

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND CITIZEN-LED ANTI-GALAMSEY ACTIVISM IN
GHANA: A STUDY OF USER POSTS ON FACEBOOK**



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**SOCIAL MEDIA AND CITIZEN-LED ANTI-GALAMSEY ACTIVISM IN
GHANA: A STUDY OF USER POSTS ON FACEBOOK**

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8231820009



**A dissertation in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies,
School of Communication and Media Studies,
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies**

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree
Master of Philosophy
Journalism and Media Studies
in the University of Education, Winneba.**

DECEMBER, 2023

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **David Ampaabeng Kyeremeh** declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:



DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. GIFTY APPIAH-ADJEI

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the unwavering support and encouragement of my family, whose love and understanding have been my anchor throughout this academic journey. To my beloved late grandmother, Hannah Osei Amoabeng, my beloved mother, Rose Afriyie whose sacrifices and belief in my potential have fuelled my pursuit of knowledge. Again, special dedication to my Senior brother, Mr. Samuel Marsum for his prayers and kindness. Lastly, to my brother, Nana Frimpong Solomon and my adorable friend Abena Ornormaah Eduah: for their constant encouragement and understanding during moments of academic intensity. You have all been a priceless boon to me.



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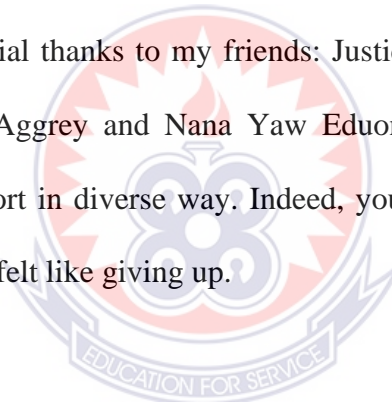
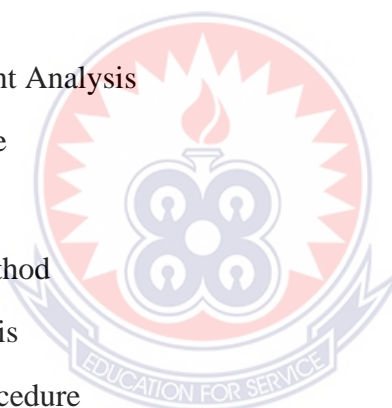


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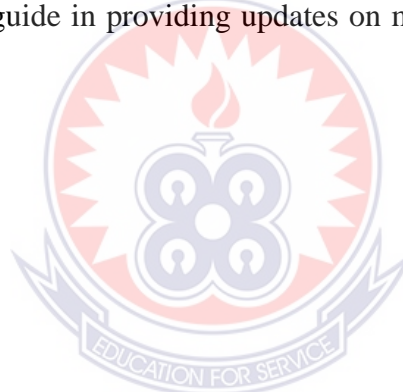
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ABSTRACT

Social media platforms have become an important arena for activism and mobilization; opening up direct communication and conversation channels between the general public and users seeking to raise awareness and mobilize the public toward a common course. The current study investigates user posts on anti-galamsey activism on Facebook, exploring how social media is shaping citizen-led activism in Ghana. Drawing from the Social Movement Theory and Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions, and underpinned by qualitative content analysis, the study analysed 1350 Facebook posts by citizen anti-galamsey activists. The study shows galamsey continues to thrive primarily due to political interference, leadership failure and high unemployment rate. Again, the study indicates that, the effectiveness of social media activism is closely tied to the types of posts used. Moreover, the study divulges negative emotions are not only prevalent, but can be more engaging for some social media users, thus, individuals have a tendency to pay more attention to negative posts. The four emotions (fear, anger, sad and disgust) outpoured by the citizen anti-galamsey activists were all negative emotions out of the six emotions listed by Paul Ekman. This study concludes that, Facebook is a potential platform to mobilize public opinion against illegal mining (galamsey). Hence, the government and its apparatus should actively participate and harness information from these online conversations to address concerns and guide in providing updates on measures being taken to combat galamsey.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

Illegal mining also known within the Ghanaian parlance as Galamsey is a descriptive term in Ghana meaning "gather them and sell" (Ofori & Atokora, 2021). It is a method of mining where perpetrators used unconventional and illegal means to extract gold from water bodies and land (Ofori & Atokora, 2021). It can primarily be defined as the process of using unconventional means of mining gold without the appropriate regulations (Ofori & Atokora, 2021). Also, Bugnosen (2005) in his definition said illegal mining is the knowledge of prospecting and mining in an area designated, which makes use of specialized technologies and methods not involving substantial expenditure.

According to historical reports by Ofori-Mensah (2010) as cited in Baddianaah (2022), earliest in the history of Ghana, local miners (citizens) enjoyed free explorations, gathering and selling of gold and other minerals such as diamond, bauxite and manganese around the Akan territories as early as the 4th century. Thus, the process of extracting, gathering and selling of gold largely by citizens was later coined as galamsey, which meant 'gather and sell' (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001; Ofori-Mensah, 2011). Owusu-Nimo et al. (2018) mention that illegal mining occurs in remote locations as well as in the urban areas, but predominantly occurs right in the heart of villages and towns and is performed close to forested areas as well as along the banks of and in water bodies. Owusu-Nimo et al. (2018) assertion is affirmed by Faamaa et al. (2020) who observe that illegal mining activities are predominant in vegetated areas in Ghana such as Western, Central, and Eastern parts of Ghana, and these places hold the majority of unskilled and unemployed youths (60%) of Ghana's

population are located in rural areas. In most of these aforementioned regions, the availability of gold bearing rocks and metals seem to be the only alternative lucrative enterprise to venture in just to earn a keep (Faamaa et al., 2020).

Galamsey has been a national headache for Ghana since the 1970s and the reasons are not far-fetched (Quainoo, 2020). Quainoo (2020) observes that the rampaging effects of galamsey on our environment notably our lands, water bodies and forests, the health, safety and security issues of galamsey operatives themselves as well as the upsurge in social vices in galamsey continues to courts year after year.

Glasson et al. (2005) mention that Ghana's mining sector especially one which has been crippled with illegalities (illegal mining) should be seen more of bane than a priceless boon. Glasson et al. (2005) echo that the natural environment is the "sink" for the wastes and the "source" for the resources. According to Glasson et al. (2005), environmental pollution and the depletion of resources are invariably the ancillaries to economic development. Meanwhile, Akabzaa and Darimani (2001) have called for the regularization and formalization of galamsey citing it as a major source of direct and indirect employment for millions of Ghanaians and hence banning it means depriving millions of their livelihood. Despite the varied discourse on the galamsey phenomenon, it remains a topical issue in Ghana not for its gains but because of the numerous negative impacts it has primarily on the environment and the finances of Ghana (Armah et al., 2013; Boateng et al., 2014). While studies have looked into the benefit Ghana garners from illegal mining (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001), other scholars like Armah et al. (2013) and Boateng et al. (2014) sought to take an opposing stand and thus argue that because galamsey is mostly; unregistered and unregulated, poorly monitored by regulatory authorities and rely heavily on the use of crude equipment, allowing its practice to continue could lead to severe environmental

consequences such as water pollution, land degradation and loss of agricultural lands. Aside its environmental consequences, illegal mining also poses health related risks especially to dwellers of such mining communities (Armah et al., 2013). The above assertion can be confirmed from a study conducted by Armah et al. (2013) which report of a link between illegal mining and chronic health conditions including diabetes. From another tangent, those making economic arguments in opposition to galamsey posit that illegal mining deprives the country of significant amounts of revenue needed for national development due to the non-payment of royalties and taxes by the illegal operators (Tschakert, 2009bs).

Amid increasing climate change and environment degradation, illegal mining has received widespread public concern in Ghana, with greater attention in recent times due to increased media reportage (Kpienbaareh et al., 2020). As cited in Baddinaah et al. (2022), due to the growing environmental consequences by galamsey on the environment, media groups, particularly Omni media (Citi FM) sparked an all-stakeholders call to action to fight galamsey by fronting a campaign against galamsey with the hashtag #StopGalamsey (Owusu et al., 2019). The #stopGalamsey campaign attracted civil society organisations, pressure groups (e.g., Occupy Ghana), governmental organisations (e.g., USIAD, UNDP) and non-governmental organisations (e.g., A Rocha Ghana) who collectively placed a courtesy call on the Government of Ghana to take action against illegal mining and its associated negative consequences (Owusu et al., 2019). According to Owusu et al. (2019), in response to this call, the government constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM); tasked with the core duty of coming up with solution-oriented proposals to put a stop to galamsey operations in Ghana. In a report submitted by the IMCIM, the committee recommended that, the practice must be stopped or embargo be placed on

all small-scale mining activities while awaiting the re-registration of the small-scale mining groups (Owusu et al., 2019). The ban took effect from March 2017 to December 2018, spanning almost 2 years (Owusu et al., 2019). In order to enforce the ban, it became necessary that a sort of watchdog be instituted to keep a close check on the observation of the ban and in effect led to the formation of “Operation Vanguard”, military and police combined anti-galamsey taskforce, to champion the course (Baddianaah et al., 2021a; Tuokuu et al., 2020).

Addo (2022) reiterates that despite numerous measures put in place by government and stakeholders to combat galamsey and its scourge, Ghana seem to be fighting a lost battle. According to Addo (2022), the biggest challenge facing the traditional media (frontliners in the fight against galamsey) is that some news/stories [highlighting galamsey-related issues] were influenced by political leaders because they owned the media houses/stations and are also 'kingpins' in the galamsey business. According to Addo (2022), several political leaders and their connections were interested in the galamsey operations. These are powerful leaders such as policymakers, regulators, and heads of institutions and security agents tasked with ensuring compliance yet through the backdoor and out of the daylight, they have been bought and corrupted by the influence of those 'kingpins' (Addo, 2022). In the last two decades, the media has become a formidable tool for social change and a force for creating awareness and responsibility on the devastating effects of illegal mining activities (Addo, 2022). The media have used variety of platforms, programs, events, and stakeholders to launch the 'Stop Galamsey Now Campaign' in order to draw the general public and policymakers' attention to the environmental, social and economic effects (Addo, 2022).

While traditional means of activism such as: street marches, picketing and strikes have all played a critical role in traditional activism, these channels are limited by issues of reach and geographical dispersion, amongst others, challenged especially in Ghana (Hubner et al., 2017). Opong (2018) reiterates that the country lacks a common platforms and mediums that allow people to express their opinions and views about socially and economically sensitive matters that they are constantly faced with in their everyday life. Scholars like Bardici (2012) asserts that the emergence of social media has paved way for the introduction of new phase of communication practices which has provided newfound interaction patterns, created new forms of expressions, stimulated a wide civic participation, and so forth. Bardici (2012) further emphasizes that social media are rapidly evolving and their importance is increasing and their role is changing in social and political processes and discourses. Indeed, beyond its basics of sending and receiving messages, social media has evolved to facilitate collective action, reduce cost and time, and overcome the cognitive constraints of individuals (Bimber et al., 2005). Social media mobilize and recruit individuals for collective action efforts on contentious issues (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013). More important, they make it easier for users to express personal opinions and to organize collective activities (Chon & Park, 2020). For example, a person who is angry about police violence is able to post his or her opinion on a personal social media account, such as Facebook or Twitter. This posting may diffuse in the network through sharing functions (i.e., connected or collective actions), and accordingly, other individuals may be exposed to mobilizing information even if they do not seek it out (Tang & Lee, 2013; Xenos et al., 2014). The rise of the internet and social media has led to the emergence of networked social movements that are able to mobilize individuals across geographic, cultural boundaries and ideological barriers for greater collaboration and participation to strive for change (Papacharissi, 2010).

Agbozo and Spasso (2019) conducted a study to explore how Ghanaians have resorted to social media as a vehicle for positive activism in curbing illegal mining (galamsey). The findings of the study revealed that the outrage expressed by citizens led to the raising of awareness by the media and subsequently causing government to act swiftly to curb the menace (Agbozo & Spasso, 2019). The findings of their work clearly give evidence of how social media is changing social and political narratives and subsequently serving as an agent of change. As impactful as social media has been in reconstructing social and political narratives, the lingering question remains: ‘how’ is the platform used as a medium for activism, considering its emerging nature and adoption rate particularly in developing countries?

1.2 Current State of Galamsey in Ghana

As cited in Baddianaah (2022), the Small-Scale Mining Law of 1989 (PNDCL 218) which was amended by the Minerals and Mining Act of 2006 (Act 703) defines small-scale mining locally known as ‘galamsey’ as an indigenous enterprise that requires certification of Ghanaians from the Minerals Commission to operate (Akabzaa and Darimani, 2001; Ofosu-Mensah, 2011). By implication, this amendment explicitly stipulates that, Small-Scale Mining as defined by the law only affords citizens of Ghana to partake in the operation of mini extraction business.

According to Quainoo (2020) as at 2020, Ghana was the tenth largest producer of gold in the world and second in Africa only after South Africa. Quainoo indicated that, gold is the second leading export commodity of Ghana after cocoa, and galamsey contributes about 35% of all gold exported out of the country. Most of the gold obtained through galamsey is exported illegally (Quainoo, 2020).

Also, Klutse (2021) recounts that mining activities in Ghana accounted for about 9.1% of Ghana's gross domestic products (GDP) and serves as a source of employment for about 260, 662 citizens in the formal sector. According to Minerals Commission of Ghana, about 300,000–500,000 Ghanaian artisanal miners work without an official license and have contributed about \$ 461.1 million to Ghana's economy since 1989 (Klutse, 2021). It is therefore not surprising that Ghana also has the largest artisanal and small-scale mining in Africa (1,100,000) with estimated dependents of 4,400,000 with most of these individuals who are into the illegal act not by choice, but out of necessity to survive (Klutse, 2021).

Historically, Ghana's Small-scale mining is reserved for indigenes with just acquisition of certification to operate (Akabzaa and Darimani, 2001; Ofosu-Mensah, 2011) and laws prescribed to regulate and safeguard the practice of Small-scale mining (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001; Bebbington et al., 2018). In recent times, Chinese, Indians, and Serbs have entered and consolidated their fortes in the sector (Armah et al, 2013). The metamorphosis of the Chinese and other foreigners from large-scale mining investors into small-scale mining can be linked to involvement of self-seeking citizens who aim to side-step the Minerals and Mining Act for their gains (Armah et al, 2013). Unfortunately, local miners who barely can afford the means to acquire the needed equipment in the mini-extraction business have collaborated with the Chinese influx that are technologically savvy and resourced to engage in galamsey (Baddianaah, 2022). The introduction of the use of heavy machines (excavators) by the Chinese illegal miners in the mini-mining sector wheeled along its own woes to Ghana. Thus, it further increased the environmental consequences posed by illegal mining (Antwi-Boateng and Akudugu, 2020; Hausermann et al., 2020).

The introduction of these heavy machinery by the Chinese into the Small-scale mining sector has negatively impacted the environment and lives of inhabitants in mining communities; these effects range from land degradation, deforestation, violence, reduction in agriculture production, pollution (air and water bodies) uncovered pits coupled with its associated health effects (Armah et al., 2013; Boateng et al., 2014; Bortey-Sam et al., 2015; Hilson, 2016; Kpan et al., 2014; Tom-Dery et al., 2012). For instance, a study conducted by Boateng et al. (2014) in Atiwa district of Ghana assessed farmer's awareness of small-scale illegal mining, its impact on cocoa production and livelihoods in the mining communities. The outcome of the study revealed that farmers in the communities faced several challenges emanating from mining activities such as water pollution from excessive use of chemicals, air pollution and land degradation from indiscriminate heavy use of machines. In addition, farmers also observed an early dropping of immature pods, wilting, yellowing of leaves and low yield on cocoa farms closer to mined-out areas (Boateng et al., 2014).

Also, Bortey-Sam et al. (2015) study assessed metals and metalloids in organs of free-range livestock for human consumption near mining areas of Tarkwa. The findings of the study indicated the presence of four potentially harmful elements in free-range livestock which when consumed in large quantities is harmful to children in the Tarkwa area (Bortey-Sam et al., 2015). Ofori and Atokora (2021) equally discovered that because galamsey operations involve alluvial mining techniques which is primarily dependent on water, the operations cause severe destruction such as pollute lakes, streams, and rivers as a result of the use of toxic chemicals such as mercury which has grave health implications on humans and aquatic habitats when released into rivers. Ofori and Atokora (2021) again observed that these poisonous chemicals

and heavy metals destroy both the biophysical environment and its inhabitants like fish, mollusks, crustacean, other forest animals and humans.

Additionally, Faamaa et al. (2020) also mention that even though Ghana is blessed with several river basins and reservoirs that supply the country with water for industrial, domestic and agricultural purpose, the prevalence and cascading operations of illegal miners has affected these water sources that supply water for the sectors mentioned above.

Adu et al. (2016) as cited in Faamaa et al. (2020) emphasize that illegal mining activities do not only harm the natural environment but also jeopardize human economic activities, health, and livelihoods. Adu et al. (2016) observe that mining activities either illegal or legal tend to give financial support and independence to people involved in it, and the communities in which mining operations occur equally tend to directly or indirectly have a fair share of that benefit through employment, boosting of market sales. They conversely argue that while the gains may seem attractive enough, on the scale of effects, these benefits cannot outweigh the negative implications illegal mining activities have on the environment, the people and their livelihoods (Adu et al., 2016).

The causes of galamsey have been studied and documented by different scholars (Adu et al., 2016; Baddianaah et al., 2022; Boateng et al., 2014; Bortey-Sam et al., 2015; Faamaa et al., 2020; Ofori & Atokora, 2021). Boateng et al. (2014) and Ofori and Atokora (2014) for instance, observed that unemployment has been the prime 'pushing-factor' for young people to indulge in illegal mining.

For instance, Ofori and Atokora (2014), in a paper concluded that, unemployment remains a huge hindrance to any attempt at dealing with the phenomenon. Their

observation in a visit to some mining communities confirmed that, young people migrate from many towns and cities to work in these illegal mining sites to earn a keep (Ofori & Atokora, 2014). They aver that, illegal mining is a major source of income for many unemployed people and since there is high unemployment rate in Ghana and government has not been able to provide other source of employment to the teeming youth unemployment situation, many young people defy the laws and engage in illegal mining (Ofori & Atokora, 2014).

A study by Adu et al. (2016) was conducted to identify some factors that influence individuals to engage in illegal mining activities. The findings of the study revealed that Poverty, low level of education, inadequate job opportunities, high rate of unemployment, huge start-up capital for businesses, Poor business performance, high dependency rate in families, loss of farm lands, ineffective social intervention programs, averting cost of legal processing and attached responsibility in mining, excessive bureaucracy in attaining requisite license have all been the ‘pulling factors’ for majority involvement in galamsey activities (Faamaa et al., 2016).

Ofori and Atokora (2014) in a study found that, in an attempt to curb the menace of illegal mining, the government initiated an alternative livelihood program as employment option for the youth in mining areas yet those programs were inadequate and not attractive enough to the youth to prevent them from engaging in the illegality.

In reacting to the aftermaths of galamsey, Boateng et al. (2014) mention that Ghanaians have expressed fears that illegal mining might be a resource curse rather than a blessing. While much have been studied about small-scale mining in Ghana and the negative impacts it is having on the environment including; water bodies, farmlands and ultimately, human lives (Armah et al., 2013; Boateng et al., 2014; Bortey-Sam et al., 2015; Hilson, 2016; Kpan et al., 2014; Tom-Dery et al., 2012),

Boateng et al. (2014) caution that the negative impacts should not be taken for granted considering the fact that this has not been the story of other mining-rich African countries.

Typically, the thought of mining gold must portray nothing but richness and blessings but that has not been the case-scenario for Ghana; the question that continues to linger in the minds of most Ghanaians is; Is Ghana's illegal small-scale mining (Galamsey) a sure path to development or a slow path to destruction? (Boateng et al., 2014).

1.3 Social Media Activism

Rees (2013) defined digital [social media] activism as an instance where digital tools (the internet, mobile phones, social media etc) are used for bringing about social and/or political change. Examples of social media activism were common throughout the '80s, however, things started to really snowball with the advent of web 2.0 and the dot com boom (Rees, 2013). According to Rees (2013), the introduction and rapid growth of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter from 2004 onwards helped buttress digital [social media] activism to the point where entire campaigns could be run online (sometimes with little to no offline component) and still have a wide mileage. Shirky (2011) is one of the first scholars to write about social media as a new social networking instrument for collective action. Shirky (2011) contends that the global communication system has become denser, more complicated, and more evolved over time. People now have greater access to knowledge, more opportunities to engage in public discussion, and consequently a stronger potential to take collective action (Shirky 2011). Dartnell (2006) posits that online activism is a mature, new territory for non-governmental actors to raise awareness and garner support around the world. In fact, Sharma (2017) found that the trivial means of keeping in touch with friends, sharing photos and jokes has developed into a force for societal change

which shines a light on subjects' previously unknown, deepening conversations and empowering citizens of the world to unite and effect change in diverse ways. This picture of trivializing social media just for the fun of it as opined by Sharma (2012) has gradually changed due to the widespread use of the internet and social media, hence providing citizens with a medium and new opportunities to actively engage in the process of information production (Bachmann. et al., 2012; Chadha et al., 2012).

Recently, an emerging area concerning social media is how it can be used to champion a social cause through activism (Malik, 2022). With the emergence and availability of social media, the platforms allow activists to post and share information at all times, anywhere at their convenience (Hansen et al. 2011) with Facebook proving to be a very useful platform for the purposes of activism (Ellison et al., 2007; Neumayer & Raffl, 2008).

Ostensibly, there is more to social media than the mere face value of sharing of pictures, videos, memes and the famous assumption of it being used as a medium of staying connected with loved ones as mentioned by Sharma (2017). Through sharing on social media as a community, individuals gather a legion of support from those who share concerns on the same issues (Keller et al., 2018). Research reveals that social media platforms have aided police in combatting crime (Denef et al., 2012), as well as becoming the channel through which political sentiments are aired, arousing considerable discussions and debates (Dahlgren, 2014). As of January 2023, there were 5.16 billion internet users worldwide, which is 64.4 percent of the global population and out of this total, 4.76 billion, or 59.4 percent of the world's population are social media users (internetworldstats, 2023). Gretzel (2017) posits that social media activism is a form of cyber- activism that takes advantage of social media affordances to reach its cause-related goals. Through social media, users are able to

form collective societies and initiate organizational action while engaging in social media activism which is increasingly playing a role in bringing social-political issues to the forefront of the public debate (Rigby, 2008).

Online communities create a space for all voices, enabling visibility to those that have been historically overlooked or misrepresented (Haas, 2017). Chadwick (2009) argues that the internet's influence belongs to the capability to deliver by a sovereign arena of communication and in effects citizens autonomously take part in discussion farther from the supervisory power of state, enormous media organizations as well as arrangements of social inequity that enforces on their everyday lives. Compagny (2018) also mentions that social media brings confidence to many people who are not scared anymore to say what they think and people are now able to tell their stories more than before. The assertion above is supported by Shirazi (2013) who believes social media has made it possible for the oppressed and marginalized groups to voice their demands to bring changes in the legal, political and social scenario through intense citizens' participation. Petitions, protests, letters to politicians and those in power are disseminated through social media, but what brings attention to a movement is the recent use of hashtag; the high number of mentions of a hashtag, which is what brings it worldwide attention (Khan-Ibarra, 2015). Khan-Ibarra (2015) posits that people who are activists offline tend to use social media activism as online and offline organizing strategies. They are committed to a cause, part of a movement and stick to the issue until there is change (Khan-Ibarra, 2015).

Social media activism has been a major force behind many social changes, debates, mass movements and creating activist groups (Mukherjee, 2016). Liou (2013) also mentions that around the globe, social media tools have served as channels for fuelling social movements. Social media has been shown to strengthen social actors'

ability to challenge and change power relations in society, providing platforms for debate, reflection, influencing and mobilizing people (Malik, 2022). Whether objectives are uniting your supporters, educating the public, amplifying marginalized voice for success, starting well-informed conversations, seizing public attention around issues, or raising mounting efforts, social media can be an additional technique to further your organisation's mission (Haas, 2017). Malik (2022) mentions that social media campaigns have been on the rise and some of the social media campaigns that have thrived in the world in the past years include #MeToo, #TimesUp, #HeforShe, #WhyIStayed, #BlackLivesMatter, #MenAreTrash, #EndSars, and in Ghana, #FixTheCountry.

On the effectiveness of social media activism, Vardhan (2017) adds that it has become a powerful tool, that in the face of any incidents, social media becomes the voice of people. Everyone starts sharing, tweeting, 'hashtaging' their views, rage, and demand for justice on social media (Malik 2022: 3029). Ofori- Parku and Mascato (2018) affirm that hashtags have the power to draw attention to and mobilize a large population for a cause. Indeed, the ushering into the era of social media, especially those well-known social networking platforms as Twitter and Facebook, arguably has had the upshot of facilitating communication between organizations and stakeholders (Kietzmann et al., 2011) with a growing segment of social media usage particularly on Twitter including individuals advocating for humanitarian causes, against environmental problems upsurge, political issues and economic debates (Beirut, 2009). Cammaerts (2015) mentions the fact that, since social media has a wide mileage, social media activism is extremely conspicuous to others especially compared to the traditional spaces of activism and hence can rapidly spread beyond individuals and beyond local communities. Lee and Hsieh (2013) equally mention that

online activism is similar to traditional offline activism behaviours because there are costs and risks imposed on the individual to participate in such activities.

According to McCaughey and Ayers (2003) there are three types of Internet activism: (1) awareness/advocacy; (2) organization/mobilization; (3) action/reaction. McCaughey & Ayers, (2003) posit that awareness is created when relevant information about a cause can be accessed, while advocacy occurs when actions for the movement are put into action or carried out and lastly, the action/reaction phase includes “hacktivism” where activists may hijack a trending hashtag or engage in online disobedience to support a cause. McCaughey and Ayers (2003) further mention that, in online communities, it is easier to organize and mobilize groups as they may already have signed up to receive information as part of the awareness phase. Vegh (2003) also discovered that the Internet [social media] is used for mobilization in three different ways, namely: (1) to call for offline action, such as rallying a public demonstration by posting detail online; (2) to call for an action that normally happens offline but can be done online, such as emailing your state representative; and lastly to (3) to call for an online action that can only be carried out online, such as a spamming campaign.

According to Carney (2016) social media activism has proven to be effective just as real-life activism. This assertion can be confirmed from the recent social movements such as #BlackLivesMatter which transitioned from tweet (online) debates to action on the streets which profoundly highlighted and shaped “national discourse about race” (Carney, 2016).

In Ghana, some major civic actions, notably: #OccupyFlagstaff and #DumorMustStop, #fixthecountry were all triggered via social media (Brobbery et al., 2021; Dekalu, 2015).

The study by Brobbery et al. (2021) found that the #fixthecountry online campaign became successful despite the diverse backgrounds of the participants of the movement, the hybridity of the communication technologies, the use of social media fuelled the success of their interaction, leading to enhanced information and communicative ecology, giving the participants a formidable front both within and outside Ghana. While social media activism has proven ability in transforming societies, Peuchaud (2014) advises that social media activism has the latent to trigger disturbing occurrences [because of its ability to reach larger audience] and therefore its usage must not be taken for granted since it carries real risk and enormous potential.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Illegal mining has become a significant environmental and social issue in Ghana (Al-Hassan & Amoako, 2014; Armah et al., 2013; Boateng et al., 2014; Bortey-Sam et al., 2015; Kpan et al., 2014; Schueler et al., 2011). The government together with other stakeholders such as the mainstream media, some communities, political leaders, NGOs, and CSOs have struggled to combat the practice (Biney, 2019; Kpienbaareh et al., 2020; Nyamekye-Acquah, 2018; Pomary, 2016; Quainoo, 2021), leading to the emergence of citizen-led anti-galamsey activism (Agbozo & Spassov, 2019). According to Agbozo and Spassov (2019), social media platforms have played a critical role in facilitating user representations, providing a space for users to share their experiences and disseminate information on the practice (galamsey). However,

how the platform is being used in promoting citizen-led activism remains unclear due to its emerging nature and adoption rate particularly in developing countries.

In the Western world, a study by Raine et al. (2012) indicates that 66% of social media users in the United States employ such platforms for posting their thoughts about civic and political issues, react to others' postings, press friends to act on issues and vote, follow candidates, 'like' and link to others' content, and belong to groups formed on social networking sites.

In Egypt, Tufekci and Wilso (2012) conducted a survey on participants in Egypt's Tahrir Square protests. The study gathered that social media and Facebook in particular provided a new source of information which was farther from the supervisory eyes of those in authority. They also gathered that those who participated in the protest got informed primarily through interpersonal communication using Facebook.

In the Ghanaian context, studies have been conducted to investigate how social media platforms have triggered civic actions (Brobbe et al., 2021; Dekalu, 2015).

For instance, Dekalu (2015) in a study observed that campaigns like Occupyflagstaff and DumsorMustStop were triggered due to organizers of the protest use of the hashtags (#OccupyFlagstaff and #DumsorMustStop) respectively on Twitter and on Facebook to draw awareness to the situation in Ghana. The use of these hashtags helped the online protesters to call on people to partake in the cause by mobilizing support via their Facebook and Twitter accounts. People who wore red on Fridays in solidarity with the Red Friday Campaign posted their pictures on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to draw the public's attention to their cause (Dekalu, 2015). The findings of study clearly give evidence of how social media can be used as conduit to

campaigning against social and political injustice and subsequently serve as agent of change.

Also, there have been several studies conducted on the issue of combatting illegal mining in Ghana but the majority of them have centered on the efforts of traditional media and government apparatus (e.g., Biney, 2019; Kpienbaareh et al., 2020; Nyamekye-Acquah, 2018; Pomary, 2016; Quainoo, 2021).

For instance, the study by Kpienbaareh et al. (2020) highlighted the role of the media in the ongoing clampdown on galamsey activities through the media's agenda-setting theoretical perspective. The findings reveal that as a result of the mainstream media's incessant reportage on galamsey stories, stringent measures such as the Operation Vanguard and Galamsey Court were established to fight galamsey menace. This led to seizure of galamsey operation equipment, arrest and persecution of culprits, closure of illegal mines et cetera.

In addition, the study by Biney (2018) qualitatively examined what informed practitioners in the media space to mount a sustained lifelong learning drive against 'galamsey' in Ghana. It emerged from the study that the 'galamsey' activities were complex and engaged in by both Ghanaians and foreigners using heavy earth moving machines destroying forest vegetation cover and water bodies.

Furthermore, previous research by Agbozo and Spassov (2019) has directed attention towards social media activities pertaining to galamsey. Agbozo and Spassov (2019) utilized a quantitative methodology to investigate the role of social media in instigating positive political action against galamsey. The authors highlight the scarcity of qualitative studies that delve into the utilization of social media in combating galamsey, and they recommend future investigations to explore the

subjective experiences, perspectives, and emotions of social media users in relation to galamsey-related activities (Agbozo & Spassov, 2019).

