction by participating in voting and co-authoring its narrative. (Hall, 2006).

### ***1.1.2 Audience Interactivity***

McMillan (2002) posits that audience interactivity can be characterized as "conversational interactivity", which entails direct interaction between individuals through computer-mediated communication technologies, simulating face-to-face (F2F) contact. The phenomenon of reality television leverages various social media platforms and technological convergences, thereby highlighting the potential for interactivity beyond the conventional unidirectional format of television broadcasting. This is evident in the integration of television broadcasts, internet updates, feedback forums, telephone and cell phone voting, and more recently, social media engagement. The marketing of interactivity as a key aspect of the reality TV experience posits that viewers/consumers have the potential to actively participate in the production process (Andrejevich, 2008).



The conventional marketing of reality TV programs involved stakeholders such as in-house and home audiences, producers, participants/contestants of the show, and sponsors, who jointly generated content without requiring audience engagement. Over time, television networks have faced difficulties in keeping pace with rapidly advancing technology, leading to a decline in audience numbers. To address this challenge, some networks have embraced new marketing strategies, including social media and specifically Twitter, to engage with and interact with audience members to promote their shows. This form of engagement is representative of the introduction of Web 2.0, thereby changing television viewership from a passive activity to an active one, where viewers are no longer just passive consumers of a show but actively participate in its

experience. This shift has led to the promise of increased interactivity in reality TV programs. (Nielsen, 2013; Nielsen, 2017; Subramanyam, 2011; Walker, 2015; Wilson, 2014).

As Andrejevich (2008) explains, the media industry's promise of interactivity stems from the desire to increase profits. In the case of Reality TV, this interactivity comes at a cost to the consumers who must bear the expenses for dial-up, internet access, and other components. Nevertheless, the illusion of participation is powerful and attractive to audiences, even if it does not always result in profit (Schultz, 1994).

According to media commentator Laurie Zion (2002), this attraction to interactivity is driven by consumer interest in additional features on social media platforms such as Twitter.

Based on this examination, it can be deduced that the industry holds a specific degree of narrative control over cross-genre drama and reality television programs and presents a strategy for offering a limited form of interactivity without sacrificing its dominance over the narrative. However, the level of appeal that this form of interactivity holds for audiences and individual viewers over time has yet to be determined, and engaged audiences may seek out new, engaging ways to participate in the reshaping, transforming, and co-creation of the content (Cover, 2006).

### ***1.1.3 Social Media***

In this research, the term "social media" will be defined as Internet services where the content is generated by the users of the service. While other terms, such as "Web 2.0" and "participatory media," exist to describe these services, this research will consistently utilize the terms "social media" to describe the phenomenon and "social tools" to describe the technologies. According to Cann et al (2011), social media



transforms individual user contributions, such as status updates, tweets, or comments, into an online activity stream through the use of Web-based technologies. One such tool, microblogging (Twitter), will serve as the study site for this research.

Social media enables users to create online content themselves (Cann et al, 2011). Marwick (2010) also defines social media and Web 2.0 as user-generated content published online through channels that involve collaboration and participation, including video, audio, blogs, and others. Reality television shows utilize social media as an extension of their content, and these communities of reciprocal participation embody the essence of Web 2.0, to both the advantage and disadvantage of its members. This includes not only the enthusiastic audience, but also the broadcasters, cast, and crew (Marwick, 2010).

Broadcasters have recognized the potential of social media communities by providing unbiased reviews and complimentary promotional material, transforming these communities from a source of entertainment to a legitimate forum. Audience members can gather in this virtual space to express their opinions and share their shared passion, embodying the characteristics of an authentic community. Cast members of reality television shows have also benefited from strong social media followings, leading to increased career opportunities as the distinction between celebrity and audience becomes blurred. However, the direct access to social media provided to audiences can also have negative consequences, as stars receive unfiltered love and hate.

McBride (2015) highlights that "the entertainment industry is closely tied to pop culture and social conversations." Not only has reality television permeated these spheres through online social networks, but the resulting virtual communities have also fundamentally changed the media paradigm and social practices, reforming the

relationships between viewers, contestants, and producers. Nielsen (2013) notes that other media are also starting to shape the television business model, with social media such as Twitter completely transforming the way television is viewed. Thanks to the advent of "second screen" media such as Twitter, television viewership has shifted from a passive experience to an active one. In fact, according to Nielsen, "86% of tablet owners and 84% of smartphone owners in the United States reported using their second screen device while simultaneously watching TV at least once in 30 days."

In the realm of media, the use of social media for television programs has become a critical aspect of a show's success. Millions of dollars are paid to media analytics companies to analyze a program's social media presence and provide insights for effective marketing strategies that cater to the preferences of the target audience. The involvement of "citizen critics," or audience members who provide feedback through social media, is a cost-effective and genuine source of feedback compared to traditional focus groups or professional reviewers (McBride, 2015).

The presence of a social media page for a television program has become a necessity, with research indicating that programs with a strong social media presence perform better in terms of viewership ratings than those without (Holt, 2017). In an age of shortened attention spans, audiences often require stimulation from multiple sources to remain engaged, and it is the responsibility of the broadcaster to provide interactive social media content that keeps viewers captivated. Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have been utilized effectively by reality television profiles through the use of tools such as polls, question and answer sessions, Twitter stories, countdowns, and fan voting (Aguiton & Cardon, 2007).

Utilizing such features perfectly exemplifies the shift in power from producers to consumers caused by Web 2.0 participatory nature as well as transforming methods of marketing, advertisement, and promotion. In addition to markedly improved ratings and facilitating a more engaged viewership, broadcasters reap the benefits of having access to the unfettered opinion of their audience, their demographics, and watching trends (McBride, 2015). The importance of social networking is usually mentioned in connection with news and other traditional media, but social media also plays a significant role in television audience engagement measured by social media interactions and ratings. (McBride, 2015).

The transformation of social media is not just a result of technological advancements, but rather a fundamental shift in mentalities. Nee and Dozier (2017) argue that social media has enabled users to express themselves and become active content producers. This capability, which doesn't require advanced technical knowledge, represents a major departure from the historical norm where only those with specialized skills were able to contribute to web content.

Social media platforms typically promote user participation and openness, bringing democracy to the web and blurring the distinction between producers and consumers of content. As more and more individuals become content producers, the flow of information is no longer just from top-to-bottom, but rather from peer-to-peer. The self-organizing structure of web 2.0 supports users in making their information accessible to everyone, fostering the development of collective intelligence (Kolbitsch, et al, 2006).

#### ***1.1.4 TV Reality Shows in Ghana***

The inception of television series in Ghana during the 2000s has resulted in an increased media presence within the country's public sphere, thereby facilitating more efficient dissemination of information to the citizens. The advent of reality TV shows such as Big Brother and Pop Idol at the dawn of the 21st century marked a substantial shift in the dynamic between industry, text, and audience (Holmes, 2004). In recent years, the Ghanaian television landscape has seen the emergence of popular culture-themed reality shows, including Talented Kids, Ghana's Most Beautiful (2007), I'm in Love with Bomaye (2012), and "Date My Family" (2021). The latter, a dating show that seeks to pair individuals with similar interests through a series of three dates with the prospective partner's family, has garnered a positive reception from the Ghanaian audience. With a unique twist, the show captures the excitement and thrill of finding a suitable partner and portrays relatable situations for the audience to identify with.

Date Rush, a dating reality show produced by Adesa Production Limited and sponsored by Rush Energy Drink, has rapidly gained widespread popularity and excitement among Ghanaian upper, middle-class, and youthful viewers since its launch in 2020, as indicated by its frequent trending and high engagement on social media Twitter (Shine Publications, 2020). The program was developed to cater to the needs of young Ghanaians searching for a platform to connect, meet, and develop relationships that could potentially blossom into long-term commitments (Showbiz3News.com, 2021). In addition to fulfilling its purpose, Date Rush also seeks to provide viewers with a highly entertaining experience, a hallmark of reality TV shows (Andrejevich, 2002). As the show progresses, it encourages social media interactivity, with audience members exchanging opinions on various topics, including gossip and character analysis, both

before, during, and after each episode. The program also features chat capabilities that enable discussion and opinion sharing.

Further evidence of the widespread appeal of TV3's "Date Rush" can be seen in the emergence of various social media sites dedicated to individual audience members, such as @SheminaDaterush, @FatimaDaterush, and @AliDaterush, which allow for easy identification by fans and viewers (L'Hoiry, 2019; Showbiz3News.com, 2021). The level of audience interactivity offered by the show, particularly on social media platforms like Twitter, has been a significant contributor to its popularity. This not only provides the Ghanaian audience with a content-rich experience but also encourages active engagement and participation. TV3 also incorporates the views and concerns shared on these platforms into its wider media offerings (i.e. television), thereby amplifying the impact of audience interactivity and engagement. As a result, the show continues to attract both a dedicated following and new audience members, resulting in a growing number of active audience engagement (Showbiz3News.com, 2021).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Over the past two decades, advancements in information technology and communication have seen a significant increase. The Internet has become a crucial tool for information dissemination and communication, with the Web assuming a dominant position in this regard. The rise in popularity of the Web as a new means of communication has resulted in changes in the usage of traditional media and people's everyday lives (Dimmick et al, 2004). Social media has gained widespread acceptance, and its usage on the Internet has altered. This development, which is commonly referred to as a revolution, has bridged the gap between content producers and consumers in traditional media. With the advent of web 2.0, new forms of content creation and

organization, including live, active audience engagement in reality television shows on the web, have emerged.

In a qualitative study by L'Hoiry (2019), the reality TV show "Love Island" was analyzed to examine the relationship between social media and the commercial viability of audience engagement. The research aimed to investigate how the producers of the show leveraged social media to generate profits. The findings of the study indicated that there is immense potential for commercial exploitation and monetization of audience participation in reality TV. This has driven television producers and sponsors to shift from a model of passive content consumption to an approach that involves co-creating and co-engaging with the audience. The conclusion reached by L'Hoiry (2019) was that the utilization of audience participation through social media has limitless potential for commercial gain. (Benedict, 2013; McKinsley and Co, 2013)

The study by Kjus (2009) employed a quantitative survey methodology to investigate the presence of participatory culture in daytime talk shows, such as Oprah, which afforded ordinary individuals the chance to produce content and participate in discussions about significant social topics. The format's success led to the replication of similar programs both in the United States and globally, with a transition from in-studio participation to remote participation through various communication methods including telephone, text, email and most recently, social media. (Kjus, 2009).

Holmes (2004) in his article "But this time you choose! (Pop Idol)" explored the implications of interactivity in reality television programming using qualitative methods. He was particularly interested in the significance of the promise of interactivity in shaping the audience-text relationship in TV and cultural studies. He argued that the notion of empowering audiences was not a mere byproduct of these

programs but was instead a central aspect of their design and marketing, as evidenced by promotional slogans such as "You decide!" (Big Brother) and "But this time you choose!" (Pop Idol).

The study by Gandy et al. (2002) employed a random television survey methodology to gain insights into the viewing habits and Internet usage patterns of Big Brother viewers. The study aimed to determine the demographic characteristics and preferences of individuals who found the program enjoyable and made it a part of their daily routine. The findings revealed that viewers who regularly visited the show's website before and after the broadcast were typically younger, more educated, and computer-savvy. Furthermore, the results indicated that those who regularly visited the Big Brother website were more likely to actively plan their viewing experience, eliminate distractions, and become more engaged during the television broadcast compared to those who did not use the website.

Kjus (2009) explored the evolution of reality television programming towards audience empowerment, where viewers are granted the agency to actively participate and influence the outcome of the show through their choices. This shift in dynamic was described by Kjus (2009) as a move from the one-way communication mode of broadcasting to the two-way communication mode of telephony and the Internet.

In Hill's (2016) work, "Reality TV Engagement: Producer and Audience Relations for Reality Talent Shows," the author conducts a qualitative study on the relationships and engagement between production practices, broadcast executives, performers, and audiences in the reality television industry. The study concludes that engagement, which typically refers to audience attention, has evolved into a key measure of success in the industry, taking into account both ratings and social media popularity as well as

cultural impact. Hill (2016) posits that further examination of engagement as an economic and cultural value could provide valuable insight into the industry and inform strategies for fostering productive and trust-building relationships between producers and audiences.

In the study conducted by Donkor (2013), a quantitative survey was utilized to assess the impact of television serials, such as telenovelas, on teenagers in Madina. The study found that exposure to these serials had a slight influence on the way the teenagers spoke, dressed, and behaved, however, it also acknowledged that other factors, such as the use of other media and the environment, may contribute to these behavioral changes in the adolescent population.

Kyere-Owusu and Boamah (2020) also conducted a qualitative study to examine the extent to which the contents of the YOLO program promoted social change. The study revealed that the primary objective of producing YOLO was to promote social change. Numerous studies, including those by L'Hoiry (2019), Kjus (2009), Holmes (2004), Gandy et al (2002), Hill (2016), Donkor (2013), and Kyere-Owusu et al (2020), have explored the viewing habits and potential effects of reality television shows and the role of social media and commercial exploitation and monetization of audience participation and interactivity through both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Over the past 15 years, there has been a significant shift in television content and viewer behavior. While some television networks have failed to adapt to advancements in technology, resulting in a decrease in their audience, others have embraced new marketing strategies such as utilizing social media, particularly Twitter, to increase show promotion and engagement with their audience. This shift has transformed television viewing from a passive experience to an active one, with viewers utilizing



"second screen" technology and social media platforms to actively engage with their favorite shows. As a result, the traditional model of watching television at a designated time and place, while seated in front of a television set, has been revolutionized. The exploration of audience interactivity on social media with regards to reality TV shows in Ghana using a qualitative approach is an emergent area of research with limited dedicated studies.

This study focuses on exploring the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter in relation to the most recent reality TV show in Ghana, TV3 Date Rush. By utilizing a qualitative approach, this research aims to examine the dominant issues that arose from audience posts shared on Twitter before, during, and after the TV3 Date Rush broadcasts, and to analyze the emotional responses of the viewers through these posts.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To explore the nature of audience interactivity that goes on before, during and after the TV3 Date Rush on Twitter
2. To examine the emotional outpour of the audience through the posts before during and after TV3 Date Rush on Twitter.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of audience interactivity that goes on before, during and after the TV3 Date Rush on Twitter
2. What forms of emotions did the audiences through their Twitter posts demonstrate before during and after the TV3 Date Rush show.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on social media, audience sentiment analysis, and audience interactivity in the context of Ghanaian Reality TV

shows. The examination of the most recent reality TV show in Ghana, TV3 Date Rush, will provide insight into the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter, the dominant issues that arise from posts shared by audiences, and the emotional response of the audience. The findings and recommendations of this study have implications for academic researchers, Reality TV audiences and enthusiasts, and stakeholders in the industry. The study will enhance the understanding of Reality TV audiences about their use of social media and their role in co-authoring content and shaping the narrative of Reality TV shows in Ghana. The analysis of audience feedback is crucial for producers, participants, and sponsors to understand the perception of their shows and make informed decisions.

In the era of multiplatform television viewing, individualized and personalized conversations about television content are mediated through various forms of media. The relationship between social media engagement and television ratings has been demonstrated by industry reports (Walker, 2015). This study adds to the existing knowledge and provides practical implications for the Reality TV industry in Ghana.

This study aims to examine the relationship between TV reality shows and viewership, which has been addressed in various industry reports (Nielsen, 2013; Nielsen, 2017; Subramanyam, 2011; Walker, 2015; Wilson, 2014). Despite the recognition of this relationship, limited scholarly and industry research has been conducted in this area. Hence, the current study seeks to delve into the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter before, during and after the airing of the TV3 Date Rush program and to analyze the emotional response of the audience through their posts on Twitter.

The results of this study will provide valuable insights into audience feedback on Reality TV shows in Ghana. Additionally, the findings and recommendations of this

study will provide the stakeholders of the TV3 Date Rush program, including the producers and participants, a comprehensive understanding of the views and sentiments of the audience regarding the show and its content.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study was defined by a time period of seven months, starting in January 2022 and concluding in July 2022. The research focused exclusively on the examination of audience interactions on Twitter in relation to the TV3 Date Rush show, including the emotions expressed by viewers through their posts before, during, and after the show. The methodology used for this study was qualitative content analysis, which involved the analysis of Twitter posts made by the audience.

### **1.8 Delimitations**

This study has a narrow focus on exploring the level of audience interaction and emotional response of viewers on Twitter in relation to the Reality TV show TV3 Date Rush. It entails analyzing the Twitter interactions of the audience before, during, and after each episode of the show. The scope of the study is limited to the Twitter audience of TV3 Date Rush.

The researcher has established a definition for the terms "social media" and "social media phenomenon" in the context of this study. Social media refers to online services where users generate content, while the "social media phenomenon" refers to any themes or issues that emerge from the audience's interactions before, during, and after the TV3 Date Rush show on Twitter.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study is comprised of five chapters. The introduction, which makes up the first chapter, delves into the background of the study, its objectives, research questions,

significance, delimitations, and organization. The second chapter offers a comprehensive review of related literature and establishes the theoretical framework for the study. The third chapter details the data collection methods, including the research approach, design, sample and sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis. The fourth chapter presents the findings and discussions of the data collected and analysed using the theories discussed in chapter two. Finally, the fifth chapter provides a summary and conclusion of the findings, as well as recommendations for future studies.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature for the following concepts: social media; the social media landscape in Ghana; sentiments and sentiment analysis on social media; audience interactivity; reality TV shows; and interactivity and social media. The chapter further discusses the theories that underpin the study and their relevance to the research work.

#### 2.1 Social Media

The concept of social media has garnered attention from a lot of scholars (Wright & Lynn, 2011; Nicole, 2007; Manning, 2014; Treem, 2016). Different scholars have interrogated the concept of social media from different viewpoints. For instance, while Benski, Langman, Perugorria, and Tejerinaand (2013) explored social media about recent activities of protest groups opposed to repressive government action, van Dijck (2013) on the other hand, investigated how people who seek opportunities to communicate their identities to others have used social media to accomplish that expedition. Some scholars have hinted that the concept of social media is an interesting paradox; one that has attracted more than a few definitions, with ascribed characteristics and understandings being developed and revised now and then (Wright & Lynn, 2011; Nicole, 2007; Manning, 2014; Treem, 2016). For instance, Nicole (2007) stresses that social media researchers find it hard to keep up to speed: empirical findings are most often very contextual and time-specific and easily become irrelevant when the topic of study changes. For example, as social media platforms update their application interfaces, previously stable and well-tested approaches and tools can become outdated (Nicole, 2007).

Wright and Lynn (2011) also point out that the social media landscape is continuously evolving. New channels, services, and apps for social media are being implemented at a rapid pace. Many of these emerging social media sites, services, and software attract media interest, and some gain a firm foothold, but even before they enter the mainstream of consumers, most fade and vanish. The remaining ones are modifying their interface and terms of service, and constantly adding new services and features (Wright & Lynn, 2011). From the views articulated by Nicole (2007), Wright, and Lynn (2011), it can well be argued that social media does not remain the same, and researchers struggle to cope with the nuances as well as the characteristics and understandings of social media ascribed in this constant flux. According to Treem (2016), over the past two decades, social media has developed from an obscure, but novel mode of communication to an increasingly universal means of interaction, coordination, collection of information, and commerce. However as social media has developed into a multi-billion-dollar area of the global economy and has become a common concept in the everyday lexicon, it has become more difficult to grasp the extent and nature of social media activity (Manning, 2014; Nicole, 2007; Treem, 2016). For example, to resolve this challenge, Treem (2016) proposes that there is a need to explore social media definitions, address various social media myths and assumptions, investigate how social media relates to many sociological problems, and discuss how moving forward scholars should research social media.

