

**INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON QUALITY
OF COMMUNICATION IN WINDHOEK**

**A research project report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies (Honours) to the University of
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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to look into the topic of social media and the impact that it has on the quality of communication in Windhoek. Social media has emerged as the strongest tool/channel of communication in the 21st century not just in Namibia but across the entire universe and it has received massive heap of praise because of its incredible ability and capacity to spread messages in faster and effective ways among people which in contrary has not been the case in the former days of communicating through written letters which would take days and weeks and even months to reach the receiver. The study was formulated on quantitative method through the usage of questionnaires. The study conducted its questionnaires on 100 participants selected using purposive sampling of which 50 participants were from the University of Namibia (UNAM) and another 50 from the International University of Management (IUM). Among the 50 participants from either university, comprised of 40 students and 10 staff workers. The study outcomes revealed that 100 percent of the participants had perfect knowledge of what social media is about, indicating that they were all connected to various social media sites. However, there seems to be an imbalance among users with regards to social media usage pertaining to the fact that some respondents are left out due to certain limitations in connectivity, some of which are such as poor network connections and the unaffordability of social media tariffs. Despite this, social media usage in Windhoek has been highly anticipated with respondents forming a formidable opinion that despite some of its associated negativities and challenges, social media has indeed transformed communication and it has risen beyond limits to a point where they cannot imagine how life in the modern times would be without it.

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DEDICATION

This work is highly dedicated to my fellow students for their additional but constructive commentaries and to everyone who participated in this study. Above all, I thank the Almighty God for the boundless blessings and wisdom he poured upon me.

DECLARATION

I, Matias Ameinge hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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DIAGRAMS, TABLES AND FIGURES

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1. CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

It's hard to overestimate the role of social media because it's such a very changing and fast-developing phenomenon in modern life. Its new powers have become influential in more and more spheres of life and sometimes social media sites feels like forming a new reality, but in fact they're only reflecting on the world we live in. Hence, this study's primary purpose is to dive us into how influential social media has become in taking communication to other levels through a wide range of social media concepts and terminologies with more emphasis in each chapter.

1.2 Orientation of the study

According to (Hudson 2020), social media refers to websites and applications that are designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently, and in real-time. "Some apps like Twitter, and Facebook, specialise in sharing links and short written messages, others, like Instagram and Tok-Tok, are built to optimise the sharing of photos and videos (Hudson 2020)".

According to (Sam, 2019) the advent of social media communication technology has impacted in changing the patterns of communication worldwide, and Namibia is not an exception. Scholars say, "social media has increased both connectivity and participation in all spheres of social life."

However, there have been controversies and disagreements arising from the discussion of the subject regarding social media, with some scholars going as far as to mentioning that the fact that the level of development in various countries tend to differ sets a perfect analogy to why

some countries have not been at the same heights as others in terms of the level of exposure with relation to social media.

This simply means that there has been an increasing change in social media communication in its advancement over the years, such as the advent of the new social media applications like Facebook, although questions still remain on whether people have been able to adapt to these changes. Has there been a gap among Windhoek residents in the usage of social media as method of enhancing communication? Has the government done enough in ensuring social media presence in the country? These are some of the unanswered questions that the current study wishes to ponder on.

In short, this research is intended to explore the improvement that social media have brought about in making the communication process better among Windhoek residents, and whether people are able to correspond to the changes and enjoy a better way of communicating as compared to the times before.

1.3 Statement of the problem

From the researcher's point of view and based on the researcher's assumptions, social media usage in Namibia has not been a predominant phenomenon, particularly in the countryside areas as opposed to urban surroundings. And even in the urban areas where social media presence has been pretty much descent as compared to other areas, there has not been much provision of information on how people can effectively keep up with various trends of social media, which in most instances people might find themselves left out.

Hence, the research investigating the impact of social media on quality of communication, primarily had a clear-cut inquisitiveness on how social media has transformed the way people in communicate and relates to social media and if there has been any kind of absence in its usage, the researcher has gone as far as to storming out ways of uprooting the issues

engulfing this social media debacle. The research project further analysed the hindrances that impedes people from communicating effectively through means of social media. Therefore, there is a need to explore the change that social media has evoked.

1.4 Research questions

- What is social media?
- What are the perceptions of the public on social media on information sharing?
- How have Windhoek residents responded to social media as a means of communication?
- What are the limitations of the public in accessing social media?
- Has social media use improved communication?

1.5 Significance of the study

In exploring the improvement in communication as a result of social media the research is crucial because it benefited not only geographical area in which the research study has taken place but the country at large (i.e., the government, and the public). It can help the government cherish the importance of social media in the public's lives, which in some ways might prompt the government to allocate more funds and resources for internet connectivity services, which ultimately help in digital network coverage over the country. The information obtained through this research study aided people in coming up with ways to improve in understanding the concept social media and its critical role in the communication process which helped in making sure that nobody feels left out including those people that experience barriers to access social media.

1.6 Limitation of the study:

Limitations are things that the researcher cannot control. Firstly, some people might not be willing to answer because they might not have time. Secondly, the time of collecting data is limited and the researcher might not get enough information. The fact that Windhoek is a cosmopolitan city, consist of ethnic groups means that the researcher might not be able to cover or rather include each and every ethnic group in the research. There might also be a situation where the researcher may experience language barriers due to the variance in tribes across the city.

1.7 Literature Review and the theoretical and/or conceptual framework

This chapter investigated the various research studies and similar topics based on social media which has helped in forming up strong evidence towards this research topic. As for conceptual framework, the chapter have outlined the best theory which is linked to this research topic, as applied in the field of communication. The theory presented here is ‘Social Network Theory’ which is related to the research topic (Social media and its quality on communication) and how it best corresponds to the respective theory. The theory is used as a rich source for a better understanding of the theoretical fieldwork of communication.

Social media is often considered a very substantial component to every developmental aspect of any country in the world because of its ability to spread messages and information across citizens in the fastest way which is part of the communication process. From the researcher’s point of view most people in Windhoek tend to have knowledgeable foundation with social media use and huge admiration with how it works because of the perception that it is an invaluable asset to the communication process. So, people have been able to acknowledge its existence which massively contributes to the sharing of information among residents.

Sam (2019) believes that “the impact that social media has on society can be proven from many cases. For example, in politics, Western governments long studied and understood the

shifting electoral demographics, whereby the voting population is increasingly becoming youthful and highly active on these platforms.” This means politicians were able to make use of social media for elections in order to gain the support of the youth. But in contrast the concept of social media and its effects to communication can be adjudicated upon other factors. Sam (2019) is also of the point that “in Namibia, more and more people now have access to smartphones that enable them to be on social media, and the affordability of data in Namibia has also increased social media interactions, with many people now abandoning the traditional short message services (SMS) and preferring WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Telegram and other more inventive social media texting platforms.”

However, according to the (education magazine, n.d.), “communication was the main purpose of the invention of social media. It argues that the purpose seems to be fulfilled from outside, but in the hindsight, the soul of communication seems to have lost. The speed of the communication might have been increased, but the reliability of social media has received a massive downfall. This is because in this technology era, both online and offline conversations are dominated by social media interactions (education magazine, n.d).”

With easy person-to-person accessibility triggered by social media, people are becoming lazy. Studies shows that 11 percent of adults prefer to stay home on weekends and make posts on Facebook instead of going out and acquiring real-life experiences. In other words, people are losing interests in meeting others in person. In short social media might have improved communication but has also contributed to its decline in other way.

Methodology

1.8 Research design

The research design refers to the overall strategy that the researcher chose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring it effectively address the research problem.

According to (Creswell, 1994 in De Vos, 2011) quantitative approach is an enquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true. The researcher used quantitative approach, because it's easier and take less time to collect data. It also uses questionnaire to collect data and this is the fastest way to collect data and it is not biased.

Quantitative approach is the best for this study because it allows the researcher to collect data using questionnaire to as many people as possible until the desired outcome is met. Using this approach, conclusions are made in line with the findings, and it is used to generalise findings to the whole population. De vos, (2011) further stated that, quantitative differs from qualitative in such a way that qualitative is used to understand or describe people's behaviour and attitudes. In simplicity, quantitative has to do with numbers while qualitative have to do with in-depth description. Using this design, the researcher started with a general idea and uses research as a tool to identify issues that could be the focus of future research. In addition, researcher may use primary or secondary research or a combination of both. Primary is a data that someone collects personally, while secondary is the analysis and synthesis of primary research that was compiled at a previous date (Kimbery, 2003-2018).