While the existing study has explored galamsey and the involvement of social media in galamsey activism in Ghana, there remains a dearth of research specifically examining the content and sentiments expressed on social media platforms concerning galamsey. Thus, the present study aims to address this research gap by employing a qualitative research approach to examine user posts and sentiments conveyed in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on illegal mining phenomenon on Facebook in Ghana.

1.5 Research Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate how the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism communicated their message on Facebook in Ghana.
2. Identify the dominant issues that emerged from the post shared by the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook in Ghana.
3. Examine the emotions expressed in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism posts on Facebook in Ghana.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions are designed to guide the study:

1. How did the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism communicated their message on Facebook in Ghana?
2. What are dominant issues that emerged from the post shared by the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook in Ghana?

3. What kinds of emotions were expressed in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism posts on Facebook in Ghana?

1.7 Significance of the Study

In diverse ways, conducting research on this topic will be of benefit to academics, government, industries and the general social media public. In the first place, there is dearth study on citizen-led social media activism; this study will therefore contribute to the existing literature on social media, citizen-led activism, and ‘galamsey’ phenomenon in Ghana. The study will also provide opportunity for further studies in the area of citizen-led social media activism, particularly on its effectiveness on addressing the various issues individual citizens are confronted with. Also, the findings of the study will furnish the government and other key stakeholders with the various degrees of sentiments expressed by citizens particularly those who are directly affected by the galamsey. In addition, the study will provide insights into the ways in which Facebook and other social media platforms can be used as medium to harness social media user’s sentiments on social and political issues in Ghana.

Again, the findings of the study will give the government and key stakeholders an insight into specific intervention programs needed in the ‘galamsey’ prone areas as Ofori and Atokora (2014) mention that although government has initiated intervention programs in some galamsey areas yet those interventions are not attractive enough to sway off the illegal miners from the act.

Finally, the study will inform policymakers (Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Mineral Commission) and environmental activists (Environmental Protection Agency) on how social media can be used as a tool for promoting environmental protection and sustainability agenda in Ghana.

1.8 Scope and Delimitation.

The study will be conducted within a period of Six (6) months, from April, 2017 to September, 2017. This study will focus on posts made on Facebook by citizens concerning illegal mining (galamsey) phenomenon in Ghana. It explores the dominant issues that emerge from the posts, the kinds of post used to disseminate their message, as well as the diverse emotions expressed by the citizens through their posts. The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to examine posts shared on Facebook to largely understand how citizen-led anti-galamsey activism is using Facebook as a medium to add their voices and address the narratives to the fight against illegal mining (galamsey) and its associated menace in Ghana.

1.9 Organization of the study

The study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by outlining the major concepts of the study. It goes ahead to locate the gap in the literature and uses the gap to formulate objectives. The objectives are transferred into questions and then the significance of the study is detailed. Chapter two is the literature review which is aimed at reviewing literature related to the study. The literature reviews will also involve theoretical and empirical reviews. Chapter three of the study will look at the methodology; detailing all the processes, procedures involved in data collection and analysis. The chapter will embody; research approach, research design, sample and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis. The findings and discussions of the data collected will be discussed under the fourth chapter of the study. Data gathered from the study will be thematically analysed and discuss using the theories discussed in the second chapter two of the study. Chapter five summarizes the entire

work, draws conclusion, spells out limitations and makes recommendations to the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature for the following concepts: social media; the social media landscape in Ghana; social media ‘Most Popular’: Facebook; Citizen-led activism on social; sentiments and sentiment analysis on social media; the chapter additionally discusses the theories that underpin the study and their relevance to the research work.

2.1 The Origin and Evolution of Social Media

The Web 2.0 (social web) redefined a way people use information and communication services and eventually, users evolved into prosumers who actively participate and collaborate in the ecosystem of a read-write web (user-generated content) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; O’Reilly, 2005; Podobnik et al., 2013). Social media behemoths like Facebook (2004) and YouTube (2005) seized on this trend by allowing users to produce, share, and engage with content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The democratization of content creation resulted in an exponential increase in online social interactions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Not to talk of the proliferation and widespread adoption of smartphones and mobile internet which further accelerated the evolution of social media (Statista, 2021). With the introduction of application like Twitter in 2006 and Instagram in 2010, social media became more accessible, enabling users to engage on-the-go (Duggan et al., 2015). Also, the integration of multimedia elements like photos and short videos revolutionized content sharing, fostering new forms of expression and communication (Duggan et al., 2015).

Many scholars have directed attention towards the concept of social media due to its widespread and emerging nature (Boyd, 2014; Castells, 2012; Tufekci, 2017; Turkle,

2011). For example, while Turkle, (2011) in her book titled “Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other”, delves into the psychological and sociological impact of social media and other digital technologies on human relationships and communication as she explores the paradox of feeling connected yet alone in the digital age; Boyd (2014), a prominent researcher in the field of social media, also explored how teenagers use social media platforms and the complexities of their online social lives. Her work emphasizes the role of technology in shaping contemporary youth culture and the challenges they face in online spaces (Boyd, 2014).

Social media has received more than few classifications, contingent on its operational functions. For instance, Zhang and Lui (2015) have classified social media into ‘Text-based’, primarily used to analyse textual content to categorize social media posts. Network-based’ approaches which utilize the relationships between users and their connections to infer the content's category and ‘Multimedia-based’ which applies techniques for analysing images, videos, and audio data are discussed, including feature extraction, deep learning, and content-based retrieval (Zhang & Lui 2015).

Nonetheless, some scholars have argued that attaching singular definition to social media becomes illogical as they tag the concept of social media as that of paradoxical phenomenon; one that has attracted more than few subjective definitions primarily because of its attributed features and continual understandings being garnered now and then from its emerging nature (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Hinton & Hjorth, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Van Dijck, 2013).

In understanding the diversity in the definitional conceptualisation of social media, Boyd and Ellison (2007) are one of those pioneers to have provided one of the key foundational conceptualizations of social media, describing it as "a web-based service

that allows individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (p. 211) Their definition emphasizes the core features of social media platforms, such as user profiles, connections, and network visibility (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) propose a classification framework of social media based on two dimensions: media richness and self-presentation. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) definition expand on the definition proposed by Boyd and Ellison, highlighting two key characteristics of social media: "user-generated content and interaction between users". They describe social media as "a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological basics of Web 2.0, which paved way for creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 61). This conceptualization emphasizes the participatory aspect of social media and the generation of content by users (O'Reilly, 2005; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Waters & Ackerman, 2011). They argue that social media platforms vary in terms of the richness of media they support, ranging from text-based platforms like Twitter to multimedia platforms like YouTube and with these interplanetary, users can create and manage their online personas (self-presentation) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

O'Reilly's (2005) definition in a way aligns with that of Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010) which equally gravitates around the penetration of Web 2.0. and how it shaped users' interaction with contents. O'Reilly (2005) posits that the concept of social media lies within its ability to offer a set of economic, social and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the Internet. His concept of social media defiles the old static web pages, where audience were considered as

passive consumers to a more dynamic and interactive platforms, where users actively participate in content creation (creating their desirable content) and consciously sharing it (O'Reilly, 2005). This Web 2.0 embodies and thrives on the mutable and dynamic nature of social media through the incorporation of emerging technologies and trends (Waters & Ackerman, 2011) a reason Kietzmann et al. (2011: 12) described it as "social media honeycomb," because of its multidimensional construct.

Boyd (2011) Hinton and Hjorth (2013) and Van Dijck (2013) approach the definition of social media from a typical cultural sociological perspective. Under this umbrella, Hinton and Hjorth (2013) for instance argue that social media is not solely a technological phenomenon but also a cultural one. Their definition position social media as cultural practices, technological tools, platforms, spaces and medium that aim to change and transform human interaction. This perspective emphasizes the dynamic and transformative nature of social media, with special attention on the role it is playing in shaping human interactions and societal norms (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013). According to them, the social and cultural practices that emerge around social media platforms, such as sharing, liking, and commenting provide space where individuals negotiate their identities, relationships, and social interactions (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013).

Van Dijck (2013) also espouses the proposition that the platforms allow people to connect, create, collaborate, and share content and knowledge, often forming social relationships and publics. Just like Hinton and Hjorth, Van Dijck (2013) emphasizes the social aspect of social media and its pivotal role in facilitating social interaction and building communities.

Similarly, Boyd (2011) conceptualizes social media as "networked publics," which refers to the "social spaces that emerge when groups of people are electronically

connected and able to interact with one another." Boyd (2011) like the aforementioned scholars, underline the cultural and social implications of social media, illuminating the ways in which social norms, values, and practices are shaped through social media (Boyd, 2011).

Some scholars also joined in the social media discourse, interrogating the concept from specific lens, such as its role in social capitalism and political activism (Castells, 2015; Putnam, 2000). For instance, Putnam's (2000) work highlights the connection between people, and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from social media use. He argues that social media can enhance social capital by facilitating the formation of strong ties among family and close friends and weak ties among acquaintances and colleagues, and this can promote social cohesion, civic engagement, and collective action (Putnam, 2000). Castells (2015) echoing Putnam's perspective, describes social media as "digital communication technologies that allow individuals and groups to connect, communicate, and act collectively on the basis of shared interests, identities, and values" (p. 29). Castells' (2015) concept argues on the premise that social media evolved with an inherent potential to promote democratic participation, political mobilization, and social change, typically in the context of social movements and protests. Castells argues that, social media can offer new forms of political expression and organization, enabling marginalized groups to challenge established power structures and articulate their demands (Castells, 2015).

Based on the diversity and complexities in the operational definition of social media by scholars, Waters and Ackerman (2011) and Kietzmann et al's. (2011) composed a definition; describing it as "social media honeycomb," based on its multidimensional concept, it can therefore be argued that it is nearly impossible to assign a singular definition to social media due to the incorporation of emerging technologies, hence

ascribing a simple definition may be rendered invalid and unapplicable with time. Equally, this current study does not take any key interest in examining the discrete definitions and classifications of social media platforms or its correlated services. For the purposes of this study, the researcher primarily adopted social media due to its integral ability to provide an avenue for people to principally communicate, generate and post their own content, share their contents with others, to primarily address social, economic, political or environmental concerns (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Hinton & Hjorth, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.1.1 Social Media ‘Most Popular’: Facebook

Facebook is the most popular networking website that allows users to create their own profiles; gives them an opportunity to upload and share pictures and videos; post and comment; play games; chat and stream live videos etc (Odunfa, 2023; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2022; Tazeen & Mullick, 2023). Facebook is created with several features for its operation such as chatting, groups, private messaging, and wall posts, among others to keep in touch with family, friends, and world happenings via laptops, handsets (mobile phones) and desktop computers as far as they have access to the internet (Apuke, 2016; Shiau et al., 2018). A good number of social media scholars have ranked and described Facebook as the “most popular” social networking website worldwide (Chen, 2021; Garcia, 2021; Johnson, 2019; Lee, 2023; Salloum et al., 2017; Smith, 2020; Thompson, 2020) with Taylor (2016) arguing that if Facebook were a country, it would have significantly been larger than China and India. According to Kim and Yang (2017) Facebook has become a worldwide phenomenon and it has widely been accepted by people globally; adopted for myriad of purposes and reasons including social and business reasons (Alamu, 2021). According to Salloum et al. (2017) among the vast variety of social media networking

sites that are available for communication and interaction, Facebook was one of the most modern and attractive tools for connecting people around the world; and thus, most popular and preferred tool for keeping in touch among students (Pegoraro et al., 2017).

As at 2022, Facebook boasted an impressive user base, with a staggering 2.93 billion monthly active users and a remarkable 1.96 billion daily users (Facebook, 2022). Facebook has global youthful age demographic, evident from a recent study that shows that 25.3 percent users fall within the age range of 18–24; 24.8 percent within 24–35 age group, 13–17 taking 9.8 percent; 35–44 with 17.2 percent; 44–55 accounts for 12.1 percent; 55–64 garnered 6.3 percent while those aged 65 and above constitute 4.5 percent portion of the platform's user community (Statista, 2022). Facebook's geographic demography has majority of its users from Asia-Pacific, with of 47.1 percent subscribership globally; Europe has the second-largest share with 22.7 percent, followed by North America with 9.4% percent, Latin America 10.9 percent and the Middle East & Africa garnering the lowest share of 9.9 percent (Statista, 2022).

In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, and Eduardo Saverin started Facebook, which first targeted Harvard University students before extending to other campuses (Harvard Gazette, 2019). The platform's early success can be ascribed to its simplicity and ability to connect people with others who share like interests (Facebook, 2014). Facebook became a publicly traded corporation in 2012, with a user base of over 1 billion (Facebook, 2014). In August of 2005, the web address www.Facebook.com was obtained by Zuckerberg. Later, in September of 2006, Facebook's availability was expanded from only educational institutions to anyone holding a registered email address (Lee, 2021). Recognizable by its blue aesthetic and distinct white "F" logo,

Facebook had unveiled their photo upload and photo tagging features in 2005, which were also included on its mobile app in April of 2006. The platform's "tabs" and Facebook wall features were introduced in July 2008 for better content organization purposes. The "like" feature was then added in February of 2009, allowing users to interact with each other's posts on the platform (Kassler, 2021; Lee, 2021).

Scholars have interrogated diverse reasons that make Facebook a more suitable social media platform for online activism (Bakshy et al., 2015; Earl & Kimport, 2011; González-Bailón et al., 2017; Perrin, 2016; Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010; Westerman et al., 2012). Facebook's success as a platform for online activism can be attributed to its popularity. With over 2.85 billion monthly active users (MAUs) worldwide, Facebook represents a huge audience that can be reached by activists seeking to promote their causes (Facebook, 2021; Perrin, 2016).

Additionally, Facebook's user base is diverse, contingent on dissimilar ages, gender, and geographical locations, which provides activists with the opportunity to target specific demographics and connect with a broad range of people (González-Bailón et al., 2017). To buttress the above propositions, a study by the PewResearchCenter (2018), shows 69 percent of US adults use Facebook; of the 69 percent, 74 percent visit the site daily, while 51 percent visit the site several times a day. This high level of usage and accessibility translates to a large audience for activism efforts, allowing activists to reach millions of people with their messages (Perrin, 2016). Furthermore, Facebook's design and features make it an ideal platform for mobilizing individuals and organizing movements. For example, Facebook groups provide a way for like-minded individuals to come together around a shared cause and discuss strategies for change (Earl & Kimport, 2011).

Also, Facebook Events allow activists to organize and publicize demonstrations or other forms of public activism, allowing them to reach a wider audience and coordinate efforts (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). Facebook's interactive features, such as likes, comments, and shares, stimulate user engagement and foster a sense of collective participation (Valenzuela et al., 2012). The platform's algorithmic system ensures that activism-related content reaches the targeted audience, amplifying its impact (Bakshy et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Facebook facilitates real-time discussions, enabling activists to engage in dialogues, address concerns, and counter misinformation (Bradshaw, 2018). The diverse setups for presenting content on Facebook, including images, videos, and live streaming, make it a powerful medium to convey the emotions, narratives, and visual elements that engage users and elicit empathy (Blendon et al., 2017; Theidon, 2018). Such multimedia content has been found to enhance the likelihood of content sharing, virality, and message adoption (Westerman et al., 2012). Facebook enables the formation and management of online communities, empowering activists to connect, collaborate, and organize collective action (Earl & Kimport, 2011). It effectively bridges geographical barriers, bringing together individuals who share common goals and values (Bakshy et al., 2015).

In addition, the integration of purposeful groups and pages dedicated to activism foster discussions, consolidate resources, and mobilize supporters (Jackson & Fougne, 2019). The platform's event creation feature further facilitates offline mobilization and coordination (Lewallen & Rutherford, 2017). Facebook's sophisticated targeting tools, such as custom audiences and lookalike audiences, facilitate precision in reaching demographics potentially more receptive to specific causes (Thorson et al., 2013). By tailoring content to specific audiences, activists can

effectively raise awareness, shift public opinion, and sustain engagement (Valenzuela et al., 2012).

In affirming the power inherent in Facebook as the popular social media platform for undertaking online activism, different scholars have conducted diverse empirical study to affirm this proposition (Becker, 2016; Eun-Young & Johnson, 2016; Herzberg, 2018; Kenneth & Sarah, 2018). For example, Becker (2016) conducted a study to examine the social and political context in which the movement emerged, particularly focusing on issues of racism and police brutality targeting black Americans. Additionally, the study analysed the unique features of social media platforms, mainly Facebook, that enabled the marginalise movement to gain traction and mobilize activists across different locations and demographics. The study found that Facebook was used for organizing protests, sharing news articles and videos, and discussing issues related to police violence against black people.

Herzberg (2018) as well conducted a study to analyse the Effectiveness of Online Activism and social media in the Syrian Refugee Crisis. The study utilized the theory of collective action to assess the effectiveness of social media, principally Facebook, as a tool for online activism in raising awareness about the refugee crisis in Syria. Through content analysis of Facebook posts, Herzberg (2018), found that Facebook presented a common space for the refugees to share their stories, connect with others, and raise awareness about their situation.

Eun-Young and Johnson (2016) equally conducted a study titled "The Power of Social Media and Activism: A Case Study of the Arab Spring." The study employed social movement theory to theorise the concept of digital activism. A mixed-method approach was used; combining content analysis and survey to analyse the role of social media, including Facebook, in the Arab Spring movements. By examining

Facebook posts, comments, and groups related to the movement, they found that social media enabled citizens to circumvent traditional media channels and the supervisory surveillance of those in authority. Also, it was found that those who took part in the protest used Facebook as primary source of communicating and soliciting for information, hence created a sense of community and solidarity (Eun- Young et al., 2016).

Again, Kenneth and Sarah (2018) conducted a study to examine the role of Facebook in the Women's March primarily to analyse issues women were confronted with. The study employed content analysis of Facebook posts and it was found that Facebook played a vital role in organizing the march and providing a platform for women to share their personal experiences and connect with others who share their values. Additionally, the study identified how Facebook helped to promote a sense of empowerment among participants in the march (Kenneth & Sarah, 2018).

The above reviewed literatures justify how social media and Facebook in particular has enhanced the communication ecosystem, providing space for citizens of the world regardless of individual ideologies to freely share their views on matters they are confronted with in their daily routines (Becker, 2016). Again, Facebook's distinct features and functionalities have positioned it as the premier platform for online activism due to its extensive reach, interactive engagement, visual content capabilities, community-building potential, targeted advocacy tools, ability to convey emotions and share narratives, virality and message adoption (Blendon et al., 2017; Smith, 2018; Theidon, 2018; Westerman et al., 2012). The current study therefore draws on evidence from the propositions above and thereof employs Facebook to examine how anti-galamsey activists utilize the platform to address the issue of Galamsey and its associated menaces in Ghana.

2.1.2 Social Media Landscape in Ghana.

The social media landscape in Ghana has evolved and witnessed tremendous growth in recent years (Addison & Balamoune-Lutz, 2018; Ackah, 2019; Perrin, 2021). With an estimated population of 30 million (GP & H C, 2021), Ghana has over the years, experience remarkable growth in internet penetration and access to technology. According to a report by the National Communication Authority (NCA), as of January 2021, the number of internet subscribers had reached almost 24 million, representing a penetration rate of 77.26%, an increase from 2.29 million subscribers representing 8.14% penetration rate in 2010 (NCA, 2021). In contrast with Ghana's population, it can be deduced that the number of individuals using social media is not favourable albeit there is an upsurge in penetration rate, juxtaposing current statistics with previous years. The rise in the number of internet subscribers has been credited to mobile technology, being the driving force of the internet boom, and this is evident in the fact that 99% of internet subscribers access the internet through mobile devices (NCA, 2021).

According to a report by Wearesocial and Hootsuite, the number of social media users in Ghana stood at 10.1 million, representing a penetration rate of 34% as of January 2021 (Wearesocial & Hootsuite, 2021). In terms of patronage and subscription, Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular platforms, followed by YouTube with significant levels of interaction among Ghanaian youth (Agyapong & Ofori-Dwumfuo 2018; Owusu et al., 2017) with Instagram and Twitter equally gaining popularity among urban Ghanaian users (Agyemang et al., 2020). In affirming the above ranking, Wearesocial and Hootsuite, a social media management platform, in an updated data, found that Facebook is on top as the most subscribed social media platform in Ghana with 6.7 million active users in Ghana, followed by WhatsApp (6.3

million), YouTube (4.9 million), Instagram and Twitter having 2.7 million and 1.4 million active users respectively (Wearesocial & Hootsuite, 2022).

In terms of penetration rate, Facebook amasses 29%, followed by WhatsApp with 24%. Twitter and Instagram join the race with penetration rates of 2% and 1%, respectively (Wearesocial & Hootsuite, 2021). In the context of average time spent on social media in Ghana, a report by Wearesocial and Hootsuite (2022) on 'digital usage trends in Ghana' found that, as of 2021, the average time spent on social media in Ghana was 3 hours and 12 minutes per day. This represents an increase from the 2 hours 22 minutes recorded in 2020 (Wearesocial & Hootsuite, 2022). Obviously, the statistics provided above are evident that internet penetration has surged propelling a boom in social media adoption and usage.

Highlighting on the factors that have influenced social media usage in Ghana, Fosu et al. (2020) espouse that advancements in technology have increased the accessibility of social media in Ghana. With the advent and influx of cheaper smartphones and better internet connectivity, more people are joining social media platforms (Fosu et al., 2020). Again, the economic environment and social media adoption are intertwined in Ghana. Aboagye and Eshun (2018) found that Ghana's middle-class population drives social media usage as they have more disposable income, access to technology, and are more likely to be literate.

Despite the surge in social media usage, various factors hinder the social media landscape in Ghana. The issue of internet connectivity and electricity fluctuations remain a hindrance in some areas, resulting in limited social media usage (Oyibo et al., 2021). In a study to investigate social media adoption in Ghana, Akoto et al. (2016) established that the younger demographic, particularly university students, were the primary users. They found a lack of dependable internet connectivity as a

barrier to social media adoption among specific demographics (Akoto et al., 2016). Political interference and the government's attempts to regulate social media have also been identified as factors hindering the growth of social media in Ghana (Cudjoe, 2018; Owusu-Ansah & Agyemang, 2020). In 2018, the government of Ghana proposed a bill to regulate social media usage and criminalize certain behaviours, such as the spread of fake news, hate speech, and defamation (Cudjoe, 2018). Although the bill was not passed, it raised concerns amongst citizens and human rights activists, highlighting the need for transparency and accountability in governance (Cudjoe, 2018).

Nonetheless, considering the notion of Ghana having a relatively liberal regulatory regime for social media use, the introduction of the Cybersecurity Act 2020 and other laws has raised concerns around online privacy, surveillance, and censorship (Djan, 2020). According to Djan (2020) the introduction of these laws has created an environment of uncertainty for social media users, which could lead to self-censorship, limit freedom of expression, and ultimately dampen online engagement. The unclear regulatory environment also places significant pressure on social media platforms, forcing them to comply with multiple regulations and potentially limiting their investment in the country (Djan, 2020).

Indubitably, social media has become an integral part of people's daily routines globally and Ghana is no exception. In recent years, the popularity of social media in Ghana has increased, and as a result, has attracted the attention of scholars who have interrogated its impact on societies from differing standpoints (Agbozo & Spassov, 2019; Dekalu, 2018; Serpell, 2017). For instance, Dekalu (2018) conducted a study to examine the role social media plays in terms of mobilizing and organizing people for demonstrations which has become key component of civic activism in Ghana. The

study was situated in the context of the roles social media played in major activities such as #DumsorMustStop vigil and #OccupyFlagstaff demonstration. The study was underpinned by the social network analysis and technological determinism theories, while some related literatures were reviewed to identify how the study relates to the previous existing scholarly materials on the subject. Through a survey of 100 respondents sampled from Madina, the study found that social media tools are key components of recent civic activism actions. One key finding was that, social media platforms are used by sections of the citizens to post their sentiments and identify themselves with the sentiments of the demonstrators. This means that through social media, even people who are unable to be physically on the demonstration grounds are able to express their positions on the cause of the demonstrations (Dekalu, 2018). The results revealed that social media appear to be a faster, cheaper, convenient and efficient way of mobilizing people for civic activism. The authors advised that social media as new media channels have come to stay, hence it behoves on organizers of protests via social media to sensitize their members to avoid using abusive language and insults on their social media during civic activism discourse (Dekalu, 2018).

Bruce et al. (2022) investigated the impact of social media usage on the long-term sustainability of SMEs, specifically in Ghana. Using empirical data from 424 respondents who are representatives of manufacturing SMEs in Ghana and SmartPLS techniques, the study confirmed that in a broader spectrum, social media usage does not only have a positive impact on SMEs but considerably drives their motivations towards resilience and sustainability. The results further revealed a positive and significant effect of social media usage value creation, business connections and opportunities on SMEs' sustainability. The study drew on its finding to draw

conclusion that social media is gradually transforming diverse business ecosystems due to the limitless capabilities they offer (Bruce et al., 2022).

Agbozo and Spassov (2019) also conducted a study to examine how social media instigated a general uprising on how illegal mining plagued Ghana's natural resources and health of residents. The study analysed approximately 11,000 tweets made between 1st March 2017 and 1st March 2018 on Twitter with the hashtag – #StopGalamseyNow. The study found that it was as a result of reactions of Ghanaians and the level of outrage expressed which led to the raising of awareness by the media, and government acting swiftly to curb the menace. In the authors view, Ghana's action is a testament to the fact that social media is a potent agent in political action (keeping government on its toes) in order to bring about national growth and establishing the true meaning of democratic governance (Agbozo & Spassov, 2019). The authors recommend that social media can be used as vehicle for positive activism in bringing socioeconomic development coupled with the traditional media in amplifying the cries of citizens (Agbozo & Spassov, 2019).

The above literature reviews examined the prevalence of social media usage in Ghana, specifically referencing the NCA and Wearesocial & Hootsuite findings. These reports reveal approximately 10 million individuals are actively using social media within an averagely youthful demographic, who spends an average of 3 hours and 12 minutes each day on these platforms. Anderson and Barthel (2018) found that social media activism is largely undertaken and influenced by those within the age range of 18 to 29 (37%) compared to those within 30 to 49 (30%), 50 to 64 (22%) and 65 and older (11%). Therefore, these literature reviews validate the need for the current study to investigate social media activism within Ghana's youthful social media landscape with focus on citizen-led anti galamsey activism. Also, undertaking

this research adds to the existing body of knowledge on this topic while also creating a premise for future studies within the same context.

2.2 Sentiment and Sentiment Analysis on Social Media

Some scholars have suggested sentiment is not a universal or natural feeling, but a social construct that is shaped by culture, history, and power relations (Ahmed 2014; Grossberg, 2010; Zhang et al., 2019). Zhang et al (2019) in particular assert that sentiments must not be limited to just subjective feelings, but also from the broader spectrum of cognitive appraisals of the target object. To them, sentiment arises from the interaction of affective and cognitive processes, where individuals evaluate an object or situation based on their personal beliefs, experiences and expectations which then elicit certain emotional responses (Argamon et al., 2011; Grossberg, 2010; Zhang et al., 2019;). For example, through the illustration of love, it is evident that sentiment produces automatic physical reactions such as heightened heart rate and rushes of adrenaline when we are in the presence of someone, we find appealing (Smith, 2019, Stets, 2019). Again, it can be conveyed through nonverbal communication such as prolonged gaze and smiling towards them (Smith, 2019; Stets, 2019). Smith (2019) avers that emotions are triggered as a result of mixture of physiological sensations, actions, and cultural connotations that are acquired through long-standing social connections. It is socially constructed by practice, habit, and interaction, usually within a particular social and cultural context (Lunt, 2020).

Thoits is one of the earliest scholars to have simultaneously labelled the basic elements of sentiment through his definition of 'emotion'. Thoits' (1990), as cited in Stets (2019), posits that sentiment has four interconnected components: (1) situational cues, (2) physiological changes, (3) expressive gestures, and (4) an emotion label that names the specific configuration of components. Barrett (2017) contends emotions are

not hard-wired in the brain as pre-existing categories, but instead are constructed by the brain based on the context and meaning of our experiences. Premised on Barrett argument, Thoits (1990) as cited in Stets (2019) reveals that children learn the connection between these components by repeatedly being exposed to emotion labels from others when particular configurations of the components emerge in their own experiences. This implies that emotions are not just internal states, but they are also shaped by social and cultural factors and the interactions between individuals and their environment (Barrett, 2017). By implication, Barrett (2017) posits that individual's cultural context and orientation influence the emotions and gestures tags they apply to an experience. For instance, fear is physiologically associated with greater decreases in blood pressure and blood flow to the extremities (Levenson, 2001), and generally get activated when there is an interpretation of potential harm in one's environment (Ekman & Friesen, 2003).

While both Gordon (2010) and Thoits (1990) as cited in Stets (2019) agree on the biological and cognitive aspects of experiences, they also recognize the social domains: the interpretation(s) made in the situation, the expressions and gestures, and the vocabulary/labels that are all learned through socialization. Other terms associated with emotions have also been interrogated; among the most general is the term 'affect', which is "any evaluative (positive or negative) orientation toward an object" (Smith-Lovin, 2015, p. 18). Some scholars equally argue that the affective domain of sentiment can be positive, negative, or neutral depending on the individual's evaluation of the target (Argamon et al., 2011; Grossberg, 2010; Zhang et al., 2019). This highlights the cognitive aspect of emotions and sentiments. Moods are "affective states without an object or without a specific object" (Smith-Lovin, 2015, p. 19). 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, p. 19). However, for the purposes of this current study, I will use these terms interchangeably since ultimately, they capture the socialized feeling of people (Ahmed 2014; Grossberg, 2010; Stets, 2019; Smith-Lovin, 2015).