While the literature has contested arguments as to who coined the term "social media" (Bercovici, 2010, Trottier & Fuchs, 2015), Beer and Burrows (2007) believe that the term seems to have arisen in the early 1990s in response to new web-based communication tools that enabled online interaction. However, Bowie (2013) suggests that the advent of social media can be traced to the period when O'Reilly (2005) adopted

the word 'Web 2.0' in 2005. While O'Reilly (2005) claims that 'Web 2.0' denotes actual changes whereby users' collective intelligence co-creates the value of platforms like Google, Amazon, Wikipedia, or Craigslist in a "community of connected users", Bowie (2013) on the other hand suggests that the term was mainly created for identifying the need of new economic strategies of Internet companies after the 'dot-com' crisis, in which the bursting of financial bubbles caused the collapse of many Internet companies.

Due to the variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available, it is exceedingly difficult to have a single description covering all social media-related technology and practices in part, because social media is not characterized by any scope, format, topic, audience, or source (Bercovici, 2010; Beer & Burrows, 2007; Trottier & Fuchs, 2015). Importantly, depending on each scholar's theoretical position and methodological considerations, their understanding of social media will vary, and social media concepts need not simply rely on internet-based media established in recent decades (Bercovici, 2010). Trottier and Fuchs (2015) show a theoretically comprehensive concept of social media, noting that theorists could logically follow any of three modes of sociality as a focal point when contemplating the essence of social media: (i) cognition, (ii) communication, or (iii) cooperation. In Trottier and Fuchs's (2015) view, the three modes of sociality direct analytical attention to multiple social structures and different media forms. The emphasis on cognition is on shared knowledge, platforms such as newspapers, blogs, or even television that offer access to similar information to the masses will act as social media. Basic communication relies on social relationships and connections, and all platforms such as email, text, or discussion boards will also fall into the social media spectrum. Lastly, cooperation deals with interdependent acts toward a communal goal and is reflected in media such as

Wikipedia, or even certain massively-multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) (Trottier & Fuchs, 2015).

The notion of 'social media' has been associated with multiple concepts: "the corporate media favourite 'user-generated content,' Henry Jenkins' media-industries focused 'convergence culture,' Jay Rosen's 'the people are formerly known as the audience,' the politically infused 'participatory media,' Yochai Benkler's process-oriented 'peer-production,' and Tim O'Reilly's computer-programming-oriented 'Web 2.0'" (Mandiberg 2016). Considering the scope for extended social media concepts, most academics, and practitioners who invoke social media refer to a range of web offerings that have evolved over the past three decades, including blogs, social networking platforms, and microblogging (Mandiberg, 2016). The same as Bowie (2013), Mandiberg (2016) also claims that the advent of these technologies and the related unique applications is also characterized by the development of Web 2.0, which refers to the nature of a class of web-based applications that provided the ability for all users to write and add content by uploading and could be accessed from varied devices.

In preference to the Web 2.0 concept, some scholars, such as Beer (2008) and Henderson (2015), eschew the term social media, which may serve as an umbrella concept that embodies a larger category of online applications that facilitate expression and interaction. Specifically, scholars have called for distinctions between social media broadly, and more narrow terms such as social networks or social networking sites. For instance, Henderson (2015) argues that Twitter is a form of social media in that it facilitates user-generated public communication by non-professional actors but differentiates Twitter from social networking sites like Facebook or LinkedIn where individuals commonly interact with people, they know offline and follow others'



activity bi-directionally. Similarly, Beer (2008) argues that there is value in distinguishing between sites that are used primarily for individuals actively networking social networking sites and platforms that simply articulate the online connections of individuals, which would fall under the definition of social network sites. He comments that classifying social media can facilitate more nuanced scholarship examining similarities and differences among types of applications and their respective uses.

To solidify an operational definition of what constitutes social media, this study found that there are two approaches to how the term has been interpreted in social media scholarship. Both approaches are the attribute approach and the typology approach (Hjorth & Hendry, 2015; Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2014; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). First, the attribute approach focuses on enumerating the essential elements that social media needs to be recognized as a communication technology. Following this approach, Kietzmann et al. (2011) described social media with a broader emphasis on the use of mobile and web-based social media technology to create increasingly immersive platforms in which user-generated content is posted, co-created, debated, and updated by individuals and communities. With the aim of better explaining social media, they also proposed seven functional building blocks of social media: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups.

Although each block adequately represents an aspect of the social media experience, this attribute approach does not clearly explain what social media looks like in a practical sense. Kane et al. (2014) on the other hand, focus on social media networks and argue that they are defined by a digital profile authored by users, the ability to search content and restrict others from viewing content, means of displaying relational

ties, and network transparency that reveals the connections of other users. These definitions as provided in the works of Kietzmann et al. (2011) and Kane et al. (2014) are purposively inclusive to not only account for current social media platforms but also provide a framework for analyzing new and emerging technologies. With slight variations, these definitions of social media commonly focus on three attributes: (i) they are web-based, (ii) they provide a means for individuals to connect and interact with content and other users, and (iii) they provide the means for users to generate and distribute content on the respective platforms (Kane et al., 2014; Kietzmann et al, 2011).

Also, scholars have created classifications that define social media in terms of different types of communication technologies (i.e. Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Krishnamurti & Dou 2008; Shao 2009). For example, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classify social media in terms of blogs, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities, and virtual game worlds. Alternatively, Beer (2008) offers the categories of wikis, folksonomies, mashups, and social networking sites as distinct types of applications that fit within the broader framework of Web 2.0. Further scholars focus on definitions of singular social media types. Ellison and Boyd (2013) specifically distinguish social network sites as communication platforms that offer users unique profiles, public connections, and the ability to create and consume user-generated content and do consider Twitter and YouTube social network sites. Blogs, another type of social media technology, developed into a unique form that included distinct entries in reverse chronological order (Siles 2012), whereas microblogging, a phenomenon largely driven by Twitter, founded in 2006, focuses on much shorter live updates of one's life, opinions, or reactions to current events or other media (Honeycutt & Herring 2009; van Dijck 2011).

It can be concluded that the commonality among various types of social media technologies is their ability to facilitate the maintenance of existing relationships, the formation of new connections, the creation and sharing of content, and the visibility of individuals' social networks to others to a certain extent (Ellison & Boyd 2013; Heinonen 2011; Kietzmann et al. 2011; Romero, Galuba, Asur & Huberman 2011; Qualman 2012). These studies do not strive to create a uniform definition of social media nor to establish a clear categorization of various social media platforms or related services.

Instead of perceiving the ambiguity surrounding social media as a hindrance, scholars suggest that it should be considered as an opportunity for ongoing theoretical investigation. This study does not concentrate on categorizing various types of social media platforms or related studies, but rather focuses on the social aspect of providing a platform for individuals to maintain existing relationships, form new connections, produce and share content, and to some extent, make their social networks accessible to others. (Ellison & Boyd 2013; Heinonen 2011; Kietzmann et al. 2011; Romero, Galuba, Asur & Huberman 2011; Qualman 2012).

### ***2.1.1 Social Media (Microblogging) Twitter***

Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts). Tweeting is posting short messages to anyone who follows you on Twitter, with the hope that your words are useful and interesting to someone in your audience. Another description of Twitter and tweeting might be microblogging. Some people use Twitter to discover interesting people and companies online, opting to follow their tweets (Twitter posts). (Gil, 2021).

Twitter's big appeal is how scan-friendly it is. You can track hundreds of engaging Twitter users and read their content with a glance, which is ideal for our modern attention-deficit world. Twitter employs a purposeful message size restriction to keep things scan-friendly: every microblog tweet entry is limited to 280 characters or less. This size cap promotes the focused and clever use of language, which makes tweets (Twitter posts) easy to scan, and challenging to write. This size restriction made Twitter a popular social tool. (Gil, 2021). Several social scholars have described Twitter as the best microblogging to promote shows by engaging and interacting with audience members. Holt, 2017; McBride, 2015; Kocak, 2017). Studies by both Holt (2017) and McBride (2015) ranked Twitter as the best microblogging site for interaction by TV stations in engaging their audience. Literature examining the effectiveness of using Twitter in education is variable in scope, although a growing number of publications outline the potential possibilities and pitfalls of using the tool in this context. Giordano and Giordano (2011).

According to Rogers (2014) Twitter creates the ultimate audience diversity for all groups, Twitter not only attracts a unique audience, but it makes your desired audience easy to pinpoint. Characteristics and interests are easy to discern not only through profiles but through tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts), retweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts), hashtags, etc. that the individual shares. As we all know, to engage with someone, you must be engaging to be relevant and Twitter helps us identify who we should engage with.

The origins of Twitter date back to early 2006 when NYU student Jack Dorsey shared a new online communication idea with some of his coworkers at Odeo, a podcasting company. Dorsey's idea was a platform that allowed users to share short messages with groups of people, like sending text messages. The first version of this platform was

referred to as “twtr,” and was used solely by people who worked for Odeo. On July 15th, 2006, Twitter was introduced to the public. The website started seeing around 20,000 tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts) per day in the first months, but this number grew to 60,000 in 2007, when Twitter was a hot topic at the South by Southwest Interactive conference. Hashtags, retweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts), and mentions are just some of the terms that are a normal part of today’s internet vocabulary, and Twitter is responsible. Twitter is one of the largest social media platforms in the world, with approximately 328 million active users which makes it hard to believe that it’s only been around for 11 years (Demit, 2022). In April 2021, Twitter is easily noticed by its blue outlook resembling a mountain bluebird with a dash of hummingbird thrown in, the Twitter bird has a beak and body that point toward the sky in what Bowman called “the ultimate representation of freedom, hope and limitless possibility.” Rehak (2014).

Over 465.1 million are active users on Twitter placing it 14th in our ranking of the world’s most ‘active’ social media platforms. Studies conducted by Kemp (2022) show that data published in the company’s self-service advertising tools showed that Twitter’s active users have grown quickly over the past three months. These latest figures indicate that roughly 5.9% of all the people on Earth use Twitter today however because the company limits the use of its platform to people aged 13 and above, there is over 7.5% potential Twitter reach as a percentage of those aged 13. Also, according to Kemp (2022), West Africa has about 5.4%, active users, with a 28.8% of Twitter’s global users being female and 71.2% of Twitter’s global users being male. Twitter announced that it was establishing its African headquarters in Ghana, a study conducted by Adegbite (2022) indicates that Twitter has 919.7 thousand users in Ghana in early 2022, and this represents 2.9% of the recent population and housing count. However,

Twitter restricts the use of its platform to people aged 13 and above, and 4.2 per cent of the “eligible” audience in Ghana uses Twitter in 2022. (Adegbite, 2022).

A study by Gil (2021) explored why people use Twitter, the study found out that people send tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts) for all sorts of reasons besides sharing their thoughts: vanity, attention, shameless self-promotion of their web pages, or pure boredom. Many tweeters microblog recreationally. It's a chance to shout out to the world and revel in how many people read their tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts). Murthy (2012) argues that Twitter is a form of social media in that it facilitates user-generated public communication by non-professional actors but differentiates Twitter from social networking sites like Facebook or LinkedIn where individuals commonly interact with people they know offline and the following activity is bi-directional.

José van Dijck (2012) conducted a study on using interpretative flexibility as a concept to analyse the early development of one specific microblogging site, Twitter. By tracing microblogging's unstable meaning in its early years (2006). The study found that the concept of interpretative flexibility enabled an analysis of Twitter as an emerging technological playground where the socio-cultural meaning of microblogging as a mediated social practice is contested and shaped by various interests. Kocak (2017) interrogated the impacts of social media and its interactions; Twitter's transformation has not only changed the position and the role of the individual on the Internet but also directly affected social life and forms of communication. By having the chance for expressing themselves much more than before through social media, individuals have found the opportunity to interact with others as never before, to meet with a wider audience, and share their thoughts, experiences and knowledge as content producers and active participants.

Another study conducted by McBride (2015) shared a focus on the comparison of Twitter and how it has affected TV shows that have been around for the past five-ten years and concluded that there is no definite answer if Twitter helps with audience engagement. But the most interesting point she saw is that, respondents like Twitter and it would enhance audience engagement, and that social media is changing how people do and view things from television shows to keeping up with friends and family. It is amazing what 140 characters can do to impact society. Logghe et al (2016) surveyed decoding twitter and understanding the power of using Twitter as surgeons, it concluded that Patients rely on digital media for education on health and disease Although tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts) should never be used for individualized advice or direct patient surgeon communication, the opportunity for surgeons to educate patients via Twitter is unprecedented therefore surgeons took the advantage of Twitter to provide accurate and timely information on surgical pathologies and procedures. And an illustrative example of the power of Twitter to unite surgeons is the use of hashtags.

Anger et al (2011) conducted a quantitative study on the basic functions and communication possibilities on Twitter and their interpretation in the context of social influence, considering the three different processes of attitude change and the existing rating systems designed for Twitter. The study found that many people are active on Twitter as influencers based on communicated content or message shared not by attributes such as family bonds or celebrity status (this might cause an action without previous tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts)). Perceiving content on Twitter usually means that one has subscribed to the updates of another. It is thus a prerequisite for a relationship bond on Twitter that user A has subscribed to user B's tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts). After the consumption of content, the user may choose to amplify the messages by retweeting them or may choose to comment on the content by

communicating with the original publisher. This may cause a change in sentiment or entail an action. In this case, user B has been influenced by user A. Therefore, Twitter is primarily content-oriented, but its influence is largely dependent on personal relations.

The studies reviewed in this section enhance the two diverse yet hefty basis of this current study. First, the option of Twitter for this study is because it provides services where users can tweet, retweet, share hashtags, mentions share photographs/videos and links, play games, chat and stream live videos (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Nations, 2018). Twitter's advantage in enabling tweeters to tweet, retweet, and share mentions, and photos/videos aided the researcher to gather data on the tweets (Twitter posts) (Twitter posts) shared on Twitter to assess messages expressed by audiences before during and after their interaction on season 6 *TV3 Date Rush* reality show. Also, the massive use of Twitter as a data site for scientific research substantiates its wide usage in social media research while at the same time opening the fences of scholarly research.

### ***2.1.2 The Social Media Landscape in Ghana***

Ghana has been described as a fast-rising urbanized country with 16.99 million internet users in Ghana in January 2022 (Huyer & Mitter, 2003; Power, Khatun & Debeljak, 2012; Kemp, 2022). The Ghana Social Media Rankings (GSMR), an annual report highlighting social media usage in Ghana reveals that in 2020, over 18 million people in Ghana had access to the Internet with an average of nine million people actively using social media. Although the number of active users on social media in Ghana is unfavourable when compared to the population of Ghana, in a recent survey by Kemp (2022) Ghana's internet penetration rate stood at 53.0 per cent of the total population at the start of 2022. Also, a Kepios analysis indicates that internet users in



Ghana increased by 350 thousand (+2.1 per cent) between 2021 and 2022. For perspective, these user figures reveal that 15.07 million people in Ghana did not use the internet at the start of 2022, meaning that 47.0 per cent of the population remained offline at the beginning of the year due to issues relating to COVID-19.

There were 8.80 million social media users in Ghana in January 2022. The number of social media users in Ghana at the start of 2022 was equivalent to 27.4 per cent of the total population, but it's important to note that social media users may not represent unique individuals, a Kepios analysis reveals that social media users in Ghana increased by 600 thousand (+7.3 per cent) between 2021 and 2022. (Kemp, 2022). Internet and social media usage across the globe indicate a worldwide estimate of 4.021 billion internet users and 3.196 billion social media users in the world (Mensah, 2018; Pugh, 2010; wearesocial, 2018). According to Wearesocial (2018), the number of internet users per 100 people, which also pertained to the global penetration rate for the internet in 2017 was proportionate to 53% with the social media penetration rate increasing from 43% in 2016 to 68% in 2017. Nonetheless, studies in Africa have cited a lower internet penetration rate of 20% between 2016 and 2017 which is in sharp contrast to other jurisdictions like Europe and the United States of America (Mensah, 2018; Sackey, 2015; Wearesocial, 2018).

Similarly, Essilfie (2016) notes that the past years in Ghana have seen social media being used in a vast diversity of ways, whether to march people around social causes and political campaigns, boost citizen journalism and civic participation, create a forum for debate and interaction between governments and their communities, or to enhance innovation and collaboration. According to research conducted by Ibrahim (2013), the penetration of social networking and Web 2.0 technologies is soaring in Ghana.

Demographically, Ghanaian society is a youthful one, where youth between the ages of 15 and 29 make up around one-third of the population. With the exponential growth of online social networking - particularly among this demographic, who will in the next few years become active citizens, potential entrepreneurs and part of the government and private sector workforce - it is argued that social networking tools have the potential to enhance citizen engagement in the region, promote social inclusion and create opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and development.

A study on social media in Ghana has also expounded on several other interesting results (Nutsugah, 2019; Mensah 2018; Sackey, 2015). For example, a study conducted by Sackey (2015) revealed that Ghana has a unique mobile user base of 19.53 million with 9.28 million being active mobile internet users. This indicates that more people access social media on their mobile devices. The study conducted by Sackey (2015) also revealed that in Ghana WhatsApp leads the trend as the most actively used social media application followed by Twitter. Research studies on social media within the Ghanaian context are increasingly springing up (Nutsugah, 2019). In a study on the dialogic nature of the Twitter handle of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), Nutsugah (2019) critically examined the ways social media is promoting Public Relations practice at the GPS. Underpinned by the Dialogic Public Relations Theory, Nutsugah (2019) explored the nuances of dialogue communications on internet platforms and concluded among other things that Twitter has become a very important medium suitable for the GPS to dialogue with the public for effective policing.

Ferguson and Perse (2000) argue that television broadcasters becoming more concerned with what the Internet has to offer in the way of competition. With more and more people having access to Web 2.0, the Internet is thought to be television's greatest threat

to viewership and consequently advertising revenue. Nielson (2013) posits that other media also have recently begun to shape the television business model. Social media such as Twitter have completely changed the way television is viewed. Thanks to the invention of Twitter and other “second screen” media, television viewership has changed from a passive pastime to an active one. Viewers no longer just sit back and enjoy a television show. In fact, according to Nielsen. “86% of tablet owners and 84% of smartphone owners in the United States said they used their second screen of choice while simultaneously watching TV at least once for 30 days.”

Kyere – Owusu, and Boamah, (2020), also did a study using the qualitative approach to undertake an in-depth analysis to examine how the contents of the YOLO program are helping promote social change. Kyere et al study revealed that the rationale behind the production of YOLO was indeed to help promote social change

Just as Kemp (2022) focused primarily on Twitter usage in Ghana. As such, the number of Twitter users in all 10 regions in Ghana was collated in early 2022, in the following age brackets - youth (13-34), and adults (40 and over) as well as by gender, and correlated with several factors, including digital access, gender gaps, youth population, and Internet freedom. The study revealed that the total number of Twitter users in the world stands at 465.1 million in April 2022, increased by roughly 29 million (+6.6%) in the three months leading up to April 2022.

### ***2.1.3 Interactivity***

The last three decades have seen an ongoing scholarly debate over the definitions and measurement of interactivity (Avidar, 2013; Bucy, 2004; Heeter, 1989, 2000; Jensen, 1998; McMillan, 2002; Moore, 1989; Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli & Ariel, 2007; Schultz, 2000). There has been general agreement that interactivity is an important element of

the communication process and serves as a relational maintenance strategy that contributes to relational outcomes. Nevertheless, there is no agreement on the operational definition of interactivity. Walther, Gay, and Hancock (2005) stated, Interactivity, as a loose term is alive and well on the Internet and is a dynamic that begs for theoretical and practical attention from communication researchers. As a construct, interactivity has been undertheorized, and as a variable, poorly operationalized.

Indeed, popular conceptualizations of interactivity include synchronicity, control, rapidity and speed, participation, a variety of choices, directionality, hypertextuality, connectedness, experience, and responsiveness (Rafaeli & Ariel, 2007). According to (Avider, 2013), scholars have tended to define “interactivity” using three different research perspectives: (a) interactivity as a perception-related variable, focusing on participants’ experiences and self reports (Newhagen, 2004; Wu, 1999); (b) interactivity as a process-related variable, focusing on the ways in which participants transfer information to one another (Kelleher, 2009; Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1997; Rogers, 1995; Stewart & Pavlou, 2002); and (c) interactivity as a medium characteristic, focusing on the technological features of a medium and its ability to generate activity (Markus, 1990; Rust & Varki, 1996; Sundar, 2004).