1.9 Data collection methods

The study used questionnaires as a tool to collect data. A pretesting of the questionnaire has been carried out to test if the questionnaire is answerable and to identify the errors in the questionnaires as well as to determine how long it has taken for someone to answer. Questionnaires were handed over to participants (both males and females) from two Windhoek tertiary institutions principally at two tertiary learning institutions, namely the University of Namibia (UNAM) and International University of Management (IUM). The participants ranged from the age of 18 and above to gather information, as this is mostly the age group with a hint on what the topic of social media is about. During data collection, the researcher presented the participants with an introduction of the study and give them an informed consent form for them to give their consent whether or not to participate. This research study is particularly directed to Windhoek as a geographic area of study and the same applies to the participants that had taken part in this research study. The research sample as mentioned earlier included students and staffs from various universities, principally students from the University of Namibia (UNAM), and the International University of Management (IUM).

1.10 Population

The intended population of this study are the students of Windhoek student from high learning institutions and one shopping center which are UNAM and IUM. This has ensured for equal representation of participant's views on the research topic at hand since everyone had their own opinions. Also, these are the areas where one would mostly find individuals of diverse socioeconomic status and ethnics groups. Participants that had been included in the sample are those that are 18 years old and above.

1.11 Sampling

According to (Methods of sampling from a population, n.d.), a sample comprises elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. Since this research study takes place over a wide geographical region, (Windhoek in this case) the researcher will use clustered sampling. Moreover, (Thomas 2020), define cluster sampling as a method of probability sampling that is often used to study large populations, particularly those that are widely geographically dispersed. In cluster sampling, researchers divide a population into smaller groups known as clusters. They then randomly select among these clusters to form a sample. Researchers usually use pre-existing units such as schools or cities as their clusters, thereby making it easier for a researcher to contact lots of individuals in a geographic place.

1.12 Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires as a tool to collect data. A pretesting of the questionnaire had been carried out to test if the questionnaire is answerable and to identify the errors in the questionnaires as well as to determine how long it had taken for someone to answer. The researcher used questionnaires as a tool of collecting data. The questionnaires consisted of closed ended questions, multiple choice questions whereby the respondent chose the answer of their choice. It also contains short questions whereby the respondent indicated yes or no or short answers. Furthermore, the questionnaire had scaling questions whereby the respondents had to scale the answer based on the question asked. E.g., on a scale of 10, rate the importance of social media in communication.

1.13 Reliability and validity

In order to ensure validity and reliability of the research the researcher selected the sample of the Windhoek population that provided the needed answers, as well as the extent to which the result really measure what they are supposed to measure. The researcher also checked the

consistency of results across time and across different observers. To obtain useful results, the researcher ensured that the methods used to collect data are valid. The research measured what it claims to measure as this ensured that the researcher discussion of the data and conclusions drawn are also valid.

1.14 Procedure

This part of the thesis included all research-related activities undertaken in order to achieve the objectives of the study and to offer some possible solutions to the problem. It provided a detailed description and complete information on the preparation of the questionnaire revision and dry run of the questionnaire, details of the data collection strategies and approaches that has been done. The researcher used quantitative approach which involved the usage of questionnaires. O'Leary (2014) suggests some obvious strengths for this research method, as administering a questionnaire allows the researcher to generate data specific to their own research and offers insights that might otherwise be unavailable. In listing the additional benefits of questionnaires, O'Leary (2014) suggests that they can: Reach a large number of respondents and can represent an even larger population. It also allows for comparisons, generate standardized, quantifiable, empirical data, generate qualitative data through the use of open-ended questions and can be confidential and even anonymous.

1.15 Data analysis

The data collected using questionnaire was presented using MS Excel spreadsheets. Data has been analysed using MS excel through tables, graphs and SPSS software. According to (SPSS Statistics Help, n.d.), SPSS is the abbreviation of Statistical Package for Social Sciences and it is used by researchers to perform statistical analysis. SPSS statistics software is used to perform quantitative analysis and is used as a complete statistical package that is

based on a point and click interface. This software has been widely used by researchers to perform quantitative analysis since its development in the 1960s by Norman H. Nie, in collaboration with C. Hadlai Hull and Dale Bent. SPSS software can read and write data from other statistical packages, databases, and spreadsheets.

1.16 Research Ethics

Ethics is an important part of research to both the participants and the researcher. All the participants have the right to be respected and their decisions to take part/not in the study must be adhered to. The researcher got an ethical approval from the department of information and communication studies. (Mantzorou, 2011) said that, informed consent is the major ethical issue in conducting research. Therefore, the researcher handed out an informed consent to the respondents beforehand. The researcher adhered to ethical issues such as voluntary participation; in such a way that no one was forced to participate. No harm to the participants be adhered to that, participants had been protected physically and emotionally to prevent harm, the respondents had been informed thoroughly beforehand about the potential impact of the study (if there is any). In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the respondent's identity was not revealed nor relate it to the study.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review in this research gives a comprehensive explanation and evaluation of various literature concepts, topics, arguments, and opinions that were once conducted in previous studies which support and serve as evidence to this current research study. The researcher merges and integrates different literature from various studies that signify the need and justification of this study through citation of materials that has relevance to the research topic. This has helped the researcher to assess the presented literatures based on the topic the researcher is focused on and give comments while ensuring that the literature is fully focused on addressing the objectives of the research. Finally, the reviews demonstrated gaps in knowledge, theoretical and methodological shortcomings, and unanswered questions and why there should be a need for further research. The research also compares various disputes or variances in literature and/or theoretical frameworks and how they apply to this research study.

2.2 Defining and comprehension of social media. (Types of social media, Benefits and Flaws).

What is social media?

Hudson (2020) defines social media as any digital tool that permits users to quickly produce and share content with the general public. “Social media encompasses a large vary of internet sites and apps. Some, like Twitter, specialize in sharing links and short written messages. Others, like Instagram and TikTok, are designed to optimise the sharing of photos and videos. Anyone with web access will check in for a social media account (Hudson, 2020).” they will thus use that account to share no matter content they value more highly to, and therefore the content they share reaches anyone who visits their page or profile. This definition is

supported by Wigmore (n.d.), who delineate social media as a collective term for websites and applications that specialize in communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the various forms of social media.

Social media appears to bring out what communication is in essence such as interaction and sharing. Social media is an umbrella term, and it refers to new arenas where users create content through writing and broadcasting carried out by “the people formally known as the audience”¹⁶ (Luoma-aho 2010, p.3).

Types of Social Media

Hudson (2020) articulated that there are many different types of social media, and many services could fit into multiple categories. Kakkar (2020) admitted and reckoned that seeing the popularity and power of social media channels, means that businesses and marketers look for different types of social media networks that they can use to target and convert their audiences, although general people are only aware of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram sorts of social channels, there are quite a few of the major types, along with some examples are such as:

Social Networks

Social networks specialise in connecting and exchanging thoughts, ideas, and content with other users (Hudson, 2020), often with users who share tastes and interests. Facebook and Twitter are examples of social networks. Though more professional than others, LinkedIn may be considered a social network, as well (Hudson, 2020).

Media Networks

Hudson (2020) further claimed that, as opposed to social networks, which specialise in letting users share and exchange raw thoughts and ideas, media networks specialise in distributing content like photographs and videos. Instagram and YouTube are examples of this. A YouTube user, for example, will upload a video they've created, and other users can "like," "dislike," or comment on the video. If they enjoy the video enough, a user may choose to "subscribe" to the creator, so that new videos from that creator appear in their feed.

Discussion Networks

Discussion networks like Reddit and Quora as Hudson (2020) suggests, are the ideal outlet for posts that can spark in-depth discussion among users. Users can leave detailed responses in the comment section, and other users can respond directly to those comments, allowing for conversations to grow and develop organically. Kakkar (2020) believe that they help businesses by being a top-notch resource for doing immaculate market research. These forums are the oldest ways of running Social Media Marketing campaigns.

Bookmarking & Content Curation Networks: Pinterest, Flipboard

Opting for such types of Social Media will help you find out, share, discuss and save a variety of latest content and media that are trending as well Kakkar (2020). They are very helpful in channelising brand awareness for your business, plus, choosing this one to run different types of Social Media Marketing campaigns will help you generate website traffic and customer engagement.

Consumer Review Networks: Yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor

Kakkar (2020) ideas was more business oriented and claimed that these networks offer a place to users for reviewing different kinds of products and services that they have used. Review content adds great value to any brand because it will influence more and the number

of new buyers to attempt your services. Yelp and Zomato are the types of social media platforms that offer location-based review services that will help you run location-based social campaigns (Kakkar, 2020).

Social media benefits

Social media has changed the way that we all interact with each other online. It has given us the ability to discover what is happening in the world in real-time, to connect with each other and stay in touch with long-distance friends, and in order to have access to endless amounts of information at your fingertips. In many senses, social media has helped many individuals find common ground with others online, making the world seem more approachable.

According to the education magazine (n.d.), the first and the most significant benefit that comes across is the increase in the speed of communication. The significant flaw of the traditional communication system was its slow nature, and social media seems to be a solution for the same. Messages are getting delivered within split seconds. Important notifications, instructions are also conveyed to multiple people within an eye blink. People with similar interests are coming together to form groups for a purpose. According to surveys, 39% of respondents felt closer to their friends because of social media while 26% felt they had more friends because of social media. Representatives of various cultures also come together without any boundaries or constraints. Social media helps random people meet each other by initiating the conversation (the education magazine, n.d.).