Social media has become a critical platform for human interaction and communication (Gao, et al., 2019; Hampton, 2019) with a great number of users using them not just to meet new people and share their lives but also to express their opinions and sentiments related to various phenomena and organizations through comments and posts (Agüero-Torales et al., 2019). Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter offer users the space to share and express their emotions and feelings through text, emojis, and other types of multimedia (Chen, Li, & Zhou, 2019). Sentiment analysis is therefore employed to understand users' emotions and attitudes towards a particular topic on social media (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014; Wang et al., 2018) by analysing their comments and posts to gauge positive or negative emotions (Bollen et al., 2011; Pak & Paroubek, 2010). Some recent studies have gone further by categorizing emotions into more specific patterns, such as joy, anger, and sadness (Akdag Salah et al., 2018; Mohammadian et al., 2019). Thus, Sentiment analysis is used to interpret emotions in unstructured texts as positive, negative, or neutral, and even calculate how strong or weak the emotions are (Cui et al., 2023). Interestingly, despite the physical distance between social media users, they are still able to engage in conversations and discussions on various topics (Papacharissi, 2010). However, Bargh and McKenna (2004) suggest that in analysing people's sentiment, there are complexities in trying to wholly appreciate user behaviours as well as their state of minds through texts. Also, Thelwall et al. (2012) noted that sentiment analysis

algorithms cannot capture the complexity of sarcasm, nuanced expressions, and cultural differences in language. Therefore, by wholly analysing users' sentiment, it can help us better understand the affective domain of human communication and provide insights into how people feel and think about particular topics or issues (Ellis & Kelly, 2018). In order to capture these emotional complexities, various methods for sentiment analysis either manually, semi-automatically, or fully automatically are conducted (Choudhary & Gupta, 2020). Manual methods involve human annotation of the text to identify the sentiment expressed in it; Semi-automatic methods utilize machine learning techniques to classify text into positive, negative, or neutral sentiment categories while fully automatic methods utilize Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques to extract sentiment from text (Saleiro & Lopes, 2019; Choudhary & Gupta, 2020). According to Choudhary and Gupta (2020), manual approaches such as surveys have limitations in providing detailed insights due to limited questions and responses from participants, as well as being time-consuming and costly. In contrast, automated systems offer more flexibility in collecting and analysing data. They allow for the analysis of large amounts of data in a shorter time frame without the limitations of manual data collection approaches (Choudhary & Gupta, 2020). For instance, a study by Smith and Lee (2018) utilized an automated technique called the Text Analytics tool to extract and filter relevant content. According to the authors, the tool eliminates manual filtering, making data analysis much easier. The tool applied various filters such as emoticon replacement, capitalization correction, stop word removal, and punctuation removal (Smith & Lee, 2018).

Ceron et al. (2013) undertook a study on citizens' sentiments in Italy and France, with a focus on how social media can enhance knowledge of political preferences. Ceron et

al., (2013) utilising quantitative research approach; extracted and filtered data via a fully automated system of analysis to investigate the popularity of Italian political leaders in 2011 and the voting intention of French Internet users during the 2012 presidential election using Twitter as the preferred social media network. By using the Sentiment Identification Algorithm (SIA) tool, the authors were able to predict a victory for Hollande with 54.9% of votes (Ceron et al., 2013). While the study did not extensively demonstrate how opinions shared online led to Hollande's victory, it created an understanding of the method and technique involved in carrying out sentiments analysis on social media.

López-Chau et al. (2020) analyse data sets generated by trending topics on Twitter that emerged from Mexican citizens that interacted during the earthquake of September 19, 2017, using sentiment analysis, and supervised learning, based on the Ekman's six emotional model. López -Chau et al. (2020) built three classifiers to determine the emotions of tweets that belong to the same topic. According to the study, the classifiers with the best accuracy for predicting emotions were Naive Bayes and Support Vector Machine. The study found that the most frequent predicted emotions were happiness, anger, and sadness; 6.5% of predicted tweets were irrelevant.

Martin-Domingoa et al. (2019) also conducted a quantitative analysis of Twitter data, using Airport Service Quality framework to assess the sentiment of passengers' comments about airport services. The study used a total of 34,528 Tweets from London Heathrow Airport using the official Twitter account @HeathrowAirport during a period of 55 days. They then preprocessed the tweets by removing stop words, hashtags, and mentions. Sentiment analysis tool was then used to categorize each tweet as being positive, negative, or neutral. To validate the results, the authors

compared the findings with actual ASQ scores for the airports (Martin-Domingoa et al., 2019). A coding manual was used to categorize the tweets into various ASQ dimensions, such as service reliability and efficiency, staff friendliness, and terminal facilities. It was found that social media could be a suitable resource for sentiment analysis of ASQ. The results indicated a strong positive correlation between the sentiment scores obtained from Twitter data and the actual ASQ scores of the airport. The study also found that service reliability and efficiency, staff friendliness, and terminal facilities were the ASQ dimensions that were most frequently mentioned on social media. Martin-Domingoa et al. (2019) suggest social media can provide insight into passengers' feelings and expectations concerning airport services and such information can help airports to improve their service quality by addressing the concerns and needs of their passengers.

Agangiba and Blessed (2019) equally applied the concept of sentiment analysis for the determination of polarities (positivity, neutrality or negativity) of sentiments extracted from views expressed by Ghanaians regarding the introduction of the double track system in Second Cycle Schools in Ghana. These views are sourced from tweets (twitter posts). The authors argue that accurate analysis of sentiments largely rely on the context of word usage. Thus, most sentiment analysis approaches ignore context when predicting sentiments; thereby leading to loss of context. Agangiba and Blessed (2019) therefore, 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 analysis of sentiment is done (Agangiba & Blessed, 2019). An overall model accuracy of 76% was achieved using this technique which outdoes similar works such as Garg's (2016) work with an accuracy of 72%.

Botchway et al. (2020) conducted a study using sentiment analysis to draw conclusions from a sub-Saharan African bank's tweets. The authors argued that social media websites provide a significant source of data for mining interesting expressions on various subjects (Botchway et al., 2020). Such expressions on social media empower firms and individuals to discover varied interpretations regarding the opinions expressed by customers subsequently triggering financial institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa to invest in technology to remain competitive in today's business environment (Botchway et al., 2020). According to the authors, Twitter has been integrated into the marketing communication tools of banks to improve the flow of information (Botchway et al., 2020). The study utilized four sentiment lexicons to perform a sentiment analysis on a large dataset of Ecobank Group tweets and found that the Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner (VADER) performed the best based on accuracy and computational efficiency. A word cloud was generated to visually examine the terms in the positive and negative sentiment categories based on VADER. The authors' approach demonstrates the need for firms to focus on customer engagement through social media channels to enhance customer experience and build loyalty and trust. The study suggests that competitive advantage has shifted from purely competing over price and product to the interplay of consumer sentiments via social media channels. The study contributes to the broadening of the scope of online banking.

Appiahene et al. (2022) conducted a study on sentiment analysis to identify perspective of citizen on the government of Ghana proposed electronic levy on mobile money transactions. These views are sourced from tweets (twitter posts). In order to ensure non-bias examination, Appiahene et al. (2022) performed full data analysis on the data to further expound the reasons associated with the discontent among people

in the country. The data analysis was conducted in five phases, with phase five recording the highest number of data, thus, 18,423 data with 24.43%, 59.29%, and 16.28% positive, neutral and negative respectively. Phase one recorded the least amount of data with 8.93%, 89.29%, 1.78% positive, neutral and negative respectively in a total of 1,400 data. In the full data analysis on 38,771 tweets, 25.50%, 59.02%, and 15.48% were positive, neutral, and negative respectively. In summary, their work showed high level of polarity with most Ghanaians going neutral (uncertain) about their stance on the proposed electronic level on mobile transactions.

The studies reviewed above demonstrate that the feelings and thinking of people are influenced and constructed in a social setting (Stets, 2019; Zhang et al., 2019) and since social media has become a critical platform for human interaction and communication (Hampton, 2019), it allows users to share and express their emotions and feelings through text, emojis, and other types of multimedia (Chen, Li, & Zhou, 2019). These studies therefore provide insight into how various scholars have interrogated the subject of sentiment analysis using one social media platform or the other. The studies inform this current study also on the practicality and the various methods in 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 Citizen-led Activism on Social Media

Citizen-led Activism refers to social and political actions initiated and driven by individuals or group of people who are not affiliated to governmental or political party (Jensen & Hall 2011). This individual come together to address specific issues, advocates for change, and create awareness about their cause (Jensen & Hall 2011). The roots of social media activism have been traced back to the early 2000s with the

rise of platforms such as Myspace, Friendster, and Facebook but gained momentum with the widespread adoption of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube (Shirky, 2011). The Arab Spring; a sequence of uprisings and protests across the Middle East and North Africa in 2010-2012, marks a major turning point in recognizing the power of social media in mobilizing activists and spreading information rapidly (Shirky, 2011). With its growing universality, social media have played a critical role in aiding the diffusion of information and organizational activity within social movements, as well as in championing a social cause through activism (Malik 2022; Murthy, 2018). With the initial intent of serving as a platform for connecting with others through the sharing of photos, videos, and texts, et cetera, Sharma (2017) asserts that this seemingly insignificant means of keeping in touch with friends, sharing photos and jokes has evolved into a force for societal change that shines light on previously unknown subjects, deepening conversations, and empowering citizens of the world to unite and effect change in myriad of ways. According to Bekafie and McBribe (2013), these activists and organizations adopt various tactics including: hashtags, viral campaigns, online petitions, and live streaming, to engage with audiences and create impact. Social media activism enables faster information dissemination, global reach, and real-time interaction with supporters and adversaries (Bekafie & McBribe, 2013).

Since its coinage, the concept of ‘social media activism’ has been associated with and subjected to multiple classifications by different scholars. For example, *Digital Activism and Cyberactivism* propounded by Bennett and Segerberg (2012) employs and make use of digital technologies, including social media platforms, for organizing and promoting activism. *Clicktivism and Slacktivism* was coined by Vromen et al. (2015) and the terms are used to describe forms of online activism that require

minimal effort from participants, such as signing online petitions or sharing posts without engaging in more substantial actions. *Hashtag Activism* by Sen and Kucuktunc (2017) employs specific hashtags to get an information go viral, drawing attention to particular issues and facilitating discussions. *Networked Activism* facilitates the creation and maintenance of activist networks, which often transcend geographical boundaries (Juris & Pleyers, 2018). *Visual Activism* category explores the use of visual elements, such as images, memes, and infographics, in social media activism. Visual content is often more shareable and emotionally impactful, contributing to the dissemination of activist messages (Agnes & Alaimo, 2018).

McCaughey and Ayers (2003) posit that there are three kinds of Internet [social media] activism: (1) awareness/advocacy; (2) organization/mobilization; and (3) action/reaction. The action/reaction phase involves *hacktivism* in which activists may take a trending hashtag or participate in online disobedience in favour of a cause (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). When relevant information about a subject can be accessed, awareness is developed, whereas advocacy occurs when actions for the movement are put into action or carried out (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). According to McCaughey and Ayers (2003), organizing and mobilizing groups in online communities is easier because people may have already enrolled to receive material as part of the awareness phase. Activism has continued to evolve since the emergence of social media, and today, social media is a strategic means for activism where Like-minded people in the social media communication environment can easily come together and facilitate collective action to change society or social problems (Chon & Park, 2020).

Some scholars have explored the fundamental assumptions underlying [citizen-led] social media activism and examined the scholarly perspectives on its effectiveness,

limitations, and impact on contemporary social movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Bruns et al. 2012; Castells 2007,2012,2015; Gerbaudo, 2012; González-Bailón et al., 2019; Jenkins, 2006; Watts & Dodds, 2007).

A key assumption of social media activism is that, online platforms facilitate interconnectedness and enable individuals to form global networks (Castells 2007, 2012, 2015; Bennett & Segerberg 2012; González-Bailón, 2018). Castells (2007) introduced the concept of the *networked public sphere*, emphasizing the transformative role of digital communication technologies in reshaping public discourse and fostering democratic participation (Castells 2007). The assumption expands on the idea that social media platforms create spaces where individuals can engage in open dialogue, share information, and collectively address social issues, thereby enhancing the democratic process (Castells, 2007). Castells advances his study and argues that social media has the ability to create *networked social movements*, where activists from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations can collaborate effortlessly (Castells, 2012). This interconnectedness is believed to enhance the scope and reach of activism, amplifying its impact on social and political issues (Castells, 2012). Castells takes his discussion on ‘interconnectedness’ some steps higher again and contends that the concept of *network society*, where social movements form around shared interests and values are enabled by digital communication technologies and he posits that social media platforms facilitate connections between individuals, creating virtual communities that span geographical boundaries (Castells, 2012). In affirmation, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) aver that social media facilitates networked forms of protest, allowing for the rapid spread of information and the mobilization of like-minded individuals, transcending geographical boundaries. In the era of digitalism, people have become more abreast

with the use of digital tools for varied purposes. They referred to set of people as ‘digital natives’, who are more likely to embrace activism through social media due to their familiarity with digital tools and social networking (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Contemporary social media activism operates on the supposition that, the democratization of information empowers individuals and communities (Gerbaudo, 2012; Jenkins, 2006; Tufekci, 2017). Tufekci (2017) in particular argue that social media activism rests on the supposition that these platforms enable the democratization of information, allowing marginalized voices and underrepresented groups to have a greater say in public discourse. According to Tufekci (2017) and Gerbaudo (2012) social media's low entry barriers and ease of use enable activists to disseminate information and opinions, challenging dominant narratives controlled by mainstream media. Tufekci (2017) further discusses that away from the supervisory and surveillance by those in authority, social media provides a level playing field for activists to reach broad audiences and mobilize supporters. While governments try to control, censor and monitor the conventional media especially in a bid to prevent citizens from contesting its decision, Jenkins (2006) also stresses that, participatory culture is facilitated by social media, allowing activists to create, share, and consume information independent of traditional media gatekeepers. In addition, decentralization of information is crucial in social media activism, as it affords activists the leverage to challenge dominant narratives and fostering diverse perspectives on social issues (Castells, 2015; Jenkins, 2006).

Scholars like Watts and Dodds (2007), Bruns et al. (2012) and Nobles and colleagues, (2020) have espoused social media activism can be very contagious since information can spread rapidly and virally. This assumption draws on the theory of "networked diffusion" propounded by Watts and Dodds (2007), which states that information

dissemination on social networks follows a contagion-like pattern and activists leverage this feature to create content that is compelling and shareable, with the potential to reach a broad audience quickly. Bruns et al., (2012) contend that the emergence of social media has enabled marginalized groups and individuals to amplify their voices to reach a broader audience. Their assumption is grounded in the idea that social media platforms empower underrepresented communities to share their stories and mobilize support for their causes; thus, challenging traditional power structures (Bruns et al., 2012). In subjecting this assumption to practical terms, Nobles and colleagues (2020) conducted a study on the Black Lives Matter movement using a qualitative research method. They employed the Critical Race Theory as the theoretical framework to analyse the experiences and perspectives of Black Lives Matter activists to study the ongoing social and political movements surrounding racial justice and policing in the United States. The study conducted a systematic review of 40 empirical studies on the Black Lives Matter movement and its effects on social change and so doing explored how social media was utilized to challenge dominant narratives, galvanize support, and mobilize protests against racial injustice. The findings indicate the role of hashtags, such as #BlackLivesMatter, facilitated a wider mileage conversation, generating collective action around racial equality. Consequently, the movement success increased awareness of systemic racism and police brutality against Black people. According to them, the movement also led to changes in policy and increased support for police reform (Nobles & colleagues, 2020).

Some scholars unequivocally argue that social media activism is most effective when combined with offline actions and sustained grassroots organizing (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2014; González-Bailón et al., 2019; Van Laer &

colleagues, 2018). In other terms, they are complementary and bridges the gap between offline and online activism. As a result, scholars like Bennett and Segerberg (2012) introduced the concept of *connective action*, suggesting that social media can facilitate collective action by enabling loosely organized networks to mobilize around common causes. The engagement and activism generated on social media are seen as a precursor to real-world involvement, such as protests, petitions, or community initiatives. Therefore, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) propose that to harness the full impact of social media activism, its true potential is often realized when it catalyses offline actions. By implication, the authors seem to suggest that the combination of digital and on-the-ground activism must consciously correlate to bring about greater mobilization and sustained movements. In testing the assertion above, González-Bailón, et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the impact of social media on political protests. The study examined the impact of social media on political protests against corruption, inequality, and political corruption in three countries; namely: Spain (2011), Brazil (2013) and Mexico (2014). The study employed social movement theory with focus on "connective action" to describe how social media p igital trace data and survey, data was gathered from participants in protests from the three countries; the study analysed Twitter data using network analysis to examine the relationship between online mobilization and offline participation through logistic regression models. The study found that social media played a significant role in mobilizing individuals to participate in political protests through connective action, facilitated by social media (González-Bailón et al., 2019). Again, they found that social media had a positive impact on political participation, as individuals who participated in online mobilization were more likely to also participate in offline protests (González-Bailón et al., 2019). In avowal to the study above, Gerbaudo (2014) and Van Laer and colleagues (2018) posit that a pivotal role of networked

movements is that they leverage on social media platforms as tools for coordination, resource mobilization, and building resilient communities. Gerbaudo (2014) in particular stresses that social media use must be understood from the perspective that it complements the existing forms of face-to-face gatherings (rather than substituting for them), but also as a medium for the creation of new forms of proximity and face-to-face interaction.

This literature review above informs the current study by establishing the role social media plays in facilitating online activism, with focus on its multifaceted nature; to facilitate interconnectedness, democratization of information, virality and ability to sustain grassroots organization (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Bruns et al. 2012; Castells, 2015; Gerbaudo, 2012; Jenkins 2006; Watts & Dodds, 2007). The advent of social media activism has revolutionized the landscape of contemporary social movements by providing individuals and marginalised group with powerful tools for advocacy and mobilisation (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). Just like any other social movements, citizen-led anti-galamsey activism adopt and leverage on social media to convey their sentiments on galamsey related issues they are afflicted with through their Facebook posts.

Social media has become an integral platform for activism, enabling individuals and groups to advocate for social and political change on a global scale. Some social scholars have emphasized the importance and criticality of the kind of post adopted by social media activists in dissemination of ideas, mobilization of communities, and fostering social change (Gillespie, 2018; Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Papacharissi, 2015). For instance, Papacharissi, (2015) argues that in the realm of social media activism, the content, style, and strategy of social media posts can greatly impact the effectiveness in spreading ideas, building communities, and promoting social change.

In the context of the present study, different scholars have propounded different types of posts that are used by activists on social media to trigger maximum impact on social, political and environmental reformation.

Young (2021) for instance interrogated how photographic and visual representations and social media shape the outcomes of collective action by disgruntled citizens. The study was conducted within the context of socio-environmental movement case in Cambodia. The author argues that the ubiquity of visual devices and digital access to visual social media facilitates underprivileged citizens in grassroots movements to aesthetically exert influence on their targets in order to leverage their demands effectively (Young, 2021). According to Young (2021), beyond considering images as messengers and mediatisation, the power of visual images inspires and provokes action: participation in the protest, and re-production and recirculation of the images on social media. The power of visual images, produced by ordinary citizens, is the performative force that brings about change in the era of social media (Young, 2021). The study concluded that while photography and visual social media have flooded our communication channels and become embodied in our daily activities, people who can afford the medium of photography, use this channel to articulate and represent their grievances (Young, 2021). The finding of this study is in line with Lee et al. (2018) who equally assert that, posts presented in visual format has larger reach since they have the tendency to attract and engage users.

Alternatively, Yu (2021) explored how Chinese consumers adopt short videos and short video-based social media platforms (short-video-based [SVB] platforms) to safeguard their rights and interests. Through review of related literature on SVB platforms and media practices and interviewing 56 interviewees in four groups that are involved in the consumer video activism process, the study uncovered the working

mechanism behind this consumer video activism strategy. According to the study, by uploading short video evidence to SVB platforms, Chinese consumers brought increased attention, including that of the media and government departments to bear on their experiences and demands (Yu, 2021). Thus, with the aid of media coverage and government intervention, businesses are forced to admit their faults and compensate consumers accordingly (Yu, 2021).

Gkikas et al. (2022) examined whether text characteristics in branded Facebook image posts associate with consumer engagement and brand awareness. The study examined text characteristics like i) readability indices, ii) text length, and iii) number of hashtags. A dataset of 135 image posts with description texts was exported from a Fashion retail Facebook business page providing post-performance metrics in terms of engagement (expressed in likes) and awareness (expressed in reaches and impressions). Positive associations were indicated between all performance metrics and the text's length, as well as the number hashtags. The readability index of Gunning Fog revealed strong associations with both engagement and awareness, while the Flesch Kincaid reading ease index was associated only with awareness metrics of reaches and impressions (Gkikas et al., 2022). Overall, they noticed that the posts' text which is easy to read, long (more than 31 words, or more than 321 characters), and contains many hashtags tends to achieve higher performance of engagement and awareness. (Gkikas et al., 2022). The research contributes literature by shedding light on the role of text characteristics of branded messaging in social media and offering insights for brand communication and social media message strategies.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Social Movement Theory

The social movement theory emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war movement in the United States (Della Porta, 2018). The theory was propounded to explicate ‘why’ and ‘how’ grassroots movements emerged, organized, and mobilized to challenge and transform social, economic, and political structures and attitudes (Della Porta, 2018). It emphasizes process through which collective actors articulate their interests, voice grievances and critiques, and proposed solutions to identified problems by engaging in a variety of collective actions (Della Porta, 2018). The theory is built on some key ideas such as resource mobilization, collective identity, political opportunity structures, and framing as critical elements in shaping the goals, strategies, and outcomes of social movements (Della Porta, 2018; McAdam et al., 2001). These movements are characterised by three core components: first, they are conflictual and have clearly recognized ideological opponents; secondly, they are structured through extensive informal networks; and lastly, they are aimed at developing, sustaining, and sharing collective identities (Della Porta & Diani, 2006).

According to Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, social movements are primarily triggered by grievances, which typically spring from a perceived injustices or concerns among a group of people that motivate them to take collective action (Tarrow, 2014; Tilly, 2004). In Tilly’s view, social movements arises when individuals or groups experience relative deprivation, which occurs when they perceive themselves to be worse off or disadvantaged compared to others in society (Tilly, 2004). In literal terms, his concept of ‘relative deprivation’ suggests that social movements may arise in response to changing social and economic conditions, such

as economic inequality, cultural or social discrimination and political oppression (Tilly, 2004). In an attempt to challenge the status-quo, these aggrieved individuals or groups organize themselves based on their shared conditions and solicit collective power to advocate for policy changes, challenge existing power structures, and work towards a more just and equitable society (Tilly, 2004). Not far from Tilly's assertion, Tarrow espouses on what he calls "contentious politics," which refers to political behaviour that occurs outside of institutional channels which is motivated by grievances (Tarrow, 2014). Tarrow argues that in situation where people feel that their rights, interests, or needs are not being properly addressed by established channels of power; such cases drive people to come together to form collective action groups that engage in various types of contentious politics, such as protests, demonstrations, civil disobedience, strikes, or other forms of direct action (Tarrow, 2014).

Some scholars have emphasised organizational structures and networks as vital module for social movements to coordinate operations, communicate information, and attract people (Diani & McAdam, 2003; Hannigan, 2014; McAdam et al., 2001). These structures can range from formal organizations to loosely connected networks, and their success has an immense impact on the movement's ability to take collective action (McAdam et al., 2001). According to McAdam et al. (2001) mobilization and network structures are prerequisite for facilitating communication and organize resources for the movement, while networks provide support and solidarity among movement participants (McAdam et al., 2001). The movements adopt mobilization strategies like rallies, protests, demonstrations, education campaigns, and online outreach; with all these actions geared towards building momentum and creating a critical mass that can sustain the movement over time (Diani & McAdam, 2003; Hannigan, 2014). In establishing the core essence for the adoption of these network

and mobilization structures, Klandermans (2004) postulates that people are more likely to participate in social movements if they have close relationships with others who are involved in the movement, which creates a sense of social support and reduces the perceived costs of participation. However, Diani and McAdam (2003) argue that while networks that are decentralized and diverse may be more adaptable and resilient, adversely, they may struggle to coordinate activities and maintain a sense of collective identity.

Snow and Benford (2000) join the social movement discourse but through the lens of 'framing'. According to them, "framing plays a crucial role in the negotiation of meaning by social actors, whose interpretive struggles shape the collective identities, claims, and frames that emerge in contentious political processes" (p. 2). The framing process involves both cognitive and emotional factors, and can be influenced by the power dynamics among different actors and institutions (Snow & Benford, 2000). Snow et al., (2001) take the conversation further and argue that social movement embracing collective identity serves to shape group boundaries, develop solidarity, and establish a sense of community among movement members. Similarly, some scholars argue that social movements rely on framing processes to build and transmit collective identities, narratives, and frames that shape public opinion and mobilize support (Benford & Snow, 2002; Chong & Druckman, 2007; McLeod & Downton, 2017). Through the framing process, social movements construct their own version of reality and mobilize others to embrace their views (Benford & Snow, 2002). According to McLeod and Downton (2017) frames are established through the selection and highlighting of certain aspects of reality, thereby making them more salient than others.

Not far from the aforementioned assumptions, some scholars contend that the nature of the political, social, economic, and cultural environments shapes the success or failure of social movements (McAdam et al., 2001; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). While there is no single definition of political opportunity structures, scholars generally consider the broader institutional and political contexts in which social movements operate, including factors such as the level of repression, access to media, and opportunities for alliances with other organizations (Della Porta & Diani, 2020, 2015; McAdam et al., 2001; Poole, 2017). McAdam et al. (2001) for instance contend that political opportunity structures influence the emergence, tactics, and outcomes of social movements. They posit that political opportunities arise when there is an opening in the institutional context that allows for the formation of alliances, mobilization of resources, and access to decision-making processes (McAdam et al., 2001). McAdam et al. (2019) in an advanced study propose that movements are more likely to emerge and succeed when there is a "convergence of structural availability and subjective readiness" (p. 23). This assertion implies that the political and social climate in which the movements operate ought to be conducive for mobilising individuals and organizations to motivate them to take action. On the contrary, some scholars argue that changes in the institutional context that limit access or resources can pose barriers to social movements. Equally, Della Porta and Diani (2015) argue that political opportunity structures can enhance or constrain movements' ability to achieve their goals, and thus suggest that processes such as political mediation and opportunity exploitation can help movements navigate and shape the political context in which they operate.

Some social scientists have sought to understand the role of networks and social interactions in supporting collective action (McAdam et al., 2001; Diani & McAdam,

2003). According to them, network analysis provides insights into the structure and dynamics of social movement organizations, the distribution of information, recruitment processes, and the dispersion of collective action (McAdam et al., 2001; Diani & McAdam, 2003). For instance, McAdam et al. (2001) posit that social movements are created through the interaction of three key factors: political opportunities, the mobilizing structures of social movements, and the collective identities of movement participants (McAdam et al., 2001). They contend that these movements are able to emerge and grow as a formidable side when there is a conjunction of these three factors. (McAdam et al., 2001; Diani & McAdam, 2003).

Gaining prominence right from resource mobilization and political process models to modern methods such as the cultural and cognitive components of framing, social movement theory has evolved to address new issues and improve in-depth understanding of social movements (Jasper, 2011; McAdam et al., 2004). According to McAdam et al. (2014), the early phases of social movement theory were heavily influenced by sociology and political science, focusing primarily on structural factors such as political opportunities, resource mobilization, and the role of social movements in democracy. However, later scholars such as Melucci (1989) propounded and argues that social movements were not exclusively driven by structural factors but also stemmed from cultural factors and identity. In support of Melucci's argument, recent studies have highlighted and affirmed the importance of culture and identity discourse in the mobilization and sustenance of social movements (Goffman et al., 2019). These scholars argue that cultural factors play a pivotal role in shaping the meanings and interpretations that individuals ascribe to social issues, as well as the actions they take to address them (Goffman et al., 2019). In addressing this locum, a more comprehensive cultural theory was coined, which posits that social

movements emerge as a form of collective identity formation and cultural expression (Hannigan & McAdam, 2006).

Scholars have also considered the role of emotions in mobilizing and sustaining movements (Goodwin & Jasper, 2012; Jasper, 2011). Scholar like Jasper has recognized the importance of affective dimensions and thus contends that affective domains such as the emotions of anger, hope, loss influence and shape collective action (Jasper, 2011). In responding to this perspective propounded by Jasper, emotions-based theories of activism were developed to address the significance of collective emotional experiences in driving social change (Goodwin & Jasper, 2012).

2.4.1.1 Applying the Social Movement Theory to Citizen-led Activism on Social

Media

Some social scholars' postulate that the emergence of digital communication technologies has played a crucial role in shaping social movements and facilitating collective action (Castells 2007; Earl & Kimport 2011; Hess et al., 2017; Tarrow, 2011). The adoption of the internet and evolution of social media has led to the creation of networked social movements that are able to mobilize individuals across geographic barricades, cultural boundaries and ideological barriers; allowing for greater collaboration and participation among social actors (Castells 2015; Earl & Kimport 2011). Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide a way for activists to connect with each other and share information quickly and easily (Tarrow, 2011). As a result, these movements are characterized by a flexible, decentralized organizational structures that are oriented towards building and maintaining digital networks of communication and resource-sharing (Castells 2015; Hess et al., 2017).

Social media has evolved making it easier for individuals or groups to connect with others who share their relative deprivation and organize themselves into social movements (Klandermans, 2014; Lindgren et al., 2017; Tufekci, 2017). According to Klandermans (2014), social media platforms provide space where individuals can easily connect with others who share their grievance, and collectively express their discontent through online petitions, hashtags, and other forms of digital activism. Tufekci (2017) mentions that platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have enabled marginalized groups to more easily amplify their voices connect and mobilize in ways that were not possible before. "These platforms provide a way for people to see what others in similar circumstances are experiencing; hence making it easier for them to get a sense of what is happening and to feel like you are not alone" (Tufekci, 2017. p. 36). As a result, those who have been traditionally marginalized or excluded are provided opportunities to share their stories and experiences which mostly lead to a more diverse and inclusive landscape for social movement organisation (Lindgren et al., 2017).

Some scholars assert that social media represents a type of *digital populism* in which the strength of social movements is derived from their capacity to channel the power of the people (Duncombe, 2013; Gerbaudo, 2012). According to them, social media platforms provide a space for individuals to come together and communicate with one another, and through this, they develop shared symbols, language, and culture (Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). Social media offers accessible and affordable platform for social movement organizations to mobilize resources spanning from fundraising, sharing knowledge, and providing organization of meetings or protest and support from large scale audiences (Duncombe, 2013). McAdam et al. (2001) in a review study highlighted the importance of both mobilization and network structures in achieving

the goals of a movement. The study was conducted within the broader field of social movement theory and the scholarly discourse on the factors that contribute to the success of social movements. McAdam et al. (2001) argue that in order for a movement to succeed, it must have effective communication and organization of resources. According to them, networks also play a crucial role in social media activism as they provide support and solidarity among movement participants (McAdam et al., 2001). The study found that mobilization and network structures are essential components for the success of social movements (McAdam et al., 2001). McAdam et al. (2001) discovered that besides effective communication and organization of resources being necessary for the movement to achieve its goals, networks also provided support and solidarity among participants. They underscore the importance of these factors in social movement theory and their role in understanding the dynamics of social movements (McAdam et al., 2001). Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of collective action and social organization in achieving social and political change (McAdam et al., 2001).