Research into interactivity as a perception-related variable has frequently focused on customers and analyzes how various elements (such as multimedia, speed, and control mutuality) influence the ways in which customers perceive or experience the interactivity level of a medium. This has usually been done to implement findings from the advertising or marketing fields (McMillan & Hwang, 2002). Other research into interactivity as a perception-related variable has focused on the relations between the

user's psychological and social characteristics and the user's perceptions of the level of interactivity of a medium (Sohn & Lee, 2005).

Like information theory, perceived interactivity assumes that media consumers perceive interactivity subjectively, according to their experience of using a specific medium and their expectations regarding the medium's level of interactivity. Hence, perceived interactivity includes two dimensions: The first is pre evaluation of the realization of interactivity in future interactions. This evaluation may rely on previous experience with similar processes; early expectations from a technological setting; and personal, subjective estimates (Sohn & Leckenby, 2002). The second dimension of perceived interactivity is the post evaluation of the process experienced by the user. This evaluation might depend on the user's technological literacy, attention to the process, and involvement with the process. For this reason, various scholars (Downes & McMillan, 2000; Kiouisis, 1999, 2002; Lee, 2000; Leiner & Quiring, 2008) have suggested disregarding the debate about the nature of interactivity in the real world and exploring it as a subjective entity and as a personal experience (Kiouisis, 1999; Lee, 2000; Newhagen, Cordes, & Levy, 1996). For example, Newhagen (2004) argued that interactivity is an information-related process that takes place in the mind of a person when the person assimilates the meanings and interpretations of symbols during interaction.

Research into interactivity as a process-related variable has focused on the process of message transition and reciprocity in a communication setting, mainly regarding responsiveness and interchange (McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Rafaeli, 1988). In other words, this perception explores the ways in which participants transfer information to one another in a communication setting (Kelleher, 2009; Rafaeli, 1988). According to Rafaeli (1988), interactivity is an expression of the extent that in a given series of

communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions. Rafaeli suggested an interactivity model that distinguishes between noninteractive, reactive, and interactive responses. According to the interactivity model, there are three possible types of messages in the communication process. The first type of message produces declarative communication: one-way messages between a sender and a receiver or receivers.

(Avidar, et. al 2015) opine that in this type of exchange, any participant might be a sender or receiver of a message in turn, but the message is always one-directional. An example of this type of message is a message board (“real” or online) in which each participant is potentially both a sender and a receiver. However, if the messages are solely declarative and do not refer to each other, then they are at the lowest level of responsiveness and are not interactive. The second type of message produces responsive (reactive) communication—the messages are two-way directional, and the receiver also becomes a sender and reacts to previous messages. Nevertheless, the messages focus only on the requested information and not beyond it. An example is an interaction between a human and a computer game in which the user’s commands result in a reaction from the game. Most computer games are responsive to users, although more “traditional” settings, such as personal interactions between humans, might also be reactive (e.g., a request— “How are you?”—followed by a response: “I am fine”). The third type of message produces interactive communication—there is a two-way flow of messages between a sender and receiver, each one in turn. In addition, the messages refer not only to the last turn but also to previous turns and encourage the continuation of an interaction. An example is a conversation between two people in which previous turns have become part of the conversation and the frame of reference

for the whole conversation. This type of interaction might also be found in talkbacks, in which people converse on an online platform. Interactive messages encourage the continuation of an interaction, as they are relevant to the whole conversation and refer to all other turns, unlike reactive turns, which are very specific and bring the interaction to an end. Rafaeli and Ariel (2007) suggested broadening Rafaeli's (1988) model to include a larger variety of "players" (human or "synthetic") in an environment that might include messages that are not aimed at one specific player and/or are required to be answered by a single player. An example is an online conversation on a social media platform in which two players can have an interactive conversation while other players follow the conversation and may join in. An example with other types of players is an online message board in which automated software might send a direct but automatic message to a particular user, stating, for example, not to use a certain word.

According to (Avidar, et. al 2015), an additional theoretical contribution to Rafaeli's (1988) interactivity model was made by Avidar (2013), who presented the "responsiveness pyramid." The aim of the pyramid is to make a clearer distinction between "responsiveness" and "interactivity." The responsiveness pyramid suggests that all messages sent as a reaction to a previous message are responsive, although they can be noninteractive (a response that does not refer to the request), reactive (a response that solely refers to the request), or interactive (a response that refers to the request and initiates an additional turn/s) at the same time. In other words, an interactive response is a highly responsive message.

Research according to Avidar, et. al 2015 into interactivity as a medium characteristic is one of the most popular perspectives of interactivity. This view tries to identify the general characteristics of a medium (such as user control and two-way communication)

or particular website feature that enhance interactivity (McMillan & Hwang, 2002). The perspective of interactivity as a medium characteristic tends to assign labels of “low” and “high” interactivity to various media according to their technological features, thus ascribing high interactivity to new media (such as smartphones and tablets) and low interactivity to traditional media (such as TV and radio). Research into interactivity as a medium characteristic has mainly been conducted in the context of new media.

Indeed, according to Steuer (1992), interactivity is the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time. Bucy and Tao (2007) defined interactivity as technological attributes of mediated environments that enable reciprocal communication or information exchange, which afford interaction between communication technology and users or between users through technology. Similarly, Rogers (1995) defined interactivity as users’ control or the degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles and have control over their mutual discourse. Others, such as Liu and Shrum (2002), have provided a mixed definition, examining interactivity as the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronized. Other perspectives on interactivity have embraced technological determinism. For example, media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) suggested that different media can be classified as “rich media” or “poor media” according to their characteristics. Finally, the existing literature has revealed various attempts to categorize interactivity. McMillan (2002) distinguished among user-to-user, user-to-document, and user-to-system interactivity. Rafaeli and Ariel (2007) distinguished among user-to-user, user-to-medium, user-to-content, and medium/agent-to-medium/agent interactivity. Stromer-Galley (2004) distinguished interactivity as the product of interactivity as a



process, whereas Newhagen (2004) differentiated between interactivity, an information-based vertical process at the individual level, and transmission, an energy-intensive, horizontal process among participants. As is elaborated in the next section, we argue that the perspective of interactivity as a medium characteristic is problematic because interactivity exists as soon as there is an ongoing exchange of information in a communication process. Hence, interactivity might be found in both new media and traditional media, whereas the communication process determines the level of interactivity for each exchange of information.

As opposed to the perception of interactivity as a medium characteristic, (Ariel and Avider, 2015) perceive interactivity as a process-related variable, whereas the transmission of information is in the center of the interaction (Rafaeli & Ariel, 2007). In our view, interactivity is not an inherent attribute of a medium that is defined by its technological characteristics. Rather, interactivity might be found in both new and traditional media settings because interactivity is an attribute of the process of communication itself. In other words, although technological characteristics of new media help to break down the traditional differentiation between mass and interpersonal communication, new media is not necessarily more interactive than traditional media; rather, it enables interactivity (“enabled interactivity”). Hence, a face-to-face conversation might also be interactive, according to the type of message it conveys. Emphasizing enabled interactivity rather than the inherent interactivity of a medium, Jensen (2008) claimed that the complexity of online-mediated environments requires a division of interactivity into four subdimensions (transmissional, consultational, registrational, and conversational interactivity), which demonstrates that technical perspectives of interactivity and user-centered perspectives of interactivity might somehow meet.

Recent technological developments and the process of media convergence, in which media became more diverse, mobile, present, and connected to one another (Jenkins, 2004, 2006) have simplified our argument. According to Jenkins's (2004, 2006) media convergence theory, the processes of media convergence changes the ways in which content is produced and consumed, altering the relationship between existing technologies, markets, industries, and audiences. Hence, from a perspective of interactivity as a medium characteristic, the process of convergence links media that cannot enable interactivity with media that can, thus making it interactive. From a perspective of interactivity as a process-related variable, the actual usage of a medium by users and their actual interactions within a medium could exercise different levels of interactivity, both in new and traditional settings. For example, a Facebook page might contain several sporadic messages in a one-way style (low level of interactivity), whereas a telephone call might contain a vivid conversation between two friends (high level of interactivity).

Hence, the perception of interactivity as mainly relevant to new media rather than traditional media is no longer accurate. Indeed, communication consumers today are also communication producers (or "prosumers"). These prosumers watch television programs on their smartphones, send text messages to reality shows, read electronic books, and use their tablets to read online papers and write talkbacks. In this communication environment, it is no longer accurate to label a specific medium as interactive and another medium as non-interactive. In other words, when exploring interactivity, (Ariel et al 2015) argued that one should not focus on the characteristics of a specific medium, because the medium might change and converge. (Avidar et al 2015) rather, argue that the interactivity should focus on the process of message transition and reciprocity, as well as the ways in which participants transfer information

to one another in a communication setting. Thus, they endorse interactivity as a process-related variable rather than a characteristic of the medium. This perspective is especially important for social media scholars, who should not take for granted that social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are inherently interactive. Thus, even though social networks seem to represent new media while a television program or a newspaper article represents traditional media, the new platforms are not inherently interactive but rather enable interactivity. Thus, scholars who conduct research on social media should explore each interaction separately and decide whether the exchange is noninteractive, reactive, or interactive based on the process of message transition and reciprocity.

Like our argument that interactivity is a process-related variable consisting of information exchanges, (Avidar, et al 2015) further argue that social media platforms cannot be seen as “social” based only on their technological attributes. Indeed, new communication platforms enable interaction and make online participation easier and faster than traditional platforms. Hence, the platforms themselves might be seen as affordance technologies that enable various levels of social involvement and participation. Jenkins, Ford, and Green (2013) used the terminology of “spreadable media” to describe the social media nature as a platform of active engagement in spreading content.

Nevertheless, (Avidar, et. al 2015) further opine that the actual involvement, interaction, and activities performed by users on a platform determine the “sociability” of that platform. For example, if users do not use the options of “like,” “share,” or “comment,” and do not post any statuses on Facebook, then Facebook will only become a social enabling platform instead of an actual “social” medium. In addition, users

decide how active and “socially involved” they want to be in a particular context, situation, and platform and whether they want to “check in” or write a lengthy status on their “wall,” hence determining the actual “sociability” of a platform. For example, two Facebook pages might differ in their levels of “sociability.” If one page consists of an ongoing, vivid conversation among users (high level of sociability), whereas the other page lacks interaction and conversation (low level of sociability), the first page might be seen as a “social platform” while the other is seen only as a “social affordance platform.” In other words, sociability is determined by the number of exchanges and users of a platform: The higher the number of users and exchanges in a platform, the greater the level of sociability of a platform. Online marketers understand the benefits and importance of “sociability” to the success of their businesses; marketers try to increase the participation and exchange on their social media platforms by inviting users to take part in online challenges and competitions; to upload their posts, photos, and videos; and to encourage users to “like” their products and services.

Marketers understand that although they have new social media platforms, what counts is the number of users (“friends” and “likes”), interactions, and exchanges on their platforms. According to two online marketing gurus: “Technology is just that: technology. Social Media is about people and how we can approach them as informed and helpful peers” (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009)

## **2.2 Empirical Evidence on Sentiments and Sentiments Analysis on Social Media**

Sentiment analysis is the process of using computational methods to identify, extract and quantify subjective information from text data (Pang, Lee, & Vaithyanathan, 2002). The objective of sentiment analysis is to classify the polarity of a given text, whether it is positive, negative or neutral. By understanding the sentiment of a piece of text,

individuals can promote compassionate communication by tailoring their responses in a way that aligns with the sentiment expressed.

According to Klockars and colleagues (2010), compassionate communication is defined as a communication style characterized by understanding, empathy, and caring towards others. When engaging in compassionate communication, individuals aim to understand the perspectives, feelings, and needs of the people they are communicating with. Sentiment analysis provides a tool for individuals to better understand the sentiment expressed in a piece of text, allowing them to respond in a way that is more aligned with the expressed sentiment and promotes compassionate communication.

In a study by Dastjerdi and colleagues (2015), the authors found that the use of sentiment analysis tools can help individuals identify and respond to the emotional needs of others, leading to more positive outcomes in their interactions. The results of this study suggest that sentiment analysis can be a valuable tool for promoting compassionate communication by enabling individuals to better understand and respond to the emotions expressed in text data.

Also, sentiment analysis and sentiment theory promote compassionate communication by providing individuals with tools to better understand the sentiment expressed in text data. By using sentiment analysis, individuals can tailor their responses in a way that aligns with the sentiment expressed, leading to more positive outcomes in their interactions and promoting compassionate communication.

Zajonc (2000) in his work on feeling and thinking posited that sentiment is distinctly social. Stets (2019) highlights Zajonc's (2000) position of sentiment being social by identifying sentiment as a socially constructed combination of autonomic responses,

expressive behaviours, and shared meanings usually organized around another person. According to Stets (2019), sentiment involves combinations of bodily sensations, gestures, and cultural meanings that we learn in enduring social relationships. For example, love is a sentiment that is characterized by autonomic symptoms such as the flow of adrenaline and increased heart rate, emerges with another we see as attractive, and may be expressed in gazing and smiling at the other (Stets, 2019). Studies on sentiments such as Lewis (2000) and Shelly (2001) indicate that humans learn through socialization and through the processes of socialization they learn to give their internal sensations. According to Lewis (2000) and Shelly (2001), sentiments are socialized emotions; feelings that have been developed from their mere instinctive state and become properly human through thinking and interaction. It involves imagination, and the medium in which it lives mainly is compassionate communication with others' minds.

Thoits (1990) as cited in Stets (2019) indicates that sentiments have four interconnected components: (i) situational cues, (ii) physiological changes, (iii) expressive gestures, and (iv) an emotion label that names the specific configuration of components. Thoits (1990) as cited in Stets (2019) contends that children learn the connection between these components by repeatedly being exposed to emotion labels from others when configurations of the components emerge in their own experiences. Gordon (2010) avers that people interpret their emotions in a culturally weighted manner. In other words, Gordon (2010) highlights that our cultural orientation influences the gestures and emotional labels we apply to a given experience. For example, physiologically, fear is associated with greater decreases in blood pressure and blood flow to the extremities (Levenson, 2001). Fear is generally activated when there is an interpretation of potential harm in one's environment (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Hence, when we see a snake in

the bush, our culture informs us that a snake is dangerous and will likely hurt us, our heart rate will increase, our hands will become warm, our body may begin to tremble, and we will culturally associate the entire experience with the emotion, fear (Gordon, 2010). While both Gordon (2010) and Thoits (1990) as cited in Stets (2019) recognize the biological and cognitive aspects of experiences, they also recognize the social: the interpretation(s) made in the situation, the expressions and gestures, and the vocabulary/labels that are all learned through socialization.

Other terms appear in the literature on emotions. Among the most general is the term effect, which is "any evaluative (positive or negative) orientation toward an object" (Smith & Lovin, 2015). This accentuates the cognitive aspect of emotions and sentiments. Moods are "affective states without an object or a specific object" (Smith & Lovin, 2015). Compared to emotions, moods are usually longer in duration, lower in intensity, and more diffuse/global. Finally, there is the term feeling, which may be defined as the internal, subjective experience of an emotion that is unique to each person (Smith & Lovin, 2015). However, for this current study, the researcher will use these terms interchangeably since ultimately, they capture the socialized feeling of people (Stets, 2019; Smith & Lovin, 2015).

Freud (2012) assessed whether there is a small set of primary or basic emotions from which all other emotions are derived. Freud (2012) acknowledges one of the earliest arguments of the psychologist, Ekman. With Friesen, Ekman showed still photographs of facial expressions to observers in different cultures and then asked them to check from a list of emotions which ones they saw. Five emotions were recognized in the face in literate and preliterate societies: anger, fear, sadness, disgust, and happiness (Ekman & Friesen, 1975 as cited in Freud, 2012). The universality of these facial expressions

provided compelling evidence according to Freud (2012) that these emotions are basic to humans. Four out of these five emotions are negative, suggesting that humans may be more attentive to negative than positive cues, perhaps because negative cues register danger and impel humans to respond. A set of primary emotions was identified by Kempel (2011). His four primary emotions are anger, anxiety, sadness, and happiness, parallel to the basic emotions of Ekman. Kempel (2011) suggests that these emotions are fundamental because each has an evolutionary survival value (e.g. anxiety and anger enable people to react rapidly when they are at risk), occur in the early stages of human development, are widely recognized in the face, have distinctive autonomous reactions, and arise in social relationships.

Kempel (2011) takes his analysis one step further by arguing that there is a second layer of emotions that stems from primary emotions, which he labels secondary emotions. These emotions are more socially constructed, unlike the main emotions that are innate to Kempel (2011). Like the stance of scholars like Gordon (2010) and Stets (2019), Kempel (2011) notes that these emotions are learned in conjunction with the key emotions through socialization. Guilt is learned, for instance, from the primary apprehension of feelings. A kid fears retribution when he/she commits a forbidden act. A kid learns over time that when he commits a wrong act and he fears wrath, the moral label he can evoke is remorse. Kempel (2011) further notes that secondary emotions can lead to a mixture of primary emotions. Fear and rage, for instance, may result in secondary emotions of hatred, jealousy, and envy.

Social media on the other hand has become an important outlet for human interactions (Ito, 2005; Manning, 2014; Paechter, 2013) and social media platforms like Twitter allows people to have their accounts to tweet, convey feelings and relate emotions via



text as well as emoticons (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011; Obar & Wildman, 2015). Some studies on sentiments analysis on social media have characterized the notion of sentiments to concern users' emotions toward an issue based on the comments in a tweet (Akaichi, 2013; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Selwyn, 2009). Akaichi (2013) however, identifies three primary emotional patterns in sentiment analysis. They are: happy, unhappy and emotionless. The emotion happy is characterized by a feeling or show of pleasure or contentment. Normally, social media users share opinions, facts or issues based on their area of interest without being at the same place and same time (Manning, 2014). Nonetheless, Bargh & McKenna (2004) suggest that in analyzing people's sentiments, there are complexities in trying to wholly appreciate user behaviours as well as their state of mind through texts. Thus, there are various methods in sentiment analysis which can be either manually, semi-automatically or fully automatically - in understanding user behaviours and state of mind through texts (Lu & Tsou, 2010; Stapa & Shaari, 2012).

Stapa and Shaari (2012) explain that the manual approach such as surveys provides limited questions and answers for the participants as well as it is time-consuming in conducting the surveys for data collection. However, unlike the manual approach, in automated systems, there are no/fewer limitations in collecting and analyzing data (Stapa & Shaari, 2012). Some of the automated tools perform categorization immediately after the contents are extracted. For example, Lu and Tsou (2010) in a research study conducted on Twitter used an automated tool called Sentiment Identification Algorithm (SIA) tool to extract relevant and eliminate irrelevant contents. Lu and Tsou (2010) emphasized in the study that using the automated system was effortless in analysing the data because the system filtered the data by itself after the extraction. The filtration included emoticons replacements, upper and lower casing

correction and removal of stop words, repeated words as well as punctuations (Lu & Tsou, 2010).