Social media platforms like Twitter in Tunisia in the Arab Spring of 2011, the Spanish indignados, and later Occupy Wall Street (Gerbaudo, 2012), for instance were lauded as key tools to facilitate the organization of social movements by serving as a stitching mechanism. That is, protestors were able to use Twitter to stitch together a network of both human and

technology-based networks (Agarwal, Bennett, Johnson, & Walker, 2014; Bennett, Segerberg, & Walker, 2014).

Social media is not limited to WhatsApp and Facebook only. In the last couple of years, Instagram has been the most used mobile application ahead of WhatsApp and Facebook on the list. Moreover, various applications are giving a platform to people for showcasing their talent. Talented people from the rural and remote areas which were untouched or never noticed are now seeking peoples' attention. Many arts and artists are gaining popularity with the use of social media. Different ways of doing different things are being invented and spread. Many singers have gained popularity through YouTube and parallel social networks and it has been the turnaround in their fortunes.

Since the advent of social media era, the world has witnessed an incredible surge in communication with majority of people now able to receive and send messages across one another via various platforms in an instant. All these changes have been made easy by the presence of social media with digitisation also playing a role. This trend has been replicated around the world, although to varying extents and sometimes with different dynamics at play. But this ongoing transformation is not just about mere individual adoption to social media; it's about how social media impacted the quality of communication and how it fared to Namibia environments, particularly in Windhoek.

Social media flaws

Advanced technologies of communication have brought influences and impacts on cultures. There are views that the influences and impacts are brought forward by social media which has been a powerful tool that can affect and form human behaviours as well as culture (Tang & Chan, 2020). "Social media may have crossed the boundaries of culture due to the concept of borderless. Facebook may have been the social media that connects people around the

world with massive cultural backgrounds to meet at the platform. The media content uploaded may spark the invasion of culture. There are many other social media which come with influencers that may shout about different values and practices around. Local cultures had therefore slowly lost their identities and replaced with a cross-cultural phenomenon. The cultural values invaded may include human behaviours, beliefs, values or even fashion and lifestyle” (Tang & Chan, 2020).

According to Dollarhide (2021), while social media has its positive side, many points to the platform and call out negative features, likening its overuse to an addiction. Some contest it contributes to inattentiveness, stress, and jealousy. The National Centre for Biotechnology Information links heavy social media use to depression. Also, many times, social media may be a tube for misleading information and falsehoods.

The 2016 American presidential election has well-documented accounts of the impact of the ability to spread false information through the platform. Such a phenomenon leverages the power of social media, allowing anyone to reach an audience of millions with content that lacks oversight or fact-checking (Dollarhide 2021).

Signh (2018) adds on that perhaps the biggest problems that people face is the amount of time they spend on the social media networks. However, ironically, insist that this is essential nowadays if you want a strong social media presence. The update syndrome as Signh (2018) calls it, means that people keep updating their status and remain busy reading the updates of others. Signh (2018) warned that the more we stay and check out what others have shared, or see the invitation to play games, or visit unnecessary pages, the more time we waste.

The Tulane University (n.d.) maintained the argument of Dollarhide (2021) that social media users’ concerns about their privacy have spiked in recent years. Incidents of data breaches have alarmed many users and forced them to rethink their relationships to social media and

the security of their personal information. “The dramatic story of the consulting agency Cambridge Analytica is a case in point. The firm exploited the private information of over 50 million Facebook users to influence the 2016 American presidential election. This example and others have steadily deteriorated public trust and resulted in many users wondering if they have lost control over their own data.” According to a study conducted by the Pew Trust, 80 percent of social media users report being concerned about businesses and advertisers accessing and using their social media posts” (Tulane University, n.d.).

2.3 The impact of social media on the quality of communication

According to the Education Magazine (n.d.), since the propagation of social media, the ways we communicate have changed. The concept of communication had a lot of limitations prior to it; but with the rise of social media, the world has gotten more and more closer. Social media has not only found new ways of communication but also has reshaped the old ones. The rise of social media has changed the world’s perspective on communication.

The increase in the speed of communication has created a sense of urgency and a need to share things among people, provided an inside perspective of faraway places, and made digital messages more personal. The traditional ways of communication have now been replaced by modern ones. Much like everything, this concept also has two sides. One is an optimistic side and the second a pessimistic one. Just like any type of communication mediums, social media has profoundly impacted communication in various fields, forms and to various extents and has been a revelation to the modern communication emergence in Namibia and in most areas around the globe. The fact that people are now able to enjoy faster and more effective communication process across one another are some of the highlights that

since its occurrence communication has gone on and set some incredible milestones that have even left its doubters jaw-dropped and staggered.

“About a decade ago, the word ‘social media’ would not have been heard by many. But today, the basic needs of a man are changing. Conventionally, they were food, cloth, and shelter but now, we have to add internet, mobile and social media to that list. Man has always been called a social animal and nowadays social media seems to be one of his most proficient social needs. Communication is the primary motto of the concept of social media (Education Magazine, n.d.)”

It is now palpable that social media has proven to be arguably a consistent and unbeatable means of communication the world has ever witnessed, and it is voiceless to create an argument against social media especially looking at what the world is going through, either in political, social or economic contexts and logical to say the world cannot do away with social media. This has however been made possible by digitisation which has acted as a catalyst to social media thriving.

Edwards (2015) embrace the argumentation presented by the (education magazine n.d.), that communication and information travel faster and faster, the world seems to get smaller and smaller. As a result, this changes how the world communicates, especially with today’s obsession with social media networks.

2.3.1 Impact on social-life communication

Social media is a substantial component to communication. Who would even imagine life without communication just to say the least? Without communication, you would probably say life would be meaningless. But equally, social media has transformed the way people communicate in contemporary times as well. This has given more people a wide range of choices of communication through various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter,

Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, WeChat and many others. People in societies are now cherishing a more interactive, integrated and easy way of communication over long distances in an instant as opposed to walking long distances which was a routine of the past.

According to a survey by Pew Research Center, the use of social media is correlated with having more friends and more diverse personal networks, especially within emerging economies. For many teenagers, friendships can start virtually, with 57% of teens having met a friend online.

Businesses are also using social media marketing to target their consumers right on their phones and computers, in order to build a loyal fan base, and create a culture behind their own brand. Some companies, such as Denny's, have created entire personas on Twitter in order to market to younger consumers using their own language and personas.

2.3.2 Impact on political-life communication

Sam (2019) believes that “the impact that social media has on society can be proven from many cases. For example, in politics, Western governments long studied and understood the shifting electoral demographics, whereby the voting population is increasingly becoming youthful and highly active on social media platforms.” Satterfield (2020) maintains that the political landscape has changed quite a bit in the last couple of decades. The internet has played a large role in this transformation. Social media, in particular, is now a serious factor in political campaigns and in the way people think about issues. “Candidates and their supporters constantly post their views on Facebook and Twitter. Each party has its own pages, from which it broadcasts propaganda and requests for donations” (Satterfield, 2020).

Satterfield (2020), further states that as with other types of political news, the internet has greatly increased the number of polls results we see each day. Social media has accelerated

this even more. Not only do social media sites report the results of polls, but you can also participate in Facebook polls.

One of the positive effects that social media has on politics as Satterfield (2020) suggest is the opportunity for voters to interact more easily with candidates and elected officials. “Traditionally, if you wanted to meet a politician or candidate, you’d have to attend a live event. Not everyone is able to do this and now with modern technology, it’s now possible to attend virtual events where you can participate in live streaming events and interact with politicians and candidates (Satterfield, 2020)”.

According to Walton Business daily (2020), entrepreneur and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg spent more than \$1 billion of his own money in his short-lived campaign for president, before dropping out of the race in March. But social media has changed the game, allowing incumbents and newcomers alike to speak directly to constituents on everything from policy to what they had for dinner (Walton Business daily, 2020)”. Barack Obama was the first presidential candidate to use the medium, which was still nascent during his 2008 bid, and Donald Trump takes to Twitter almost daily to express himself without the filter of traditional media (Walton Business Daily, 2020).

“The Internet has become an increasingly important tool for American citizens to not only gain political knowledge but to engage in the political process itself. Some scholars suggest that this may revitalize democratic society, enabling citizens to command the political and economic resources needed to become effectively self-governing (Winner, 2003, p. 167)”

According to the Pew Research Center, nearly one quarter (24%) of Americans say that they regularly learn something about the campaign or the candidates on the Internet, with many young people pointing to Facebook and Myspace as sources of information. One in five Americans (22%) uses an Internet social networking site, and two-thirds of Americans ages

18-29 are users. Of the young users, 27% say that they have gotten information on these sites and nearly one in ten people have "friended" a candidate. According to the Pew Center, these numbers are even higher among young, registered voters (Pew Center, 2008). Research shows that there is obviously an astronomical amount of people logging into these sites, but how much political participation comes out of it is still unclear.