Some social scholars have articulated that social media helps to create a sense of shared identity by creating virtual communities of people who share common interests and concerns (Bimber et al., 2012; Shirky, 2011; Stieglitz & colleagues, 2018). For instance, Stieglitz and colleagues (2018) used the social identity theory and mixed method approach to examine the role of social media in the development of a shared identity among followers of the #MeToo movement which emerged in 2017 as a response to sexual harassment and assault in the entertainment industry. They found that online interactions among followers of the movement facilitated the development of a shared identity among individuals who had previously experienced sexual harassment and assault yet had no medium to voice their feelings (Stieglitz &

colleagues, 2018). According to Stieglitz and colleagues (2018) the shared identity created in these virtual communities motivated individuals to take part in real-world activities to further the goals of the movement. Specifically, the study found that individuals who engaged in more social media interactions related to #MeToo were more likely to participate in real-world activities such as protests and expressing their support for the movement to friends and family (Stieglitz & colleagues, 2018.). They conclude that social media can play a vital role in the development of a shared identity among individuals and this shared identity can lead to collective action in the real world (Stieglitz & colleagues, 2018.).

The concept of framing has also been used in social media activism research, particularly in analysing how social movements are covered in mainstream media (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Braun & Tufekci, 2018; Khan & Miller, 2019; Tufekci, 2015). Social media activism uses visual and textual messages to constructing a frame or narrative that resonates with the target audience and mobilizes them to take action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Khan & Miller, 2019). According to Bennett and Segerberg (2013: 8) “Social media provide an opportunity to frame an issue in ways that traditional media cannot because social media offer not only text and images but also a space for open, participatory discussion and collaboration.” Framing relating to the use of hashtags can also play a role in organizational management of social media campaigns, as is seen with the hashtag #MeToo linked to topics of social justice and rights through social media platforms (Khan & Miller, 2019). Frame analysis aims to understand how social movements use language and ideas to position themselves and their causes as legitimate and worthy of public attention (Tufekci et. al., 2018; Zhang & Kim, 2020). Social media activity, including hashtags, memes, and videos, is seen as a way to frame social movements and legitimize their cause in the public arena

(Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). For instance, Zhang and Kim (2020) conducted a qualitative content analysis study grounded on frame analysis to examine the rhetoric of the Chinese feminist movement within the context of the Chinese feminist movement, where feminists were contesting against the patriarchal social norms and gender inequality in the country. The study analysed data from feminist blogs, news articles, and social media platforms, and examined the discourse of the movement to identify the frames used to position their causes as legitimate and gain public attention (Zhang & Kim, 2020). The study found that the Chinese feminist movement strategically used humour and irony to challenge dominant cultural norms based on five frames to present their cause as legitimate in the public discourse, namely, the frame of rights and justice, the frame of gender and identity, the frame of oppression and resistance, the frame of social change and progress, and the frame of universal human values (Zhang & Kim, 2020). According to Zhang and Kim (2020) these frames were used tactically to gain public attention and support, generate solidarity, and contest against patriarchal norms in the Chinese society.

2.4.2 Ekman's Six Basic Emotions Model

The basic emotion theory was first articulated by Silvan Tomkins in the early 1960s (Keltner et al., 2019). The theory proposes that there are a set of innate, biologically-based emotions that all humans experience, and which are universal across cultures and independent of individual experiences or social learning (Keltner et al., 2019).

While some existing theories claim that facial expressions of emotion are socially learned and hence, varied from culture to culture, Paul Ekman sought to differ and challenged the validity of those theories (Ekman & Friesen, 1980 as cited in Sabini & Silver, 2005). Recent authors such as Barrett (2017) and LeDoux (2015) have confirmed this view and argue that, emotions are not universal but rather constructed

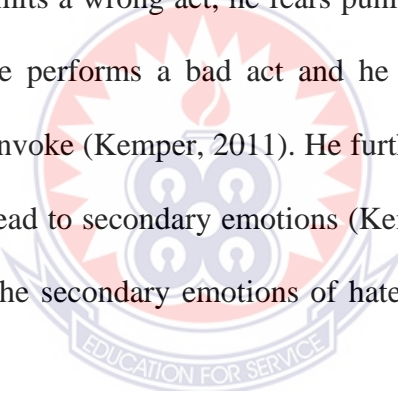
by cultures. However, Ekman and Wallace Friesen disputed this view with a field study that revealed that facial displays of fundamental emotions are not learned but innate (Ekman & Friesen, 1980 as cited in Sabini & Silver, 2005). According to these scholars, there are culture-specific prescriptions about how and in which situations emotions are displayed (Sabini & Silver, 2005). Ekman postulates that emotions are not on a continuous spectrum but rather exist as discrete entities that can be identified and classified based on some unique facial expression (Levenson, 2014; Barrett, 2017; Sabini & Silver, 2005) and they are typically identified and distinguished from other emotions based on a set of observable physical and behavioural characteristics (Barrett, 2017). For instance, happiness can be distinguished from sadness based on subtle facial expressions, while anger can be identified by the presence of tension in the muscles around the eyes and mouth (Barrett, 2017). Also, negative emotions such as sadness, anger, and fear are characterized by appraisals of goal obstruction/unpleasantness (Hareli, et al., 2015). That is, these emotions occur when something undesirable happened (Hareli et al., 2015).

Consequently, Ekman propounded six basic emotions hinged on studying the isolated culture of people from the Fori tribe in Papua, New Guinea in 1972. Various researchers such as Barrett (2017) supports Ekman's proposition and thus argue that these emotions are universal for all human beings, yet what remain uncertain and debatable is the basicness of emotions. Some scholars have argued that the idea of the existence of small set of basic emotions can be traced back to the works of Descartes (1649/1988), who suggested that all emotional states can be derived from six fundamental passions: joy, sadness, love, desire, hatred, and wonder (Barrett, 2006; Kowalska & Wróbel, 2017; Levenson, 2014; Scherer, 2010). However, the real argument on "emotional basicness" begun with the publication of Darwin's

(1872/1998) book entitled *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Kowalska & Wróbel, 2017). Darwin argued that emotions are crucial for survival and thus they have distinctive expressions that should be accurately recognized by all humans. This suggestion led many theorists to believe that at least some emotions require no learning and thus are hardwired in the brain and universal (Kowalska & Wróbel, 2017, Panksepp, 2011).

Although the view that some emotions are more basic than others is widely accepted by emotion theorists, what remains unclear is which emotions should be included in the list of the basic ones (Barrett, 2008; Freud, 2012; Izard, 2009; Keltner & Ekman, 2000; Kowalska & Wróbel, 2017). Freud (2012) and Izard (2009) examined whether there is a small set of primary or basic emotions from which all other emotions are derived. They acknowledged the earliest arguments of the psychologist, Ekman. With Freisen, 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 & Freisen 1975 as cited in Freud, 2012). The universality of these facial expressions provided compelling evidence 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 us to respond. Kemper (2011) identified a set of primary emotions. His four primary emotions are: anger, fear, depression, and satisfaction parallel Ekman's set of basic emotions. Kemper (2011) maintains that these emotions are fundamental because each has evolutionary survival value (e.g., fear and anger encourage individuals to respond quickly when they are in danger), they appear in the earliest stages of human development, they are

universally recognized in the face, they have unique autonomic responses, and they emerge in social relations. Practically, both Ekman and Kemper agree that the basic emotions have unique autonomic responses: they are quick in their onset, and they are brief in their duration. Kemper (2011) advances his analysis and argue that there is a second layer of emotions that stems from primary emotions, which he classifies secondary emotions. Like to the argument of social scholars like Zhang et al. (2019) and Kemper (2011) avers that primary motions are more socially constructed unlike the primary emotions, which Kemper considers as innate. He argues that the secondary emotions are learned through socialization in connection with the primary emotions (Kemper, 2011). For example, guilt is learned from the primary emotion fear: when a child commits a wrong act, he fears punishment and once a child learns over time that when he performs a bad act and he fears punishment, guilt is the emotion tag he should invoke (Kemper, 2011). He further states that a combination of primary emotions can lead to secondary emotions (Kemper, 2011). For example, fear and anger can lead to the secondary emotions of hate, jealousy, and envy (Kemper, 2011).

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sun-like symbol with rays, surrounded by a wreath. Below the wreath, the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE" is inscribed on a banner. The entire emblem is set against a light blue background.

Even though different scholars have shared their divergent views on the basicness of emotions, the most popular and widely used list is what most term as "The Big Six," which includes happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, and disgust (Barrett, 2005, Panksepp, 2007). However, Over the years, some theorists including Ekman, have shortened or expanded this list with their own terminology and insights; for example, while Tomkins (1964) had earlier coined nine core emotions, which he categorized as positive (joy, interest, surprise) or negative (fear, anger, sadness, disgust, contempt, shame); Plutchnik (1980) added acceptance and anticipation, Ekman and Cordaro (2011) added contempt, and Levenson (2011) added interest, relief, and love. More

recently, other candidates for basic emotions have added to the list, e.g., love or jealousy (Sabini and Silver 2005). Further addition to the list is Panksepp and Watt (2011) who listed play, panic/grief, rage, seeking, fear, lust, and care as the basic (“primary-process”) emotions. Although the list continues to expand, however, majority of scholars have subscribed to Ekman's six basic emotions as the most widely used in emotions-related qualitative studies (Izard, 2007; Levenson, 2014; Panksepp, 2007).

2.4.2.1 Applying Ekman’s Theory of Basic Emotions to Online Sentiment

Analysis

Social networking platforms have become an indispensable means for communicating feelings to the entire world where several people use textual content, pictures, audio, and video to express their feelings or viewpoints (Nandwani & Verma, 2021). This content is closely related to the lives, emotions, and opinions of users; therefore, analysis of this user-generated data is beneficial for monitoring public opinion and assisting in making decisions (Cui et al., 2023). For instance, Barros et al. (2017) analysed 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 which 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 accuracy of almost 60%. However, this result is biased by an unbalanced distribution of classes. To avoid the bias, Barros et al. (2017) apply a resampling strategy that leads to a more balanced distribution and repeat the classification experiments.

Rabeya et al., (2017), observed that research studies involving the detection of emotions from English texts were becoming innumerable as compared to Bengali texts and implemented a system to detect two basic emotions of happy and sad in Bengali. Their work initially identifies the sentiment whether negative or positive and then the specific emotion associated. They accomplished this by tokenizing 301 Bengali sentences collected from a survey and using a hash algorithm, generated hash values for each tokenized sentence. The hash values were then compared to hashed values of sentences in a Word Lexicon containing 350 words. If the value matched, the hash value is stored in a database and an input expression generated. Using the backtracking approach, both positive and negative were detected. After detecting sentiments, they applied a rule engine to detect emotions as happy and sad and obtained an accuracy of 77.16%. However, they mentioned that, in as much as their input data was relatively small, some of the words it contained could not be found in the Lexicon they used and had to be removed thus further reducing the amount of data and greatly affecting the performance of their system. Also, their system detected only two basic emotions; this means that other emotion categories were sidelined and as such the generalization ability of the system becomes questionable (Rabeya et al., 2017).

Lee and Wang (2015) shared in the notion presented by Rabeya et al. (2017) concerning the direction of research in the field towards English texts. They also believed that multilingual texts contained as many emotions as monolingual texts. Their work proposed the detection of emotions from monolingual and Bilingual texts, that is, English/Chinese and English and Chinese respectively using Multiview learning; a semi-supervised ML Approach. After obtaining 4195 posts from Weibo, a popular Chinese blog spot and annotating using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, 2319 posts were observed to contain emotion words. Using code-switching text identification, they separated Chinese texts from English texts and texts written in both Chinese and English languages creating three views, that is, Chinese, English, and Bilingual views. In the bilingual view, texts written in the English language were all translated into the Chinese language using the word-by-word statistical machine-translation method⁷⁰ and all views fed into a semi-supervised co-training algorithm for prediction into five (5) categories, namely, happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and surprise. Their results indicated anF1 measure of 0.486 and improved performance in comparison with baseline methods. However, the relatively small quantum of data used posed as a hindrance to the performance of their proposal. Also, translation of texts from one language to the other using the word-by-word statistical translation strategy could have affected the general semantics of texts and resulted in fuzzy and incorrect emotion classifications.

Kim and Klinger (2018) advance the 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 with regard to their emotional states when seeking narrative engagements on online interactions (Kim & Klinger, 2018).

2.5 Relevance of the Theories to the Study

From the literature reviewed, it is evident the emergence of digital communication technologies has played a crucial role in shaping social movements and facilitating collective action. The rise of the internet and social media has led to the emergence of networked social movements that are able to mobilize individuals across geographic, cultural boundaries and ideological barriers; for greater collaboration and participation to strive for change. The study employed the Social Movement Theory to identify the collective action frames that the citizen-led anti-galamsey activists used to mobilize their cause. The theory assisted the researcher to analyse the dominant user representations by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists on Facebook and the nature of the posts used to disseminate information about their cause. Also, Paul Ekman's Six Basic Emotions theory was applied to the research objective to assess the diverse sentiments expressed by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists through their Facebook post.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The study reviewed the phenomenon of illegal mining, known locally as "galamsey," which is a significant environmental and social issue in Ghana. The government has struggled to combat the practice, leading to the emergence of citizen-led anti-Galamsey activism. The study discussed that the emergence and adoption of social media platforms such as Facebook has played a critical role in facilitating activism,

providing a space for citizen-led anti-galamsey activists to share their experiences and disseminate information on the practice. The study utilized Social Movement Theory to analyse the collective action frames used by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists on Facebook, focusing on the prevalent user representations and the type of post they used to spread information about their cause. Moreover, Paul Ekman's Six Basic Emotions theory was used to evaluate the varied emotions expressed by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists through their Facebook posts. Generally, the study investigated user representations of anti-galamsey activism on Facebook, exploring how social media is shaping citizen-led activism in Ghana.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures employed in collecting and examining the data on how citizen-led anti-galamsey activists are using social media (Facebook) to express their divergent thoughts and sentiments in the heat of the fight against galamsey. This chapter embodies an important component of this study since the methodology has a great influence on the general upshot of research and its subsequent impact on the focal intent of the study. In pursuant of the systematic approach of standard qualitative research; this chapter covers research approach, the research design, sampling technique, data collection method, unit of analysis and size, and analysis procedures. Fundamentally, this chapter discusses the principles that underpin the choice of methods executed for the data collection and a further explanation of the procedures used in analysing the data in order to respond to the research questions.

3.1 Research Approach

Creswell and Creswell (2018) define research approaches as plans and the procedures employed in research that assist the researcher to narrow down the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Creswell and Creswell (2018) posit that, every study can be situated in three main approaches namely; qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that while qualitative research approach seeks to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem; quantitative approach is mainly employed in testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. Creswell and Creswell (2018) postulate that while

the aforementioned approaches complement each other, mixed method approach bridges the two by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks.

Characteristically, the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of qualitative using words for description while quantitative uses numbers, or better yet, using closed-ended questions and responses (quantitative hypotheses) or open-ended questions and responses (qualitative interview questions) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Contingent on worldview, design and methods used, what affect the choice of one approach over another for the design of a proposed study is research problem and questions, the personal experiences of the researcher, and the audience(s) for whom the report will be written (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The crux of the study is to investigate user representations of anti-galamsey activism on Facebook, exploring how social media is shaping citizen-led activism in Ghana. The issues of ‘galamsey’ are complicated and have for years received a lot of attention from various media houses, government organizations and some Civil Society Organizations. These groups have been in the forefront in the anti-galamsey campaign. What is not certain is “how” individual citizens are adding their voices in shaping the anti-galamsey campaign based on their encounter and perceived experiences with the phenomenon understudy. To unravel the mystery of the “how” question in the research topic and also accurately answer the research questions, the appropriate research approach to employ is ‘qualitative approach’. Different scholars have used qualitative approach and thus argue that the approach is more theory rooted and interpretative in nature as compared to quantitative approach which is

underpinned by statistical analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Cropley, 2022; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mugenda, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) for instance assert that the use of qualitative approach enables the researcher to comprehend issues by investigating them in their own specific context and the meaning that individuals bring to them. Its main focus is to generate meaning, purpose or reality from opinions and experiences of participants (Merriam, 2009). In line with Denzin and Lincoln, (2005) and Merriam (2009) assertion, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) aver that the crux of conducting a study qualitatively is concerned with identifying how people describe their own experiences, “how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 6).

Daymon and Holloway (2011) assert that qualitative research is a powerful means of gaining in-depth and holistic understanding of issues. Creswell (2014) affirms that qualitative research approach helps to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Based on Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Creswell (2014) assertions, the adoption of qualitative research approach is appropriate for this study since it affords the researcher the spectrum to understand the meanings citizen-led anti-galamsey activists on Facebook ascribe to galamsey and further interpretation based on their diverse experiences, why such meanings are important to understanding the need to fight against the illegality.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) posit that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This implies that qualitative researchers study things in their natural state, without an attempt to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) further mention that qualitative researchers traditionally employ an interpretive and naturalistic approach to research, by studying phenomena in their natural scene,

attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them rather than the researcher's. Yin (2016) asserts that the events and ideas that emerge from qualitative research represent or illuminate the meanings given to real-world events by the people who live and experience them, not the values, preconceptions, or meanings held by researchers. Lindlof and Taylor (2018) also affirm that the application of qualitative research approach classically seeks to preserve and analyse a study in the situated form, content and experience of social happenings rather than subjecting it to mathematical or formal transformations. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) equally attest that the adoption of this approach enables the researcher to go beyond statistical results.

Equally, this study espouses the qualitative research approach because it offers the researcher the grounds to conduct the study in the natural context of the posts shared on Facebook without any attempt to manipulate or influence the phenomena under study since qualitative research is mainly concerned with the experiences, opinions, and feelings of individuals and not that of the researcher. In addition, the data will be analysed in words without employing any statistical or mathematical interpretations.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell and Creswell (2018) define Research approaches are plans and the procedures employed in research that narrow down the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Creswell (2014) also defines research design as a type of investigation procedure within any research paradigm that provides clear directions that are most appropriate for achieving the research objective. The adoption of the appropriate design assist researcher articulates what data is required, what methods are going to be used to collect and analyse the data and how it is going to answer the research questions (Asenahabi, 2019).

Therefore, research design may be the approach a researcher adopts to assist him/her in an analysis to draw a cogent conclusion (Yin, 2009). In essence, research design provides an overall outline for connecting the conceptual research problem to the pertinent and achievable empirical research (Asenahabi, 2019). According to Yin (2009) in any research method, there are many designs; phenomenology, ethnography, case study, 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 characterises 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 (2005) define Qualitative Content Analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. In the application of Qualitative Content Analysis, Shava et al (2021) and Zhang and Wildemuth (2005) aver that the approach 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.

Hsieh and Shannon (2018) contend that content analysis is primarily designed for the quantitative research approach as researchers employ it in describing and interpreting the frequency or quantity of text. In drawing the line on what a text is in qualitative study, Hsieh and Shannon (2018) mention that a text can either take the form of a written word or picture. Daymond and Holloway (2002) also posit that qualitative researchers are interested in deep exploration in order to provide rich, detailed and holistic description as well as explanation therefore relies on the selection of

considerable samples. In order to achieve Daymond and Holloway's proposition above, Zhang and Wildemuth (2005) suggest the collection of suitable data and selecting the appropriate unit of analysis by the researcher. The unit of analysis in this context refers to the basic unit of text to be classified during the analysis of content (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005).

Hsieh and Shannon (2018) and Kondracki and Wellman (2002) classify social media posts as texts because the posts take the form of a written word and/or picture. Therefore, this study adopted qualitative content analysis for the study since it allows the appreciation of meanings and patterns implanted in the posts shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activism. Again, 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 (Shava et al., 2021; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). The interpretations extracted from the posts are as a result of actively and attentively reading and moving deeper and deeper into understanding the collected data. This involves back and forth thorough movement through the basic unit of texts and filtering 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

Sampling technique refers to the strategy that is applied by a researcher in selecting members of the accessible population to participate in a study (Creswell, 2014). In the case of sampling techniques, a researcher may adopt: quota sampling, convenient sampling, and simple random and systematic random sampling, snow ball and purposeful sampling et cetera for a study (Creswell, 2014). The essence of sampling is reflected in its ability to increase accessibility to the population, reduce cost, and save time to allow researchers conduct studies on subjects from the population so that the

results of the study can be used to derive conclusions (Obilor, 2023). Inherently, the use of sampling technique in qualitative research is to direct the researcher on their choice of what to observe or who to interview (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002); while it also guides the researcher in determining what to study and also provides reasons or justification for what to study (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). By applying purposive sampling, there is the need for a researcher to purposively select a particular data group, duration or site for the study after several observational study of the data set to have an in-depth view of the phenomena under study (Shaheen et al., 2016). This will involve identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2011). By implication, sampling in qualitative research approach provides a certain criterion that informs and guide the researcher to determine the object or subject, where (site) and when (duration) to be selected for the study, which holistically affects the purpose and outcome of the study. Based on the aforementioned assumptions, the term purposive or purposeful sampling is applied to this current study (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Shaheen et al., 2016).

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-tune with the study. Purposeful sampling resides on the proposition that since no qualitative researcher can capture every event as it unfolds (Lindlof & Taylor 2017), it is prudent therefore that information-rich samples are selected to have an in-depth view of the phenomena. Obilor (2023) recommend that non-probability sampling technique is employed to select only those subjects that satisfy the objectives of the study based on the researcher's conviction. This assertion is based on the assumption that participants are those who have the required status or experience,

or are known to possess special knowledge to provide the information researchers seek (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013; Patton, 2002; Shaheen et al., 2016).

In consonance with the aforementioned assumptions, the current study adopted purposeful sampling because the posts shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on galamsey possess the features that are in-tune with the general objective of this study, which is to assess the sentiments citizen-led anti-galamsey activism shared on Facebook concerning galamsey phenomenon. Additionally, purposive sampling was adopted for this study due to the inability of the researcher to cover every post and comment shared on galamsey incident on social media as they occur. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) advise to purposefully focus on specific duration and population in order to gain rich and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon understudy. Therefore, the researcher adopted Lindlof and Taylor (2017) advice and captured April, 2017 to September, 2017, to study the dominant issues that emerged from the posts shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activism, how they communicated their message on Facebook, as well as the varied emotions outpoured in the posts shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activism.

3.3.1 Sampling Size

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017) sampling is the process of picking a subgroup for a study. In the context of this study, a sample is the specific group that a researcher collects data from (Obilor, 2023). The study adopted sample of posts and comments on Facebook by anti-galamsey activism as its primary source of data. According to a 2023 report by Datareportal, there were 23.05 million internet users in Ghana at the start of 2023 and out of this number, 6.60 million were social media users (Datareportal, 2023). Out of the 6.60 million social media users, Facebook dominates as the favourite social communication platform with 5.65 million

subscribers followed by LinkedIn (2.10 million), Instagram (1.70 million) and Twitter (1,15 million) respectively. Based on the statistics above, Facebook was selected for the study due to its popularity and wide subscribership by Ghanaians (Datareportal, 2023).

As Kim et al. (2013) note, sampling approaches of a large-scale dataset on social media such as Twitter and Facebook are different from those of traditional media. In a further study, Kim et al., (2018) observe that social media unlike traditional media have no limits on production and broadcasting capacity, as a result, social media display a flexible nature, operating 24 hr continuously with almost an unlimited number of content providers hence producing large data on daily basis. Based on Kim et al's. (2018) observation, Huberbman and Saldana (2014) assert that in qualitative research, sampling relies on small numbers with the intention of studying the phenomenon in depth and in detail. Based on Huberbman and Saldana's advice, one thousand, three hundred and fifty (1,350) posts were selected from individual anti-galamsey activism on Facebook within the period of study. Again, this study was conducted within a period of six (6) months; from April 2017 to September 2017. This period was selected for the study as it was during 2017 and after that the mainstream media set its agenda on anti-galamsey campaign with the hashtag #stopgalamseynow (Kpienbaareh et al., 2020). During the period, the campaign triggered a considerable nationwide conversation where majority of individuals resorted to social media platform like Facebook as a medium to join the conversation. Although, years after the selected duration for the study continually garnered meaningful conversations on the topic matter but Lindlof and Taylor (2017) advise that since in qualitative studies it is impossible for the researcher to capture every

situation, the researcher must focus on situations and periods that can give them access to rich and in-depth information concerning the phenomenon being studied.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Kabir, 2016). According to Kabir (2016) the goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed. Rourke and Anderson (2004) posit that the demonstration of the trustworthiness of data collection is one aspect that supports a researcher's ultimate argument concerning the trustworthiness of a study; hence Graneheim and Lundman (2004) advice that the selection of the most appropriate method of data collection is essential for ensuring the credibility of content analysis. Qualitative researchers typically bank-on four methods for collecting and gathering data: observational methods, in-depth interviewing, analysing documents and group discussions (Kabir, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). While other secondary methods of data sources are applied to supplement these four main methods, they however, remain the core of qualitative inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For the purposes of this study, document analysis was employed as a data collection method in answering the research questions.

3.4.1 Document Analysis

Document Analysis can be defined as the systematic exploration of content in the pursuance of creating systematic references and inferences to the meanings, contexts and objectives embedded within texts, messages and other forms of communications, allowing valid and replicable results for further research (Prasad, 2008). Rapley

(2007) mentions that the essence of document analysis is to examine and interpret text embedded in a document for their meanings and to gain understanding through developing empirical knowledge. According to Payne (2004) document analysis helps to identify the limitations inherent in using human sources. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) affirm that qualitative document analysis can be fruitfully used to examine virtually any kind of communication materials, including narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations and print media such as articles, books or manuals. This study therefore employed document analysis as a data collection method because it analyses Facebook posts shared on galamsey in Ghana. As posited by Corbin and Strauss (2008), the use of this method affords the researcher the spectrum to extract meaning; gain understanding; and develop empirical knowledge on the post made on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists on the galamsey incident in Ghana.

Document analysis involves skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpreting and synthesizing the data contained in the document into themes or categories (Daymon & Holloway, 2011; Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is repetitive in nature and combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis that incorporates coding content into recurring patterns (Bowen 2009; Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). Bowen (2009) contends that due to the unobtrusiveness and non-reactive nature of documentary data, they are unaffected by the research process. Leavy (2014) affirms Bowen (2009) proposition and mentions that documentary data holds a built-in level of authenticity. Adopting document analysis as the data collection method for this study thus assisted the researcher to make sense of and report on the recurring patterns from the meanings obtained from the Facebook post shared by citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on illegal mining in

Ghana. Also, in consonance with the assertion by Bowen (2009) regarding the unobtrusive and non-reactive nature of documentary data, adopting document analysis as the data collection method for analysing Facebook posts shared by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists classically possess built-in level of authenticity since social media posts takes the form of electronic documents and are therefore not altered by the research process.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure primarily looks at the various steps, ways and means through which the researcher applied the various data collection methods to gather data for the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The data collection procedure starts with the researcher ensuring his access to Facebook by signing into his Facebook account using his iPhone X since the researcher already had an account created. After signing in and with focus on the subject matter, he uses the Facebook's search filter to search for posts on the subject matter by typing the following keywords: 'galamsey', 'illegal mining', '#galamsey' #stopgalamseynow, #bangalamsey and #illegalmining. The search filter assists the researcher to narrow down the list of results that appeared into something manageable. Fortunately, several posts on the subject matter popped up during the search. He thereafter selected the posts that individuals had posted or shared on Illegal mining within the period of the study that possessed the characteristics of the phenomenon under study.

In all, one thousand three hundred and fifty (1,350) posts were retrieved for this study and it comprised sixty-eight thousand, eight hundred and ninety-six (68,896) words. The shortest post comprised three (3) words while the longest post comprised of one hundred and forty-seven (147) words. The posts were then retrieved using the researcher's iPhone X to take screenshots and written-text post copied into the iPhone

X notes application. The researcher then created a special folder on his Asus laptop and transferred all the collected data from his smart phone into the created folder. After the researcher had retrieved and transferred all the needed data onto his laptop, He thereafter transferred all the retrieved posts into a Microsoft Word document on his ASUS laptop. The researcher then converted the Word document into PDF format so as to prevent unplanned changes from being made to the collected data. To start with the data analysis, he printed the document and proceeded with the analysis. This method conforms to Altheide and Schneider's (2013) advice of saving the data retrieved in a way which is more secured where the researcher can go back to it at any given time in the course of the study. The researcher took one week and 4 days in collecting data for the study.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

In general, the intent of data analysis is to make sense out of text and image data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (Creswell 2009). In qualitative research, the process of data collection and its preliminary analysis is not always distinct steps; they are often interrelated and occur simultaneously throughout the research process (Merriam 2009; Creswell, 2007). The study employed the manual thematic analysis procedures in analysing the data set. Braun and Clarke (2018) aver that thematic analysis is an appropriate and powerful method to use when seeking to understand a set of experiences, thoughts, or behaviours across a data set. This allowed the researcher to draw interpretations from a variety of data to draw classifications and present them as themes (Braun & Clark, 2018). This study adopted this technique and made interpretations into how citizen-led anti-galamsey activists are adding their voices and shaping the narrative on the

ant-galamsey campaign through their Facebook posts. Equally, this process allowed the study to make associations in the analysis and how particular themes were recurring in the study. Finally, it allowed the study to compare the issues raised with the available literature.

During data collection, the thematic analysis operates iteratively as “a flexible and useful research tool, to provide potentially a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 4). 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, categorise and note latent patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A lot of scholars (Braun & Clark, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña; 2014) have theorized on how to conduct a thematic analysis through varying stages or phases. However, my analysis followed the processes espoused by (Braun and Clark, 2006). This model outlined six phases to conducting a thematic analysis. These are the familiarisation with the data; generating initial codes, generating themes; reviewing potential themes; defining and naming theme and producing the report.

Adopting the thematic analysis process also afforded the study the premise to examine the data in order to discover common themes from several posts (Ibrahim, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2013), because thematic analysis is only an analysis method, it can be used to construct a critical constructionist analysis which is able to identify the manifest meanings of data content, as well as the latent meanings inherent in data. The rationale for using thematic analysis for this study was based on the fact that interpretations were drawn through detecting and identifying factors that gave appropriate explanations to people’s actions, thoughts and behaviours (Braun & Clark, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002).