Zamani, Abidin, Omar & Abiden (2013) in a study on Sentiment Analysis: Determining People's Emotions in Facebook identified opinions and sentiments in both English and Malay words on Facebook (1,231 users in all) and classified them under the following emotions: happy (positive), unhappy (negative) and emotionless. The classification of emotions by Zamani et al (2013) aligns with Akaichi (2013) who also identified three primary emotional patterns: happy, unhappy and emotionless. Using a qualitative case study Zamani et al (2013) posits that even though the automated approach in sentiment analysis ensures accuracy of sentiment classification, the manual approach is the best method for classifying words and emoticons occurrences due to its flexibility in analysing multilingual texts. Ceron, Curini, Lacus & Porro (2013) also conducted a study on sentiments analysis of citizens in Italy and France and how social media can improve knowledge of their political preferences. Ceron et al (2013) analyzed the popularity of Italian political leaders throughout 2011 as well as, the voting intention of French Internet users in the 2012 presidential ballot using Twitter as the preferred social media network. The study was rooted in the quantitative research approach and adopted a fully automated system of analysis to extract and filter the data. As part of the findings, Ceron et al, (2013) were able to foresee a victory for the candidate, Hollande, with 54.9% of votes the night ahead of the election using the Sentiment Identification Algorithm (SIA) tool to analyze the opinions sampled. Although the study was not expressly comprehensive on how the opinions expressed online, had led to the prediction of Hollande's win, it provided an appreciation of the concept and technique involved in conducting sentiments analysis on social media.

Agangiba and Blessed (2019) apply the concept of sentiment analysis for the determination of polarities (positivity, neutrality or negativity) of sentiments bred in the views expressed by Ghanaians regarding the newly introduced double-track system in the Second Cycle Schools in Ghana. These views are sourced from tweets (Twitter posts). In the authors' view, accurate analysis of sentiments depends largely on the context of word usage. Thus, most sentiment analysis approaches however ignore context when predicting sentiments; thereby leading to loss of context. Agangiba and Blessed (2019) therefore, in their study, attempt to avoid the loss of context with the use of the concept of Word embedding. Word embedding is a context-preserving technique which embeds the contextual information of data in the form of vectors before the analysis of sentiment is done (Agangiba & Blessed, 2019). An overall model accuracy of 76% was achieved using this technique. The authors' model's accuracy outdoes similar works such as Garg's (2016) work with an accuracy of 72%.

Nti and Adekoy (2020) similarly applied sentiments analysis to predicting stock market price movements in Ghana. Predicting the stock market according to Nti and Adekoy (2020) remains a challenging task due to the numerous influencing factors such as investor sentiment, firm performance, economic factors and social media sentiments. However, the profitability and economic advantage associated with an accurate prediction of stock price draw the interest of academicians, economic, and financial analysts in researching this field (Nti & Adekoy, 2020). Despite the improvement in stock prediction accuracy, the literature argues that prediction accuracy can be further improved beyond its current measure by looking for newer information sources, particularly on the Internet. Using web news, financial tweets posted on Twitter, Google Trends and forum discussions, Nti and Adekoy (2020) examine the association between public sentiments and the predictability of future stock price movement using an

Artificial Neural Network (ANN). They experimented with the proposed predictive framework with stock data obtained from the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) between January 2010 and September 2019 and predicted the future stock value for a time window of 1 day, 7 days, 30 days, 60 days and 90 days. They observed an accuracy of (49.4-52.95 %) based on Google trends, (55.5-60.05%) based on Twitter, (41.52-41.77 %) based on a forum post, (50.43-55,81 %) based on web news and (70.66-77.12 %) based on a combined dataset. Thus, they recorded an increase in prediction accuracy as several stock-related data sources were combined as input to our prediction model. They also established a high level of direct association between stock market behaviour and social networking sites. Therefore, based on the study outcome, they advised that stock market investors could utilize the information from web financial news, tweet, forum discussion, and Google trends to effectively perceive the future stock price movement and design effective portfolio/investment plans.

Botchway, Jibril, Kominkov, Oplatkova & Chovancova (2020) on the other hand used a sentiment analysis approach in drawing deductions from a sub-Saharan African bank's tweets. The authors advance the argument that the upsurge in social media websites has in no doubt triggered a huge source of data for mining interesting expressions on a variety of subjects. These expressions on social media websites empower firms and individuals to discover varied interpretations regarding the opinions expressed (Botchway et al, 2020). In Sub-Saharan Africa, financial institutions are making the needed technological investments required to stay competitive in today's challenging global business environment (Botchway et al., 2020). Twitter as one of the digital communication tools has in recent times been integrated into the marketing communication tools of banks to augment the free flow of information (Botchway et al, 2020). As such, the authors perform a sentiment analysis on a large dataset of tweets

associated with the Ecobank Group, a prominent pan- African bank in sub-Saharan Africa using four different sentiment lexicons to determine the best lexicon based on its performance. Our results show that Valence Aware Dictionary and sentiment Reasoner (VADER) outperforms all the other three lexicons based on accuracy and computational efficiency. Additionally, we generated a word cloud to visually examine the terms in the positive and negative sentiment categories based on VADER. The authors' approach demonstrates that in today's world of empowered customers, firms need to focus on customer engagement to enhance customer experience via social media channels using Twitter as the best microblogging tool since the meaning of competitive advantage has shifted from purely competing over price and product to building loyalty and trust. In theory, the study contributes to broadening the scope of online banking given the interplay of consumer sentiments via the social media channel.

The studies reviewed above exemplify that the feelings and thinking of people are constructed in a social setting (Stets, 2019) and since social media is an important platform for human interactions (Manning, 2014), it allows people to have their accounts to tweet (Twitter posts), express feelings and show emotions via texts as well as emoticons (Obar & Wildman, 2015). The studies mentioned above, therefore, provide insight into how various scholars have tackled the subject of sentiment analysis using one social media platform or the other. The studies inform this current study also on the viability and the various approaches to conducting sentiment analysis on social media. It explains how expressions on social media can empower researchers to discover varied interpretations regarding the opinions expressed.

### **2.3 Social Media and Reality TV Shows**

Reality TV shows rely heavily on social media to drive content consumption and ratings. What people fail to understand is that the true power of social media rests in

the information it provides. Twitter has millions of users, generating thousands of tweets and posts every minute, freely giving away valuable insights in public forums. Directly relating to broadcast ratings, social media users reveal to marketers all the relevant details of their media/television use, habits, and opinions. “Once social data is combined with internal strategy criteria and traditional performance metrics (e.g., Nielson ratings, subscriptions, ad revenue, etc.), rich insights can be gathered that can inform powerful decisions” (Benedict, 2013). Social media, especially Twitter, gives insightful data to broadcasters who are always looking for a competitive edge when it comes to their programming and marketing. (Benedict, 2013).

According to Benedict (2013), broadcasters have gained much information from social media data, including responses to promotional campaign events, viewership behaviour; social sentiment based on demographics, trends, events, and emergencies, precision viewership predictions; weekly or by season, driven by the social buzz that precedes the airing of the program, and much more. It is truly remarkable how social media has gone from pure enjoyment to a “must-have” for broadcasters and program producers, especially for reality TV shows. According to a recent study by McKinsey and Co. (2013), “social technologies can potentially unlock billions, if not trillions of dollars in value to organizations across industries”. Twitter is believed to be able to improve communication and collaboration opportunities. What this means for entertainment companies is that they can impact marketing and the production value chain through the ability to listen to and understand social data. Broadcasters can use this data to improve the content and engage viewers.

The tension of competitive rivalries is often a key ingredient in the creation of art and the production of discourses (Free, 2016). This is certainly the case in TV shows such as soap operas and Reality TV programmes (Pate, 2017) producing a cultural system

based fundamentally on live practices and pragmatic relations, which has emerged over the last two decades as a powerful mediator of both young and old social identity in the many parts of the world (Free, 2016; Pate, 2017). Social media networks such as Myspace (created in 2003); Facebook, a text, video and image sharing network (2014); YouTube, a video sharing network (2005); Twitter, a text-based platform (2006); Instagram, an image-sharing platform (2010); and Snapchat, a video sharing platform (2011) have been utilized, enabling communication on a multitude of levels (Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards, 2018). Communication undoubtedly has been enhanced by online activity; however, it is acknowledged that it also raises a host of challenges. According to Smitherma (2017), the value of social networking sites increases exponentially with the number of users. That is, as the number of people connected to the network increases the impetus for others to establish connections to the network increases (Smitherma, 2017). Online streaming services are leveraging the advantage of the internet to increase their network effects (Yue, 2011). For instance, members of the TV3 online community have various options available to them. They can add friends, participate in different groups, share their experiences, tag participants of their favorite shows, create their own online community, share a common space with friends or even strangers, view charts that highlight the users of the platform, and even explore other reality shows (Yue, 2011). The internet appears to provide a platform for new conflicts alongside intensifying ones (Moule et al, 2016). Social media is popular among the youth and those who subscribe to street gangs are increasingly using social media as a platform to communicate (Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards, 2018). Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards (2018) further that tweets on reality TV content have been used by audiences to express and communicate stories of their lived experiences. Attitudes, behaviours and perceptions, have been and in some instances reshaped by the use of

social media in people's lives (Greenfield, 2014; Annisette & Lafreniere, 2016). Johnson and Schell-Busey, 2016) found that there is a correlation between online activity on social media platforms and offline gang-related violence. Pinkney and Robinson-Edwards suggest that young people's constant use of social media has a strong connection with narcissism. Narcissism according to Panek et al (2013) is an affinity to believe in oneself to be superior over others, to increasingly pursue adoration from others, and to participate in egotistical thinking and behaviour. Carpenter (2012) expressed the notion that young people have become obsessed with taking and posting "selfies" on social media platforms, similarly gangs use the platforms for the very same reasons. Carpenter (2012) further posits that the lust for adoration sees young people thriving on the idea that they are important based on the volume of "likes" and retweets received on personal profiles. Alloway et al. (2014) narcissism in the use of social media, damages people's abilities to shape healthy, mutually beneficially relationships.

The studies reviewed the audience interactivity on reality TV shows on how social media not only enables users to add friends, join various groups, form third or fourth place communities and tag strangers who become friends but can also create their community share them with friends, and see the users' charts for the discovery of new reality TV shows (Yue, 2011). The studies reviewed above also provide an empirical basis for how social media users, particularly young people, who are identified by Dean (2013) as avid consumers of popular reality TV shows which are widely accessible on a variety of social platforms, use social media to further the tension of competitive rivalries. The studies inform this current study also on how the nature of interactivity, the emotions expressed which are characterized by sustained interactivity and other forms of subversion between feuding interactants in a fluid, scalable participatory frame



on social media, providing the researcher with the scientific basis in drawing out interpretations regarding the opinions expressed on reality TV shows.

## **2.4 Theoretical Review**

### ***2.4.1 Fourth Place Theory***

Creating in Literature, as expanded by Roy Oldenburg introduced the idea of a ‘third place’ in 1989, a space where people spend time between home (the ‘first place’) and the workplace (the ‘second place’). Traditionally, third places are physical spaces such as churches, parks and community centres where large groups of people gather to actively engage with each other. The main activity of these spaces is informal conversation, and some argue that they are vital for encouraging equity and democratic participation, and have the potential to level out social classes and backgrounds. (Ray-Chaudhuri, 2019).

In recent times, since the rise of the internet and social media in the early 1990s in response to new web-based communication tools that enabled online interaction. The ‘third place’ spaces are diminishing in number; for many, the ‘third place’ has shifted to the digital world. Most people interact either at work or home or virtually within the realms of social media. Whilst Critics of these virtual third places argue that digital ‘silos’ created for those with similar interests and perspectives are far less effective at exposing us to those with different ideas and beliefs in comparison to those that are physical. Ray- Chaudhuri (2019) asserts that many of the interactions that would occur in a third place now happen online and that these places still exist in the real world. The University (and for architecture students, the studio) serves what seems to be a similar purpose. While for most students, the primary reason for coming to university is to study and attend lectures, for many of us it is equally important for socializing and

interacting with other people. Walking around the university, many of the students are simply ‘hanging out’ rather than necessarily studying. Some merge the two into a kind of hybrid study-social affair (to varying degrees of success). (Ray- Chaudhuri, 2019).

Robert Putnam advocates that everyday social contact and encounters are crucial to overcoming ethnic cultural differences. (Kuksa, 2014 posits that, there is a shared consensus that interactions among strangers are positive for building community cohesion. Notwithstanding this consensus, it is interesting to note that most of this related research has not yet come to terms with what is meant by ‘meaningful interactions’ and how they can be achieved (Amin 2002; DCLG 2008; Lownsborough and Beunderman 2007; Tunstall and Fenton 2006). The Scheme Initiative was introduced as an online space for interaction, which was neither school nor home. In essence, combining these two types of spaces is ambitious and complex, in that school and home each belongs to a very different type of space. A typology for describing these types of spaces was suggested by Oldenburg and Bissett who noted that American life was being reduced to a very restrictive two-stop model of daily existence, the office or shop and the home, joined by the ordeal of commuting’ with few opportunities for social participation (1982: 266). They proposed a typology consisting of first places (an individual’s home), second places (the workplace), and third places (personalizable and informal public gathering spaces), which they referred to as ‘great good places’. Third places generally have a clear set of attributes in that they are highly accessible, welcoming and comfortable; they involve regular participants and provide both old and new friendships (Peachey 2010: 104).

Although Oldenburg and Bassett’s argument is couched in terms of the decline in moral standards and social malaise (1982: 265), it nostalgically harkens back to a golden age

when these ‘great good places’ were the heart of a community’s social vitality (Peachey 2010), the typology has proved to be a very useful one to describe these different types of spaces. Their definition, however, is not always uncontested. As Gee states, spaces that are ‘about something’ have a semiotic structure, and their them will therefore depend to some extent on the meaning ascribed to them by the individual. School is very clearly akin to a workplace for most children and therefore a second place, but there is a strong social element to attendance, and some locations within the school may become defined as third places (such as unused staircases or behind the bike. Similarly, entire locations may be assigned different meanings entirely due to one’s perspective. For an active and fit person, a gym may be the third place, in that it is an opportunity to socialize, and it is accessible, comfortable and enjoyable. For an unfit person who feels compelled to attend one, to stave off some of the more debilitating effects of encroaching middle age, gymnasias are second place.

The predominant third places that exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are the online spaces that have been created through social networking, such as Facebook and Twitter. Constance Steinkuehler (2005), argues that massively multiplayer online games also fulfil the requirement of a third place. She uses *Lineage* as an example of this, describing it as a neutral space that enables socialisation and personalization, but is neither a work- nor home-like environment. Kuksa (2014) discussed that to take full effect of virtual spaces, the user is required to engage their *belief* to cross over the threshold from the physical to the virtual. This could be described as ‘crossing the membrane’ or entering the magic circle, but these terms are somewhat problematic for many researchers. Therefore, Kuksa (2014) proposed to extend Oldenburg’s typology to define spaces that require suspension of disbelief to participate as ‘fourth places’. The idea of a ‘fourth place’ also extends to the physical world, as an umbrella term for the story worlds, rituals and

games. Unlike the usual formulation of the term ‘magic circle’, these spaces are not separated from first, second and third places any more than home life is shielded from what happens at work, or an evening out in a nightclub has no effect on one’s work the next morning. Who we are, and what we are, can be carried across the threshold into a fourth place if we choose; we can alter that identity, and allow that space to exert a psychosocial moratorium for the duration of our stay there. First, second and third places are semiotic social spaces, but the role that semiotics plays within the fourth place is particularly significant. Kuksa (2014) further posits that there is a range of characteristics, which are heightened within fourth places, although not specific to them.

Taking the extended activity theory model as a lattice, the separate elements of spaces described by some scholars can be structured into a single set of criteria as (i) Belief and metaxis (Presence); The subjects/participants are required to suspend disbelief, or more exactly, engage belief, in the space to fully experience the sense of location within it. This belief is fostered through emotional experiences and intentionality, or ‘lusory attitude’, in both the design of the space and the purpose of the person entering it. (ii) Boundary objects and semiotics (Tools) These spaces are often mediated through specialist language, objects and practices. They may invent words to describe objects and activities that take place within them, or appropriate words and use them with a different meanings. Understanding and using these terms are an example of boundary objects that are part of the induction into the community that uses the space. The spaces often use artefacts that could only be found within them, and which new participants must obtain, to become fully active participants in that space. Acquisition of these boundary objects is also a marker of status within the community. For example, participants who interact with TV 3 Date rush reality TV use memes to ascribe meaning

to the activities that unfold episode after episode each week, and more often participants engage with specific language that makes meaning to the existing members of the TV 3 Date rush community online. As such the internal grammar of a space may be quite different from its external grammar, and the semiotic system may ascribe a more heightened degree of meaning and symbolism to objects and the participants' ability to interpret them. These skills develop over time, identifying the user as part of the community. (Kuksa, 2014). (iii) Transformation of role and status (Division of labour) In crossing over to a fourth place, identity and status is transformed, one role is removed and another may be assigned. A person with little status in the exterior world may be an Elder within a church or become a high-profile figure in the exterior world or a monopolistic landlord. Within the communities in the fourth place, brokers have a key role and high status in that they act as boundary spanners to help induct new people into the processes of the space. Kuksa (2014) Further posits that irrespective of status in the external world, the newcomer to the space will become a newb, or worse, a noob, in their first entries, finding their old identity erased, but not yet having formed a new one. And that these initial experiences may be seen to be marginal or peripheral ones and lead to different trajectories throughout the community. (iv) Suspension of normal conventions, a transformation of time (Rules) The space could encapsulate different conventions and different roles for participants. Although the crossover between the spaces (real and virtual) is not negligible, there is a psychosocial moratorium on many behaviours, and the normal awareness of time may not be as strong. Fourth places are rarely an entirely consequence-free environment, but usually different behaviours and activities are permitted in a form of 'anti-structure' and this freedom from the constraint of normal daily life permits a heightened sense of experience and belonging. (v) Participation requires the ability to engage belief (Subject) Fourth places, as with third

places, tend to be voluntary in their participation. A distinction between the two types of places, however, is that to be fully present within the space requires an act of engagement of belief. (vi) Identity and roleplay (Identity) One's sense of self may be quite radically altered as one enters the fourth place. A person's status may also change with the crossing over to the fourth place, due to their role within the community. These are not necessarily absolutely divided; the experience in fourth place may well have an impact on the experience of the remainder of the participant's life. (vii) Community and Communitas (Community) Fourth places are 'about something.' They are usually the locus of a specific community that finds its identity and purpose through coming together within those spaces. As with all the other categories, however, the edges of the space are porous. The community developed within the space may well find expression outside of it, but the nature and experience of that community are markedly different within the fourth place in comparison to outside it. Also, through the employment of a psychosocial moratorium, individuals may feel freer to act and also free from normal social constraints. This can engender a greater feeling of connectedness and 'flow', of normative or spontaneous communitas, particularly as they are engaged in a shared activity, in which action and awareness become merged. (Kuksa, 2014).

#### ***2.4.2 Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions***

The basic emotion theory was first articulated by Silvan Tomkins in the early 1960s (Pang & Lee, 2018). Tomkins (1964) as cited in Pang and Lee (2018) postulated that each instance of a certain emotion is biologically similar to other instances of the same emotion or shares a common trigger. One of Tomkins' mentees, Paul Ekman, questioned the existing emotion theories that proclaimed that facial expressions of emotion are socially learned and therefore vary from culture to culture (Levenson, 2014; Panksepp, 2011; Sabini & Silver, 2005). Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen

challenged this view in a field study with the outcome that facial displays of fundamental emotions are not learned but innate (Ekman & Friesen, 1980 as cited in Sabini & Silver, 2005), however, there are culture-specific prescriptions about how and in which situations emotions are displayed (Sabini & Silver, 2005). Based on the observation of facial behaviour in early development or social interaction, Ekman's theory also postulates that emotions should be considered discrete categories rather than continuous (Levenson, 2014; Panksepp, 2011; Sabini & Silver, 2005).

Ekman's theory identifies six basic emotions based on studying the isolated culture of people from the Fori tribe in Papua New Guinea in 1972. The tribe members were able to identify these six emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise (Barrett, 2006). Various researchers have confirmed that these emotions are universal for all human beings (Izard, 2007; Levenson, 2014; Sabini & Silver, 2005). Scholars like Sabini and Silver (2005) have postulated that the idea that there exists a small set of basic emotions dates back to the works of Descartes (1650) who was the first to suggest that all emotional states can be derived from six fundamental passions namely; joy, sadness, love, desire, hatred and wonder. However, the real debate on 'emotional basicness' began with the publication of Charles Darwin's book entitled *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Darwin argued that emotions are crucial for survival and thus they have distinctive expressions that should be accurately recognized by all humans (Sabini & Silver, 2005). This suggestion led many theorists to believe that at least some emotions require no learning and thus are universal (Levenson, 2014; Panksepp, 2011; Sabini & Silver, 2005).