2.3.3 Impact on health and wellness communication

For health and wellness communications to be effective, they must be reaching people. Odds are, many people and their families are already on social media, so taking your message there is a strategic way to expand the reach of your wellness communications (Tolman Wiker Agency, n.d.).

The field of e-health covers the combination of communication, health and social media. Eysenbach defined e-health as “an intersection of medical informatics, public health and business, referring to health services and information delivered or enhanced through the internet and related technologies. In a broader sense, the term characterises a technical development but also a state-of-mind, a way of thinking, an attitude, a commitment to improve health care locally, regionally and worldwide by using information and communication technology” (Eysenbach, What is e-health?, 2001). According to this definition the transition from static health information on websites to interacting about health-related topics through social media and networks like Facebook and Twitter are at the core of e-health.

2.3.4 Impact on education

A research by Petrus Muronga (The usage of social networking sites for educational purposes at institutions of higher learning in Namibia) looked at how students used social media and whether academic institutions used these tools for education (The Namibian, 2015). Although

some lecturers used Facebook, for instance, to communicate with students, the study found that most Namibian students regard social media as more useful for communication among themselves, with friends or relatives. Only a minority used it for researching information or for study purposes. As with Bento's study, Muronga found that most students used their smartphones to access social media.

“His study recommended that academic institutions should “integrate these tools within a given time frame” and “implement institutional policies on the use of social media in the educational environment” (The Namibian, 2015).

2.3.5 Adoption of businesses to social media communication (Marketing and Advertising)

Hudson (2020) cited that, while any individual can sign up for social media, social media platforms have become an important part of marketing for businesses of all sizes. For businesses, social media is an indispensable tool. Companies use the platform to find and engage with customers, drive sales through advertising and promotion, gauge consumer trends, and offering customer service or support (Hudson 2020).

The Marketing Insider Group (2018) argues in favour of their value in business marketing by stating that it doesn't matter if you run a small local shop or a big national company, social media is an essential piece of a business marketing strategy. Social platforms help you connect with your customers, increase awareness about your brand, and boost your leads and sales. With more than three billion people around the world using social media every month, the users and engagement on major platforms just keep increasing (Marketing Insider Group 2018).

Various researchers indicated that social media's role in helping businesses is significant. It facilitates communication with customers, enabling the melding of social interactions on e-commerce sites (Marketing Insider Group (2018)). Its ability to collect information helps

focus on marketing efforts and market research. It helps in promoting products and services, as it enables the distribution of targeted, timely, and exclusive sales and coupons to would-be customers. Further, social media can help in building customer relationships through loyalty programs linked to social media.

“If people don’t know about your business, they can’t become your customers. Social media boosts your visibility among potential customers, letting you reach a wide audience by using a large amount of time and effort (Marketing Insider Group 2018).

Leonard (2021) is strongly of the opinion that social media marketing is the most effective way to reach a large audience, especially with a very small budget, but added that most Namibian businesses are doing it the wrong way.

“One is able to target people according to their age, hobbies, sport interests, political ideology, place of work and where they live. There has never been such a revolutionary piece of technology in marketing since the arrival of the internet and social media networks. It has been more than a decade since Namibia has joined other countries in the utilisation of the internet and social media, but it seems we are far from understanding how and when to use it” (Leonard 2021).

Leonard (2021) believe that most businesses treat social media as a static platform with limited characteristics, which it is not. This idea seemed to be proven right though. According to (bloomad.com, n.d.), while traditional avenues like TV, radio, and print ads are still vital tools, companies that fail to adapt to the role of social media in advertising put themselves at a disadvantage. “While it can present a challenge to marketers more versed in traditional mediums like TV or print, social media tends to be much less expensive if used wisely” (bloomad.com, n.d.).

2.4 Why social media is an indispensable aspect of communication - The world of social media

According to Wharton University (2019), the impact of social media has gone from being an entertaining extra to a fully integrated part of nearly every aspect of daily life for many, in little more than a decade. As quickly as social media has insinuated itself into politics, the workplace, home life and elsewhere, it continues to evolve at lightning speed, making it tricky to predict which way it will morph next.

It is interesting to see how communication has changed as compared to the times where someone have to walk miles just to convey a message to another person and have to wait for some weeks and even months to get a response. A key aspect of life is communication and very little would be possible without interactions between people. Berger (2007) argued that Facebook might not be around in 15 years but claim to prove himself wrong and glad to see how things panned out. “Young people care about what using one platform or another says about them. It’s not cool to use the same site as your parents and grandparents, so they’re always looking for the hot new thing (Berger, 2007)”. Werbach (n.d.) sympathise with Berger (2007) by insisting that a dozen years ago, everyone was talking about a different set of social networking services, and that he doesn’t think anyone quite expected Facebook to become so huge and so dominant. Werbach (n.d.) claimed that today, Facebook is one of the most valuable companies on earth and front and centre in a whole range of public policy debates, and that has proven that the scope of issues we’re thinking about with social media are broader than then.

In commerce, business owners are greatly benefiting from the many forms of exposure their company has online. All this should be affiliated to social media. With this ongoing technological expansion, people all around the world are forming part of more social media accounts than ever. This opportunity gives businesses superior chances to reach their target

audience through these platforms. A business with a significant social media presence and a positive consumer experience has 71% likelihood to be recommended to friends and family (Miller, 2019).

Since more than 91% of social media users gain access through their smartphones, it's important to stay on top of the latest technological and social media updates (Emarsys, 2019). Many businesses keep this in mind and launch their own applications, or more commonly referred to as apps.

It's fundamental to provide plenty of information about the business online, for the reason that most customers will search for company's social media accounts and reviews before making any final buying decision.

2.5 Conceptual framework

Although many alternative views of social media be within the field of knowledge and communication, such theories square measure sometimes not introduced during a consistent framework supported philosophical foundations. This paper introduces the dimension of Social Network Theory.

Social Network Theory is that the study of however folks, organisations or teams act with others within their network. Understanding the idea is less complicated once you examine the individual items beginning with the biggest part, that is networks, and dealing all the way down to the littlest part, that is that the actors (Claywell, n.d.). The investigator can so use this theory to illuminate however social media has enabled interaction among folks and the way this has facilitate transfigured the standard of communication method among folks as compared to the days before.

Rogers characterises a communication network as consisting of "interconnected people joined by laced communication flows" (1986). A communication network analysis studies

“the social linkages created by the sharing of knowledge within the social communication structure” (1986), that is, the network. In general, network analysis focuses on the relationships between people, rather than on characteristics of individuals. These relationships might comprise the sentiments people have for every alternative, the exchange of knowledge, or a lot of tangible exchanges like merchandise and cash. By mapping these relationships, network analysis helps to uncover the emerging and informal communication patterns in a company, which can then be compared to the formal communication structures.

Where networks are simply just an inventory of close friends or the people one works with, there would be nothing to review. Social scientists are involved with the interactions between every of the members of the network. These connections or ties happen to be at the heart of what social scientists request to review and perceive. Why do the people move, however do they move and what's the amount of closeness - sometimes stated as connectedness between cluster members. The Social Network theory further states that though, there are many sorts of relationships, together with reciprocal, directional et al., every of the kinds is reduced to either a robust tie or a weak tie (Ryan, 2015).

Networks that may be thought of as robust ties are unit shut enough to such Associate in Nursing extent that one has their contact numbers whereas weak ties would be those who would be stunned once communicated with (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012). However, analysis shows that the weak ties among networks are unit in some ways in which additional valuable. As Associate in Nursing example of a social network, take into account the members of a church. Despite the actual fact all of them are unit connected by the general network, not all the people relate to constant degree of closeness. It's these variable degrees of closeness, or connectedness that confirm the worth of that node to the network (Ryan, 2015).

The Social Network theory is employed to grasp everything from high ratio to the Byzantine webs related to terrorist networks. In alternative words, it's the formula behind social network theory that explains however a bit of social media content goes infectious agent in a very comparatively short time (Ryan, 2015).

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of the chapter is to comprehensively describe the methods used in the study to collect and analyse data including research methodology used in the study, the geographical area where the study was conducted, the study design and the population and sampling techniques. The instrument used to collect the data, including methods implemented to maintain validity and reliability of the instrument, are described as well as the ethical considerations. This chapter is deemed an essential component of research as it proves the researcher's ability to conduct academic study using various methods. It also helps in burgeoning and fine-tuning the researcher's critical thinking and analytical skills.

3.2 Research design

Burns & Grove (2003, p.195) define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. A quantitative approach was followed. Burns and Grove (1993, p.777) define quantitative research as a formal, objective, systematic process to describe and test relationships and examine cause and effect interactions among variables. Surveys may be used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory research. A descriptive survey design was used. A survey is used to collect original data for describing a population too large to observe directly (Mouton 1996, p.232).