3.6.1 Reducing the Data

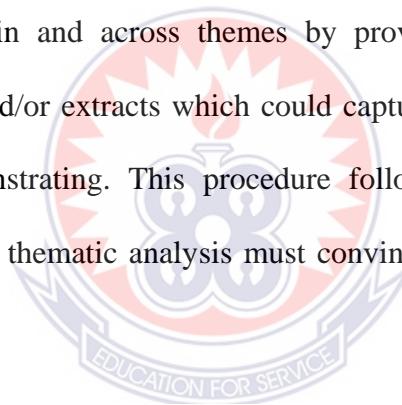
Engaging in data reduction process is very helpful as it affords the researcher the chance to edit the data, summarize it, and make it presentable. The first thing the researcher did was to sieve and reduce the data collected from the posts shared on Facebook hence the researcher read and reread the document keenly. This was done to familiarise himself with the entire body of data or data corpus before going any further. This phase guided him to figure out the type (and number) of themes that might emerge throughout the data (Dawadi, 2020). Maguire and Delahunt, (2017) recommend the researcher to at this stage make notes and jot down some early impressions that may spell out; as it guides further steps the researcher may have to carry out to analyse the data in an appropriate way. Thereafter, the researcher starts to generate initial code by organising the data in a meaningful and systematic way. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), coding reduces lots of data into small chunks of meaning. Since the researcher was concerned with addressing specific research questions, he analysed the data with this in mind. Given this, he coded each segment of data that was relevant to or captured something interesting about the research question. The main purpose of this phase was to find out the patterns and relationships between and across the entire data set (Chamberlain, 2015). The initial coding presented the researcher with a long list of codes that were identified across the data corpus. The codes were then analysed to combine different codes to form an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to ease the process, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestions, a list of the codes was prepared on a separate piece of paper and then they were organised into theme-piles which reflected on the relationship between codes and themes. Because of the explorative nature of the study, it was also important the researcher returned to and re-read all the documents before clustering codes according to the themes. This helped the researcher to

combine different codes into potential themes, collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. This technique also assisted the researcher to raise concepts and issues that were previously identified in the literature review with the generated themes. At this stage, all the themes (master themes, main themes and sub-themes) were purposely brought together for refinement. This follows Braun and Clarke (2006) suggestion to check themes for internal homogeneity (coherence and consistency) and external heterogeneity (distinctions between themes). This stage called for two tasks; at level one, all coded extracts relevant to each initial theme were manually extracted to Microsoft Word document to facilitate cross-referencing of coded extracts with the themes and to carry out the retrieval, comparison and organisation of coded extracts and themes in a meaningful way. The researcher then reread all the collated extracts for each theme, clustered all the themes and sub-themes to check whether they could form a coherent pattern. All the codes and themes along with the collated extracts were considered to see whether they could form a coherent pattern adequately capturing the contours of the coded data. At level two, a similar process was followed but in relation to the entire data set. At this level, the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set was considered. It was very important to ascertain that the “thematic map ‘accurately’ reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 91).

The researcher further refined and defined the themes to identify what each theme is about and to determine what aspect of the data each theme captures (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Careful attention was paid to identify the ‘story’ that each theme told, and how it fitted into the broader overall ‘story’ that the study wanted to tell about the data in relation to the research questions and to ensure that there was not too much overlap between the themes. This is in line with Braun and Clarke (2016) as they argue that a

theme cannot be too diverse and complex, hence the researcher went back to the collated data extracts for each theme and organised all the themes into a coherent and consistent account. The specifics of each theme were refined carefully. The researcher further refined the themes by reading through all the main themes and subthemes, codes and extracts. Then, final name along with its definition was assigned to each theme to tell a story about the data. At this stage, the researcher merged some of the lower-level themes with higher-order themes. This was done to avoid complexity of the thematic map as those lower-level themes added little to the story told by the data.

Finally, the researcher wrote down the report of the findings. This was carefully done in order to provide a concise, coherent and logical account of the phenomenon that the data represented within and across themes by providing sufficient evidence and particular examples and/or extracts which could capture the essence of the point the researcher was demonstrating. This procedure follows Braun and Clarke (2006) advice that report of a thematic analysis must convince the readers of the merit and validity of the analysis.



3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refer to the norms and values that guide decisions regarding the collection of data and analysis of said data, as well as the dissemination of findings (Mirza, Bellalem & Mirza, 2023). Ethics deals with moral problems related to the practice of research (Mirza et al., 2023). Morality in this context refers to beliefs or standards about concepts like good and bad, right and wrong (Jennings 2003). The cornerstone of ethical research is 'informed consent' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and the term consists of two important elements, with each requiring careful consideration, that is, 'informed' and 'consent' (Mirza et al., 2023). Participants must be fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what (if any) consequences

there could be (Mirza et al., 2023) but 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 particularly when using online platforms that are not opened to the public domain. However, if the online platform is opened to the public, the material may be freely analysed and quoted in line with the holistic objectives of the study without seeking the consent of the author of the post (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Since Facebook is social communication platform and the posts made on the platform are public, this study therefore did not need the permission of the authors of the posts retrieved for the study in order to proceed with the analysis as suggested by Wimmer and Dominick (2011). Though posts retrieved for the study did not need authors consent yet Bowen (2009) advises that in using such document, it is expected of the researcher to demonstrate high level objectivity by representing the research material fairly and sensitive by paying attention to subtle cues to meaning in the selection and analysis of data. Vanclay et al. (2013) and Elo et al. (2014) suggest that a researcher must endeavour to give a thorough report of methods used in the research work, thus, for ethical reasons, research 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. In line with the ethical advice by Vanclay et al (2013) and Elo et al. (2014) this research work fully outlines all the various steps and procedures through which the data collection was done and applied. It thoroughly outlines the methods and procedures utilized in the data collection and analysis so as to gain rich and in-depth understanding of the dominant issues that emerged from the posts shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists; the nature of post

used; as well as the varied emotions conveyed through the posts on Facebook. Also, it discusses the principles and assumptions that underpin the methods and procedures for the study and most importantly, justify their selection.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Stahl and King (2020) and Lincoln and Guba (2000) contend that ensuring trustworthiness is one of the central cornerstones in establishing credibility in a research work. And in order to validate and maintain trustworthiness in qualitative study, the research must be tenant on the criteria of trustworthiness; rendered on credibility, transferability, dependability, reflexivity and confirmability of the methods and results of the study (Creswell, 2014; Marrow, 2005). Credibility is spelt out on how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the study's findings (Creswell, 2014). Transferability on the other hand is how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the study's patterns, descriptions and findings from one context are applicable to other contexts: when "other contexts" in this case scenario can mean similar; phenomena, situations and populations (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Stahl & King, 2020).

The researcher's reflexivity is equally an important approach for the researcher to understand his or her own effect on the research (Patton, 2002). It is important the researcher becomes aware of his assumptions, predilections and personal experiences about the research and making them overt to himself and others by bracketing them (Fischer, 2009). Bracketing, according to Bertelsen (2005), involves the researcher creating a distance from previously held assumptions or theories and basing interpretations solely on immediate insight into the phenomenon under study.

Confirmability also requires the researcher to explicitly leave traces and clues for the selection of theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices during the entire study. This must be done in order to justify and make meaning of how and why such choices were made. Confirmability is achieved by establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are exclusively derived from the data, thus requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations were reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Guba and Lincoln (2000) confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are concurrently achieved.

Stahl and King (2020) and Creswell (2014) further indicate that the subject of trustworthiness must be underpinned by accurately answering the question of "How congruent are the findings with reality?" Thus, to answer the question, Creswell (2014) and Stahl and King (2020) provide eight validation strategies in testing for the validity in qualitative research. These processes include methodological triangulation, using member-checking to determine accuracy on the part of participants, using rich and thick descriptions, presenting negative case analysis, spending prolonged time at the research field, using peer debriefing, using external auditors and bracketing of biases or intrusions. He further recommended that qualitative researchers should adopt at least two of these strategies in their studies to ascertain a considerable level of confidence in the research findings.

This research work adopted three of the strategies laid out by Creswell (2014) in order not to influence the objectivity of the data analysis and further, its interpretation. First, the researcher bracketed himself by distancing himself with his already held assumptions or theories preceding the study to avoid any intrusiveness/ biases and basing his interpretations exclusively on collected data and the meaning they provide about the phenomena as suggested by Bertelsen (2005). In addition, in answering the

research questions, the researcher employed rich and thick descriptions to describe the meanings extracted from the Facebook posts by anti-galamsey activists in order to paint a vivid and thorough picture of the diverse issues shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists to adding their voices in the shaping of the fight against illegal mining (galamsey) through the posts. Lastly, the researcher employed the services of an external auditor to verify the analysed themes to confirm if they tally with that of the researcher by re-coding the themes again. According to Stahl and King (2020) and Creswell (2009) the use of external auditor helps to check if there are similarities or disparities between the finding of the researcher and the auditor, this ensures a consideration level of credibility and trustworthiness of the research work.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter embodied the following outlines: research approach; research design; sampling techniques; data collection methods and procedures; ethical considerations, and trustworthiness of the study. The chapter presented the roadmap and processes of the study and the method of data analysis. The researcher adopted a qualitative content analysis to investigate the dominant issues that emerged from posts shared on Facebook by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists, the nature of post used, as well as the varied emotions conveyed through those posts. Document analysis was in sourcing for the research data while thematic analysis was used in analysing the data. The chapter addressed some key tenants of standard and sound research work which included; outlining the various ethical considerations to be observed and ensuring trustworthiness of the study. In addressing ethical issues, since Facebook posts are public and are already in the public domain, the researcher did not require the permission of anyone in order to access and use them.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive presentation of the findings from the posts shared by citizen-led anti-galamsey activists on Facebook to address menaces of galamsey phenomenon in Ghana. Under this chapter, the researcher answers research questions enlisted in the first chapter of the study. The researcher answers them by aggregating the data gathered into themes and analysing them using the related theories and the literature discussed in Chapter two of the study. The first research question, however, is answered by using descriptive statistics which gave the researcher the opportunity to present the findings in a graphical representation through a table. This follows Hsieh and Shannon (2018) advice that tables and figures can be used to complement the descriptive results of content analysis if need be. The use of descriptive statistics helped the researcher to highlight the dominant issues that emerged from the posts and to assess which of the categories was given the highest prominence.

4.1 RQ1. How did the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism communicated their message on Facebook in Ghana?

Social media has become an indispensable tool for activism, providing a platform for the dissemination of ideas, mobilization of communities, and fostering social change (Tufekci, 2017). The structure and content of social media posts significantly impact the dynamics of virtual communities (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2020). Indubitably, the effectiveness of social media activism is closely tied the mode of communication employed by the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement and thus, the centrality how messages are communicated in driving social change through digital

[social media] activism is underscored by the unique features of social media platforms, such as immediacy, virality, and accessibility (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These characteristics empower activists to rapidly disseminate their messages to a global audience, transcending geographical boundaries and traditional communication barriers (Castells 2015; Earl & Kimport, 2011). In the realm of social media activism, the mode of communication adopted by activists play a pivotal role in shaping and influencing the success of social movement (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

As a result of the severe negative impact of illegal mining, diverse issues of discontent have been raised on Facebook by netizens who directly or indirectly are affected by the ‘galamsey’ phenomenon. The principal objective of this study was therefore to examine how the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism communicated their messages on Facebook to share their concerns in order to mobilize support for the anti-galamsey campaign between April 2017 and September 2017. From the collected data, it was found that the movement communicated their messages around the themes of *Text, Hashtag, Still Picture and Video*. The table labelled ***table 1 below*** shows the frequency and percentage of the mode of communication adopted by the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook concerning the galamsey Phenomenon.

Table 1: Mode of communication

Frequency distribution of kinds of Posts used by citizen-led anti galamsey activism on Facebook from April, 2017 to September, 2017.

Kind of Post	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Text	1223	90.6
Hashtag	109	8.1
Still Picture	17	1.23
Video	01	0.07
Total	1350	100

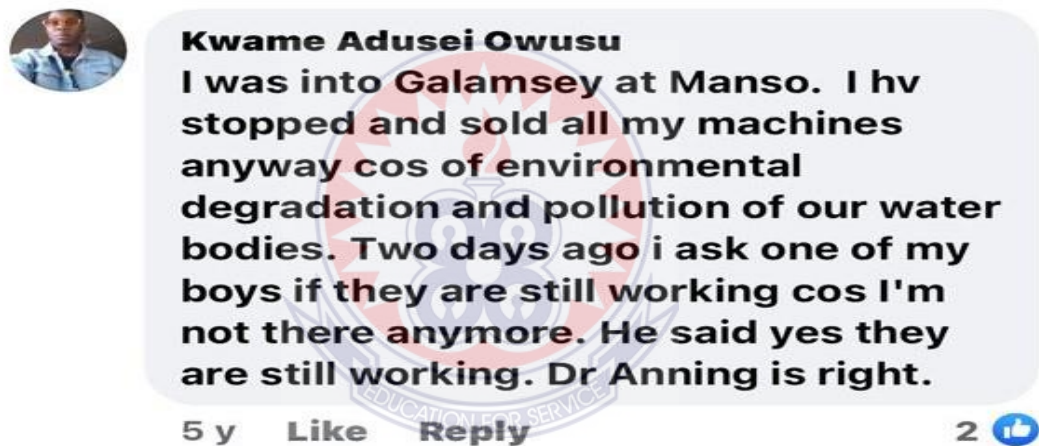
4.2.1 Text

Textual post refers to a message or content shared in written form on various online platforms, such as social media. Some social scholars have established that text is most effective in conveying complex ideas, fostering dialogue, and building a sense of community (Gkikas et al., 2022; Gonzalez, 2017). The indicators for this theme are the use of text by the activists to share experiences, construct opinions, recommend solutions and stimulate emotional support for higher engagement.

The results of the data obtained as shown in *Table 1 above*, shows that the theme of Text ranks first in the cumulative distribution of Facebook posts, with 90.6% out of the total number of posts shared in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook. Text posts have long been a staple in the social media space, allowing users to convey detailed information, articulate arguments, and share narratives (Hooker & Cooper, 2022). In online space, netizens leverage on text to share their

personal experiences and perspectives on social issues which can help to humanize these issues and make them more relatable to others (Gerbaudo & Papacharissi, 2014; Gruzd et al., 2011). Figure 1,2 and 3 exemplify the above proposition, where Kwame Adusei Owusu, Etevor Lemarla James and Nana Poku used text to construct their respective experience about the ‘galamsey’ brouhaha. Kwame Adusei Owusu used his post as a medium to share his experience of his involvement in illegal mining and why he stopped and thus admonished those in his social network to rise and advocate for change.

Figure 1: Screenshot of user’s use of text post to share experience on galamsey



Equally, Etevor Lemarla James used his post to share a bitter experience on how illegal mining is promoting sexual promiscuity in his community while blaming the community elders for looking unconcerned.

Figure 2: Screenshot of user's use of text post to share experience on galamsey



Ama Arhinmah Arhin like Etevor Lemarla James also shares a bitter experience of how illegal mining is polluting water bodies in her hometown, an incident that breaks her heart.

Figure 3: Screenshot of user's use of text post to share experience on galamsey



In reference to *figure 3 above*, an advantage of text within the online space is that it allows the posters to express themselves in their own words, without the constraints of spoken language and this can be particularly helpful for those who may struggle with public speaking or find it challenging to articulate their thoughts in real-time conversations (Gerbaudo & Papacharissi, 2014).

Alternatively, text content is more likely to be used in social media activism because it allows individuals to express their opinions and perspectives quickly and easily

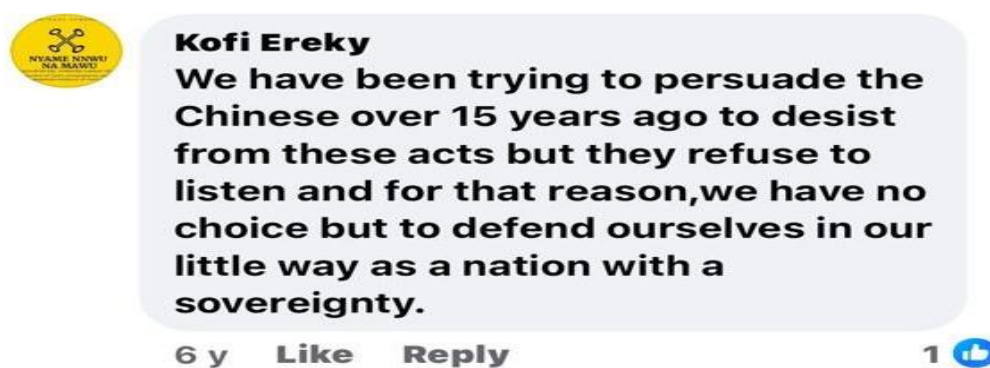
(Boyd et al., 2010; Gruzd et al., 2011). In line with the above assertion, *figures below* used text to construct divergent views on illegal mining. For example, the post by Kenneth Dani Astra constructed an opinion on how best illegal mining can be combatted by suggesting that the ultimate medium and means to halt *galamsey* is to demonstrate against government officials and state apparatus, community leaders and to a greater extent, drive away all foreigners who have taken centre stage in the illegal venture.

Figure 4: Screenshot of user's use of text post to share opinion on galamsey



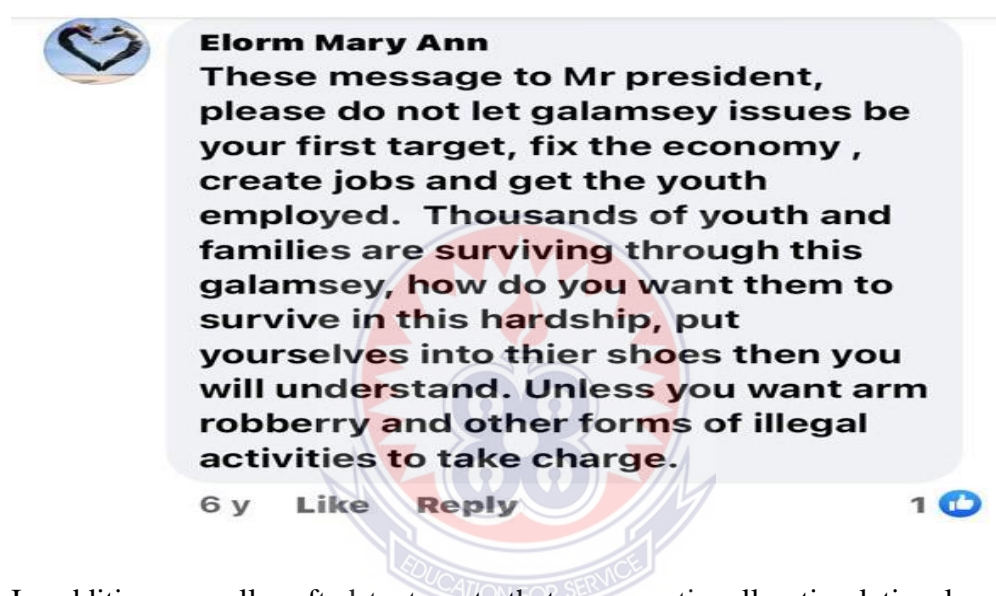
Equally, Kofi Ereky in *figure 5 below* suggested that galamsey continues to thrive because Ghanaians have been lenient with the Chinese illegal miners for long and thus suggested that the best possible solution to solving the menace is to put stringent measures in place to stop the Chinese from perpetuating further harm.

Figure 5: Screenshot of user's use of text post to share opinion on galamsey



Conversely from the opinion in *figure 6 blow*, Elorm Marry Ann opined that while government is making all efforts to curb illegal mining, it should not lose sight of the very trigger of the illegality; which is unemployment. Her post therefore suggested that the best panacea to the ‘*galamsey*’ rumpus is for government to create more jobs to absorb those in the illegal business, should they decide to quit their involvement in the illegal business.

Figure 6: Screenshot of user’s use of text post to share opinion on galamsey



In addition, a well-crafted text posts that use emotionally stimulating language and compelling narratives tend to generate higher levels of engagement and sharing thereby trigger wider awareness creation and larger mobilization (Castells, 2015; Smith & Johnson, 2018). The above assertion is substantiated within the context that discontentment with certain policies and decisions can trigger a large set of emotions that cause individuals to act upon these political acts (Berg, 2020). This is because emotions have a strong social character they play up in social situations and during social interaction (Yang & Pace, 2007). Exemplifying the propositions above, the anti-galamsey movement used diverse emotionally stimulating posts either directed at government to rise to the occasion to fight the canker or to their followers to have all

hands-on-deck to correct the galamsey muddle created. Like Kofi Kyei's post *below*, he called on Ghanaians to prioritize the interest of the country first considering how far it has come and advices that we desist from leasing lands to Chinese illegal miners who extract the country's resources at the detriment of citizens.

Figure 7: Screenshot of user's use of emotion text post for larger engagement



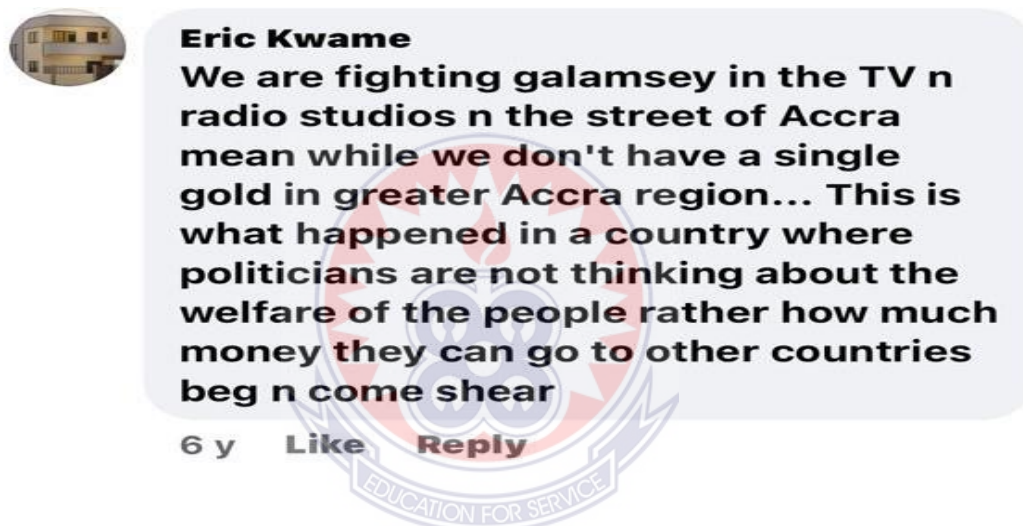
Alhassan Dayan textual post *below in figure 8* equally makes an emotional appeal to followers stating that while a section of netizens are calling for the legalization of illegal mining, there should equally be a worry and concerns about the effects it has on those living within the galamsey enclaves and the country at large.

Figure 8: Screenshot of user's use of emotion text post for larger engagement



The post by Eric Kwame labelled *figure 9 below* also expressed emotion through textual content to resent how politicians sit in their comforts and are inconsiderate about the plights and ordeals of galamsey communities even though it is believed that section of these politicians are key stakeholders and beneficiaries of the illegal business. He suggested the best way to solve the menace is to move the fight to galamsey communities and interact with them rather than sitting in Accra where illegal mining is not done.

Figure 9: Screenshot of user's use of emotion text post for larger engagement



4.1.2 Hashtag

A hashtag is a label or metadata tag used on social media websites including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to make it easier to discover, organize, and categorize content (Twitter, 2021). It consists of the symbol "#" followed by a relevant keyword or phrase without any spaces (Twitter, 2021). Hashtags allow people to find posts that are relevant to their interests and interact with other social media users who share those interests by joining the conversation about social issues (MacDonald, 2017). Social media activism employs hashtag as a framing device that allows crowds to be rendered into networked publics that want to tell their story collaboratively and on their own terms (Papacharissi, 2015).

The results of the data obtained, as shown in *Table 1 above*, shows that Hashtag ranks second in the cumulative distribution of Facebook posts, with 8.1% out of the total number of posts shared in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook. Recently, social media incorporated functionalities such as mention and hashtag make it easy for social actors to find and connect with relevant others, to be exposed to the voices of those who share similar concerns, and thus form groups and communities without centralized authorities (Wang & Chu, 2019). In this, activists use text to construct and leverage on hashtags to form an ad hoc public (Bruns & Burgess, 2011) to classify messages, improves searchability, and allows the organization and people to link messages to existing knowledge and action communities (Saxton et al., 2015). Using hashtags with social media advocacy effort therefore allows movements to spread organically to like-minded individuals and organizations and to spread virally to other users of the social media platform (Saxton et al., 2015). Within the context of this study and as underpinned by Saxton and his colleague's assertion, an example is when the posts below created a common identity by framing their message around hashtags like #stopgalamseynow, #Bangalamsey #saynotogalamsey and #Notogalamsey. This action makes room for others to join them causing widening of audience for greater mobilization and awareness creation for the anti-galamsey campaign (Saxton et al., 2015).

Figure 10: Screenshot of user's use of hashtag to stop galamsey



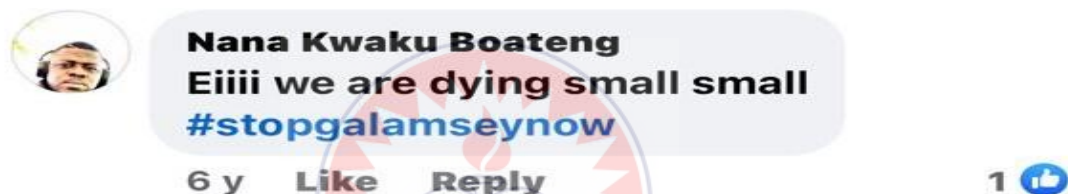
Figure 11: Screenshot of user's use of hashtag to ban galamsey



Figure 12: Screenshot of user's use of hashtag to say no galamsey



Figure 13: Screenshot of user's use of hashtag to stop galamsey



4.2.3 Still Picture

A still picture post refers to a type of online content that primarily utilizes images or graphics to convey information or express ideas (Burgess & Green, 2009; Young, 2021). Social media activism makes use of still pictures to create judgments and invoke interactions among social media users: believing, expressing a feeling, commenting, reproducing, (re-) circulating, and/or acting (Young, 2021). Still pictures shape how people see, believe and act (Young, 2021). The indicators for this theme are the visual representation of water pollution, destroyed arable lands and images of security concerns. According to Young (2021), pictures and the collective actions of social movements are interwoven, and complement each other for socio-political change, typically in an era of visual social media.

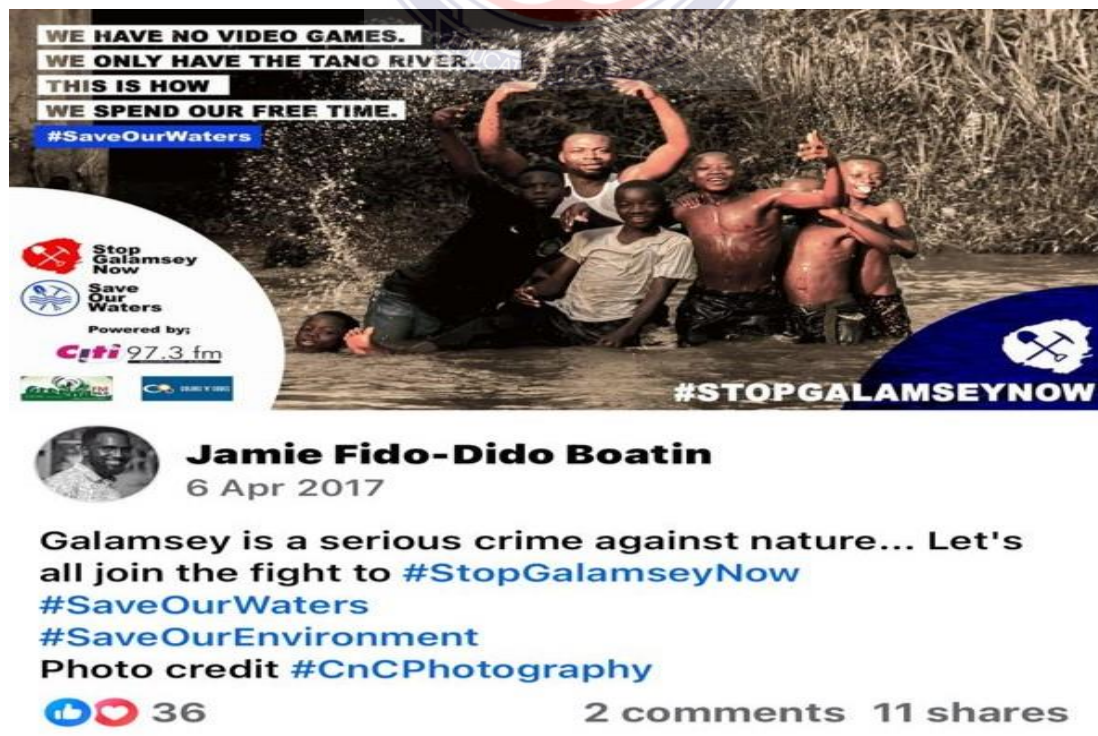
As shown in *Table 1*, another dominant theme that emerged from the data collected is the theme of still picture, with 1.23% shared post by the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook being image-related. In the social media space, the use of still pictures allows social movements more complex message making, framing, and re-framing of messages and, an impact on the reception of contentious actors by attracting media attention and mainstreaming social movement claims (Karabelnik, 2021). Scholars like Kietzmann et al. (2012) posit that still pictures are more likely to be shared and engaged with than text content; because image content is more attention-grabbing and easier to understand at a glance. For example, as a way of drawing the attention of government and other stakeholders to pollution of water bodies through illegal mining, River Pra of Ghana severely polluted by illegal mining was compared to Li River in China which looked cleaner. Thus, the post sought to call on netizens to reflect on how Chinese illegal miners are destroying water bodies in Ghana while theirs (Chinese's) remain untouched and clean. By implication, the post raised a call-to-action directed at inciting followers, policymaker and other stakeholders to rise to curb the menace. Just as Kietzmann et al. (2012) posited above, it is therefore not surprising that the post garnered one hundred and thirty thousand shares which is an indication of larger mobilization and awareness creation.

Figure 14: Screenshot of user using still picture to show affected water body



For maximum impact, Jamie Fido-Dido Boatin used a still picture and hashtag to advocate that River Tano is the only means of leisure (swimming) to the people living around it unlike those in the urban centres who have alternative sources of entertainment; hence, he suggests that, it is important to protect the people's source of entertainment from destruction. Like *figure 15 below*, Jamie Fido-Dido Boatin employed still picture to assist in recruiting an anti-galamsey movement and sympathetic audiences both within and outside social media platforms to mobilize and raise a call to action against the negative effects illegal mining is having on River Tano (Hand, 2017). Equally, the post beyond playing the role of a messenger and mediatiation, also possess the power to inspire and provoke action against illegal mining around Tanoso (Young, 2021), and subsequently, if his post cannot determine the change of the status quo, it can undoubtedly become its catalyst in both a negative and positive sense (Pompa, 2022).

Figure 15: Screenshot of user's post on galamsey advocacy using still picture



The post labelled *figure 16* below also used still picture to draw attention to threats illegal mining poses to national security and particularly to those within the galamsey enclaves. Affirming Boadi Philip's posts below, Agbozo and Spassov (2019) found that attempts have been made by communities and individuals in the past to put an end to the illegal business; the same attempt undertaken in 2005 and 2006, which precipitated the death of several people (through gunshot) who stood against it due to the effects on water bodies and health (Schueler et al., 2011). It is as a result of Schueler et al.'s (2011) finding that image was used to create awareness on how galamsey prone communities are exposed to threat especially to those who oppose it. As to why Boadi Philip shared still picture content rather than written or spoken texts; it must be highlighted here that people tend to believe more of what they see and pictures are easier to remember because they can transmit more specific messages that are more difficult to grasp (Grabe & Bucy 2009) and thus can trigger them to take action.