Although the view that some emotions are more basic than others is widely accepted by emotion theorists, there is little agreement on which emotions should be included in

the list of the basic ones (Panksepp, 2011; Sabini & Silver, 2005). The most popular list sometimes referred to as "The Big Six" was used by Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen in their research on the universal recognition of emotion from facial expressions. The list included happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, and disgust, which are still the most commonly accepted candidates for basic emotions as already indicated above (Barrett, 2006). It is important to note that, over the years some theorists expanded the list. For instance, Plutchik (1980) added acceptance and anticipation, Ekman and Cordaro (2011) added contempt while Levenson (2011) added interest, relief and love. More recently, other candidates for basic emotions have been proposed. For example, love or jealousy has been proposed by Sabini and Silver (2005). Some authors have also used their terminology. For instance, Panksepp and Watt (2011) listed to play, panic/grief, rage, seeking, fear, lust and care as the basic emotions. Although there continue to be a growing number of studies that keep shortening or expanding Ekman and Friesen's six basic emotions just as the ones stated above, scholars like Izard (2007), Levenson (2014) and Sabini and Silver (2005) are of the view that Ekman and Friesen's six basic emotions are the most widely used in emotions related qualitative studies.

#### ***2.4.2.1 Applying Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions to Online Sentiment Analysis***

Online space is a vast virtual space where people express and share their views, affecting every area of life, with implications for marketing and communication (Neri, Aliprandi, Capeci & Cuadros, 2014). The study by Neri, et al. (2014) describes a sentiment analysis study performed on more than 1000 Facebook posts about newscasts, comparing the sentiment for Rai - the Italian public broadcasting service - towards the emerging and more dynamic private company called La. In the study, Neri, et al. (2014) emphasizes that opinion mining and sentiment analysis are



important for determining opinions on brands and services or understanding consumers' attitude. Neri, et al. (2014) also indicate that besides the computational technique that is used for sentiments and opinion mining, there is a whole gamut of issues that play a role in the quality and usability of the sentiments and opinion extraction. First of all, sentiments and opinion mining can be applied to different levels of text: words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or documents. Words, as the smallest units, can have different polarities in different meanings and or in different domains. This requires word sense disambiguation of words in context and domain, or topic detection as prior processing (Neri, et al., 2014). Furthermore, polarity expressed by a word may be reversed within a phrase through negation. Also, parts of a document may express different polarities. Opinions can be related to topics (what is the opinion about) or associated with different opinion holders (the author, the subject, a citation or quote, etc.) (Neri, et al., 2014).

Kim and Klinger (2018) advance Ekman's theory of basic emotions in online sentiment analysis and intimate that emotions are a crucial part of compelling narratives. They also emphasize that emotions and sentiment analysis have become a major part of online studies (Kim & Klinger, 2018). The study points out that much of the daily experiences of people influence and is influenced by the emotions they experience. This experience is however not limited to real events. People can feel emotions because they are reading a novel or watching a play or a movie (Kim & Klinger, 2018). The study also recognizes the deliberate choices people make about their emotional states when seeking narrative engagements in online interactions (Kim & Klinger, 2018).

Barros et al. (2017) on the other hand aimed at analyzing two research questions using Ekman's theory of basic emotions: 1) is the classification of Quevedo's works proposed

by the literary scholars consistent with the sentiment reflected by audiences on Facebook and 2) which learning algorithms are the best for the classification? To that end, they perform a set of experiments on the classification of Francisco de Quevedo's poems that are divided by literary scholars into four categories and that Barros et al. (2017) map to emotions of joy, anger, fear, and sadness. Using the terms "joy", "anger", "fear", and "sadness" as points of reference, Barros et al. (2017) constructed a list of emotion words by looking up the synonyms of English emotion words and adjectives associated with these four emotions and translating them into Spanish. Each poem is converted into a vector where each item is a normalized count of words relating to a certain emotion. The experiments with different algorithms show the superiority of decision trees achieving an accuracy of almost 60%. However, this result is biased by an unbalanced distribution of classes. To avoid bias, Barros et al. (2017) apply a resampling strategy that leads to a more balanced distribution and repeats the classification experiments.

Mohammed (2017) also analyzed Ekman's theory of emotion detection in microblog text. Here, Mohammed (2017) argues that online attitude can mean an evaluative judgment, such as positive or negative, or an emotional or effectual attitude such as frustration, joy, anger, sadness, excitement, and so on. Grathel (2018) sifted students' text emotion mining on Twitter. In the study, tweets that expressed at least one of seven basic emotions were collected. The resulting dataset was a corpus of 42,000 tweets with a balanced presence of each emotion. From this corpus, a lexicon of roughly 40,000 words, each associated with a weighted vector corresponding to one of the emotions, was created. Next, different methods of identifying emotion in these 'cleaned' tweets were performed and evaluated. These methods included both lexically-based classification and supervised machine learning-based classification. Finally, an

ensemble method involving several multi-class classifiers trained on unigram features of the lexicon was evaluated. As part of the findings, the study established that Twitter has become a medium through which a substantial percentage of the global population communicates their feelings and reactions to current events. Emotion mining from text, therefore, aims to capture these emotions by using a series of algorithms to evaluate the contents of each tweet. This evaluation revealed that the ensemble method outperformed all other tested methods when tested on existing datasets as well as on the dataset created for this study (Grathel, 2018).

### **2.5 Relevance of the Theories to the Study**

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that reality TV shows are universal and due to competition, tension sometimes emerges among participants with the advent of social media, users share opinions, facts or issues based on topics of interest including user sentiments on some of the favourite contestants on a particular reality TV show. The theory of fourth place aided this study in analyzing and answering the research question on the nature of interactivity teasing out the issues that emerged from the posts shared on Twitter by the audience of the TV 3 Date rush show. It also enabled the researcher to uncover how a series of participants of each episode of the TV 3 Date rush show was represented by the audiences through their Twitter posts. Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions, on the other hand, provided the basis for analyzing and answering the research question on the emotional outpour that was expressed by the audiences through their posts.

### **2.6 Summary**

The study reviewed the audience interactivity on reality TV shows. It was discussed that although interactivity is a “buzz word” for the contemporary age, the entire concept

of interactivity has gained particular currency in TV even though it is a precise definition that remains ambiguous (Holmes, 2004) Ghanaian TV entertainment industry has not been spared with the infiltration of more reality shows of different genres targeting all age ranges. Several scholars have maintained that although reality shows are a relatively grey area in the entertainment industry it has come to stay serving one form of gratification or the other, it also comes with some economic gains both for the entertainment industry and the producers of these reality TV shows and the participants at large. With a growing Internet penetration rate and social media usage in Ghana, the Internet presents a valuable storehouse of data on audience perspectives and sentiments on a wide range of issues especially relating to love relationships. The study also discussed the theory of fourth place, and Ekman's theory of six basic emotions to highlight how the audience on Twitter discussed the TV 3 Date rush reality show.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodological procedures employed in gathering and analysing data for this research. This section captures the research approach, research design, sampling techniques, and data analysis techniques employed based on the nature of the research questions and objectives. It also addresses the ethical concerns in the study.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

To fully understand the nature of audience interactivity that goes on before, during and after the TV3 Date Rush on Twitter, this study adopts the qualitative research approach. As argued by scholars, the qualitative research approach, as opposed to the quantitative research approach is theoretical and interpretive (Brennen, 2017; Creswell 2013). As such, it allows the researcher to wholly interpret and understand the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter by making sense of language which is generally based on human experiences and relationships (Brennen, 2017). The qualitative research approach thus aids the researcher in exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

The explanation by Brennen (2017) and Creswell (2014), presents an appropriate justification for selecting the qualitative research approach for this study as it offers the basis for conducting a qualitative study based on the fact that meaning is derived from the experiences of audiences of TV3 Date Rush and how these experiences make sense of understanding of participants by the audiences on Twitter.

Patton and Cochran (2007) emphasize that in qualitative research, the researcher's goal is to unveil the facts without interfering with or manipulating the natural setting of the phenomenon of interest. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also point out that qualitative researchers often employ an interpretive and naturalistic approach to research by studying phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Furthermore, Lindlof and Taylor (2002) aver that qualitative research seeks to preserve and analyze the situated form, content and experience of social action rather than subject to mathematical or formal transformations.

Similarly, this study adopted the qualitative research approach because it offered the researcher the opportunity to probe deeper and explore the meanings audiences on Twitter ascribed to the TV3 Date Rush reality TV show. The study was also conducted in the natural context of the posts shared on Twitter without any attempt to manipulate or influence the phenomena under study since qualitative research is concerned with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and not that of the researcher. Ultimately the data was analyzed in words without subjecting it to any statistical or mathematical interpretations.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design acts as a blueprint that guides a study to achieve its goals and provides answers to a research purpose (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Dannels (2018) defines a research design as “a detailed blueprint used to guide the implementation of a research study, towards the realization of its objectives”.

Research design is defined by Creswell (2014) as a type of investigation procedure within any research paradigm that provides clear directions that are most appropriate

for achieving the research objective. Therefore, research design may be the approach a researcher adopts to assist him/her in analysis to draw a cogent conclusion (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), in any research method, there are many designs; phenomenology, ethnography, case study, and narrative research, among others. This study employed qualitative content analysis as the research design on the basis that it provides the strategy, plan and structure that characterizes this research work. The study also adopted qualitative content analysis because it served as the logical link that connects the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the research questions.

### ***3.2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis***

Hsieh and Shannon (2018) contend that traditionally, content analysis is a design for the quantitative research approach as researchers employ it in describing and interpreting the frequency or quantity of text. However, this has been appropriated into the scheme of the qualitative research approach in going beyond the frequencies of text to analyse and interpret the quality or meaning of texts. A text according to Hsieh and Shannon (2018) can either take the form of a written word or a picture. Zhang and Wildermuth (2005) also note that qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to understand social reality in a subjective yet scientific manner by examining the meanings and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a text. To do so, Zhang and Wildemuth (2005) further acknowledge that qualitative content analysis involves collecting suitable data and selecting the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis refers to the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005).

Hsieh and Shannon (2018) classify social media posts as texts because the posts take the form of a written word and/or picture. Thus, qualitative content analysis was adopted for this study because it allows the appreciation of meanings and patterns embedded in the posts shared on Twitter by audiences before, during and after the TV3 Date Rush reality show. It also allows the researcher to draw out subjective yet scientific interpretations by examining the meanings and patterns that may be manifest or latent in posts retrieved. In all, two thousand, three hundred and ninety-four (2,394) posts were retrieved for this study and they comprised sixty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-one (66,521) words. The shortest post comprised three (3) words while the longest post comprised one hundred and nine (109) words. A single word was regarded in this study as the basic unit of text. The interpretations drawn from the posts were because of actively reading and moving back and forth through the basic unit of texts and decluttering the volume of data into core patterns and meanings. There was also a focus on in-depth descriptions of the embedded meanings from the posts shared.

### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

According to Lindelof and Taylor (2017), sampling is the process of picking a subgroup for a study. Many researchers who adopt the qualitative approach use a sampling technique that directs their choice of what to observe or who to interview (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Daymon and Holloway (2011) assert that a sampling technique helps the researcher in determining what to study and provides justification for what to study. This way the researcher reduces the possibility of engaging in wasteful efforts because the exact unit or units to be studied are predetermined and well thought-through. Qualitative researchers employ different sampling techniques from the randomly selected and probabilistic sampling which quantitative researchers generally use



(Daymon & Holloway, 2011). The underlying principle of gaining rich and in-depth information guides the sampling strategies of qualitative researchers. Thus, under the qualitative research approach, the object or subject selected for the study, where and when, depends on certain criteria which are determined by the purpose of the study. Therefore, the term purposive or purposeful sampling is applied (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

Creswell (2014) defines purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling which includes data or subjects that are selected for possessing specific features that are in line with the study. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) also aver that no qualitative researcher can capture every event as it unfolds. There is therefore the need to purposively select a data site for the study. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) also acknowledge that the right choice of sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communicative phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort. In line with the above assertions, purposive sampling was adopted for this study because the posts shared on Twitter by the audience before, during and after the TV3 Date Rush reality show possess the features that are in line with the overall objective of this study, which is to analyse the sentiments audience shared on Twitter concerning the participants of the before, during and after TV3 Date Rush reality show. Furthermore, purposive sampling was adopted for this study due to the inability of the researcher to capture every tweet/post on social media as they unfold. As a result, season 7 of the TV3 Date Rush reality show was purposively selected to gain a rich, in-depth understanding of the nature of audience interactivity that emerged from the posts shared on Twitter by audiences, as well as, the kinds of emotions exhibited by the audiences through the tweets/posts.

### **3.4 Data Collection Method**

Qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering data: observational methods, group discussions, in-depth interviewing, and analysing documents and material culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Spencer & Snape, 2003). Even though other secondary and specialised methods of data sources supplement these four primary methods, they nonetheless, remain the core of qualitative inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For this study, document analysis and observation were employed as a data collection methods in answering the research questions.

#### ***3.4.1 Document Analysis***

Daymon and Holloway (2011) have defined document analysis as an analytical in order for research to elicit method meaning, which gives the researcher leeway in examining documentary data to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. Documentary data can be either written texts or images that are often recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). Documentary data can also take various forms such as advertisements, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; social media posts; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspaper et cetera (Bowen, 2009). This study, therefore, employs document analysis as a data collection method because it analyses Twitter posts shared before during and after the season 7 TV3 Date Rush reality show. It also seeks to elicit meaning; gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge around the phenomenon.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2011), document analysis entails finding, selecting, appraising and synthesizing the data contained in the document into themes or categories. Analysing documents incorporates coding content into recurring patterns

(Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). Analysing documents is thus, a useful method because documents are naturally unobtrusive and non-reactive. This gives documents a built-in level of authenticity (Leavy, 2014). Adopting document analysis as the data collection method for this study, therefore, assisted the researcher to make sense of and report on the recurring patterns from the meanings obtained from the Twitter post shared before, during and after the season 7 TV3 Date Rush reality. Also, in line with the observation by Leavy (2014), concerning the unobtrusive, non-reactive nature of documents, adopting document analysis as the data collection method for this study using the Twitter posts shared before, during and after the season 7 TV3 Date Rush reality possess a naturally built-in level of authenticity since social media posts are a form of electronic documents.

#### ***3.4.2 Online observation***

The internet and being constantly connected has shifted our interactions to online. It enabled social interactions and brought people together for different purposes and from different places. Even though one can easily disengage in such interactions, studies (McKenna, et al., 2002) have suggested that online social interactions influence us in many ways, such as shaping our decisions. In earlier Internet studies, the consensus was that emotions are difficult to express online (Derks, et al., 2008). More recently, however, more focus has been put on studying the relationship between emotions and the internet as technology advances. This is enabled by the amount of publicly available data, known as Big Data, and new techniques and software that can obtain and analyze Big Data, such as text mining and neural networks. Several studies (Lafren & Fiorenza, 2012) argue that the emotions expressed offline can be expressed online as well as without losing value. Some even suggested that more emotions can be expressed online

because of the lack of self and social constraints (Marriott & Buchanan, 2014), as well as the improvement of online communication channels, such as the possibility for video capabilities (Misoch, 2015).

According to a study (Frost & Rickwood, 2017), it suggests that online social interactions not only influence our health, but it also destroys one's ability to interact in face-to-face interactions and could lead to a dysfunctional social person (Beneito-Montagut, 2015). Communication and interaction between people, in addition to the exchange of information, it also reinforces the social bonds. The focus now should be towards the analysis of the differences between online and offline emotional experience (Parkinson, 2008).

Collins' research (Collins, 2004) suggests that face-to-face interaction enables the establishment of interaction rituals. Collins (Collins, 2004) proposes that successful rituals create group symbols, tools that individuals use to communicate group identity to others, and injects group members with emotional energy, whilst failed rituals drain emotional energy. Emotional energy influences human behavior through two ways. First, individuals want to be involved in situations where their emotional energy is likely to be increased. Second, high levels of emotional energy are associated with confidence, attractiveness, influence, and shared identity and morals. Interactions are successful when the emotional energy is increased for the individuals involved. Collins (Collins, 2004) argues online interactions lack two bases of interaction rituals: situational co-presence and mutual focus of attention. Situational co-presence is when "processes that take place as human bodies come close enough to each other so that their nervous systems become mutually attuned in rhythms and anticipations of each other, and the physiological substratum that produces emotions in one individual's body becomes stimulated in feedback loops that run through the other person's body." In

other words, online interactions lack the physical aspect and online communication methods tend to rely on just a single information channel, lacking the multi-sensory information provided by intimacy. Online interactions lack mutual focus of attention due to the “lack of the flow of interaction in real time; even if electronic communications happen within minutes, this is not the rhythm of immediate vocal participation...There is little or no buildup of focus of attention in reading an email, or paralinguistic background signals of mutual engrossment...the more that human social activities are carried out by distance media, at low levels of interaction rituals intensity, the less solidarity people will feel...”. However, recent developments suggest that interaction rituals are possible online too, since situational co-presence and mutual focus of attention are not the only aspects of interaction rituals (Campos-Castillo & Hitlin, 2013). They argue that each online communication channel, such as e-mail, social media, video conferencing, and online discussion forums have its own group symbols and norms. Innovations, such as hashtags and emoticons increase the amount of information, especially emotional information. Interaction and anticipation exists online, such as the receiver of the message perceives and tries to understand the meaning of the message, meanwhile they also prepare for a response and their stance towards the message. The sender of the message does not expect the receiver to just passively receive the message, thus the sender expects a reply, as well as emotional response.

It is known that there is a difference between online and offline communication. The main difference being in online communication we lose verbal cues and body language expression. Our emotions are affected by observing others in a certain emotional state. Our emotions will automatically reflect what they are feeling (Dimberg, et al., 2000). For example, if we see another person sad, we will also experience sadness. This pattern

is believed to support our ability to understand social interactions. By sharing others' emotions, we can understand and predict their intentions and actions, because emotions make us feel and view issues in the same way as them (Hatfield, et al., 1994). On the other hand, online interactions lack the emotional connection. Of course, one would get a reaction to an emotionally charged message; however, the only input is the text content. There is no other input which one may use to read the situation. Thus, the perceived sociality is lower in online interactions than in offline interactions. This can influence the levels of emotion expressed and experienced (Derks, et al., 2008). According to a study (Berry & Hansen, 1996) on the effects in social interactions, it suggested that positive emotions were more evident in social situations where you can interact and read the other person. On the other hand, online social interactions were more associated with negative emotions because of the lack of the ability to read the other person and the social situation (Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

Meanwhile, a lot of scholars (eg. (Gregor & Kubiak, 2013)) have paid attention to digital technologies in Web 2.0, such as social media. Social media is defined as digital applications that facilitates the sharing of ideas and information, as well as the building of virtual networks and communities (Obar & Wildman, 2015). For example, Facebook continues to develop and change to better users' experience of sharing. At the beginning, social media is just regarded as serving the role of communicating and interacting online (Matthew, 2013). However, more functions of social media have been discovered by further studies, for example, social media has been becoming the new venue for businesses to compete in and it also stimulates the creation and innovation of users. This resulted in new forms of cooperation between companies and consumers, called open innovation (Asio & Khorasani, 2015). Bugshan (Bugshan, 2015) reported in his study of innovation in the context of Web 2.0 that online

communication channels have developed and facilitated the opportunity for open innovation as an attractive means of customer involvement in value creation. For example, his study has revealed that under the context of Web 2.0, platforms and social media can also serve as a platform where knowledge can flow. Wikipedia and Facebook are examples where knowledge flows in both directions and can be triggered by individuals from any location at any time (Shang, et al., 2011).