A survey obtains information from a sample of people by means of self-report, that is, the people respond to a series of questions posed by the investigator (Polit & Hungler 1993, p.148). In this study the information was collected through self-administered questionnaires with open and close-ended questions distributed personally to the subjects by the researcher as well as mail-in surveys was used whereby questionnaires were emailed to the participants and completed within three days and sent back to the researcher.

A descriptive survey was selected because it provides an accurate portrayal or account of the characteristics, for example behaviour, opinions, abilities, beliefs, and knowledge of a particular individual, situation or group. This design was chosen to meet the objectives of the study, namely, to determine the knowledge and views of students pertaining to how social media has impacted communication among Windhoek residents (Burns & Grove 1993, p.29).

3.3 Data collection methods

According to (Business Research Methodology, n.d.), “data collection is a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes. Data collection methods can be divided into two categories: primary methods of data collection and secondary methods of data collection”.

A questionnaire was chosen as data collection instrument. A questionnaire is a printed self-report form designed to elicit information that can be obtained through the written responses of the subjects. The information obtained through a questionnaire is similar to that obtained by an interview, but the questions tend to have less depth (Burns & Grove 1993, p.368).

Data was collected with the aid of questionnaires to evaluate the participant's knowledge and views on the impact of social media on Windhoek residents. Questionnaires were decided upon because of the following reasons:

- They ensure a high response rate as the questionnaires were distributed to respondents to complete and were collected personally by the researcher.
- They require less time and energy to administer.
- They offer the possibility of anonymity because subjects' names were not required on the completed questionnaires.
- There is less opportunity for bias as they were presented in a consistent manner.
- Most of the items in the questionnaires were closed, which made it easier to compare the responses to each item.

Apart from the advantages that have been listed above, questionnaires have their weaknesses; for example, there is the question of validity and accuracy (Burns & Grove 1993, p.368). The subjects might not reflect their true opinions but might answer what they think will please the researcher, and valuable information may be lost as answers are usually brief. This study planned to collect data through self-administered questionnaires which consist of 50 questionnaires to collect the desired information from respondents.

As mentioned above, collection of data entails two methods. The data was collected through primary forms of data collection. Formplus (n.d.), define primary data as a type of data that is collected by researchers directly from main sources through interviews, surveys, experiments, etc. Primary data are usually collected from the source, where the data originally originates

from and are regarded as the best kind of data in research, hence this study is based on primary data as a method of data collection.

The questionnaire consisted mostly of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions, as these provide more diverse detail, and were handed over to participants by the researcher on certain research areas where study is conducted. In the open-ended questions, the subjects were required to respond in writing, whereas closed-ended questions had options which were determined by the researcher (Burns & Grove 1993, p.370). Open-ended questions were included because they allow subjects to respond to questions in their own words and provide more detail. Closed-ended questions were included because they are easier to administer and to analyse. They are also more efficient in the sense that a respondent is able to complete more closed-ended items than open-ended items in a given period of time (Polit & Hungler 1993, p.203).

The questionnaire was in English and for those who could not read or write, the researcher read and wrote their answers for them. They were given the assurance that the answers would not be able to link their responses to them at the stage of data analysis, therefore ensuring anonymity. The questionnaires consisted of four sections, (A, B,C and D. Section A aimed at gaining demographic data such as age, level of education, income and gender. This information could assist the researcher when interpreting the results, for example, whether subjects lacked knowledge of social media because they were uneducated, or whether they did not catch up with social media due to lack of money, i.e., they cannot afford the required gadgets and internet costs which obviously are a requirement to access social media.

Section B aimed at determining the knowledge and views of participant on the concept of social media and its impacts on communication. Question's assessing-knowledge about social media such as social media platforms in general (Facebook, Youtube) etc, its advantages and

negativities, what prevents people from effectively accessing social media etc, questions were included. Instruction guidelines were attached to the questionnaires to guide the subjects as to whether to circle or tick the chosen response.

The questionnaires were formed up of 19 questions each, where 14 of the questions were close ended. Structured and multiple choices questions from which a respondent needs to select and explain were also used. The last five (5) open ended questions were meant to give respondents a chance to produce original ideas that the researcher might not put to consideration to impact on concept understanding. Section D provided for comment section. These questionnaires were distributed during classes and only after 30 minutes or when the lecture was over, with the permission of the lecturer.

The researcher handed the self-administered paper questionnaires to students who had signed consent forms and students were allowed to complete the questionnaire within 10 minutes after the lecture. The researcher waited for the students to finish completing the questionnaires and collected the completed questionnaires. When all data was collected, the researcher made hard and soft copies and stored them safely as a security precaution measure, in case there would be unexpected occurrences like fire or theft.

3.4 Population

According to Burns and Grove (1993, p.779), a population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study while Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, (2005) describes population as the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. The study population consisted of Windhoek residents (could be students or staffs) from two Windhoek based tertiary institutions namely, the University of Namibia (UNAM), and International

University of Management (IUM), however the study was limited to both UNAM and IUM main campuses as Windhoek campuses only.

In addition, respondents from three universities were considered appropriate as population of the study area because of the fact that these are tertiary institutions, and their opinions are highly regarded and thus helps form a great and invaluable research outcome. The Windhoek's 2021 population is now estimated at 445,745 (World population review, 2021).

3.5 Sample

Sampling is defined as the process of choosing a small group of respondents from a larger defined target population, assuming that the results obtained from the small group allows the researcher to make conclusions concerning the larger group (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2003).

The researcher used a two-stage cluster sampling method. According to (Ben-Shlomo, Brookes & Hickman, 2013) in a clustered sample, subgroups of the population are used as the sampling unit, rather than individuals. The population is divided into subgroups, known as clusters, which are randomly selected to be included in the study. Clusters are usually already defined, for example individual GP practices or towns could be identified as clusters. In single-stage cluster sampling, all members of the chosen clusters are then included in the study. In two-stage cluster sampling, a selection of individuals from each cluster is then randomly selected for inclusion. Clustering should be taken into account in the analysis.

Cluster sampling can be more efficient than simple random sampling, especially where a study takes place over a wide geographical region. For instance, it is easier to contact lots of individuals in a few GP practices than a few individuals in many different GP practices.

Disadvantages include an increased risk of bias, if the chosen clusters are not representative of the population, resulting in an increased sampling error.

A convenient total sample of 20 subjects was selected from the two tertiary institutions which comprised of 5 UNAM students, 5 IUM students, 5 UNAM staffs and another 5 IUM staffs amounting to a total sample of 100% which were chosen by two-stage cluster sampling method, whereby a selection of individuals from each of the above-mentioned clusters were randomly selected for inclusion in the study (Ben-Shlomo, Brookes & Hickman, 2013). The sample that was chosen consisted of 10 participants from UNAM main campus, and 10 from IUM main campus. Respondents were purposefully chosen to ensure inclusivity and horizontal coverage i.e., to ensure that the research study has reached the desired extent.

3.6. Research Instruments

According to the (Columbia University, n.d.), a research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure, and analyse data related to your research interests. These tools are commonly used in health sciences, social sciences, and education to assess patients, clients, students, teachers, staff, etc. A research instrument can include interviews, tests, surveys, or checklists. The Research Instrument is usually determined by researcher and is tied to the study methodology.

Questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher to participants to complete. Questionnaire guides were prepared by the researcher in line with the main research questions as stated in chapter one for primary data collection from participants who wished to partake. The researcher formulated and handed self-administered structured questionnaires with a list of open and close-ended questions, as these provide more diverse detail.

In the open-ended questions, the subjects were required to respond in writing, whereas closed-ended questions had options which were determined by the researcher (Burns & Grove 1993, p.370). Open-ended questions were included because as it allows subjects to

respond to questions in their own words and provide more detail and to give more broad answers as they possibly could.

3.7. Reliability and validity

3.7.1. Reliability

Polit and Hungler (1993, p.445) refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. The 20 questionnaires which were answered by both groups, the UNAM, and IUM aimed to reveal consistency in responses. To ensure validity of the research, the researcher purposively selected a sample population that can provide the needed answers. Reliability can also be ensured by minimising sources of measurement error like data collector bias. Data collector bias was minimised by the researcher's being the only one to administer the questionnaires. The physical and psychological environment where data was collected was made comfortable by ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and general physical comfort. Subjects were requested not to write their names on the questionnaires to ensure confidentiality.

3.7.2 Validity

The validity of an instrument is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Polit & Hungler 1993:448). Content validity refers to the extent to which an instrument represents the factors under study. To achieve content validity, questionnaires included a variety of questions on the knowledge of social media (Polit & Hungler 1993:250). In the validation process of this study, copies of the questionnaire and copies of the research questions were given to some media lecturers. These lecturers went through the research questions and the questionnaire carefully to ascertain the appropriateness and adequacy of the instrument.