Figure 16: Screenshot of user showing still picture post of security concerns



Still pictures produced in social media activism transcend their meaning as evidence and evolve into practices of mediated social resistance that may conjure solidarity, affect the narrative, or mobilize more activists to the area of conflict (Karabelnik, 2021). These images that circulate on social media can, in terms of evidence and power, influence the public to take actions that later put pressure on government, state and policy-makers (Young, 2021). *Figure 17 below* drew on *figure 16* to uncover the source of these insecurities. Boadi Philip's post is confirmed by Bondah (2013) that Ghana's physical security is under threat as illegal miners like the political leaders like the assemblyman in *Figure 17 below* acquire firearms to defend their galamsey activities. In Linfield's (2011) view, by engaging with Boadi Philip post in a thoughtful and reflective way, friends and followers within his online network can develop a deeper understanding of the complex issues at stake and work to promote positive change eradicating these insecurities that are wheeled along by illegal mining.

Figure 17: Screenshot of user's post showing image of security concerns



In Linfield's (2011) view, still pictures are representations of real-life events that capture something that actually was there and thus, provoke those within the poster social media network not to simply gaze at the images but to act and think critically and ethically, especially about the pain of others when it comes to images of atrocity. This is particularly true when it comes to images of atrocity which can evoke strong emotional responses and raise important questions about justice, human rights, and responsibility (Linfield, 2011). Linfield's (2011) assertion therefore explains the reason behind the post below, implicitly posted to arouse the emotions of those in his network and to solicit their support. Again, as to why Dove Maxwell shared image like this, Sktelenburg and Klandermas (2007) posit that when people identify with a group, they tend to participate in that group's action. Thus, when passive followers see photos of friends and followers as members of social movements, there is the tendency that they may join the social movement and be in the next protest.

Figure 18: Screenshot of user's post showing image of security concerns



Dove Maxwell · Follow
13 Aug 2017

Anti galamsey task force killed Four people at Akyem Kwabeng.

Eeeeeiii Ama Ghana

According to some social scholars, still pictures assist in creating awareness on social phenomenon (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016; Lee et al., 2018). The finding of this theme is confirmed by Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) and Lee et al. (2018) that the use of visual elements such as still pictures in awareness campaigns on social media, can significantly increase the reach and impact of these campaigns. According to Chen and Dhillon (2020), like the aforementioned posts, awareness was created by posting different still pictures depicting polluted water bodies, depleted forest and security concerns because still picture is particularly effective in capturing attention in crowded social media feeds, contributing to increased engagement and the virality since still picture posts can quickly convey messages, evoke emotions, and increase shareability (Chen & Dhillon, 2020). Again, it could be observed that, most of the anti-galamsey activism participants captioned their still picture posts with text characteristics. According to Hooker and Cooper, (2022) the interplay between text and visual or blending visible allure with highly readable texts, encourage quick and easy understanding thereby increasing engagement and creating awareness on the negative impacts of illegal mining.

4.1.4 Video

A video post refers to a type of online content that primarily consists of a video and is shared on various social media platforms or other digital spaces (Jenkins et al., 2006). Scholars have emphasised the key role video content plays in social media activism, for instance, Kshetri et al. (2017) found that video content allows individuals to communicate complex ideas more effectively than text or images alone because videos can convey multiple dimensions simultaneously, such as visual, auditory, emotional cues, making it easier for viewers to understand complex concepts or

perspectives. The indicator for this theme was niched around video representation of depleted forest.

As shown in *Table 1 above*, video emerged as another kind of post from the data collected with 0.07% shared on Facebook. In the social media context, videos can convey tone, body language, and facial expressions that are difficult to convey through text or images alone (Kshetri et al., 2017). Overtly, videos are powerful tools for social media activism, as they can help to persuade and mobilize audiences in a more impactful way than traditional text or image activism methods (Kshetri et al., 2017). *Figure 19 below* used video content to draw attention to how leaders and stakeholders in Ghana have allowed Chinese nationals to destroy Ghana's natural greenery through galamsey related activities. The post exposes the effect of illegal mining on Ghana's greenery vegetation. In the social media circus, Simeon Fosu employed video and textual messages to construct a narrative that resonates with the target audience/followers to mobilize them to fight illegal mining (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013) as video content is likely to receive higher engagement and sharing rates as compared to text-only post (Lee et al., 2018). Not only that, *figure 19 below* contains the emotions of sadness and anger which mostly receive higher engagement rates than videos with neutral emotions (Cheng & Huang, 2018). This emotional appeal is proven effective in social media activism campaigns, as it motivates viewers to take action and spread the message (Cheng & Huang, 2018).

Figure 19: Screenshot of user's post showing video of affected forest reserved

Despite videos proving to be an effective channel to communicate complex ideas and perspectives more effectively than text or still pictures because they provide an audiovisual experience that engages the viewer's senses and emotions (Kshetri et al., 2017), within the span of the study period, only one of the citizen-led anti galamsey activism employed this type of post as medium to communicate his concerns and grievances. The question then remains, why did video posts have the least use? In answering this question, many Ghanaians rely on prepaid data, which can be quickly depleted when consuming large amounts of data-heavy video content (Danso et al., 2023), hence the reliance on text and picture communication which are less expensive.

4.2 RQ2. What are the dominant user representations in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook in Ghana?

Facebook boasts an impressive user base with a staggering 2.93 billion monthly active users and a 1.96 billion daily users, a reason some social scholars have described it as the largest and most popular social networking website (Smith, 2020). Social networking platforms [like Facebook] have become an indispensable means for communicating feelings to the entire world where several people use textual content,

pictures, audio, and video to express their feelings or viewpoints (Nandwani & Verma, 2021). Specifically, it offers users the opportunity to express their feelings and ideas about social and political subjects (Tarihi, 2017).

Illegal mining phenomenon is one menace that government after government have attempted to fight against (Quainoo, 2020). The more government tried, the more the problem exacerbated. By 2017, the galamsey conundrum had almost become so intractable to the extent that a media coalition against galamsey was formed and a strong movement against galamsey was ignited precipitating a general groundswell of discontentment against galamsey amongst the vast majority of the Ghanaian populace (Quainoo, 2020). The general consensus was that Ghana was on the verge of an imminent disaster if immediate steps were not taken to salvage the situation (Quainoo, 2020). Opong (2018) found that the country lacks a common platforms and mediums that afford people the leverage to express their opinions and views about socially and economically sensitive matters that they face in their everyday life. Nonetheless, as oppose to Opong (2018) assertion above, the emergence of social media and online activism have assisted in instigating general uprising on the issue which has been plaguing Ghana's natural resources and health of residents of galamsey communities (Agbozo & Spassov, 2019). According to Abgozo and Spassov (2019), it is as a result of the level of outrage expressed by Ghanaians on social media that led to the raising of awareness by the media, and government acting swiftly to put measures in place to curb the menace.

This research question therefore sought to identify and analyse the dominant issues that emerged from the posts shared on Facebook by anti-galamsey activists between April 2017 and September 2017, following the #stopgalamseynow anti-galamsey campaign. The detailed coding of the collected data, totalling one thousand, three

hundred and fifty (1,350) posts, revealed that Facebook anti-galamsey activists framed and presented their concerns on illegal mining phenomenon round the following themes: *Ecological challenges, Leadership Failure, Economic issue, Weak Legal/institutional Framework, Insecurity, Bribery, Corruption and Social/cultural infiltration.*

The table labelled **Table 1** below shows the frequency distribution of posts shared on Facebook from April, 2017 to September, 2017. The table shows the frequency and percentage of the dominant issues that emerged from the posts shared on Facebook in the anti- galamsey citizen-led activism on galamsey conundrum in Ghana.

Table 2: Dominant User Representations

Frequency distribution of dominant issues that emerged from the posts shared on Facebook from April, 2017 to September, 2017 in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism.

Kind of Posts	Total	Percentage (%)
Ecological Challenges	608	45.0%
Leadership failure		16.5%
Economic issue	157	11.6%
Insecurity	133	9.9%
Corruption	120	8.9%
Weak legal/institutional framework	109	8.1%
Total	1,350	100

4.2.1 Ecological challenges

In the context of the current study, ecological challenges refer to the adverse impacts and consequences that the unregulated and destructive illegal mining activities pose

on the environment. The concerns raised under this theme are essential to holding powerful economic actors, including states accountable, pressuring governments and private industries to commit to higher environmental standards, defending marginalized and indigenous populations from land-based exploitation, and exposing projects that could lead to environmental degradation (Nuesiri, 2016). The indicators for this theme include destruction of cultivable lands, contamination of water bodies/destruction of aquatic habitat and vegetation depletion.

The results of the data obtained, as shown in *Table 2 above*, indicates that the theme of ecological challenges dominated in the cumulative distribution of Facebook posts, with 45.0% out of the total number of posts shared by the anti-galamsey activists. This finding affirms existing argument that social media platforms like Facebook have become an important arena for environmental communication, activism, and mobilization (Anderson, 2017; Boulianne et al., 2020) opening up direct communication and conversation channels between the general public and users seeking to raise awareness and mobilize the public toward protecting the environment (Pearce et al., 2015). For instance, *figure 20 below* described how illegal mining has destroyed water bodies. The posts of Edem Ashigbi, Benjamin Crentsil and Lily Frempong within the focus of this theme called for the protection of water bodies from illegal mining. The posts of Edem Ashigbi and Lily Frempong in particular placed a courtesy call on his friends and followers (tagging twenty-six (26)) and pleaded on them to put their political disparities aside in order to have all-hands-on-deck to protect water bodies from illegal mining which has become a national enemy and threat. In online space, it is more likely for Edem Ashigbi to persuade his peers and other people in his horizontal networks to engage in social issue like the ‘fight

against galamsey’ as a result of their shared interest thereby making it easier for him to engage them to collectively embark on a singular cause (Tang, 2018).

Figure 20: Image of user’s post showing affected water body.



Figure 21: Screenshot of user’s post showing affected water body



Figure 22: Screenshot of user's post depicting water pollution



Figure 23: Screenshot of user's post showing affected water body



Some of the posts also expressed diverse concerns on the negative effects of illegal mining on the natural forest and cultivable lands. For example, by posting video content in *figure 24 below*, the post by Simeon Fosu exposed how illegal mining (galamsey) has destroyed most of the country's green forest since the act is mostly carried out within or around forests. His concern is confirmed by Yeboah's (2023) finding that "illegal gold mining is the main cause of the depletion of the natural forest" (p: 456). He therefore used his post to draw the attention of leadership and stakeholder on their failure in protecting Ghana's natural forest.

Figure 24: Screenshot of user's post showing affected forest reserved

Also, Afia Pokuaa's post in *figure 25* below expressed worrying concerns on dug out pit from illegal mining to highlight the destructive nature of the act and the imminent dangers it poses to life. Why is she worried about these galamsey dug pits? Agbozo and Spassov (2019) found that some of these galamsey pits cave in during the mining process which leads to the death of miners. Again, these pits get filled with rain water and eventually become the breeding grounds for mosquitos and other dangerous/poisonous insects and animals, causing malaria and other deadly diseases (Al-Hassan & Amoako, 2014). These findings confirm her fears and reason for her post.

Figure 25: Screenshot of user's post showing degraded land

The human-environment interaction, which according to Ostergren and Le Bossé (2011) is one of the basic facts of life, has so many implications. Ostensibly, the environment offers infinite possibilities, of which humans make important choices based on cultural and technological development (Ostergren & Le Bosse, 2011). Unfortunately, some of these choices, be it necessary have been a driving force for environmental degradation and change (Kervankiran, 2016). This citizen-led anti-galamsey movement therefore holds the credence that governments and policy makers will not take meaningful environmental action caused by illegal mining without a strong push from them (Mackey et al., 2021). In line with Mackey et al.'s (2021) proposition, it is therefore not surprising that a section of these citizen-led anti-galamsey activism participants specifically dedicated their social media space solely to highlight the numerous ways illegal mining is taking a toll on the environment. Thus, Edem Ashigbi, Benjamin Crentsil, Lily Frempong, Afia Pokuaa and Simeon Fosu posted on their Facebook wall and/or shared with their followers, images of polluted waters, degraded lands and depleted forest all caused by illegal mining purposely to create awareness and mobilize support for protecting the environment from illegal mining.

4.2.2 Leadership Failure

Leadership failure in the context of this study refers to the shortcomings and failures of power actors to address and control the negative impacts of illegal mining. This theme therefore focuses on inability of authorities to effectively prevent, control, and manage the occurrence of illicit mining activities. In fact, the issue of galamsey in political discourse has been described by scholars as one of a paradox, as those who seemingly are to lead the fight against the act are the very people who are thwarting all means to curb it (Botchwey & Crawford, 2018; Boafo et al., 2019). According to

these scholars, leadership failure in dealing with issues of illegal mining has been tagged as one of the major hindrances to the fight against the illegality (Botchwey & Crawford, 2018; UGBS, 2017). It is therefore not surprising it came second on the cumulative distribution table. The indicators for this theme are concerns of community heads leasing lands to illegal miners, politicians' involvement in the galamsey menace and corruption among power actors. This theme generally looks at corruption among leadership, weak/lack of political will, unconcern attitude among power actors and poor monitoring among power actors.

As shown in *Table 2 above*, the second dominant theme that emerged from the data collected is the theme of Leadership failure, with 14.51% of all posts shared by the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement. According to UGBS (2017), the “illegitimate business has continued to flourish because it serves the interests of a wide range of actors, including some chiefs who gain through the royalties they receive in exchange for land; and the political, business, and local elite who own the concessions that operate outside the legal mining framework” (p.3). As a result, a section of the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement took a confrontational stance, criticizing government/politicians, community heads, and business gurus' involvement in galamsey which has stifled its combat. From the posts below, it was retorted that, the galamsey brouhaha must not entirely be blamed on the Chinese who are only and largely given consent by the local gatekeepers, instead, the blame must be levelled on stakeholders like chiefs, politicians, businessmen and other state apparatus who leased lands to these '*galamseyers*' to perpetuate their activities with impunity at the expense of the locals and the country at large. In support of their slant of grievance, Agbozo and Spassov (2019) affirm that the galamsey business is one which keeps thriving because it is surrounded by corrupt activities, beginning from politicians to rural

chiefs and heads of towns down to the miners; a reason fighting it has become more complex than it was expected.

Figure 26: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure



According to a study by UGBS (2017), about 80 percent of land in Ghana is under the control of chiefs, implying that most mineral operations occur on stool land. Unfortunately, some chiefs have turned their control over land into widespread de facto power at the local and national levels, effectively utilising it in exacting tribute from both legal and illegal galamsey dealers UGBS (2017). The posts and concerns Jerome Ashie Terkpetey, Isaac Marfo Ahenkorah and Ocansey Daniel and concern could be understood from the aforementioned study, that the best panacea to fighting the illegality is to tackle it from the root cause which is meeting chiefs and leaders of various illegal mining communities to talk find appropriate ways of dealing with illegal mining and its side effects.

Figure 27: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure

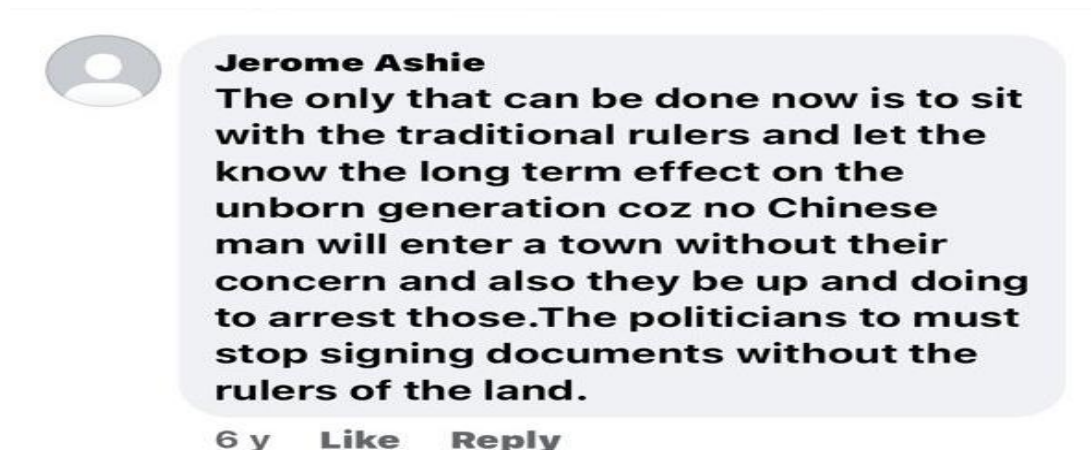


Figure 28: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure

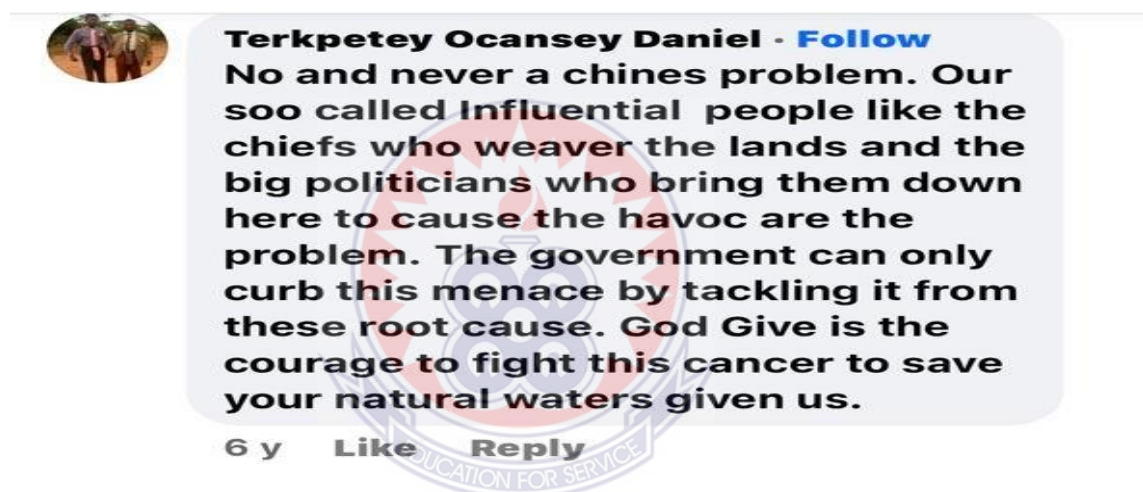
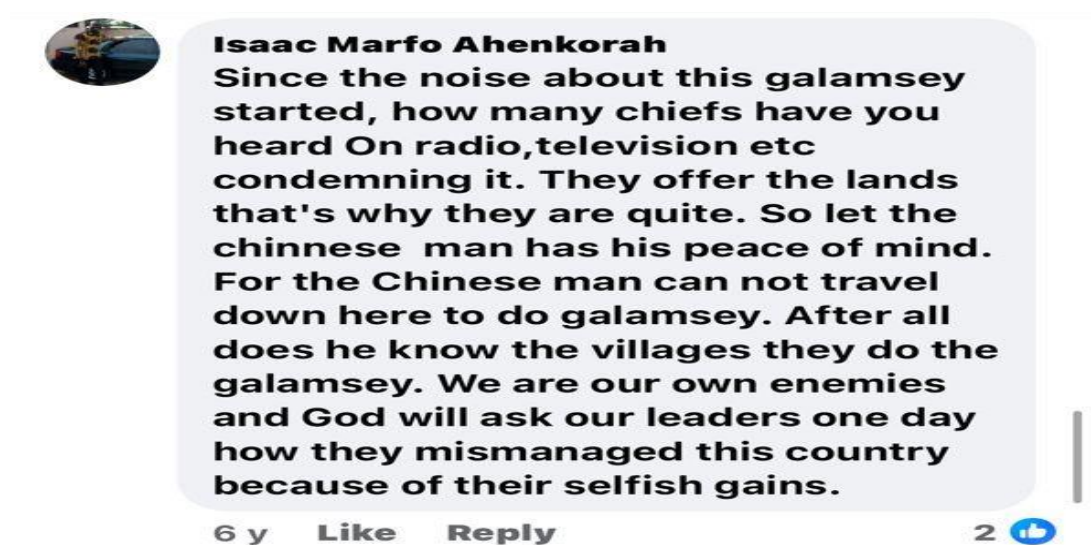


Figure 29: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure



Strangely, Yeboah (2023) discovered that, most of these politicians have deeply built their forte in the illegal venture; own mining concessions and threatening government officials who question their illegal activities. In view of this, whenever these illegal miners (both locals and Chinese) were arrested, there were influential local people with political connections who fought for their release. Unfortunately, these actions particularly by the politicians pose a serious hindrance to the collective agenda of fighting illegal mining.

Figure 30: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure



Figure 31: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure



Figure 32: Screenshot of user's post depicting leadership failure



In substantiating the claims under this theme, scholar like Bofo et al. (2019) and Crawford and Botchwey (2017b) confirm that power actors such as politicians, chiefs, officials of state institutions such as the Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, traditional rulers and landlords as well as the national security apparatus particularly Police, military, and immigration officers though are tagged as the frontliners in the fight against galamsey, yet it said that, the success of the Chinese in the mini-mining sector is due to their ability to establish strong ties with the aforementioned stakeholder

4.2.3 Economic Challenges

Economic Challenges within the context of this study highlights financial elements that push people into the illegal venture. According to some scholars, another giant agent cause of illegal mining is in most cases economic factors (Hilson & Garforth, 2012; Kervankiran, 2017). The number of illegal miners and the scope of their activities across the length and breadth of the country are increasingly alarming (GB&F, 2012), as they find illegal mining as an attractive venture for most people in the rural communities to escape from poverty, despite its associated life-threatening dangers (Afriyie et al., 2016). Unfortunately, the high level of unemployment in the country makes the youth susceptible to illegal activities including galamsey in order to earn a living (Bondah, 2013). Thus, this theme tackles the fight against illegal mining typically from economic cause perspective highlighting concerns like high unemployment rate, poverty and lack of alternative livelihood.

The results of the data obtained as shown in *Table 2 above*, shows that the theme of economic issue ranked third in the cumulative distribution of Facebook posts, with 11.63% of the dominant user representations. Some scholars found that a major reason for the high patronage of illegal mining particularly among the youth in rural

‘galamsey’ communities is the result of lack/inadequate job opportunities. This view is substantiated by some scholars who posit that a major cause of illegal mining in Ghana is high unemployment rate (Bondah, 2013; Eduful et al., 2020). This condition compels both the rural and urban unemployed to consider illegal mining as an option for securing livelihood (Kervankiran et al., 2016). For instance, some as shown below suggested that government’s earlier decision and promise to give rural areas jobs through the ‘One district One Factory’ (1D1F) must be implemented as an intervention programme to provide the illegal miners with an alternative source of livelihood. According to these posts, until this fundamental issue is solved, the battle against illegal mining will continue to be a fuss and a losing battle.

Figure 33: Screenshot of user’s post depicting economic issue

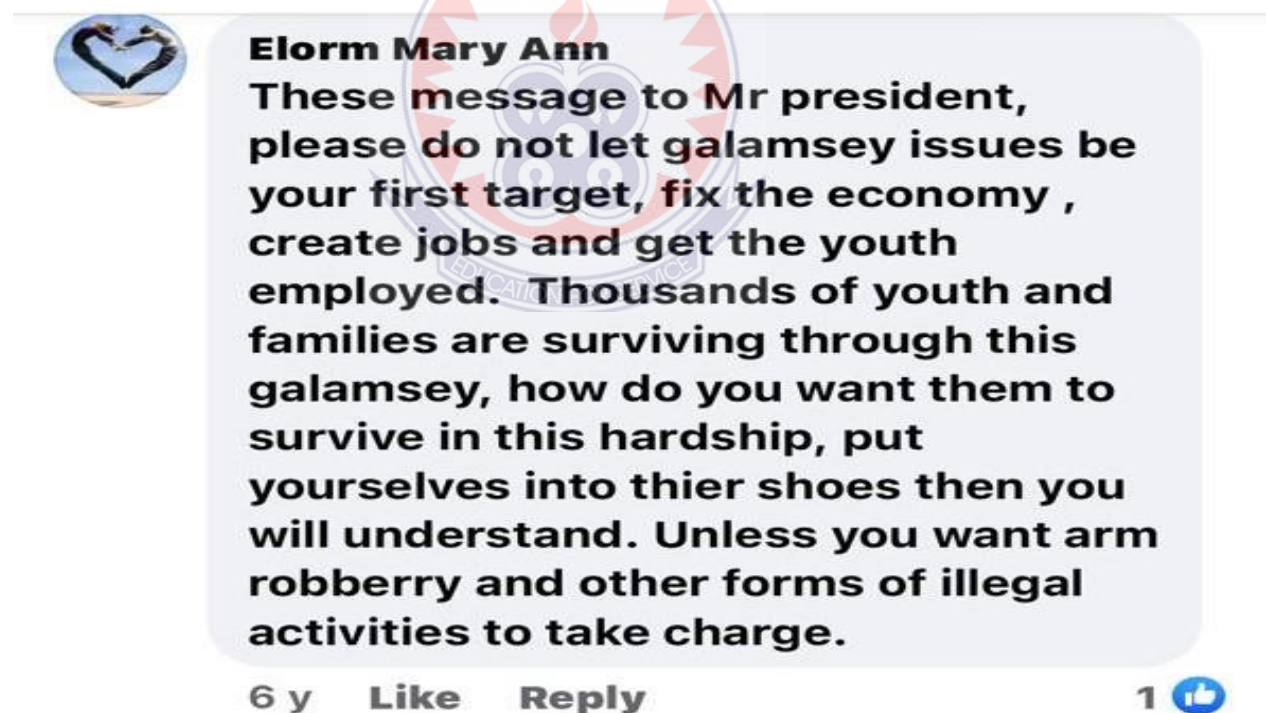
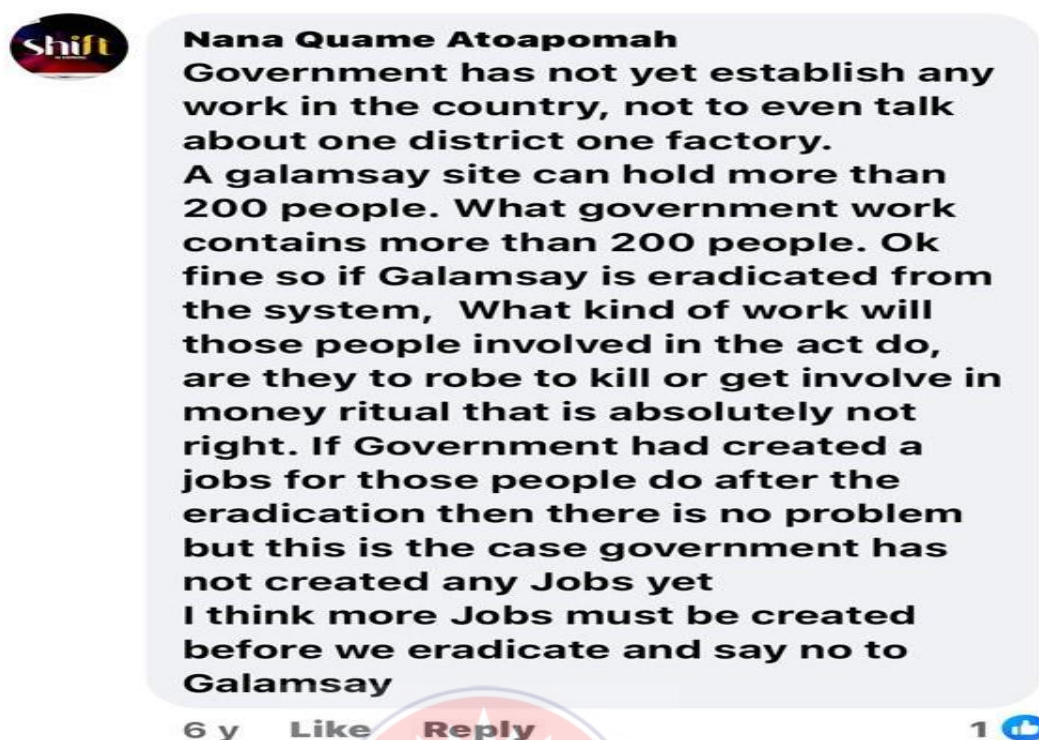


Figure 34: Screenshot of user’s post depicting unemployment concerns



In reality, unemployment pushes many youths to engage in galamsey as an alternative source of employment in other to survive and to obtain the basic life necessities such as food, clothing and accommodation (Afriyie et al., 2023; Eduful et al., 2020). This situation compels many people even with formal education to join the illegal trade. This assertion is postulated in figure 35, 36 and 37 where a section of the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement is with the opinion that while government strives to eradicate illegal mining, effort should equally be made to provide affected persons with alternative means of livelihood or the government risk fighting a losing battle.