However, as social media have become increasingly important to individuals, as well as to every industry, what makes people continually coming back to social media and why users stay loyal and stick with social media have caused heated debate. Nadkarni and Hofmann (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012) conducted a study and they concluded that social media use is motivated by two primary needs which are the need to belong and the need for self-presentation, and both of them are related to our emotional experience. To be more specific, they listed factors in the two categories, such as demographic and cultural factors affect the need to belong, in the meanwhile, neuroticism, narcissism, shyness, self-esteem and self-worth contribute to the need for self- presentation. The results of their study indicated that the reason of 62% of Facebook users using Facebook continually can be explained by attitude and satisfaction. Between them, attitude is the most important factor and they found out that the entertainment and status seeking have been found to have indirect significant effects on continuance intention using, while information seeking, and self-expression have been found to have insignificant effects (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). This conclusion is present in many other studies (eg. (Basak & Calisir, 2015)), and is generally accepted as the reason for social media use.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection procedure looks at the various steps, ways and means through which the researcher applied the various data collection methods to gather data for the research

study. (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The data collection procedure started with the researcher ensuring her presence by signing in to the Twitter platform. As online observation she actively engaged with the content on the Twitter platform. (Kozinets, 2015). After purposively selecting the salient issues, she searched the posts on the above incident by using season 7, TV3 Date rush as the keywords. Fortunately, several posts on the subject matter popped up during the search. She, therefore, retrieved all the posts audiences had shared before during and after the season 7 TV3 Date rush which occurred from January 2022 to July 2022. This is because the said period captures the launch of the season, the series of events that unfolds episode after episode and a new dimension to the show as well as the period media conversations surrounding that moment were rife. This assertion is in line with Lindlof and Taylor (2017) who aver that in qualitative studies, it is practically impossible to capture every situation, thus, the researcher ought to focus on situations the phenomenon and periods being that can give them access to rich and in-depth information concerning the phenomenon being investigated.

In all, two thousand, three hundred and ninety-four (2,394) posts were retrieved for this study and they comprised six-six thousand five hundred and twenty-one (66,521) words. The shortest post comprised three (3) words while the longest post comprised one hundred and nine (109) words. The researcher stored all the retrieved posts in a Microsoft Word document. She then converted the Word document into PDF files to prevent changes from being made to the data mistakenly. To commence the analysis, she printed the document and proceeded with the analysis. This method follows Altheide and Schneider's (2013) advice of saving the data retrieved in a way which is more secure since the researcher can go back to it at any given time during the study



### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Cassell and Ymon (2014), as well as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017), argue that data collection and analysis take place concomitantly. The analysis of the data for this study followed the manual thematic analysis procedures. Thematic analysis is concerned with drawing interpretations from a variety of data to draw classifications and present themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). This study made interpretations of how audiences viewed the participants of the TV3 Date Rush before during and after the reality show through their Twitter posts. This process allowed the study to make associations in the analysis and how particular themes were recurring in the study. The thematic analysis also helped the study to make an in-depth understanding of potential issues (Marks & Yardley, 2004). It also allowed for generating individual themes and doing a cross-analysis of themes. This allowed the study to compare the issues raised with the available literature.

Adopting the thematic analysis process also afforded the study the locus to examine the data to discover common themes from several posts (Ibrahim, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2013), because the thematic analysis is only an analysis method, it can be used to construct a critical constructionist analysis which can identify the manifest meanings of data content, as well as the latent meanings inherent in data. Since qualitative studies value critical subjectivity and reflexivity, the study was able to explore, through thematic analysis, the subjective perceptions of female participants of the TV3 Date Rush reality show. The rationale for using thematic analysis for this study was that interpretations were drawn by detecting and identifying factors that gave appropriate explanations for people's actions, thoughts and behaviours (Hatch, 2002; Creswell, 2013).

Again, the thematic analysis provided flexibility to be used for both inductive and deductive approaches to research analysis (Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Hayes, 2017). Not only that, the thematic analysis helped to analyse the data at different points of the data gathering (Miles & Huberman, 2014), and it was good to employ thematic analysis to code, categories and note patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A lot of scholars (Braun & Clark, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Crawford, Brown & Majomi, 2008) have theorized how to conduct thematic analysis. However, my analysis followed the processes and Huberman (1994) and adopted by Alhojailan (2012). This model by Miles has three stages for conducting a thematic analysis. These are the data for validation reduction of the stage, the display of data level and data drawing which outlines the issues for validation of the extracted themes.

The initial thing the researcher did was to reduce the data collected from the tweets/posts shared on Twitter. This involved sorting them out and discarding irrelevant portions (Miles & Huberman, 2014). After sorting out the data and retrieving the part that is relevant to the study, the researcher considered creating a three columned table with the raw data in one column, themes generated in another and the third column containing general commentary of the data (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Halldorson, 2009). I read the data on three occasions (Biklen, 2007) before attempting to generate themes from them. Reading the text thrice before the analysis itself gave the researcher a feel of the data and a clearer understanding of the issues (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). He used Bernard's (2000) ocular scan method to search for themes, get the full image of the data, and make connections between the ideas, emotions and thoughts expressed by the audience (Attard & Coulson, 2012; Kim, 2008). He did both a vertical and axial reading of the texts. By vertical, the researcher took each post and analysed it separately and drew the themes. By axial, he placed all the individual data side-by-side with each

other and did a horizontal analysis of the issues raised. This approach to the thematic analysis was also used by other scholars (Brinkmann & Kyale, 2014; Eksell & Thelander, 2014; Heide & Simonsson, 2015) to generate a comprehensive analysis of the data.

Though a lot of caution was taken in handling the data, it was important to validate how reliable the themes were to the study in anticipation of meeting the methodological philosophy of the study. The validation of the themes was done using another independent reviewer. It was the duty of the independent reviewer to also go through the data and analyse it thoroughly to generate his/her themes. After that, the generated themes were compared with that of the researcher to identify similarities and divergences. The themes generated that did not agree with each other were reworked. The idea behind this process was to have highly reliable themes through the inter-coder analysis (Hosmer, 2008). This gave the researcher a better comprehension of the themes because of the inputs of the outside independent reviewer (Miles & Huberman 2014; Hosmer, 2008).

The descriptive part of the first research question was however grouped into the following themes: cohesive communism, socialising, and safe space. This is in line with the views expressed by Creswell (2014) which indicates that in analysing data, the researcher needs to winnow the information gathered. The impact of this process is to aggregate data into a small number of themes. The data collected for RQ1 and RQ2 were as well grouped into relevant themes. The following themes were developed for RQ1 respectively: communism and Quizzes, for RQ2 respectively: anger, trolls, and surprise. Excerpts from the Twitter posts were also used to support the analysis and discussions.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical procedures are critical for conducting credible research and generating high-quality data for analysis (Zikmund, et al., 2003). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) indicate that researchers are expected to uphold ethical principles such as anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent, as well as seek permissible entry for data collection.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that seeks to address questions of morality (Jennings, 2003). Morality on the other hand refers to beliefs or standards about concepts like good and bad, right and wrong (Jennings, 2003). Bowen (2009) states that in qualitative research, the researcher is expected to demonstrate objectivity (seeking to represent the research material fairly) and sensitivity (responding to even subtle cues to meaning) in the selection and analysis of data from documents. In conducting online research studies such as this study, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) admonish that the researcher must be ethically concerned about the use of comments or postings of private individuals. However, if the site is intended to reach the public the material may be freely analysed and quoted to the degree necessary in the research without requesting the consent of the author of the posts (Austmann, 2015; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Since Twitter is a public communication platform and the posts made on the platform are public, this study, therefore, did not need the permission of the authors of the tweets/posts retrieved for the study to proceed with the analysis as hinted by Wimmer and Dominick (2011).

Vanclay, Baines & Taylor (2013) also note that a research study must fully disclose all the methods and analytical procedures used for the study to enable replication of the research work by another researcher; enable peer review of the adequacy and ethicality

of the methodology, and to encourage critical self-reflection on the limitations of the methodology and any implications for the results and conclusions. Given the ethical principle espoused by Vanclay et al (2013), this research work fully outlines all the various steps, ways, and means through which the data collection was done and applied. It chronicles in full, the methods and procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data on the nature of audience interactivity that emerged from the posts shared on Twitter by audiences, as well as, the kinds of emotions exhibited by the audiences through the tweets/posts. Similarly, it discusses the principles and assumptions that underpin the methods and procedures and most notably, the rationale behind their selection.

As a result, the data collection procedure was created with the utmost care to ensure that it did not violate any of the research ethics principles (Zikmund et al., 2003).

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue that ensuring trustworthiness is one of the most important factors in establishing credibility in research work. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is often discussed in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the methods and results of the study (Creswell, 2014). Credibility is how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the research study's findings (Creswell, 2014).

Transferability on the other hand is how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research study's findings apply to other contexts. In this case, "other contexts" can mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

However, dependability is the extent to which the study could be repeated by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent. In other words, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Finally, confirmability signifies the degree of neutrality in the research study's findings. In other words, this means that the findings are based on meanings derived solely from the data and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. This involves making sure that researcher bias does not skew the interpretation of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Given this, Creswell (2014) also indicates that the subject of trustworthiness boils down to the question of "How do you know that your findings are true and accurate?" Thus, to answer the question, Creswell (2014) provides eight validation strategies in testing for the validity of qualitative research. These processes include triangulation, using member-checking to determine accuracy on the part of participants, using rich and thick descriptions, presenting negative case analysis, spending prolonged time in the research field, using peer debriefing, using external auditors and bracketing of biases. He further states that qualitative researchers should adopt at least two of these strategies in their studies.

This research work applied two of the strategies laid out by Creswell (2014) in order not to affect the objectivity of the analysis as well as the interpretation of the data. First, the researcher bracketed her biases by distancing herself from previously held assumptions or prejudices and basing interpretations solely on data and the insight they provide about the phenomena as recommended by Bertelsen (2005). In addition, in answering the research questions, the researcher employed rich and thick descriptions

to describe meanings derived from the Twitter tweets/posts to paint a vivid and thorough picture of issues shared on Twitter by the audience before during and after their interaction on the season 7 TV3 Date Rush reality show.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter presented the process of the research and the method of data analysis.

The researcher adopted a qualitative content analysis to explore the nature of audience interactivity that emerged from the posts shared on Twitter by audiences, as well as, the kinds of emotions exhibited by the audiences through the tweets/posts.

Using document analysis, the researcher collected and analysed two thousand, three hundred and ninety-four (2,394) posts were retrieved for this study and they comprised six-six thousand five hundred and twenty-one (66,521) words. The shortest post comprised three (3) words while the longest post comprised one hundred and nine (109) words. In addressing ethical issues, since the Twitter posts are public, the researcher did not require the permission of anyone to use them. Finally, the entire chapter was subjected to the following outline: research approach; research design; sampling techniques; data collection methods and procedures; ethical issues, and trustworthiness of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the findings gleaned from Twitter posts regarding the TV3 reality show Date Rush. In fulfilling the research questions posed at the start of the study, the data collected was reduced into themes and analysed utilizing relevant theories and literature discussed in Chapter two. The first research question was specifically addressed through descriptive statistics, which facilitated the presentation of the findings in a graphical format through a table. The utilization of descriptive statistics enabled the researcher to emphasize the predominant issues that arose from the posts and determine which categories received the most attention.

#### 4.1 RQ1 What is the nature of audience interactivity that goes on before, during and after the TV3 Date Rush on Twitter?

Twitter is considered one of the world's premier social media platforms, with 7.8% of the global user base active and an average daily log-in rate of 486 million people. Scholars like Taylor (2010) and Kemp (2022) have referred to it as the largest social networking site in the world.

Like many social networking sites, Twitter has deepened online interaction by enabling users worldwide to post, comment, share photos, videos, links, chat and watch live videos (Gil, 2021). Twitter also allows users to share their thoughts, beliefs, feelings and experiences through online interactions Holt, (2017) and McBride, (2015). According to a study by Smith (2018), producers of reality TV shows prefer Twitter as



a source of audience engagement and feedback due to its real-time nature and widespread usage among their target demographics.

Date rush is a TV dating programme that invites singles together to find a suitable match. It is a 13-week show where a bachelor/spinster tries his/her best to land a date with one of the featured maidens/gentlemen each week (GhLinkMedia, 2022). Date rush has been aired for the past 4 years and is the most thrilling and anticipated show on the Ghanaian social calendar (GhLinkMedia, 2022). The 7th season of 2022 brought increased gratification to Ghanaian viewers as it was noticeable how dedicated fans made a point to return home from their daily routines every Sunday evening to watch TV3 Date Rush per my online observation.

Fans of the reality TV show found it exciting to engage with one another on social media platforms, particularly Twitter, to express their eagerness for each episode (Agyei, 2019). Holt (2017) and McBride (2015) posit that social media platforms, including Twitter, allow users to express their opinions and perspectives through online interactions, as demonstrated by fans of reality shows who use social media to share their reactions and thoughts on each episode. This research aimed to identify and analyse the nature of audience interactivity evident in posts shared on Twitter from January 2022 to July 2022, in response to the social media fervour that surrounds the TV3 Date Rush show. The systematic coding of 2,394 collected tweets (posts) revealed that the Twitter audience shared their experiences of the TV3 Date Rush reality show concerning the following themes: Trolling contestants, shared consensus, Television quizzes/TV games, Expression of anger, and Surprise.

The frequency distribution of posts shared on Twitter from January 2022 to July 2022 is presented in Table 1 below. The table illustrates the frequency and percentage of

audience interactivity that occurred before, during, and after Season 7 of the TV3 Date Rush reality show.

**Table 1:** *Frequency distribution of posts shared on Twitter from January 2022 to July 2022*

<b>Kinds of Posts</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Trolling Contestants	743	31.04
Shared Consensus	646	26.98
Shock	407	17.00
Expression of anger	383	16.00
Use of Quizzes	215	8.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,394</b>	<b>100</b>

TV3 DATE RUSH SHOW	THEMES EMERGED	
BEFORE	ANTICIPATION	<b>Table 2: RQ</b>
	USE OF QUIZZES	
DURING	TROLLING OF CONTESTANTS	
	SHARED CONSENSUS	
AFTER	SHARED CONSENSUS	
<i>1Themes emerged</i>		

#### **4.1.1 Trolling Contestants**

The theme of trolling contestants contextualizes engaging in intentionally repetitive and harmful actions, often in violation of policies, motivated by boredom, attention-seeking, and entertainment, resulting in harm to the community, content, and others (Fichman et al., 2016). Fichman et al. (2016) also noted that consistently defining trolling is difficult. There is a lack of clarity and consensus regarding what constitutes trolling behaviour. (Golf-Papez et al., 2017), who define trolling as a deliberate and mischievous attempt to provoke reactions from online users. According to the data

retrieved from Twitter, there were instances of users engaging in trolling behaviour towards certain contestants during and after the episodes of the TV3 Date Rush show.

According to Thoits (1990), as cited in Stets (2019), sentiments consist of four interconnected elements: situational cues, physiological changes, expressive gestures, and an emotion label that defines the specific arrangement of these components. To analyse the theme of trolling contestants in the TV3 Date Rush reality show, the researcher applied the principles of expressive gestures of sentiment analysis, as presented by Zajonc (2000) to the posts shared on Twitter. Rather than simply reading the posts, the researcher actively interpreted their meanings by thoroughly reviewing all the collected data, repeatedly moving through the posts to become familiar with their contents and gain a comprehensive understanding of the messages conveyed in the tweets.

According to the results displayed in Table 1, the theme of trolling contestants emerged as the most prevalent in the cumulative distribution of posts shared on Twitter, accounting for 31.04% of the total posts. The analysis of these results suggests that the audience engages in trolling the contestants of the TV3 Date Rush show due to the high expectations for quality content from the producers, who aim to fulfil their promise of delivering "first in news best in entertainment." Arthur (2016) noted that reality TV shows, such as TV3 Date Rush, are seen as economically feasible but operationally demanding, putting significant pressure on media houses to deliver high-quality programs. This pressure is further exacerbated by the increasing demands for quality and value for money from audiences, as highlighted by Jackson (2017).

Consequently, producers of reality television are frequently faced with substantial stress to consistently surpass spectator expectations (Jackson, 2017). Under this sustained

high-pressure environment, mistakes will inevitably transpire as the requirement for more novel episodes increases (Arthur, 2016; Jackson, 2017). As a result, under the pressure to maintain engagement before, during, and after each episode, producers may either neglect the content they are producing, leading to the trolling of contestants on the TV3 Date Rush reality show, or they may deliberately create such content to generate the intended audience engagement and establish a consumer base for each production as asserted by Jackson (2017).

It is thus not unexpected that with each airing of the TV3 Date Rush episode, a significant portion of the audience's posts on Twitter aimed to ridicule every individual contestant, regardless of gender, particularly for the clamorous interactions between contestants or for humorous hairstyles/appearances. This observation supports the assertions made by Arthur (2016) and Jackson (2017) that audiences are likely to express their enthusiasm for a show through critiques of the contestants and events that occur episode by episode. The following posts shared by the audience serve as evidence of this viewpoint:

*@jacob\_menkah*

*"@NAkufoAddo just want to trend like my favourite show on Sunday night. #DateRush" 10:26 pm 27 Mar 2022. Twitter for Android (jacob\_menkah 2022)*

*@EfiaNyantakyiwaa*

*"It seems most people have more interest in @DateRush than fellow Ghanaian's speech. Indeed time changes. The mode Ghanaians at the moment." 8:30 pm 27Mar 2022 Twitter Web App (EfiaNyantakyiwaa 2022)*



Fig 1



Fig 2



The above posts substantiate Gil's (2021) assertion that Twitter represents the most suitable platform for television stations to engage with their audience and grant users

the opportunity to voice their opinions on relevant topics. This is due to the ubiquitous presence of social media in people's daily lives, which has led individuals to rely on such platforms for various purposes, including event notifications and the expression of views on a range of topics, including entertainment, fashion, products/services, and destinations (Kane et al., 2014). It is noteworthy that although the audience posts were characterized by attempts to ridicule the contestants of the reality TV show (as previously discussed), they also reflected the excitement and anticipation surrounding future episodes or events. The following post serves as an example of how social media allows audiences to express their perspectives on a wide range of subjects and make recommendations on important social issues that impact their lives, as stated by Kane et al. (2014).