Content validity was further ensured by consistency in administering the questionnaires. All questionnaires were distributed to subjects by the researcher personally. The questions were formulated in simple language for clarity and ease of understanding. Clear instructions were given to the subjects and the researcher completed the questionnaires for those subjects who could not read. All the subjects completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. This was done to prevent subjects from giving questionnaires to other people to complete on their behalf.

The researcher structured the questionnaire in the Likert fashion, on a modified four-point scale instead of a 5-point Likert fashion. Researcher prefers a modified Likert scale because according to normal Likert scale, strongly agree assigns 5 points, agree 4 points, undecided 3 points, disagree 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point. Many researchers and educationists feel that there is no logical enough reason to assign the weight of 3 points to somebody who is undecided on a given issue. Therefore, the 4 Likert scale is preferred.

Moreover, seeking subjects who are willing to participate in a study can be difficult, particularly if the study requires extensive amounts of time or other types of investment by subjects. If the number of the persons approached to participate in a study declines, generalising the findings to all members of a population is not easy to justify. The study needs to be planned to limit the investment demands on subjects in order to increase participation.

The researcher also pretested the questionnaire on eight respondents with each of the two respondents picked from each respective research areas. A pretest refers to a trial administration of an instrument to identify flaws. When a questionnaire is used as a data gathering instrument, it is necessary to determine whether questions and directions are clear

to subjects and whether they understand what is required from them. This is referred to as the pretesting of a questionnaire (Polit & Hungler 1995, p.38, 711). This was done in order to see:

- How the subject will react to the questionnaire.
- Whether the items are clear enough and easily understood.
- Whether there is the need to include more items in certain areas; or
- Whether there are some items to which they would not like to respond.

3.8 Procedure

The researcher asked for the Research Permission Letter which was granted by the University of Namibia. This was done to confirm the legitimacy of the study to respondents and to seek their permission to participate in the study. Questionnaires were submitted to participants to complete and return to the researcher. Participants were given 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and the researcher collected the questionnaire from each participant upon completion of the questionnaires.

3.9 Data Analysis

According to (Guru99, n.d.), data analysis is defined as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modelling data to discover useful information for business decision-making. The purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from data and taking the decision based upon the data analysis.

After the data was collected it was organised and analysed. For analysis of closed-ended questions, a computer programme called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Data was analysed by using descriptive statistics. Frequency tables were drawn and

from these the data was presented in pie diagrams and bar graphs. The open-ended questions were analysed through quantitative content analysis by the researcher with the aim of quantifying emerging characteristics and concepts. Concept analysis is the process of analysing verbal or written communications in a systematic way to measure variables quantitatively (Polit & Hungler 1995:209, 698).

3.10 Research Ethics

The conducting of research requires not only expertise and diligence, but also honesty and integrity. This is done to recognise and defend the rights of human subjects. To render the study ethical, the rights to self-determination, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent were experimented.

Written permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the Department of Information and Communications Studies within the University of Namibia. Subjects' consent was obtained before they completed the questionnaires. Burns and Grove (1993, p.776) define informed consent as the prospective subject's agreement to participate voluntarily in a study, which is reached after assimilation of essential information about the study. The subjects were informed of their rights to voluntarily consent or decline to participate, and to withdraw participation at any time without penalty. Subjects were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures that would be used to collect the data and assured that there were no potential risks or costs involved.

Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Burns and Grove (1993, p.762) define anonymity as when subjects cannot be linked, even by the researcher, with his or her individual responses. In this study anonymity was ensured by not disclosing

the respondent's name on the questionnaire and research reports. When subjects are promised confidentiality, it means that the information they provide will not be publicly reported in a way which identifies them (Polit & Hungler 1995, p.139).

In this study, confidentiality was maintained by keeping the collected data confidential and not revealing the subjects' identities when reporting or publishing the study (Burns & Grove 1993, p.99). No identifying information was entered onto the questionnaires, and questionnaires were only numbered after data was collected (Polit & Hungler 1995, p.139). The ethical principle of self-determination was also maintained. Subjects were treated as autonomous agents by informing them about the study and allowing them to voluntarily choose to participate or not. Lastly, information was provided about the researcher in the event of further questions or complaints.

Summary

The researcher used a quantitative, descriptive survey design. 20 questionnaires were administered by the researcher to collect the data from a convenient sample of 20 subjects. The questionnaires had both closed and open-ended questions. The sample consisted of participants from UNAM main campus, and IUM main campus. Permission was obtained from the UNAM's Department of Information and Communications Studies that will grant the re-searcher the right to carry out the research study. Anonymity, self-determination, and confidentiality were ensured during administration of the questionnaires and report writing. Questionnaires were distributed to subjects to ensure validity. Reliability and validity were further increased by pretesting the questionnaire. This chapter described the research methodology, including the population, sample, data collection instruments as well as

strategies used to ensure the ethical standards, reliability and validity of the study. The findings are stated in chapter four.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data obtained from fieldwork conducted at two high learning institutions. The main purpose of the research was to investigate the impact that social media has on the quality of communication across Windhoek. The researcher does not only present the research findings but also analyses the data as obtained on the self-administered questionnaires used in the study. The researcher used a diverse sample of 100 respondents from two academic institutions, the University of Namibia and the International University of Management.

The chapter illustrated all the major findings as shown by the analysis of collected data using charts, graphical displays and tables and at the same time answering the research questions. Study results are linked to the theoretical framework, discussed in chapter 3 using the critical analytical approach in which they are critically justified, supported and contradicted in the process. The researcher worked to ensure that all the findings provided answers to research questions of the study and that the research objectives were realized.

4.2 Sample

The data presented in this section was taken from the completed questionnaires. The researcher distributed 50 questionnaires to the University of Namibia and another 50 questionnaires to the International University of Management which comprised of 40 students and 10 staffs from UNAM as well as 40 students and another 10 IUM staffs. Respondents were purposefully chosen to ensure inclusivity and horizontal coverage. To

ensure reliability of study, the researcher chose to balance sample representatives from the two tertiary learning institutions. All UNAM respondents decided to participate in the study, however only 40 IUM respondents participated in the study. Five students and another five staffs failed to submit back the questionnaires to the researcher through email. The participants failed to reply to the emails which were sent to them. The questionnaires hence represented a 90 percent response rate. The research questionnaires were designed in simplicity form which enabled for clear understanding by the respondents. Also, the simplicity and importance of the research study ensured for the high response rate in this study.

4.3 Restating the research questions

The SPSS program was used for the data analysis. The findings are discussed according to the sections of the questionnaire. The four sections of the questionnaire were:

- Section A: Respondent's Demographic Characteristics
- Section B: Social media Utilisation
- Section C: Social media Usage Consistency
- Section D: Comments and Suggestions

4.4 Data presentation and analysis

4.4.1 Population Sample

Calzon (2021) define data analysis as the process of collecting, modelling and analysing data to extract insights that support the topic at hand. The researcher explored the relationship between the concepts and categories into information tables which gave an opportunity for review to ensure that all data was taken into consideration. Simplified tables, charts, and graphs that can be easily interpreted by any reader intending to gain insight into the impact of social media study were used.

4.5 Respondent's Demographic Characteristics

This section of the questionnaire covered the respondents' age, gender, income and their educational level. This information is central to the study, the personal data helped contextualise the findings about the age groups and gender views about how social media strengthen communication and whether they make use of social media for communication and the formulation of appropriate recommendations.

4.5.1 Respondents' ages

The respondents were asked how old they were at their previous birthdays. Table 4.1 depicts the respondents' ages.

Table 4.5.1 Respondents' ages at the time of completing the questionnaires

AGE	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
18-30	80	80%

31-43	3	15%
44-60	1	5%
61-75	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Out of the 100 respondents who participated in the questionnaires, the table results presented in table 4.5.1 above shows a greater number (80%) of respondents below 30 years. Study results also indicate that the percentages in the numbers of respondents seem to decrease gradually as the age range goes up. The results show there are (15%) of the 31-43 years as compared to the 18-30 and even much smaller percentages of the 36 to 45 years categories. For this study, none of the respondents were above the age of 60 years giving an indication that social media qualities to communication are more recognised by younger and middle age categories. One can therefore conclude that the impact of social media on the quality of communication is more felt and enjoyed well received by the Namibian youths.

4.5.2 Respondents according to gender

Of the 90 respondents who participated in the study, only 40 (44%) females took part in the research and 50 (56%) were males hence, making more males to have been more represented in the sample. Although the number of females representation appeared to be less, this however does not affect the research results in any way.

4.5.3 Income

The question on whether participants received a wage or salary provided for a YES/NO answer and an additional (Others) option. This was done in case the participants had other source of income. The income in wage or salary question revealed that 15 (17%) of the respondents who took part in the study were income receivers. The remaining 75 (83%) respondents were mostly students and it could be easily understood that they were not job holders and hence do not receive an income. However, there is a complication with regards to how they still somehow managed to access social media pages which could be costly at times. The answer to this misunderstanding, however, can be drawn from the fact that neither participant answered the ‘Others’ question, which could only be the reason the participants might have received money elsewhere i.e., from their parents that they used to purchase internet data bundles/vouchers.