Figure 35: Screenshot of user’s post depicting unemployment concerns



Figure 36: Screenshot of user’s post depicting unemployment concerns

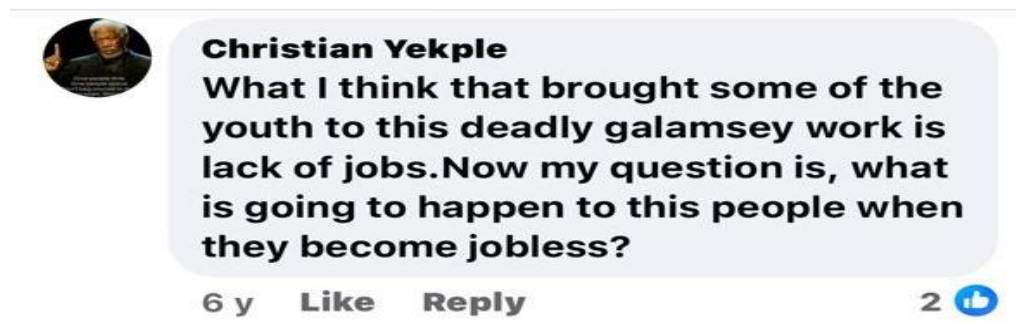
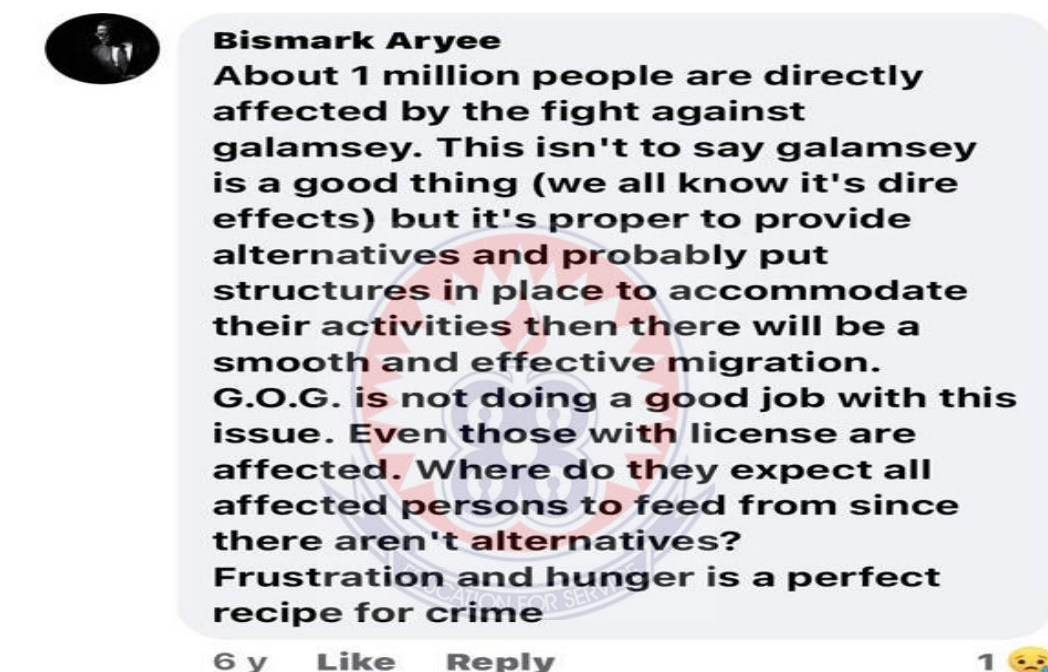


Figure 37: Screenshot of user’s post depicting unemployment concerns



4.2.4 Insecurity

Ngwoke and Akabike (2022) define insecurity as one of the social ills that threatens humanity’s existence, create fear within its environment and limit its free movement. According to Ewetan (2014), insecurity stems from lack of safety; risk, hazard and uncertainty, lack of defence and lack of security. Insecurity in the context of this study refers to the challenges and threats posed by criminal activities, social unrest, and instability in galamsey communities. In the case of this study, illegal mining activities in Ghana pose significant security risks in affected areas, creating an environment

conducive to social conflicts, violence, and criminal activities (Samuel & Yeboah, 2023). It is often characterized by a lack of formal oversight and regulation which can precipitate conflicts over mining rights, land ownership, and access to resources (Samuel & Yeboah, 2023). The theme of *insecurity* therefore reports on issues of conflicts among miners, violence and armed robberies in galamsey communities.

The results of the data obtained, as shown in **Table 2 above**, shows that the theme of weak legal and institutional framework ranked high among the dominant user representations in the cumulative distribution of Facebook posts, with 9.3% of the total post for this study. As was exemplified in the post by Dove Maxwell, shed light on security defects in galamsey communities with an image that showed bodies of four (4) dead illegal miners who were killed by the Anti-galamsey task force deployed by government. His post follows Tarrow (2014) argument that social movements are primarily triggered by grievances among a group of people which motivate them to take collective action. The post by Dove Maxwell therefore sought to avers that government has failed as it watches citizen perish under the guise of fighting illegal mining and hence, used his post to incite communities to fight illegal mining to avert the reoccurrence of such unfortunate incident. In the realm of social media activism, as opined by Tufekci (2017), Facebook provides space for activists like Dove Maxwell to share his post to people in similar circumstances and experience; hence making it easier for them to get a sense of what is happening and to feel like they are not alone, thus triggering collective action.

Figure 38: Screenshot of user's post showing security concerns



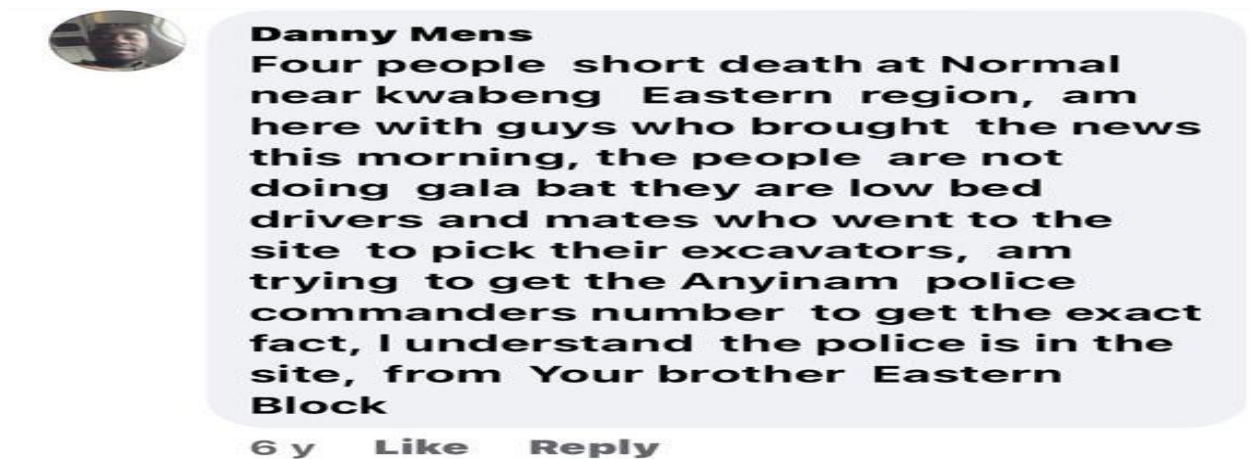
Dove Maxwell · Follow

13 Aug 2017

Anti galamsey task force killed Four people at Akyem Kwabeng.

Eeeeeiii Ama Ghana

Like Dove Maxwell's post, Danny Men's post equally raises concern of insecurity as people were shot dead at galamsey site for allegedly engaging in the act. As the cases of killing increases, as general element underpinning the social movement theory is likely to manifest; which is the issue of grievances among a group of people as Tarrow (2014) propounded. This aggrieved individual is likely to embrace a collective identity to fight the brutality of government which is likely to trigger social conflict.

Figure 39: Screenshot of user's post depicting security concerns

Agbozo and Spassov (2019) observed that the galamsey business is one which is surrounded by corrupt activities, beginning from politicians to rural chiefs and heads of towns down to the miners. The post by Waju Wan could not be any truer as it is confirmed by the above study. It can therefore be said that Waju Wan used his post to expose the rots and corruptions undertaken by community leaders like the assemblyman which in diverse ways undermine most efforts to fight illegal mining and promote sustainable development. Again, the possession of these firearms according to Bondah (2013), are used by the illegal miners to defend their activities; which in the long run undermine and threaten Ghana's physical security, particularly, these galamsey communities. Equally, Bloch (2011) found that, these armed groups perpetuate violent activities, such as extortion, intimidation, and physical assaults, to assert control over mining sites and protect their illicit operations. Not only that, the presence of these militias further exacerbates social conflicts and compromises the safety and security of affected communities.

Figure 40: Screenshot of user's post showing security concerns

The post in *figure 41* below by Quabena Sarpong shed light on the issue of armed robbery in host communities. His concern has equally been underscored by Ofori and Atokora (2021) who observed that income generated by young galamseyers are unsustainable since many lack financial education and consequently live ostentatious lifestyle by spending all their revenue without savings. Quite revealing, the act is not exclusively practiced by indigenous people in mining communities who consider it as traditional source of livelihood but also engaged in by migrant miners; both internal and trans-border (Nyame & Grant, 2014). The net effect of living a spendthrift lifestyle leads many of these illegal miners to engage in social vices such as armed robbery, substance abuse and prostitution. This finding is equally supported by Faamaa et al. (2020) study which revealed that most of the unemployed youth in these

mining areas and in other regions find mining as a lucrative and best alternative to stealing and engaging in other violent criminal activities to make money.

Figure 41: Screenshot of user's post depicting security concerns



For these community members who protest on the ticket of insecurity in galamsey communities, have some social scholars standing with them, as they argue that, when a situation is created by governmental decision making or by any means that could possibly prejudice a specific group or community, a status of unfairness and illegitimacy arises (Yigit & Tarman, 2013). Subsequently, such status is able to push a group of people into collective action (Berg, 2020). It must therefore not be viewed as out of normal to see majority of the anti-galamsey movement used their social media space to protest against situations that threaten their life and peace.

4.2.5 Corruption

The OECD (2013) defines corruption as the abuse of public or private office for personal gains. Corruption has been one of the main obstacles to sustainable economic, political and social development relating to illegal mining (Yeboah, 2023). It is characterised by elements of bribery, extortion and embezzlement (OECD, 2013). Corruption within Ghana's public sector is a proximate cause of illegal mining activities in the country (Mantey et al., 2017). Within the definition of this theme, it

was identified that the illegal venture continues to linger because local miners and their collaborators pay huge sums of money to members of the illegal mining Taskforce and as a result compromises the activities of the taskforce (UGBS, 2017). Again, members of the anti-illegal mining Taskforce extort monies from illegal miners to permit them to operate when they were supposed to arrest them and seize their equipment (UGBS, 2017; Yeboah, 2023). This has been a major impediment to the fight against illegal mining. The indicators under this theme therefor capture concerns raised around extortion by Operation Vanguard team from illegal mining miners, taking of bribes by both government officials and community leaders.

The results of the data obtained, as shown in **Table 2 above**, shows that the theme of weak legal and institutional framework ranked among the dominant issues highlighted in the cumulative distribution of Facebook posts, with 8.52% of the total post for this study. The post by Alhaji Aminu follows a news report filled by *Starrfm*, an Accra based radio station on May 12, 2017 which alleged that *Aisha Huang*, a known Chinese kingpin in the galamsey brouhaha, who after her arrest, threatened to release sex videos involving herself and some highly placed Ghanaian officials who purportedly gave her protection to continue her illicit mining activities. Subsequently, she managed to get off the hook. From a typical political lens, Mohammed Aminu assertion falls in line with an observation by Ofori and Atakora (2021) that Corruption and Political influence are the major factors impeding the fight against galamsey menace. They assert that many of the Chinese's illegal operatives are working hand in hand with politicians and public officials, thereby enjoying protections from law enforcement officers (Ofori & Atakora, 2021).

Figure 42: Image of user's post depicting corruption among gov't officials



Alhaji Mohammed Aminu · Follow

17 May 2017

Sex For Galamsey Palaver!!



1 comment

Ci Ci Corley's post labelled *figure 43* below confirms Alhaji Mohammed Aminu post in *figure 42* that, indeed bribery and political interference is a major hindrance to the fight against illegal mining.

Figure 43: Screenshot of user's post depicting corruption among gov't officials



Ci Ci Corley

If some of our leaders in positions of authority can stoop so low and use sex as a bargaining tool to allow criminals to go free then how can we develop as a nation!!? Morals are important in whatever we do

6 y Like Reply

Mohammed Lamptey equally condemns a government official for squandering a certain funds which could have been used to build factories to provide an alternative means of livelihood to illegal miners. His concern is supported by Ofori and Atakora (2021) who found that public office holders and political corruption, interference,

local authority selfishness have been identified as a proximate challenge faced by regulatory institutions executing curbing galamsey policy interventions.

Figure 44: Screenshot of user's post depicting corruption among gov't officials



Monetary influence of Chinese migrants against Ghana's weak regulatory institutions is a significant challenge facing policy interventions aimed at fighting galamsey (Ofori & Atakora, 2021). This observation by Ofori and Atokora therefore validates Ismail Habeeb concerns that the Chinese effrontery to persist in the illegal business despites opposition from citizens and major stakeholders can be underscored by their ability to bribe heads of state institution with money to bypass laws. The finding affirms Hausermann and Ferring (2018) who indicated that, programmes to combat illegal mining failed because some corrupt members of the security task forces and others who were under the control of "big men" with political power provided support to people engaged in illegal operations for personal gains.

Figure 45: Screenshot of user's post depicting corruption among taskforce



Isaac BraKo Ramsey put this theme in short notice yet clearest form. He asserts that, galamsey could be a serious threat yet corruption is more perilous and thus suggest corruption should be fought first. Solving corruption is a step to fighting illegal mining. His rant could be understood from many evidences provided in *figure 46*.

Figure 46: Screenshot of user's post depicting corruption



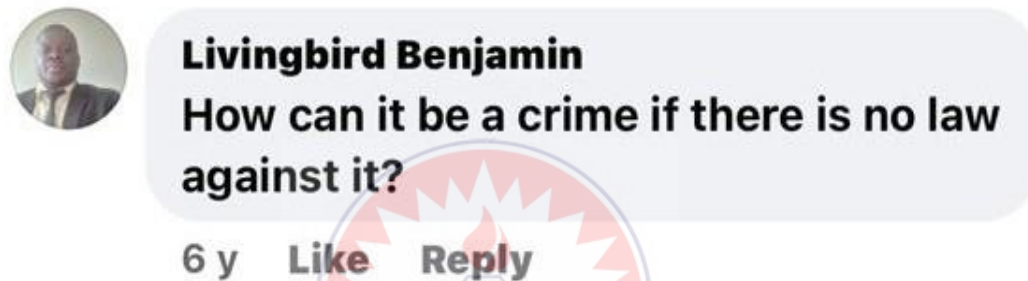
4.2.6 Weak Legal and Institutional Framework

This theme in the context of the current study evaluates the inadequacy or insufficiency in terms of legal structures, policies, and institutions responsible for controlling and preventing unlawful mining activities. This theme is underscored by the proposition that, there are institutions mandated to work to promote mining as a source of livelihood for the people and also reduce the environmental impact of gold mining (Yeboah, 2023). Unfortunately, despite these laws adopted to deal with illegal mining, the state continues to struggle with the enforcement of mining regulations as a result of these regulatory institutions not exerting their mandated power (UGBS, 2017; Yeboah, 2023). Obviously, illegal mining operations highlight gaps in law enforcement, weaken governance systems and corruption among state institutions. The theme therefore captures issues of unclear or ambiguous laws, ineffective enforcement, lack of coordination and inadequate monitoring and surveillance in combatting galamsey.

The results of the data obtained, as shown in **Table 2**, shows that the theme of weak legal and institutional framework ranked fourth in the cumulative distribution of

Facebook posts, with 11.04% of the total post for this study. The posts below by Livingbird Benjamin typically tackle illegal mining from political perspective. In his view, although galamsey seems criminalized hitherto, he argues that the best way to fight the canker is to clearly construct and enforce a legal framework that clearly and legally criminalizes the act. His argument is confirmed by Yeboah's (2023) finding that weak legal and institutional framework is one of the factors that account for the weak enforcement of mining laws in Ghana.

Figure 47: Screenshot of user's post depicting weak legal and Inst. framework



Teschner (2012) tells it better arguing that, political leniency and corruption in the enforcement of laws have resulted in the booming of the illegal mining sector. Quobby Deedew and Sky Blue outburst could therefore be understood from Teschner (2012) finding that if Ghana's laws were effective, the issue of galamsey and its menace would not have escalated to this uncontrollable turn. They therefore suggest that a clear legal framework void of any ambiguity should be enacted to regulate the escalating illegal mining menace in Ghana.

Figure 48: Screenshot of user's post depicting weak legal framework

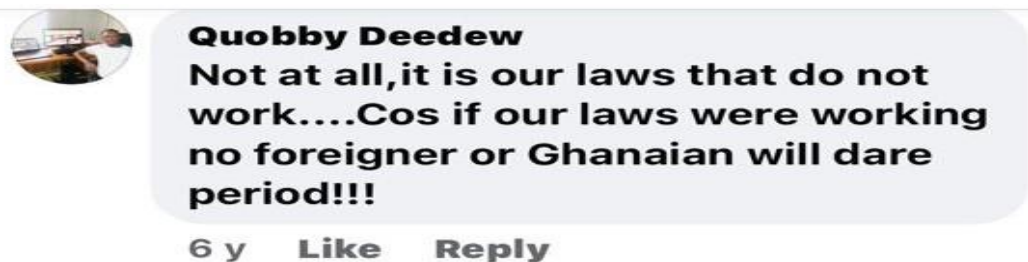
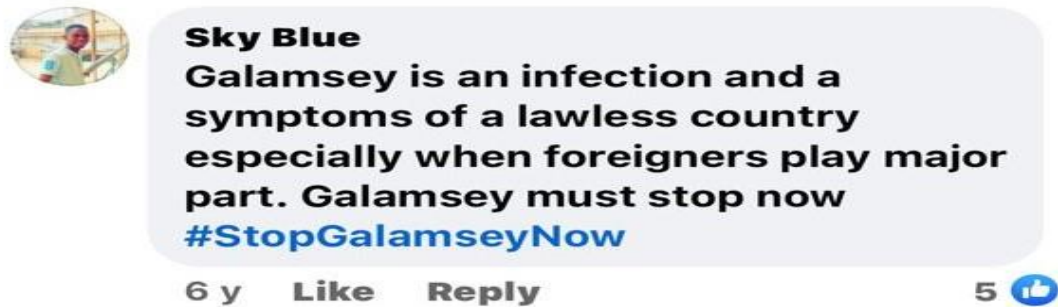


Figure 49: Screenshot of user's post depicting weak legal framework

Moyer (2001) emphasises that “the desire for positive change in existing conditions and in society’s common interest is regarded as a basic element of social movements” (p:17). While the aforementioned dominant issues discussed have fuelled public discontent and calls for accountability and transparency in governance; scholars like McAdam et al. (2001) and Meyer and Minkoff (2004) contend that an unfortunate phenomenon like ‘galamsey’ is not entirely a death sentence yet for Ghana. These scholars posit that in the midst of the galamsey ruckus, the nature of the political, social, economic, and cultural environment shape the success or failure of the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement (McAdam et al. 2001; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). Within this framework, political opportunities therefore arise when there is an opening in the institutional context in Ghana that allows for the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement to form alliances, mobilize resources, and access to decision-making processes that are geared toward fighting illegal mining (McAdam et al., 2001).

4.3 RQ3. What are the emotions expressed on Facebook in the citizen-led anti galamsey activism in Ghana?

The emotions that human beings experience play a fundamental role in all social phenomena and as a result, it becomes important to incorporate the analysis of affective structures and emotional dynamics into the study, characteristically when it revolves around human experience (Bericat, 2016). While a common definition for

the term 'emotions,' has not been established, majority of researchers have agreed that emotion is characterized mostly by feelings, behaviour, physiological changes and cognitions that always occur in a particular context that influences it (Gordon, 2010; Lovin, 2015). Primarily, the profound complexity which characterizes human life in the world is reflected in the broad and subtle universe of emotions (Levenson, 2001). For this reason, understanding the complex nature of human emotions is absolutely necessary for the adequate development of all human-related research (Lovin, 2015).

Social networking platforms have become an indispensable means for communicating feelings to the entire world where several people use textual content, pictures, audio, and video to express their feelings or viewpoints (Nandwani & Verma, 2021). These contents are closely related to the lives, emotions, and opinions of users (Cui et al., 2023). As technology continues to evolve with its integral capabilities, analysis on kinds of emotions exhibited by the users on web-based applications is becoming a more utilized tool particularly on social media (Levenson, 2001). Social media has thus, become an important platform for analysis of human interactions (Paechter, 2013) and social networking sites such as Facebook are said to enable users to comment and convey emotions through texts and emojis (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011). The practice and process of identifying audience emotions can be referred to as sentiment analysis. Sentiment analysis is therefore employed to understand users' emotions and attitudes towards a particular topic on social media (Wang et al., 2018). The analysis of social media sentiment according to Bargh and McKenna (2004) assesses and contextualizes the conversations of users around the social space on a specific subject. In the sphere of social media activism and in collective action, the expression of emotions assumes great prominence (Yang, 2000). In Yang's view

(2017), these emotional expressions are central to all these varieties of online activism.

This research question provided the grounds for identifying the diverse emotions expressed through posts in the anti-galamsey activism on Facebook. From the analysed data for the study, the extracts show that the posts exhibited four out of the six basic emotions outlined in Ekman's theory of basic emotions. These emotions were: anger, fear, sadness and disgust. The table labelled *table 3 below* shows the frequency and percentage of emotions exhibited in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook on the 'galamsey' phenomenon in Ghana.

Table 3: Kinds of Emotions

Frequency distribution of emotions exhibited on Facebook in the citizen-led anti galamsey activism on Facebook from April, 2017 to September, 2017.

Type of Emotion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fear	334	24.7
Anger	220	16.3
Sad	205	15.2
Disgust	138	10.2
Neutral	453	33.6
Total	1350	100

4.3.1 Fear

From the data corpus analysed, fear emerged as the most dominant emotion expressed in the anti-galamsey activism posts in the Facebook with 24.7%. The theme of fear according to Smith-Lovin (2015) is an uncomfortable feeling caused by danger, pain, or looming harm. According to Joaquim et al. (2018), all states of fear are triggered by feeling a threat of harm and have both anxiety and terror. In other words, fear is

typically incited once a situation is being perceived as threatening to one's physical or psychological self as well as being outside of one's control (Nabi, 2002). The posts captured under the theme of fear raised concerns around cases of: destruction of cultivable lands, water pollution and destruction of aquatic life, forest depletion and possible loss of human life. Some of the posts sought to campaign against galamsey due to the method and chemical used which can be harmful to users who are exposed to contaminated water. For instance, a post by Prez Virgo Baabangida as shown below sought to draw attention to the looming danger that is likely to erupt if government does not provide portable water to some of these galamsey affected areas. In his view, usage of mercury infested water in galamsey infested water bodies can claim many lives through series of infections and diseases. Leeper and Slothuus (2014) postulate that activists usually employ fear-inducing narrative to highlight potential consequences of inaction, or to expose hidden threats of galamsey, so as to draw people's attention to them.

Figure 50: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of fear



To buttress Pres Virgo Baabangida's view, Jennifer Mankatah and Ed Mens posts exhibited fear of possible contamination of water bodies and food as a result of

immersion of toxic chemicals like mercury during galamsey related activities. This poses serious health threat to people and aquatic habitats. Jennifer Mankatah in particular asserts that it is highly possible those living in galamsey catchment zones may have a considerable level of mercury in their body, hence, it is imperative to conduct a test to be certain of any sort of infections.

Figure 51: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of fear

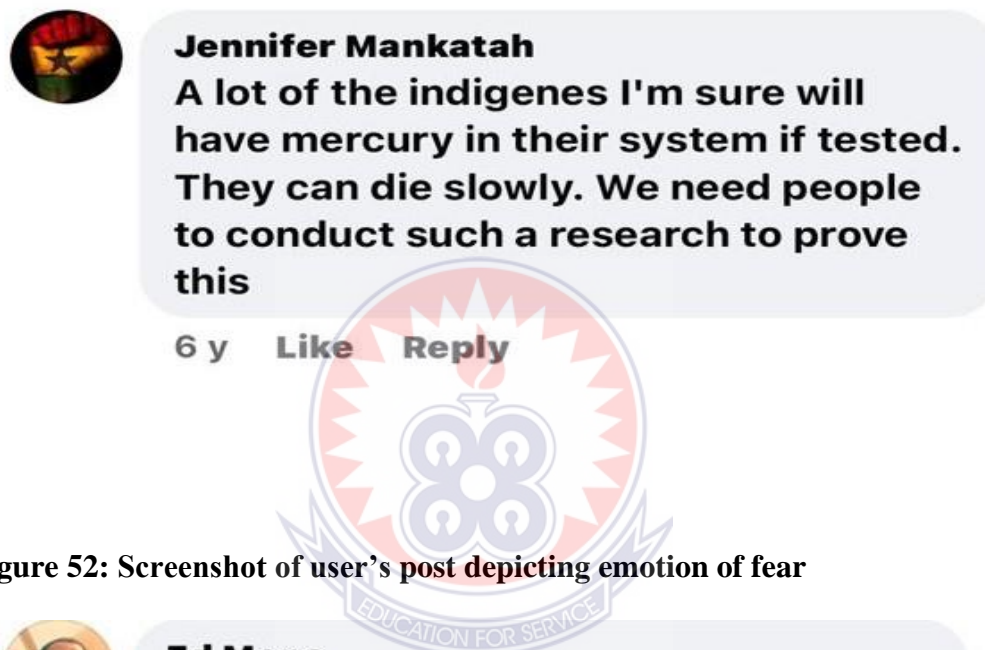
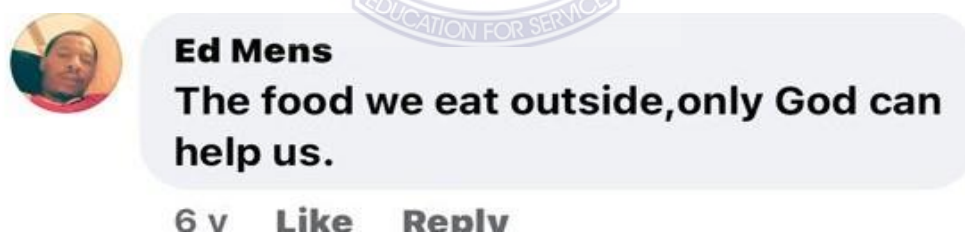


Figure 52: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of fear



Similar to Prez Virgo Baabangida, Jennifer Mankatah and Ed Mens posts, other posts equally raised concern characterized by fear indicating that if measures are not put in place to remedy the cases of water contamination, the country risk importing water from foreign lands in the offing. For instance, Jacob Zornu's post below, anticipated a fear of the unknown. His post confirmed a study by UGBS (2017) that Ghana Water Company in March 2017, warned that the spate of water pollution by illegal mining operators was approaching alarming levels, and that the country risks importing water

for consumption by 2020 unless illegal mining activities are curbed. In line with his post, Ekman and Cordaro (2011) assert that People's fear for their future or the environment often mobilizes them to take action; thus, in this case, the looming and dire impacts of illegal mining as forecasted by Jacob Zornu triggered his action of posting to draw attention of stakeholders to remedy any future tragedies that may flare up from illegal mining.

Figure 53: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of fear



Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that netizens expressed the fear of losing their physical security as a result of illegal mining practices. This is similar to Bondah (2013) observation that Ghana's physical security is under threat as illegal miners acquire firearms to defend their activities. He again mentioned that high unemployment rate can plunge the country into chaos just like Democratic Republic of Congo, as illegal mining is fuelled by unemployment and poverty (Bondah, 2013). Stephen Larbi's post below expressed fear just like Bondah (2013) opined, that illegal mining can plunge the country into civil unrest as it was the case of Sierra Leone, Liberia and DRC if measures are not put in place to solve unemployment in the country. Stephen Larbi's post can be understood from what Gurr (1970) as cited in Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2007) said that, when changing social conditions cause people to experience 'relative deprivation' the likelihood of protest and

rebellion significantly increases; and consequently, can throw a society like most of these mini-mining communities and Ghana at large into a state of chaos.

Figure 54: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of fear



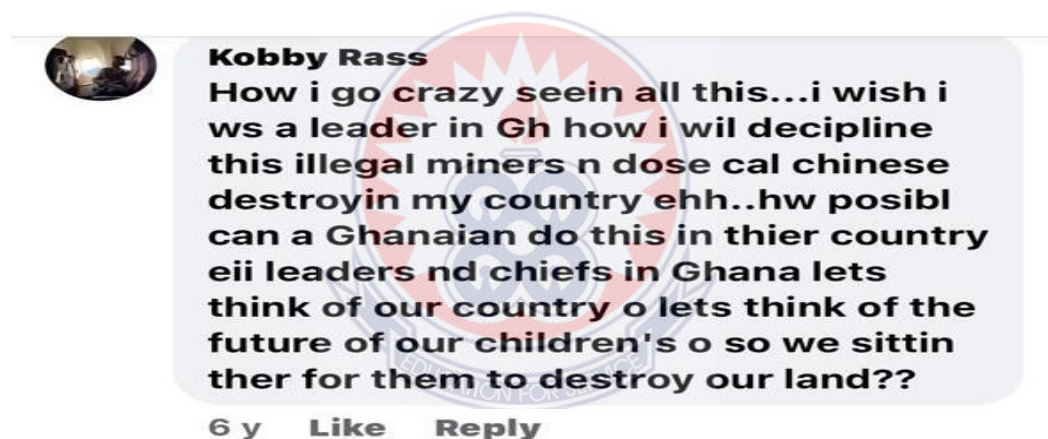
In the domain of social media activism, scholars argue that one of the most used emotions in communication is fear, usually elicited via the presence of threats, which indeed has been shown to have strong persuasive effects (Tannenbaum et al. 2015). It is therefore not surprising that fear dominated as the most exhibited emotions in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism as a duct to convey a message to stakeholders and to call on others to join in the fight against the act.

4.3.2 Anger

Another dominant emotion that emerged from the data of emotions is the theme of anger, garnering 16.3% of the total post collected from Facebook. Anger is an intense emotional state that involves a strong, unpleasant and non-cooperative response to perceived provocation, accident or threat (Lovin, 2015). In Lovin's view (2015), anger is a healthy emotional response to a threat or irritation. The theme of anger therefore encompasses all the Facebook posts expressing expressions of displeasure, annoyance, irritation, and all frustration tied to the galamsey menace. This emotion includes both annoyance and fury, and these are triggered by a feeling of being blocked in one's progress (Joaquim et al., 2018). From the data collected, some posts

expressed rage at how illegal mining has generally affected the natural environment and the inability of leaders to combat it. Fan et al. (2014) found that in general, angry messages in particular are more likely to spread on than joyful or sad ones. According to Tufekci (2017), anger can act as a mobilizing force, driving individuals to participate in online protests and advocacy. The theme focused on destruction of the environment by illegal mining and how power actors have not been able to deal with it. An example is *figure 55 below* by Kobby Rass expressing irritation at how political and traditional leaders have allowed local and Chinese miners to destroy the country's natural resources through illegal mining.

Figure 55: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of anger



In his view, these power actors hold the mandate to protect the environment and thus, they must be held accountable for their actions. Kobby Rass's line of thought aligns with Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans's (2009) position that social movement works hard to create moral outrage and anger and to provide a target against these power actors who this emotion can be vented on. Thus, a central attribute of emotional experience is intentionality –that is an emotion has an object (Jalonen, 2014). Not far from Kobby Rass' concern, Moses Abu Zachary's post *below* equally conveys the emotion of annoyance as he raised concern on what he described as *cheat from the Chinese miners*.