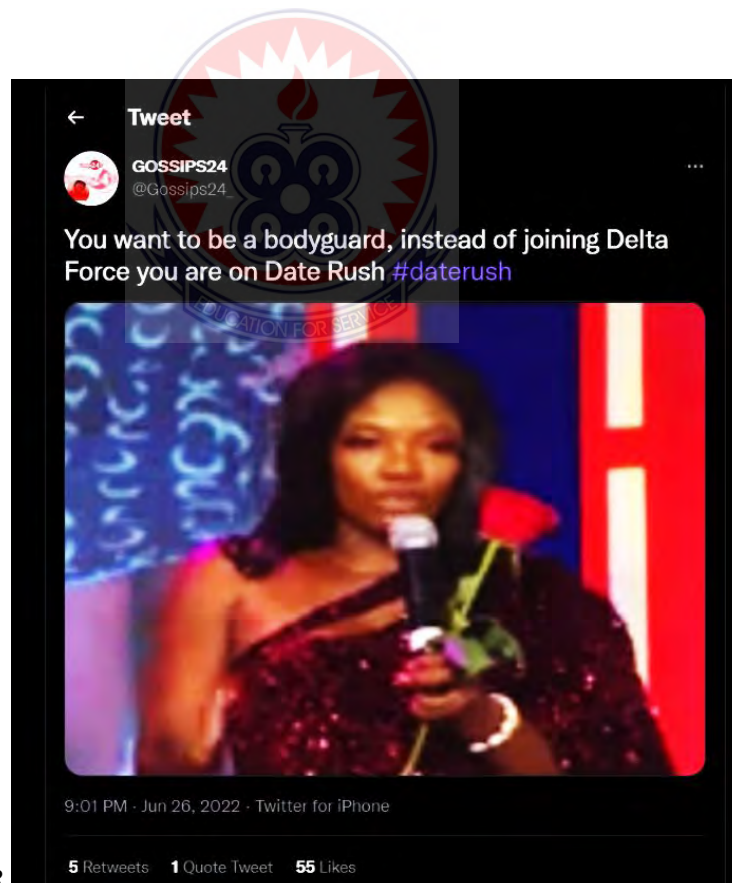


Fig 3

Fig 4

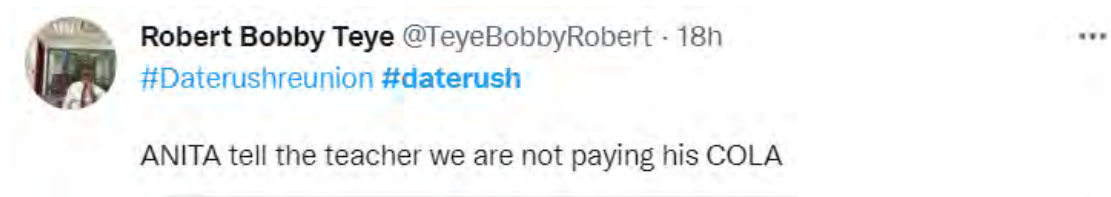
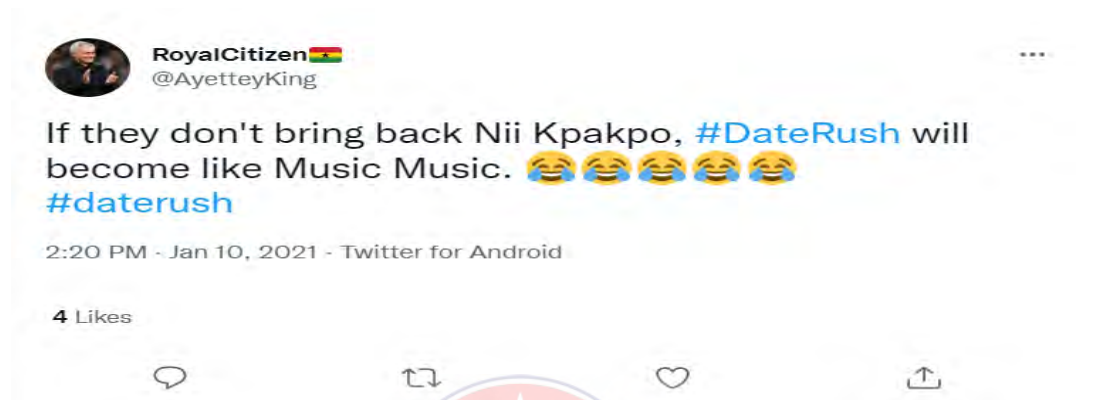


Fig 5



About Kane et al.'s (2014) argument, the aforementioned post by @AyetteyKing illustrates using Twitter as a means to advocate for the return of the former presenter for the first seasons of TV3 Date Rush. The post suggests that if this does not occur, the reality show will become akin to "music music," implying that the latter programme is likely to lose its appeal to Ghanaian viewers. @AyetteyKing highlights the importance of maintaining the audience's interest as crucial for the growth of the reality TV show and calls for producers to take proactive measures in this regard



Fig 6

In further alignment with Kane et al.'s (2014) argument, the post by *@jailer\_mccal* serves as another example of utilizing Twitter for making recommendations. In this instance, the user suggests that a contestant on the show should consider a different life path, specifically by participating in the 'Ghana's Most Strongest' competition, instead of searching for love. Through the use of expressive gestures, a component of sentiment analysis, this user freely voiced their opinion on the platform. The following are additional examples of expressive gestures by the audience of the "TV3 Date Rush" reality TV show.

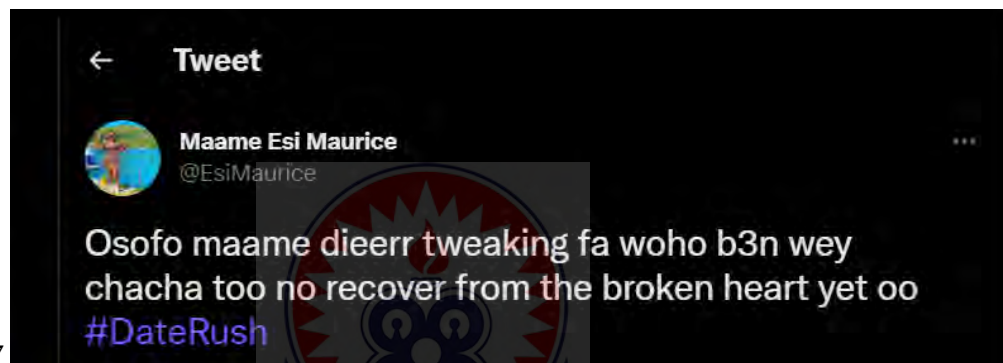


Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



The researcher's ability to draw the above interpretations was based on the empirical evidence of the theory of sentiments and sentiment analysis. Zajonc (2000) and Tompkins (2017) posit that the use of empirical evidence in this theory, which encompasses a socially constructed interplay of autonomic responses, expressive behaviours, and shared meanings organized around individuals and their relationship to texts to generate meaning, served as the foundation for uncovering the meanings inherent in the posts. (Zajonc, 2000; Tompkins, 2017).

Gordon (2010) posits that individuals understand and process their emotions in a culturally influenced manner, emphasizing that cultural background shapes the expressions and emotional categorizations we assign to a specific experience. To comprehend the theme of trolling, the use of significant expressions within the posts such as "...Instead of joining delta force" "...u for go do Ghana Strongest" and "...efa wo ho ben" [does this concern you?] has provided a direction for interpretation and served as a guide (Zajonc, 2000; Gordon, 2010).

#### ***4.1.2 Shared Consensus***

The theme of shared consensus originates from the Latin word "communis," meaning "shared" or "common" (Dagger, 2022). The researcher operationalizes this theme as referring to the shared platform created by the TV3 Date Rush TV reality show audience as they gather to share their experiences. (Holt 2017; Mcbride 2015) further support the idea of shared consensus, which refers to how the producers of the Adesa productions effectively engaged with the audience, fostering a shared consensus before, during, and after the TV3 Date Rush show among viewers of all ages (Holt, 2017; Dagger, 2022). The posts illustrate that the producers of TV3 Date Rush were effective, well-planned, and delivered on the reality TV experience, demonstrating the audiences' greater ability

to co-create in the production process. This shift from passive television viewership to active audience engagement in reality TV shows the transformative impact of audience interactivity on television (Andrejevich, 2008; Nielsen, 2013, 2017; Subramanyam (2011), Walker, 2015; Wilson, 2014).

The analysis of the data collected as displayed in Table 1 revealed that the theme of shared consensus was the second most prevalent, accounting for 26.98% of the posts made by the Twitter audience. According to Gil (2021), this result showcases that the audience of the TV3 Date Rush show is highly active on their Twitter pages, expressing their anticipations, expectations, and sense of belonging to a community before, during, and after each episode. Additionally, some of the posts depict emotions such as anxiety, attention, boredom, self-promotion, and recreational microblogging, which aligns with Oldenburg's (1989) third-place to the fourth-place theory that explains how social media provides a platform for people to relieve stress and build online communities. These results provide insight into the experiences expressed by the audience before, during, and after an episode of the TV3 Date Rush show, showcasing the presence of shared consensus.

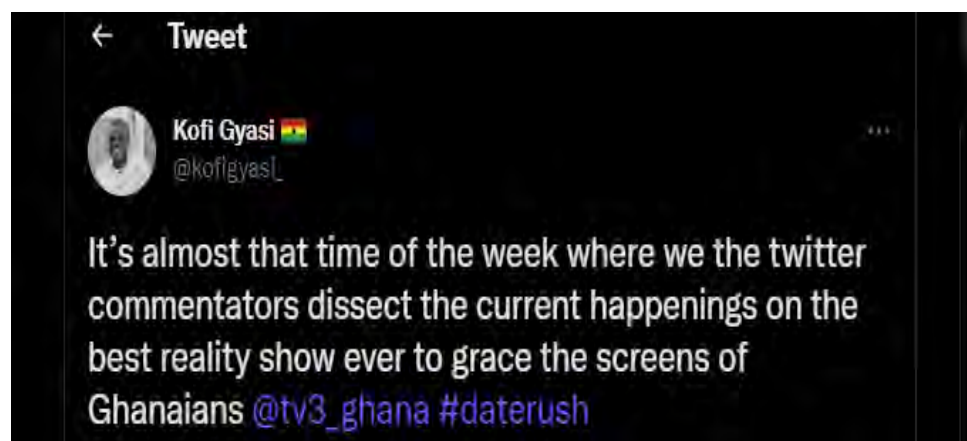


Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12



Fig 13

According to Ray-Chaudhuri (2019), most individuals interact in the workplace, at home, or through social media. This is supported by the assertion that a significant portion of interactions that would typically take place in a "third place" is now

conducted online. Fig 11 affirms this by highlighting the shared consensus, as described by Kuksa (2014), that online interactions with strangers can positively contribute to the formation of online communities. Steinkuehler (2005) posits that the dominant "third places" in the contemporary era are online spaces created through social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and multiplayer online games, as they are neither work- nor home-like environments. Kuksa (2014) extends Oldenburg's typology by defining spaces that require suspension of disbelief to participate as 'fourth places.' This is because the subjects or participants must actively embrace the beliefs associated with it to fully immerse themselves in the sense of place within these spaces. The utilization of such terminology can be viewed as serving as boundary objects, which promote the initiation of individuals into a community that utilizes this category of space. Further examples of shared consensus can be found below.

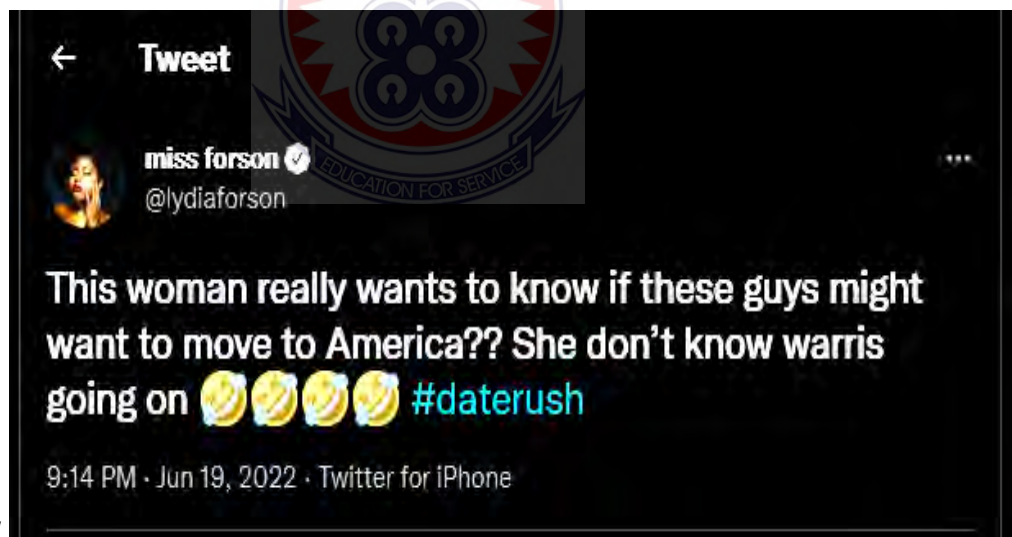


Fig 14



Fig 15

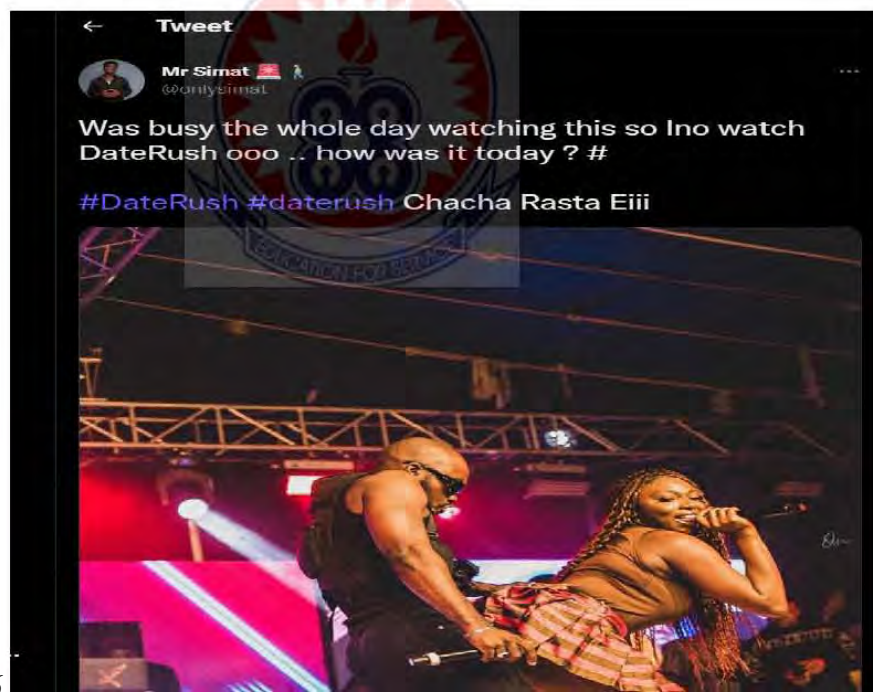


Fig 16

Fig 17



The researcher observed how the participants in the posts above utilized their tweets to engage in communication and form what Kuksa (2014) and Dagger (2022) refer to as a community of strangers convening to share a consensus. The popular Ghanaian celebrity in Fig 14 contributed to the community by tweeting about her viewing of TV3 date rush, which sparked a trend of engagement among other members. For instance, Fig 15 expressed surprise at Fig 14 viewing of the show and received a reply from Fig 14 saying, "you're late." Another example of a fourth-place engagement from the posts in Fig 16, which identifies Twitter as the best online space to catch updates, even when they miss an episode. These observations align with Kuksa's (2014) definition of fourth places.

The user Fig 14 embodies the concept of role and status transformation, as described by Kuksa (2014), in the context of fourth places. In such spaces, individuals may experience a transformation of identity and status, where one role is discarded and another may be assumed. For example, Fig 14, who holds significant status in the external world, serves as a celebrity figure within the online space and helps to introduce new participants, such as Fig 15 to the processes and norms of this online realm.

New and established participants in a community acquire boundary objects and semiotics, which are often conveyed through specialized language, objects, and practices. They may even coin new terms to describe objects and activities specific to the community this is noted by Dagger (2022). The following are examples of audiences expressing themselves in this fourth-place shared consensus using objects and semiotics to engage each other:

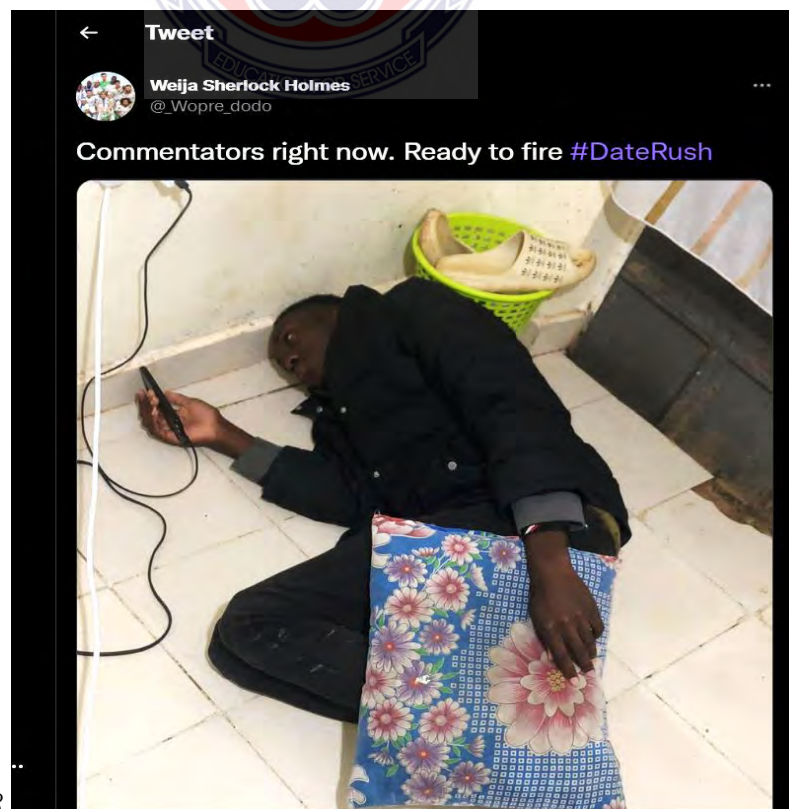


Fig 18



Fig 19

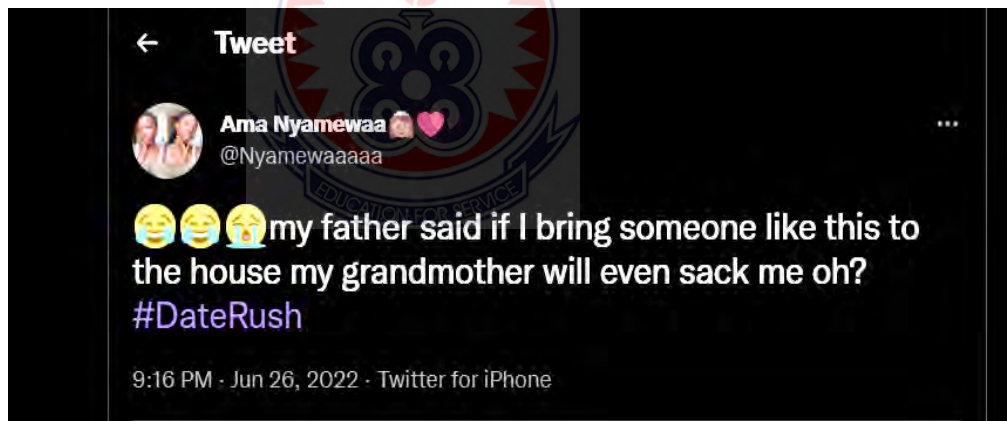


Fig 20



Fig 21



Fig 22



Fig 23



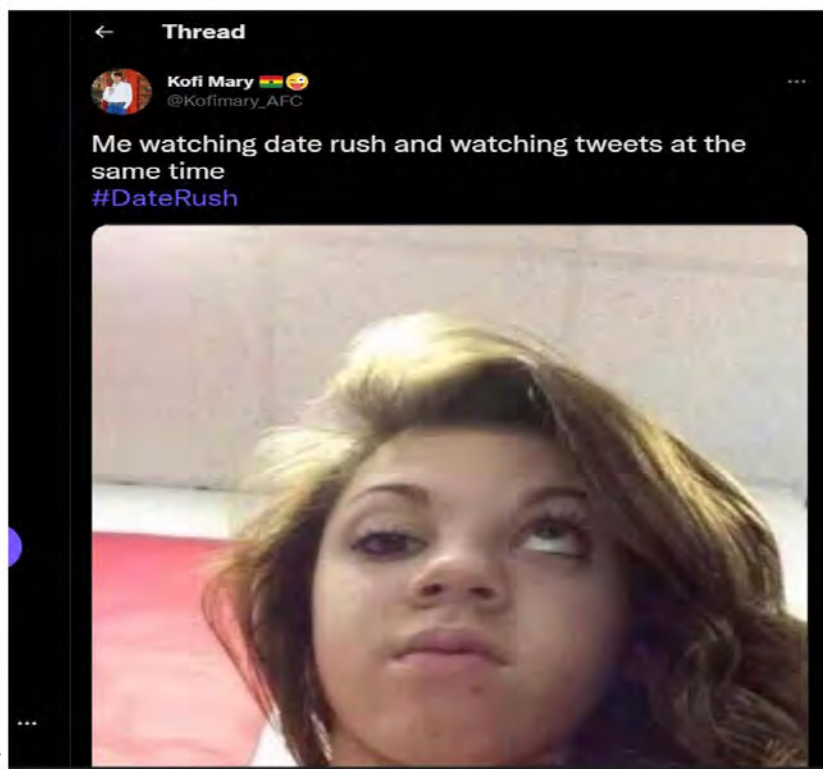


Fig 24



Fig 25

Kuksa (2014) suggests that the utilization of memes by participants to assign meaning to the events that occur during each episode of TV3 Date Rush is a process of acquiring boundary objects and semiotics. Through this engagement, they adopt a specific language that holds meaning for the existing online community members. According to Eco, U. (1976) in semiotics, external and internal grammar are used to understand how language and other signs are used to create and convey meaning. The study of external grammar is essential for the analysis of the linguistic forms that are used to communicate, while the study of internal grammar helps to explain the mental processes that underlie language use and comprehension, E.co, U. (1976).