4.5.4 Respondents’ level of education

Table 4.5.4 Educational level

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Literacy learning	0	0%
High School	0	0%
Tertiary institution	81	90%
College	5	6%
Not at all	0	0%
Others	4	4%
TOTAL	90	100%

From the participants that answered the questionnaires, the study reported that the majority were students and were on tertiary institutions, with 81 (90%) participants. This provides for enough evidence that since these people are academic wise, they have better knowledge about what social media is and how it works. Also, 5 (6%) have reached the college level which means they either had undergraduate as well as post graduate degrees, which might have afforded them job opportunities and earn better salaries which obviously mean that they can afford to buy gadgets and internet bundles, thus giving them a licence to access social media. Only 4 respondents (4%) chose the 'Others' option. The respondents, however, did not specify the exact level of education although there was a space provided for that.

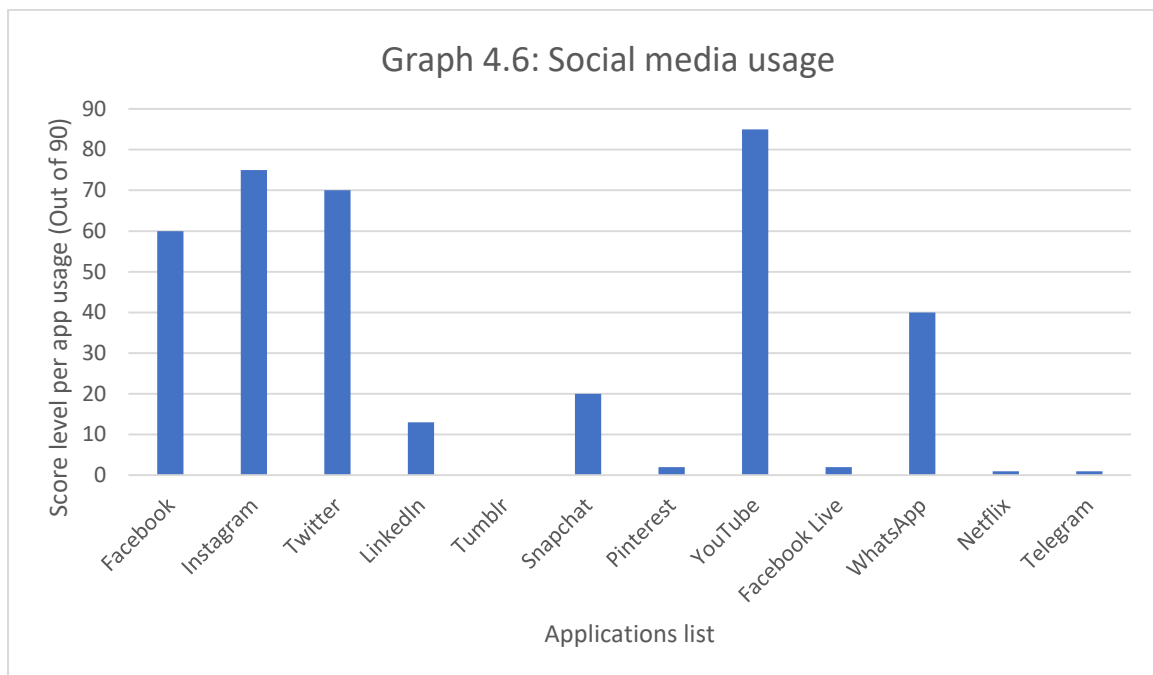
The 0% for both literacy and high school is somehow justified because this study was conducted at high learning institutions in UNAM and IUM and it could be reasonable to say that there are few literacy and high school learners on those campuses.

4.6 Social media utilisation

With regards to the usage of social media, the researcher provided a list of various social media applications and the respondents were required to select the types they use. These included a list of apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube and Facebook Live as well as the option for others. Their responses showed a high usage rate of some social media apps. YouTube recorded the highest usage rate score with a (85 out of 90) respondents across all campuses, Instagram came second with a (75/90), Twitter (70/90) and Facebook in fourth with a (60/90) score. The results also indicated a high usage rate of Snapchat by female respondents and a low usage of Pinterest among respondents. Also, a space for other choices, which respondents could specify, were provided. Only ten (10/90) respondents added to this option, with WhatsApp being the most

chosen app added, since it was not part of the listed apps. Netflix and Telegram were also the notable additions to the list through the ‘others’ option space which was provided. Apps like LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest and Facebook Live recorded a low usage rate with Tumblr scoring a zero. The reason for this could be that the respondents either did not have ideas about these apps or find them not interesting.

The usage rate per application over the two campuses is illustrated in the graph below. The score grade is out of 90 which represent the total number of respondents who participated across UNAM and IUM.



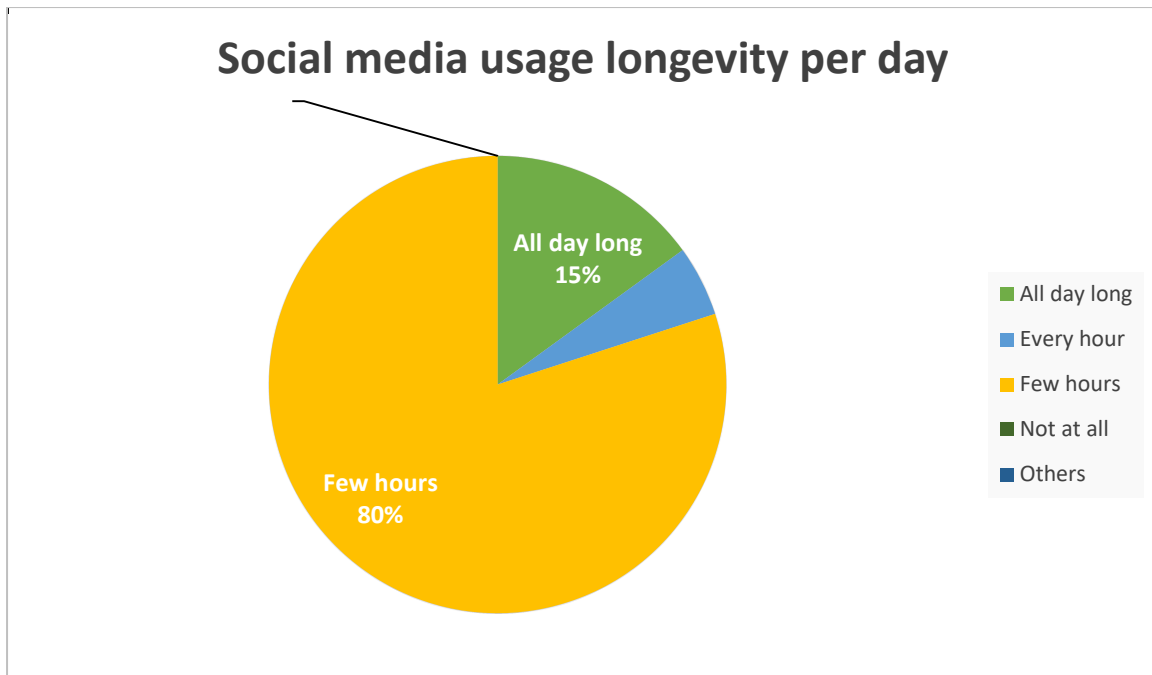
Furthermore, over 70/90 respondents indicated that they use social media more for communicating, sharing pictures, sharing music and watching videos. This result is logical because the study was conducted on two campuses and majority of the participants might be students and they might watch more videos for their learning. Also there appears to be a

correspondence between people preference to watching videos on social media and the fact that YouTube is the most used social media application as shown in the graph above cement this finding. The results also indicated that only a few people use social media for video blogging and sharing articles. This seems odd especially because these people are mostly students and staff workers and sharing articles should be at least one of their top daily social media usages.

Respondents were also asked to rate how satisfied they were with social media usage. The rating scale was organised according to four alphabetical letters, (A for being very good), (B for being good), (C for being bad) and (D for not having any idea). Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents rated social media as very good and twenty percent (20%) for being good. This just shows how important people view social media as part of their lives. To add to this, the respondents comprised of both students and staffs from the two universities and surely social media should be at the centre stage of their learning and work. No participant rated social media as being bad and since they are educated people, they all had an idea of what social media was about.