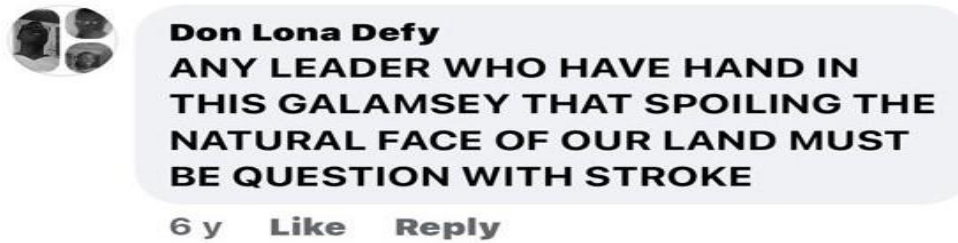
Figure 56: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of anger

While Kobby Rass blamed the Chinese miners for destroying the environment, Moses Abu Zachary's post labelled *figure 56 below* argued that, although 'galamsey' is classically reserved for Ghanaians who need only certification from Minerals Commission of Ghana to operate; ironically, it seems the Chinese and other foreigners have ignored the law to capture the mini-mining business. Antwi-Boateng and Akudugu (2020) made the same observation citing that the Chinese ability to mobilize resources and execute heavy machineries (excavators) in the small-scale mining industry wheeled along; its own woes to galamsey communities; virtually displacing the indigenes from their source of livelihood and worsening the environmental catastrophes of illegal mining. It is in this regard that Moses Abu Zachary is irritated at the Chinese miners for issuing threat to the locals of galamsey communities for taking what originally and rightfully belongs to them. Moses Abu Zachary expression of anger can thus be understood from the observation made by Antwi-Boateng and Akudugu (2020). Scholars like Yang and Pace (2007) posit that such an emotional expression is valid, since emotion like anger is activated when social injustice like Chinese destroying and taking what belongs to these mining communities arises.

Moreover, other posts attributed galamsey and its related woes on politicians who are expected to be the frontliners in the fight against the canker and thus, called for the

head of any politician who is caught involved in the act. An example of this post is one by Don Lona Defy below:

Figure 57: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of anger



Though, post labelled *figure 57 above* may sound violent and frown on in real life situations yet, Shaw (2014) avers that social media defy some cultural, social odds and barriers to enable users like Don Lona Defy to convey anger at injustice in ways that are prohibited in daily life, thereby giving him space to vent his anger at authorities without any fear of societal stereotyping. Like Don Lona Defy, the post by Mohammed Kamal Ck labelled *figure 58 below* also exhibited an intense level of anger crafted with strong words. Whiles the former calls for the head of leaders involved in illegal mining, Mohammed Kamal Ck post suggest that Chinese illegal miners by whatever crude means available, must be chased out of Ghana if that is what it takes to curb the menace. His post equally syncs with Shaw (2014) assertions above.

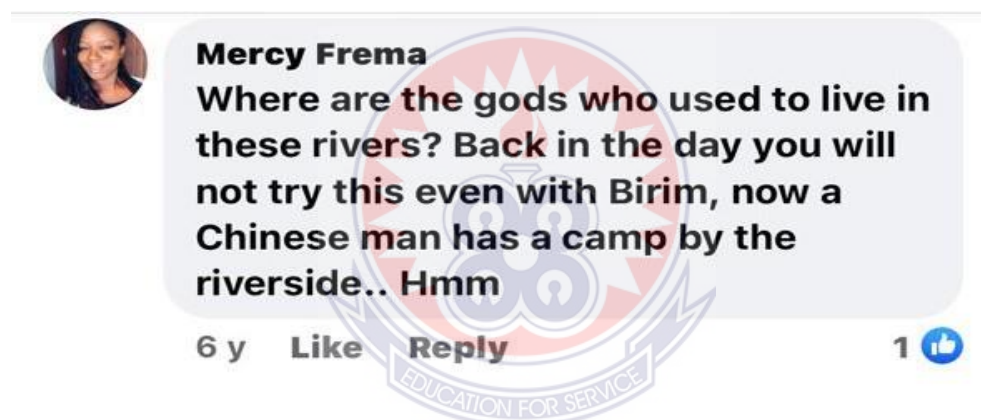
Figure 58: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of anger



According to William (2017), behaviours accompanied by anger and rage serve many different purposes and the nuances of aggressive behaviours are often defined by the

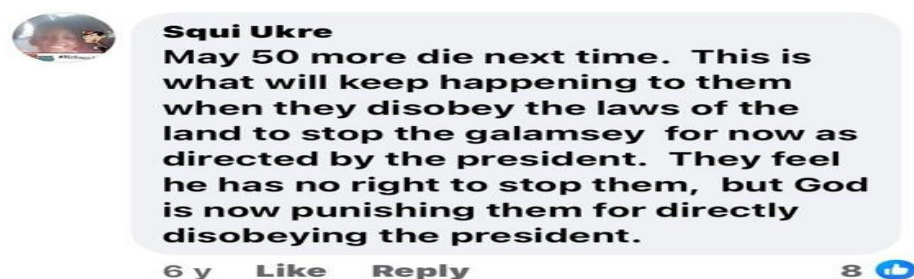
symbolic and cultural framework and social contexts. The study found that While most of the posts that exhibited anger called for infliction of physical punishment on felons, others like Mercy Frema's post is influenced by her cultural beliefs which seems to call on the smaller gods who are believed to be the custodians of these polluted water bodies to release their wrath and 'spiritually' to strike the perpetrators dead. Mercy Frema's post could thus be understood from William's (2011) point of argument that the expression of anger can be influenced by one's cultural framework and social context.

Figure 59: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of anger



Similarly, a post that was in reaction to an incident that caused the death of many illegal miners as a pit caved in on them by Squi Ukre expressed an intense fury wishing 50 more had died.

Figure 60: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of anger



His post can be understood from Shaw (2014) argument that social media offers space for people to convey anger at injustice in ways that are prohibited in daily life routines.

4.3.3 Sadness

Emotions such as sadness are often associated with something negative, because they are experienced in an unpleasant way in most situations by which they are evoked (Moll et al's., 2001). According to Joaquim et al., (2018), sadness has both disappointment and despair; and the most states of this emotion are triggered by a feeling of loss (Joaquim et al., 2018). Power and Dalglish (2008) point out that sadness is not a totally negative emotion, and is one of the most striking emotional experiences in humans compared to other basic emotions. From the table above, sadness recorded 15.2% out of the total number of data collected. By implication, when we experience everyday sadness, we usually are able to feel intimately connected with others (Joaquim, 2018). In applying this theme to social media activism, the indicators for this theme include posts carved around feeling of loss, disappointment and despair. For instance, some of the posts expressed worries about likely poisoning of water bodies, destruction of cultivable lands, destruction of forest reserves and to an extreme, possible loss of human lives. The posts labelled 61, 62 and 63 below expressed despair at how illegal mining has destroyed arable lands, water bodies and forest reserves. The feeling conveyed in these posts are confirmed by Borah and Xiao's (2018) observation that people often leverage narratives that evoke empathy and compassion, using poignant stories to draw attention to social injustices since sadness expressions and behaviours elicit aid by signalling to others that individual needs assistance (Reed & DeScioli, 2017).

Figure 61: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness



Figure 62: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness



Figure 63: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness



Alternatively, other posts also expressed disappointment in how power actors looked unconcerned while foreigners' harness and destroy lands, water bodies and to the extreme, loss of life, all at the detriment of the locals.

Figure 64: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness

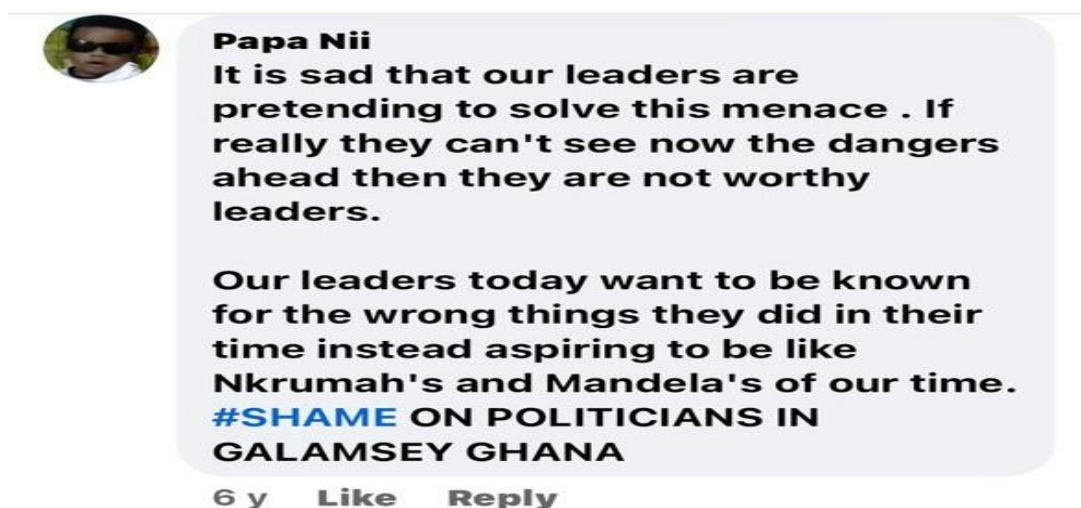


Figure 65: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness



Joaquim et al. (2018) aver that sadness is expressed as a response to a loss, potential loss or some unreachd goal. Like the above assertion, some posts were characterised by the feeling of despair expressing an unpleasant situations and scenes that are likely to befall Ghana if illegal mining and its menace is not treated as a case of emergency. For example, the post below pointed out that people are losing their lives to illegal mining. To show the seriousness of how lives are perishing, the post by Mallam Baba Sika called for the intervention of divinity to salvage the looming dangers of illegal mining on Ghanaians.

Figure 66: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness



Figure 67: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness



Equally, the post below expressed concerns on the long-term effects of illegal mining which will transcend to affect posterity who have no hands in the act. The post figuratively seems to suggest that Ghana has no future if illegal mining is not fought with a sense of emergency.

Figure 68: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of sadness

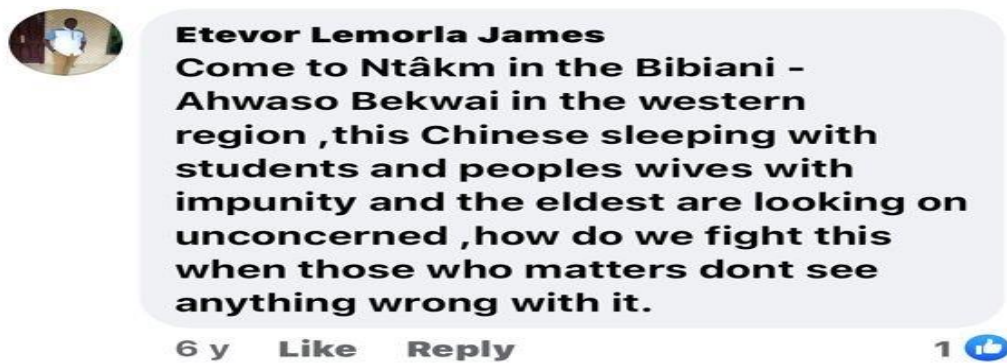


According to Karnaze and Levine (2018), the expressions exhibited in these posts are valid because people feel sad when they perceive loss or goal failure to be irrevocable, given their current resources. Again, under the theme of *sadness*, it can be concluded that most of the posts called for stakeholders to come to the aid of victims, and this can be explained by Thompson et al's. (2020) assertion that the mobilizing power of sadness lies in its ability to evoke empathy and solidarity among

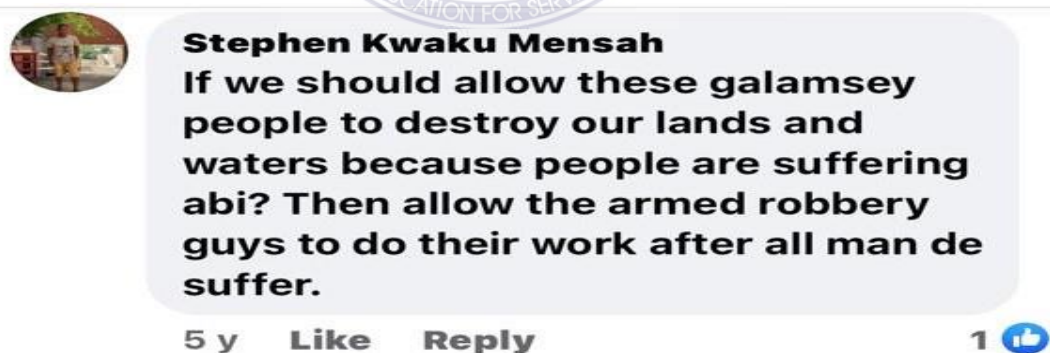
online activists which motivate them to take collective action against perceived injustices.

4.3.4 Disgust

Disgust is an emotional response to perceived moral violations or threats to one's values, (Haidt & Joseph, 2007). Disgust contains both dislike and loathing, and is triggered by the feeling that something is toxic (Joaquim et al., 2018). Haidt and Joseph (2007) assert that the emotion of disgust can serve as a powerful force for social change for people when harnessed effectively. The universal trigger for disgust is the feeling that something is offensive, poisonous or contaminating (Rozin et al., 2008). Characteristically, one can feel disgusted by something he/she perceived with the physical senses or by the actions and appearance of people and even by ideas (Rozin et al., 2008). A more common view suggests that disgust involves a range of sophisticated cognitive appraisals and a particular phenomenological state that is likely unique to humans (Kelly, 2011; Rozin et al., 2016). Mullen and Skitka (2006) therefore argue that disgust can be perceived towards moral violations or unethical behaviour. Equally, Lee and Kim (2017) aver that disgust in online spaces can serve as a catalyst for collective action, pushing activists to address and rectify situations that violate their shared values and principles. In the table above, disgust recorded 10.2% of the total data collected from the Facebook posts. The indicators for this theme include post woven around aversion, repulsion and toxicity. For instance, some of the posts expressed repulsion at increased rate in social vices such as prostitution, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and adultery in remote mining communities. For example, Etevor Lemorla James' post expressed disgust at how illegal mining has become a breeding ground for infidelity and sexual inappropriateness.

Figure 69: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of disgust

Contextually, while certain aspects of disgust may be universal, its emergence is largely enculturated and its expression is highly variable like that of Etevor Lemorla James within his cultural parameter describes these acts by Chinese as disgusting (Rottman et al., 2019). Similarly, the post by Stephen Kwaku Mensah also expresses disgust at how people caught in the act still justify their action under the popular opinion of 'hardship in the country'. His post suggests that illegal mining is wrong regardless of one's reason or excuse for engaging in it.

Figure 70: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of disgust

Alternatively, some of the posts under the theme of disgust were also characterised by feeling of aversion around concerns like; individual destruction of nature for their selfish gains, power actors sitting on the fence and disregard for laws regulating mining. For instance, the post by Sampson Jean-Claude sought to express disgust at how foreigners like Chinese have been freely allowed to engage in galamsey,

harnessing the benefits therein whereas locals are prevented from harnessing what originally belongs to them. His post again expressed disgust at how Chinese have destroyed the major source of livelihood (cocoa farming) of these community leaving them with no option than join in the illegal act. Rueben Atrakpo's post just like that of Sampson Jean-Claude also expressed disgust at Chinese' disregard for the wellbeing of locals of galamsey communities, stating that the selfish actions the Chinese illegal miners are causing various health hazards. According to Rottman et al. (2019) disgust is not often experienced in isolation; instead, it is frequently concomitant with other negative emotions, such as fear (Muris et al., 2013) and anger (Russell & Giner-Sorolla, 2013).

Figure 71: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of disgust



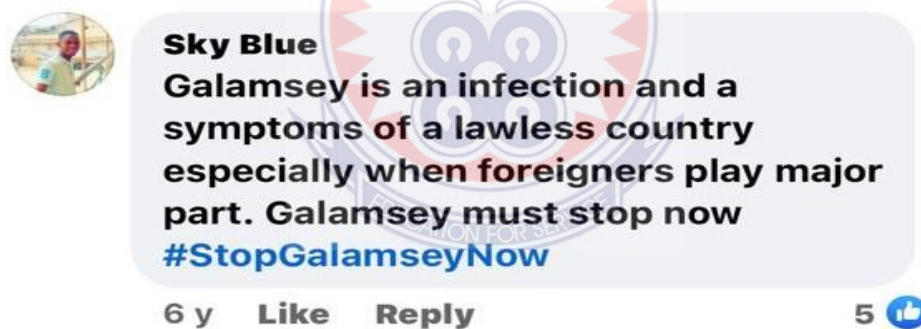
Figure 72: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of disgust



Lee and Chan (2018) aver that disgust can also be used to challenge social norms and values that contribute to social injustices. As indicated below, some posts were

characterised by clear case of injustice as they point out that the issues of illegal mining and its associated perils must be pinned on leadership for their attitude of lawlessness and corruption. Sky Blue post for example, typified feeling of disgust at how Chinese and galamsey continue to thrive as a result of leadership and citizens readiness to bypass regulations for their selfish gains. Mohammed Lamptey's post also exposed corruption among politicians and avers that a said amount which was squandered by a politician (Alfred Wayome) could have been used to build factories to absorb youth involved in illegal mining. Mohammed Lamptey's post, by inference posited that those politicians are disgusting and do not hold the moral credence to tell the illegal miners to desist from the act, when they cannot provide an alternative source of employment and livelihood to these illegal miners.

Figure 73: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of disgust



Figures 74: Screenshot of user's post depicting emotion of disgust



Emotions offer humans a rich source of information to better understand the relationship between themselves and their world (Dennison, 2023). Emotional

mobilization is therefore central to social media activism everywhere (Yang, 2017) and according to Castells (2012) “emotional activation” of the collective is triggered when individuals recognize the shared quality of their sentiments and decide to act upon them. The six basic emotions theory as propounded by Ekman and Friesen; anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise have been confirmed by Barrett (2006) as being emotions that cut across race, and also universal for all human beings (Izard, 2007; Levenson, 2014; Sabini & Silver, 2005). The expression of these emotions as seen in posts in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism was therefore not a surprise at all. Several scholars assert that negative sentiments like *fear*, *anger*, *sadness* and *disgust* which are characterized by risk, threat, and danger tend to trigger emotional responses and can help focus attention on environmental issues and motivate deeper considerations of possible solutions than information framed with positive sentiment (Hine et al., 2016; Bouman et al., 2020; DiRusso and Myrick, 2021). Also, negative emotions such as *sadness*, *anger*, and *fear* are characterized by appraisals of goal unpleasantness, thus, these emotions occur when something undesirable happened (Hareli et al., 2015). In the context of this study, Citizen-led anti- galamsey movement deployed different field of emotions as an accelerators or amplifiers, making things move faster or sound louder (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007).

In applying the basic emotional theory by Paul Ekman in the context of social media activism, traditional appeals in posts often make use of shocking, negative imagery and language while emphasizing the threat of illegal mining and the potentially catastrophic consequences (Nisbet, 2009). As to why negative emotions were dominantly used by the Anti-galamsey movement; some social media scholars posit that individuals have a tendency to pay more attention to negative posts (bad news) in

the anti-galamsey activism than to positive posts (good news) on social media (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Sanford et al. (2023) equally affirm the above assertion, stating that not only is negative sentiment more prevalent, but it may also be more engaging for some social media users. Within the parameters of this study, most of the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism participants used negative sentiments to draw and engage the attention of people to the negative impact of illegal mining possibly to inspire them to act on fighting illegal mining. Contingent on the proposition by Rozin and Royzman (2001) and Sanford et al. (2023), it is therefore not surprising that the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism employed negative sentiments such as *Anger*, *Fear*, *Sadness* and *Disgust* in their posts to engage the attention of other people to rally behind the cause of fighting illegal mining (galamsey) in Ghana.

Also, from the analysed data above, neutral emotions were largely exhibited in a number of posts. According to some social scholars, neutral emotions play a crucial role in social media activism, offering a distinct approach that can complement the more commonly emphasized anger and outrage (Boulianne, 2019; Dahlgren, 2009; Jasper, 2011). While these intense emotions can effectively galvanize immediate action, neutral emotions can foster thoughtful engagement, broaden audiences, and encourage dialogue (Jasper, 2011).

Also, Fogg (2009) found that emotions such as calmness or neutrality can enhance message receptivity. The adoption of neutral tone in social media activism has the potency to engage individuals who are otherwise resistant to emotionally charged rhetoric, thus expanding the potential for coalition-building across diverse groups (Dahlgren, 2009). Equally, Lang (2000) posits that messages devoid of extreme emotions allow audiences to process information more analytically. Activists using neutral tones therefore may encourage followers to consider multiple perspectives,

which can lead to deeper understanding and more sustainable engagement in social issues (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). A larger percentage of Citizen-led anti-galamsey activism used neutral tone because it has the potential to build sustained relationships with social media users, as studies have highlighted that message framed with neutral tone enhances empathy and understanding which leads to continued involvement in social causes and further sustains engagement which is essential for the longevity of social movements (Eveland et al., 2011). This strategic emotional framing therefore allows for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to social change (Jasper, 2011). It can therefore be understood from the current study why majority of the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism adopted neutral emotions to help them broaden audience engagement, encouraging dialogue and sustaining involvement.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed and presented the research findings that were analysed from the data corpus collected from Facebook posts in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on illegal mining in Ghana. The research findings were discussed in line with the research questions specified in chapter one to assist achieve the objectives of this study. The outcomes deduced from the study gave an insight into the intricacy of the illegal mining phenomenon in Ghana; typically revealing how the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement communicated their messages, the dominant issues raised and the diverse emotions expressed on social media as a result of the impacts of illegal mining on communities.

Firstly, the study discovered that the effectiveness of social media activism is largely dependent on the mode of communication. Therefore, the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement employed text, Hashtag, still picture and video to construct appealing and emotional messages that could resonate with their followers.

Secondly, it is revealed that it is a result of the numerous negative impacts of illegal mining on the environment and on the social life of mining communities that triggered a considerable level of outrage on social media. Environmental challenges such as water pollution, destruction of cultivable lands and depletion of forest reserves were major concerns that were highlighted by a good number in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism. On another tangent, the study found that, illegal mining has equally taken a dire toll on communities as it undermines security in such communities and to a greater extent, the country at large. The findings again revealed that most of these galamsey enclaves are faced with high cases of sexual misconduct as school dropouts continue to hike due to teenage pregnancy resulting from illegitimate sexual relationship between the galamseyers (especially the Chinese miners) and girls of schooling going age. Again, the findings of the study conclude the fight against illegal mining continue to fail as a result of number of reasons such as poor legal framework to regulate the illegality, political interference, bribery and corruption and high unemployment rate in Ghana.

Finally, the study identifies the exhibition of diverse emotions such as fear, anger, sadness and disgust by the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement. Thus, negative emotions were strategically used to trigger responses and also help focus attention on the 'galamsey' phenomenon and to motivate deeper considerations of possible solutions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study: It draws conclusions from the key findings and makes recommendations which will improve the understanding embedded in the use of social media platform like Facebook in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism to strategically and effectively communicate and spread ideas, mobilize and build communities for collective action against illegal mining. The study generally highlights an overview of how social media activism as a phenomenon can be used in communicating, mobilizing and triggering online actions geared towards social, economic, political and environmental reforms.

5.1 Summary

This study set out to identify the dominant user representations that emerged from the post shared in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on Facebook concerning illegal mining in Ghana. The study again examined the kinds of posts used by the activism to communicate their message to their followers and also explored the emotions expressed in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism through their Facebook posts.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, this study conducted an extensive review of literature which served as groundwork for exploring the following concepts: social media; the social media landscape in Ghana; illegal mining (galamsey) in Ghana; citizen-led activism on social media, sentiments and sentiment analysis on social media. The theories that were employed to expound the data – social movement theory and Ekman's Theory of Basic Emotions, were also critically reviewed and situated in the social media context. The research approach and design for this study

were qualitative (Creswell, 2018) and qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) respectively. These afforded the researcher the opportunity to explore the embedded meanings of the social media posts shared on Facebook in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on the illegal mining phenomenon in Ghana. The Facebook posts on illegal mining (galamsey) phenomenon was selected using the purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2014). This sampling technique assisted the researcher to gain rich, in-depth understanding of the dominant issues that emerged from the posts shared on Facebook by the movement, the kind of posts used to convey their message to followers, as well as the kinds of emotions expressed by the movement through their posts.

The method of data collection was document analysis because social media posts can be referred to as documentary data, according to Bowen (2009). Adopting document analysis as the data collection method for this study therefore assisted the researcher to make sense of and report on the meanings obtained from the Facebook posts shared in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on the illegal mining phenomenon in Ghana. Also, in line with the observation by Leavy (2014), concerning the unobtrusive, non-reactive nature of documents, adopting Facebook posts for this study possess a naturally built-in level of authenticity since social media posts are a form of documents which are not altered from their original setting. Finally, out of one thousand, three hundred and fifty (1,350) posts that were retrieved for this study, which comprised of eighty-six thousand four hundred and twenty-one (86,421) words, with the shortest post comprising three (3) words while the longest post comprised one hundred and forty-seven (147) words, this study organised and describe the data in rich detail using the thematic analysis of data (Braun & Clark, 2006).

5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions

Upon analysing the data, the key findings that were discovered led to several conclusions.

The first research question sought to establish the kinds of posts used in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism to communicate their message to their followers on Facebook. The findings of this research question revealed the theme of text, hashtag, still picture and video. Drawing from the social movement theory, it was established that in the realm of social media activism, the content, style, and strategy of social media posts can greatly impact the effectiveness in spreading ideas, building communities, and promoting social change (Papacharissi, 2015). Again, the findings in the study revealed that the anti-galamsey activism employed these types of posts to help construct narratives that resonate with other Facebook users and could help raise awareness, mobilize and to encourage them to embrace a call-to action for social, economic, political and environmental reforms concerning illegal mining.

The second research question which sought to identify dominant user representations that emerged from the data resulted in the emergence of the following themes: Ecological challenges, Leadership failure, Economic issue, Weak legal and institution framework, insecurity and corruption. Applying the social movement theory, it was found that social media have opened up direct communication and conversation channels between the general public and users seeking to raise awareness and mobilize this public toward protecting the environment (Pearce et al., 2015). It was also established that through the framing process, the citizen-led anti galamsey movement constructed their own version of reality by focus and mobilizing others to embrace the movement's views (Benford & Snow, 2002) and they did this by selecting and highlighting certain aspects of the illegal mining phenomenon thereby

making those issues more salient and dominant than others (McLeod & Downton, 2017).

The third research question sought to establish the kinds of emotions exhibited in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism through the posts made on Facebook. The findings of this research question revealed that social media has become an important platform for human interactions (Paechter, 2013) and social networking sites such as Facebook are said to enable users to comment and convey emotions through texts, visual, and videos (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011; Obar & Wildman, 2015). While the Ekman's theory of basic emotions outlines six basic emotions, the study discovered the activists exhibited four out of the six basic emotions: fear, anger, sad and disgust. Again, it was concluded that, negative emotion like anger, fear, sadness and disgust which are characterized by risk, threat, and danger tend to trigger emotional responses and can help focus attention on environmental issues and motivate deeper considerations of possible solutions than information framed with positive sentiment (Bouman et al., 2020; DiRusso and Myrick, 2021).

5.3 Limitations

This study set out to identify the dominant user representations that emerged from the post shared by the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement on Facebook concerning illegal mining in Ghana. The study equally examined the kinds of posts used by the activists to communicate their message to their followers and also explored the emotions expressed by the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement through their Facebook posts. In conducting the study, the researcher encountered few limitations.

To start with, the current study was limited by the constraint of time in which the data was collected. The movement's communication strategies and the emotions expressed

keep evolving and changing over time, and a more extended period of data collection could provide a more comprehensive understanding. This could therefore impact the interpretation of the findings and their relevance to the current situation.

Secondly, language also posed a challenge as some of the posts were written using shorthand. Thus, in order to fully understand what the poster sought to communicate, the researcher had to do extra work in finding contextual meaning to those words to facilitate the understanding of those posts.

Again, the study focused and extracted its data entirely from Facebook, which might not be an absolute representation of the entire online presence in the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism. While Facebook can provide valuable insights, it is essential to expand the analysis to include other social media platforms like Twitter or Instagram. This will help ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the citizen-led anti-galamsey activism's online presence and messaging strategies, ultimately contributing to a more accurate and well-rounded research findings and conclusion.

Lastly, the study relied solely on Facebook posts and this might not represent the broader spectrum of opinions and emotions related to the issue of illegal mining in Ghana as far as social media activism is concerned. Therefore, the application of other sources like interviews, surveys, or discussions especially on online forums could have provided a more diverse and in-depth perspective, eventually contributing to a more accurate and well-rounded research findings and conclusion. It must be emphasized that these limitations did not, in anyway, affect the credibility and reliability of this current study.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

In view of the opportunities and challenges the researcher encountered while reviewing literature and collecting data for the study, he makes the following suggestions for future research so that the knowledge base of social media users and social media activism will be increased and also serve as a repository for researchers.

The researcher in undertaking the current study employed a qualitative content analysis of user representations and sentiments of citizen-led anti-galamsey activism to determine dominant issues that emerged, and examined various emotions exhibited.

Within the same context of social media activism, similar study could be situated in quantitative analysis to examine the frequency and reach of citizen-led anti-galamsey activism on social media platforms. The outcome of this study could provide rich insights into the effectiveness of these campaigns in terms of engagement, reach, and impact.

Similarly, the current study was specifically situated and conducted within the context of Facebook. Future study could do a quantitative or qualitative comparative analysis of user representations and sentiments across different social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. This study could shed light on any differences or similarities in how users engage with and respond to the issue of illegal mining (galamsey) on these varying platforms.

Again, future research may be conducted to explore the role that social media plays in shaping policy responses to illegal mining (galamsey). This study could involve critically analysing the diverse ways in which policymakers engage with citizen-led activism on social media, as well as examining the impact that these campaigns have had on policy decisions related to illegal mining.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

First and foremost, it was deduced from the current study that citizen-led activism on Facebook has the potential to mobilize public opinion against illegal mining (galamsey). However, there is also the need for increased government engagement in these discussions. The government should actively participate and harness information from these online conversations to address concerns and guide in providing updates on measures being taken to combat galamsey. This will not only help to dispel misinformation but also demonstrate the government and other stakeholders like the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Mineral Commission and Environmental Protection Agency's commitment to addressing the issue of illegal mining in Ghana.

Again, the study concluded that citizen-led activism on Facebook has the potential to amplify the voices of marginalized communities affected by illegal mining (galamsey). In effect, there must be cooperation between the citizen-led anti-galamsey movement and other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Mineral Commission, as well as traditional authorities and non-governmental organizations. By implication, effective, equitable, and sustainable solutions could be made possible by these cooperative efforts.

Finally, it must be emphasized that citizen-led activism on Facebook is just one component of a broader strategy to combat illegal mining (galamsey). To deploy a holistic approach in addressing galamsey and its related menace, the government should map out a comprehensive strategy that includes legal, regulatory, and enforcement measures, as well as social and economic interventions to address the

root causes of illegal mining (galamsey). These strategies will help to ensure that efforts are coordinated, effective, and sustainable over the long term.



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