According to Kuksa (2014), the internal grammar of space can vary significantly from its external grammar, leading to the imbuing of objects with greater levels of meaning and symbolism. As users become increasingly proficient in interpreting these semiotic systems, their identification as members of the community is strengthened. These skills, acquired over time, demonstrate the user's integration into the community and their shared understanding of its internal grammar, Eco, U. (1976).

#### ***4.1.3 Television Quizzes/ TV games***

Theme quizzes are described as a mode of providing amusement, recreation, and intellectual stimulation to the users or audience. These quizzes comprise diverse multimedia elements, including text, audio, images, animations, video, and interactive content, which create positive experiences and maintain user engagement. According to Kamitsios et al (2018), the nature of interactivity, as posited by Benedict (2013), has provided broadcasters with valuable insights obtained from social media data, such as responses to promotional campaigns, viewing behaviour, demographic-based social sentiment, and trends, events, quizzes, and emergencies. This information allows for

precise viewership predictions, either weekly or by season, and is driven by the social buzz surrounding the airing of the program.

Despite ranking low in frequency in Table 1, these findings align with research question one on the nature of interactivity from the producer's perspective. Ray-Chaudhuri (2019) notes that quizzes can serve as an informal platform for democratic participation. Similarly, Benedict (2013) emphasizes that producers use quizzes as a form of audience engagement to measure the reach of their programs and as a means of monetizing their content. This approach is reflected in the producers of the reality TV show TV3 date rush, as evidenced by the following posts about quizzes featured on the show.

*@daterush\_tv3*

*#daterush @daterush\_tv3 @GiovaniCaleb "What do you consider as red flags in a relationship?" 13 Mar 2022 (daterush\_tv3 2022)*



*Fig 26*

The application of sentiments analysis and the fourth place theory to the themes analyzed in the present study highlights the focus on the nature of interactivity that occurs before, during, and after the airing of the TV3 date rush program on Twitter.

The researcher's interpretation of the posts through sentiments analysis seeks to understand the emotional expressions and experiences of the participants in the show.

As per Oldenburg (1989) and Kuksa (2014), the fourth-place theory posits that individuals are transformed in terms of their role and status in the online community. This transformation is facilitated through the process of socialization and learning to express one's internal sensations. As Lewis (2000) and Shelly (2001) argue, sentiments and sentiment analysis play a crucial role in this process as they help individuals to become more human by promoting thinking and interaction.

For instance, in the posts made by *@jandohk* and *@teddy\_18* (displayed above), the issues that arose from the posts represent the innermost expressions that are relatable to real-life situations, thereby facilitating the formation of a community where participants can share their sentiments. The researcher revives these emotions and experiences, making the post's author a co-creator.

In conclusion, sentiment analysis and sentiment theory serve the purpose of a fourth place in promoting compassionate communication by providing individuals with tools to better understand the sentiment expressed in text data. By using sentiment analysis, individuals can tailor their responses in a way that aligns with the sentiment expressed, leading to more positive outcomes in their interactions and promoting compassionate communication.

**Table 2: RQ2 Themes emerged**

<b>TV 3 DATE RUSH SHOW</b>	<b>THEMES EMERGED</b>	<b>THEORIES USED</b>
<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>ANTICIPATION</b>	
<b>DURING</b>	<b>ANGER</b> <b>SHOCK</b>	<b>EKMANS THEORY OF BASIC EMOTIONS</b>
<b>AFTER</b>	<b>ANTICIPATION</b>	

#### **4.2 RQ2: What forms of emotions did the audience through their Twitter posts demonstrate before, during, and after the TV3 Date Rush show?**

Paul Ekman is a psychologist who developed a theory of emotions that posits that emotions are universal, biologically based, and culturally learned. He identified six basic emotions that are universally experienced across cultures: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise (Ekman, 1992). Ekman's theory suggests that emotions are biologically based and can be recognized by observing facial expressions, body language, and physiological changes. He also argued that emotions are universal and can be recognized across cultures, although the expressions of emotions may differ (Ekman, 1971).

Ekman's theory of emotions has been widely researched and validated by multiple studies, making it one of the most influential theories in the field of emotions. He has received numerous awards for his contributions to psychology, including the William James Fellow Award from the American Psychological Society and the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in the Science of Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation (Ekman, 2020).

The emotions experienced by human beings are a pivotal factor in all social phenomena, and thus, studies about human experiences must incorporate an analysis of emotions in their examination (Gordon, 2010; Levenson, 2014). Despite this, there remain numerous questions regarding the inherent nature of emotions (Gordon, 2010), making it challenging to formulate a comprehensive definition (Levenson, 2014). The intricate complexity of human life is reflected in the vast and nuanced realm of emotions (Levenson, 2014). As a result, comprehending the intricacy of human emotions is crucial for the effective advancement of all research related to humanity (Lovin, 2015). Although there is no universally accepted definition for the term "emotions," research has indicated that emotional representation primarily encompasses feelings, behaviour, physiological changes, and cognitions that are consistently influenced by the context in which they occur (Gordon, 2010; Levenson, 2014; Lovin, 2015).

Ekman's theory recognizes the basic emotions of anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. According to his theory, these emotions are universally expressed and recognized across cultures and are biologically based. The emergence of technology has expanded social connections and incorporated human interactions into a realm of web-based applications that afford users the ability to write and upload content, accessible from multiple devices (Mandiberg, 2016). With technology's continually advancing capabilities, the analysis of emotions expressed by audiences on web-based applications, particularly on social media, has become a widely utilized tool (Levenson, 2014). Social media has therefore emerged as a crucial platform for the examination of human interactions (Paechter, 2013), with social networking sites such as Twitter enabling users to express emotions through text and emojis (Kietzmann & Hermbene, 2011; Obar & Wildman, 2015).

As described by Bargh and McKenna (2004), the examination of social media sentiment involves assessing and contextualising audiences' discourse within the social arena surrounding a particular subject. In the context of this study, the aim was to identify the various forms of emotions expressed by the audience of TV3's Date Rush. The analysis of the collected data indicated that the audience exhibited two of the six basic emotions described by Ekman's theory of basic emotions, namely surprise and anger.

#### ***4.2.1 Surprise***

A surprise can be defined as an unexpected event or occurrence (Sabini & Silver, 2005). The impact of a surprise depends on its context and utilization. It has been argued that surprises can enhance the overall appeal of a scene or program, serving as a means to capture the attention of both the audience and participants (Sabini & Silver, 2005). Moreover, surprises can add a touch of mystery to the entire production, thereby contributing to the dynamic and engaging nature of the show (Sabini & Silver, 2005).

Thus, the presence of surprise in a particular context would indicate the manifestation of an unexpected event or situation, which elicits an immediate, instinctual response in the individual. However, the opposite of this is also possible (Sabini & Silver, 2005). Unforeseen circumstances and incidents that just occur unexpectedly can seriously mar the success of the show. These emotions of surprise sometimes come as a positive turnout for the producers of any show, as it may result in more patronage by non-viewers and contribute massively to the patronage of such Reality TV shows. As part of the posts expressing surprise regarding certain events on episodes of the TV3 Date Rush show, the indicators for this theme include expressions of startlement, stun, and shock. For example, some posts expressed disbelief at the appearance, speech, or



actions of the participants that were featured on the TV3 Date Rush show. Here is a section of the posts that exhibited emotion of surprise:



Fig 27

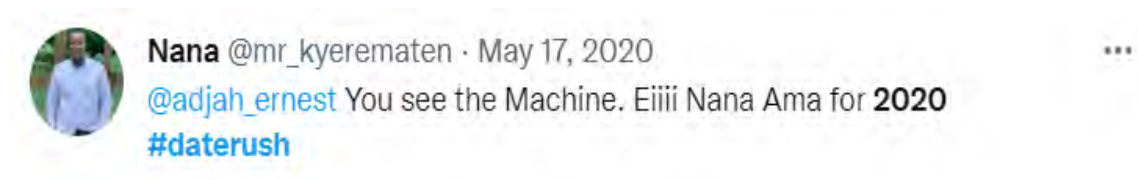
Fig 28



Fig 29



Fig 30



According to Ekman's (1972) theory of emotions, a surprise is recognized as one of the six basic emotions that are universally expressed and recognized across cultures. Also, per the works of Levenson (2014), Panksepp (2011), and Sabini & Silver (2005), emotions including surprise have been acknowledged to exist and can be expressed in diverse ways by individuals. As part of the analysis of social media posts regarding the TV3 Date Rush show, some posts were centred on expressions of shock in response to the participants' utterances and responses to questions and events. Furthermore, other posts expressed concern regarding the women on the show and their preferences for a mate, linking it to cultural norms and standards. The theme of surprise was indicated through expressions such as "Eii", "Hrr", specific facial expressions, and *emojis* of *heartbreak, tears, and concern*. These served as avenues for interpretation by Ekman's theory of emotions.

#### **4.2.2 Anger**

According to Lovin (2015), anger is a strong and intense emotional state that arises as a response to perceived threats, provocations, or accidents. The analysis of the data collected in the study revealed that anger was one of the emotions expressed by the audiences through their Twitter posts in response to events on the TV3 date rush reality TV show. This emotion encompasses all expressions of annoyance, irritation, and dissatisfaction with the development of the episodes. The notion of anger as a healthy

emotional response to irritation or threat is consistent with the views expressed by Lovin (2015).

The analysis of the emotional responses from the audience, as indicated by the collected data, revealed the presence of anger as a recurring theme in some of the posts. Anger, as defined by Lovin (2015), is a strong and unpleasant emotional response to perceived provocations, accidents, or threats. The posts in question exhibited non-cooperative reactions towards the management and organization of the TV3 date rush reality show by the Adesa production house. The posts reflected the audience's dissatisfaction with the display of what they deemed as inappropriate content for national television, such as sexual promiscuity. For instance, a post by Fig 31 expressed their displeasure with the Adesa production house for allowing their stage to be used in such a manner and called for more discretion to be exercised.

*Fig31*



Furthermore, the theme of anger as expressed by the audience through their posts encompasses not only their dissatisfaction with the Adesa production house but also their reactions to the interactions and behaviour between the contestants on the show. The analysis of the data collected indicated that some members of the audience utilized the platform to express their anger towards the actions and statements of specific participants.



Fig 32



Fig 33



According to Arthur (2016), prolonged experiences of anger can elicit strong defensive responses and deep-seated rage from individuals to protect their safety. Arthur (2016)

highlights that these emotional responses, characterized as healthy and essential, are rooted in survival instincts. This perspective aligns with Fig 31 post, which expressed dissatisfaction with the content presented on the TV3 date rush reality TV show. Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions (Grathel, 2018) posits that anger is a social and universal emotion, meaning it is a socialized feeling that emerges from innate instincts and is developed through thinking and interaction. Through communication with others, anger involves imagination and is expressed through indignant communication. The emotional responses expressed by the audiences through their Twitter posts demonstrate annoyance, irritation, and expressions of displeasure directed towards both the Adesa production house and other audiences with opposing interests.

Moreover, Fig 31, Fig 32 and Fig 33 posts offer insight into how anger can be a natural response to perceived threats or harm, per Arthur's (2016) explanation of healthy emotional responses.

In accordance with the theory propounded by Ekman and Friesen (n.d.), six emotions - anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise - are considered to be universal to all human beings as confirmed by various scholars such as Barrett (2006), Izard (2007), Levenson (2014), and Sabini & Silver (2005). The expression of these emotions through online mediums like Twitter was not unexpected, as noted by Ito and Okabe (2005) who posit that social media platforms like Twitter provide individuals with the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, experiences and emotions through online interactions. This view is supported by the data collected and analyzed for this study, which revealed themes of anger and surprise, aligning with Barrett's (2006) contention that these emotions are ubiquitous across all human experiences. The researcher was able to make meaningful and objective conclusions from the data by thoroughly reading

and comprehending the contents of the Twitter posts retrieved, in line with Spirovska's (2019) advice on how readers make sense of a text.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

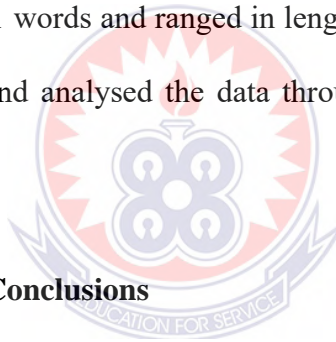
In this chapter, an overview of the study is presented, with conclusions drawn from the pivotal discoveries and proposals aimed at enhancing the comprehension of audience involvement in TV reality shows and their utilization of social media, particularly in terms of the communication of their expectation and shared consensus about TV reality shows. It offers a synopsis of the sentiments of the audiences of reality shows such as TV3 Date Rush and the producers, demonstrating how they can collaborate in the creation of content for production, thereby elevating the reality TV experience and implying that the viewer/consumer will have an enhanced ability to partake in the production process.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study aimed to explore the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter about the TV reality show TV3 Date Rush, specifically before, during, and after the broadcast. Furthermore, the study aimed to analyse the emotional expressions demonstrated by the audience on Twitter before, during, and after the TV3 Date Rush show. The significance of the research was also highlighted. To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, covering relevant theories such as social media, sentiment analysis on social media, the Fourth Place theory and Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions, which were used to interpret the data. The research methodology adopted a qualitative approach using qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to delve into the underlying meanings of the Twitter posts by the audience of TV3 Date Rush. The sample for this study was selected using the

purposive sampling technique (Daymon & Holloway, 2001), allowing for an in-depth examination of the nature of the audience's Twitter posts and the emotional expressions demonstrated.

The method of data collection for this study was document analysis, as social media posts can be considered documentary data according to Bowen (2009). Utilizing document analysis facilitated the researcher in comprehending and presenting the meanings derived from the Twitter posts related to TV3 Date Rush. Additionally, to Leavy's (2014) argument about the non-reactive and unobtrusive nature of documents, using Twitter posts for this study ensured a naturally inherent level of authenticity, given that social media posts are a form of document. Out of a total of 2,394 posts, which consisted of 66,521 words and ranged in length from 3 to 109 words, this study meticulously organised and analysed the data through a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clark, 2006).



## **5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions**

The analysis of the data yielded several key findings that led to several conclusions. The primary research objective, which aimed to examine the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter about the TV reality show TV3 Date Rush, before, during, and after the broadcast, resulted in the identification of three distinct themes: Trolling Contestants, Shared Consensus, and Quizzes. Based on sentiment and sentiment analysis theory, it was determined that audience interactivity plays a crucial role in the production process of television shows, much like how audiences are essential to businesses. The shift from passive television viewership to active audience engagement highlights the significant impact of audience interactivity on the medium of television. A more in-depth examination of the audience engagement manifested in Twitter posts



demonstrates the role of social media in enhancing audience interaction and expression of opinions and experiences (Ito & Okabe, 2005).

The objective of the second research question was to identify the forms of emotions displayed by the audience through their posts on Twitter. The findings indicated that social media has become a crucial venue for human interaction (Paechter, 2013), with social networking sites such as Twitter enabling users to express emotions through text and emoji utilization (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011; Obar & Wildman, 2015). Despite Ekman's theory of basic emotions proposing six fundamental emotions, the study found that the audience only expressed two of these emotions, namely surprise and anger.

### **5.3 Limitations**

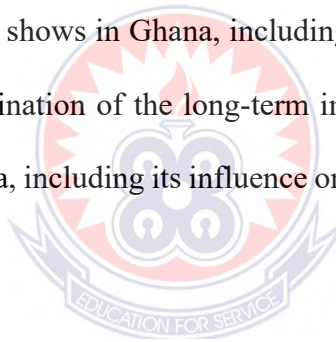
This study set out to explore the nature of audience interactivity on Twitter about the TV reality show TV3 Date Rush, specifically before, during, and after the broadcast. Furthermore, the study aimed to analyse the emotional expressions demonstrated by the audience on Twitter before, during, and after the TV3 Date Rush show. In conducting the study, the researcher encountered a few limitations.

The researcher initially observed that there were over four thousand (4,000) posts made by the audiences of TV3 Date Rush on Twitter. To ensure relevance to the current study, the researcher had to carefully scrutinize all posts and narrowed down the selection to two thousand, three hundred and ninety-four (2,394) posts. Additionally, the language used in some of the posts posed a challenge, as some were written in Pidgin English and Twi. To accurately comprehend the authors' intended messages, the researcher sought the assistance of a Pidgin English expert. Despite these limitations, the credibility and reliability of the study were not compromised.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

Given the opportunities and challenges the researcher had while reviewing the literature and collecting data for the study, the researcher makes the following suggestions for future research so that the knowledge base of social media users will be increased and also serve as a repository for researchers. Similar work may be done taking into consideration a comparative study of audience interactivity between reality TV shows in Ghana and other African countries, whilst exploring the factors that influence audience participation and interaction in reality TV shows, such as demographic characteristics and cultural factors.

Also, future research may take an investigation into the ethical implications of audience interactivity in reality TV shows in Ghana, including privacy concerns and the impact on participants. An examination of the long-term impact of audience interactivity on reality TV shows in Ghana, including its influence on the development of the television industry in the country.

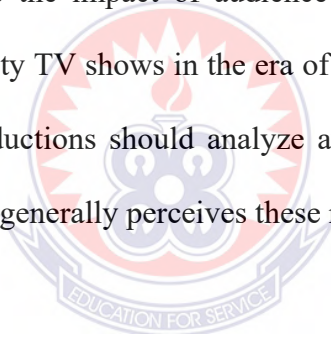


#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed. As the era of Web 2.0 is transitioning to Web 3.0, it is recommended that reality TV producers and stakeholders take advantage of the highly interactive nature of Web 3.0 to enhance producer-audience engagement on social media. Additionally, the field of reality TV is rapidly evolving and numerous studies have recognized the impact of social media on audience interactivity in reality TV shows, particularly in Ghana.

Moreover, further research should investigate how Web 3.0 technologies will change the production and content of reality TV shows. The increasing prevalence of social media has facilitated new and innovative forms of audience engagement across various

platforms, as part of a growing interactive economy. In 2020, TV3 Date Rush exemplified this participatory culture by utilizing Twitter to foster multi-platform consumption of content by the show's fans. Drawing on qualitative research of audience participation in live reality events, this study explored the multiple meanings of engagement in light of recent understandings of interactivity, and hence offers a promising and fundamental perspective on the reality TV experience, suggesting that "viewers/consumers will have a greater ability to participate in the production process" (Andrejevich, 2002). As a result, this study recommends that producers and stakeholders of reality TV shows examine the ethical and legal implications of audience interactivity and participation in the era of Web 3.0, including concerns of privacy and exploitation, and examine the impact of audience interactivity on the success and popularity of specific reality TV shows in the era of Web 3.0. Additionally, producers like TV3 and Adesa Productions should analyze audience sentiments and take into account how the audience generally perceives these reality TV shows.



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