4.7 Social media usage consistency

Figure 4.7



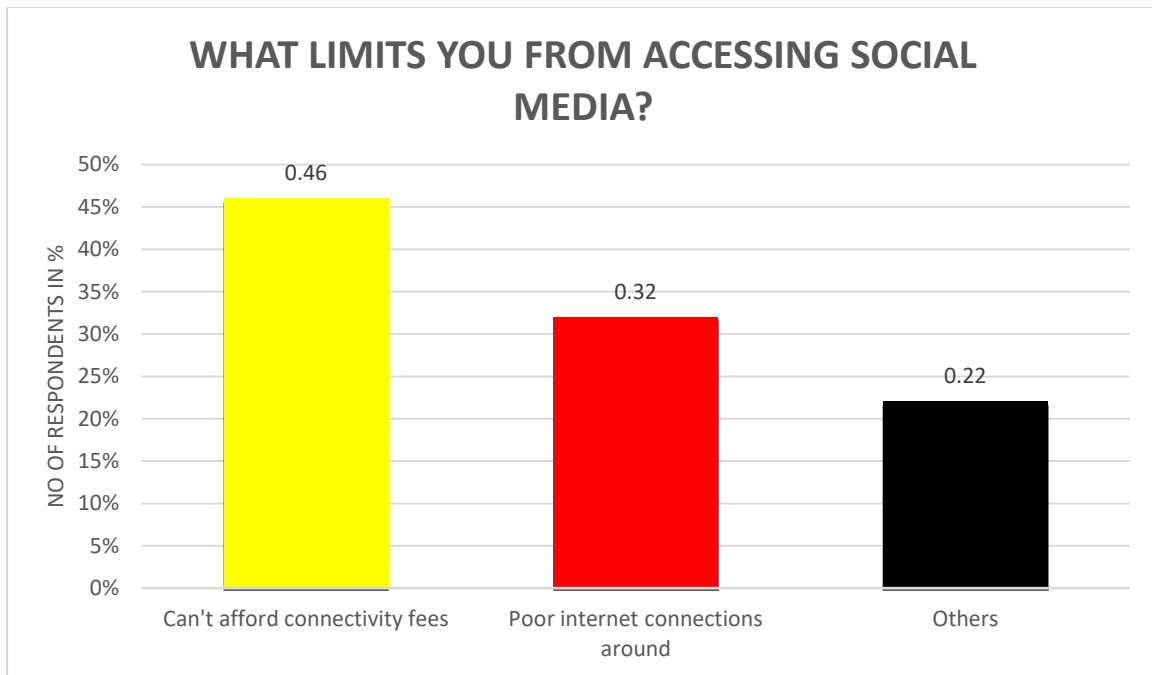
This question was aimed to identify the consistency and reliability of respondents on their utilisation of social media in a day. Their answers were combined altogether which included 10 respondents from UNAM and another 10 from IUM. There were four alternative answers given to the respondents with an additional fifth option provided in case the respondent's usage duration was different from the indicated options which thus mean that the respondent has their level of consistency with regards to social media utilisation. Now as shown in the pie chart above, the social media usage consistency among respondent differs because obviously the respondents also vary as well. Results indicated a massive 80% for respondents who only uses social media for few hours. This might be attributed to certain factors such as that the respondents included students and they might choose to use social media only for shorts period of time because they are mostly occupied with their schoolwork and they might not have enough time to get involved in social media at the same time. The outcome also revealed 15% of respondents to be the only people who prefer to use social media for a whole day and 5% for those who use it on every hour basis. It is seen that most of those who use

social media throughout the day or rather in every hour are mostly staff workers and social media is obviously part of their jobs and it is for this reason that there is somehow a small percentage. Moreover, these people have jobs and earn salaries/wages and they can afford to access social media at any time as compared to students. A 0% was recorded for the two options which means that there were zero respondents who did not access social media at all or at certain times not provided on the options.

Respondents were also asked how long they access social media in a month. The results showed that a large percentage of respondents who do not get involved in it so often, or rather who uses it sporadically thus clearly manifesting a correlation between peoples' involvement in social media as per day usage which is same as to a month usage period. Only few people use social media all month long or rather frequently. There was no percentage recorded for respondents who did not engage in social media at all.

Participants were also asked to mention what limits them from accessing social media. There were two selections given and the space for other choices in case they have other reason for not accessing social media. The reasons assumed by the researcher and referred to the respondents were as follows: 1. Can't afford connectivity fees, 2. Poor internet connections around. The third choice as mentioned before was for other reason in case there was any. Their responses were analysed according to the charts below.

Graph 3 on limitations of social media



Forty-one of the total ninety respondents (46%) indicated that they were not able to access social media because they could not afford connectivity fees. This could be linked to the assumption that some of the respondents were still students by that time and some did not have jobs and hence they cannot afford to buy internet bundles. Twenty-nine (32%) of the respondents indicated that they experienced internet connection problems which means that these people might still afford internet connectivity but their connection to social media was impeded by poor connections at the places where they live or work. The remaining twenty respondents which makes up (22%) of the people stated that there is actually nothing that keeps them away from accessing these platforms because they can afford internet bills and also that they are staying in places where internet connection is strong. The other people stated that they had not much interest in social media and internet.

Another question with regards to usage consistency was on whether respondents could live without social media. It was a simple YES/NO answer. The results indicated that (60%) of respondents cannot afford to live without social media, reason being that social media has

become part of their lives in every aspect including the profession life as well as personal life. Respondents reasoned that they get most of the daily news updates from these platforms and without to get rid of it means that their live become blank and shut out. However, these percentage is a surprise and it clearly shows that people don't really care about social media. The fact that we are now living in the information age, where social media is a catalyst to that, if these percentages are anything to go by, then it is worrying especially because the respondent were mostly millennials with a lot to learn and social media could have been a foundation to that. 40 percent of the participants indicated that they could live without social media. They detailed that with all the bad impacts associated with social media such as online bullying and privacy concerns, they can live without social media. They also indicated that social media could be addictive and this mean reduction in work productivity within the nation at large which are one of the motivations that the respondents could possibly live without it.

The chart below illustrates the numbers in percentages of respondents who can and those that cannot live without social media.

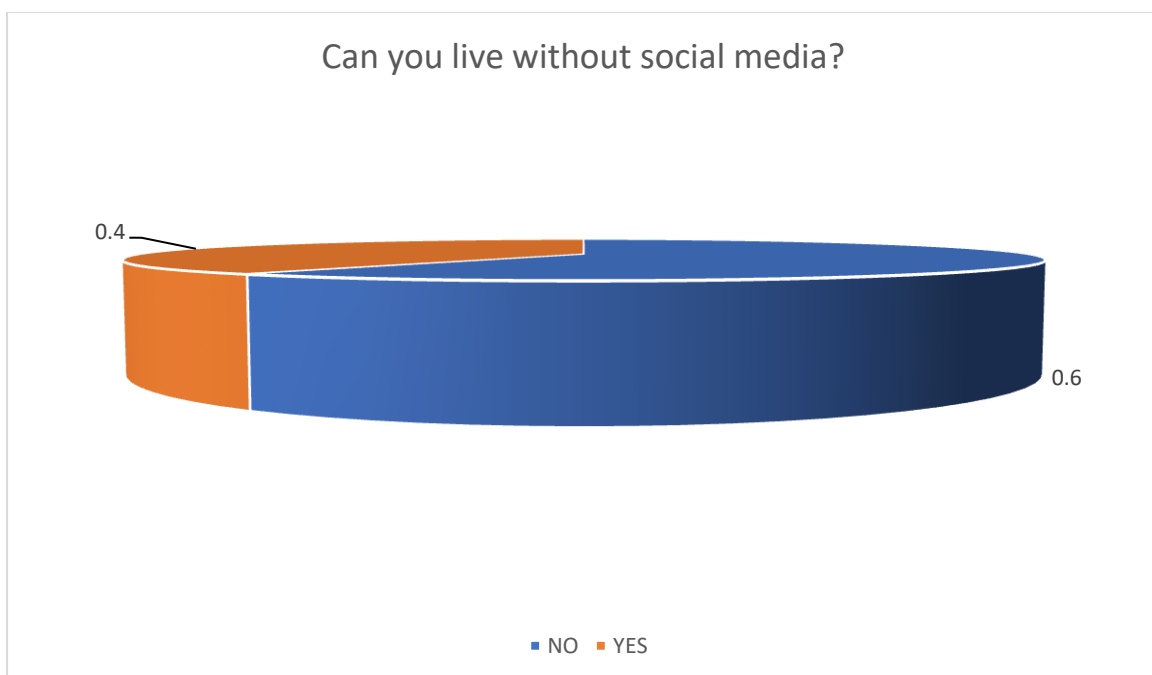


Chart 1: Social media reliability

4.8 Social media usage satisfaction

Respondents were also asked to rank their usage as per purpose categories with social media on the following aspects: Educational purposes, research, communication and interaction, social networking and news and information sharing. The rank scale was from one to five, with one being the lowest, two being moderate, three representing a high usage and four representing a very high usage. The results as per usage purpose categories are outlined in the table below.

Ranking scale in %	4=Very high usage %	3=High usage %	2=Moderate %	1=Low usage in %
Educational purposes	60%	20%	15%	5%
Research purposes	55%	30%	10%	5%
Communication and interaction	65%	30%	0%	5%
Social networking	65%	20%	15%	0%
News and information	75%	25%	0%	0%

sharing				
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Figure 4.8

4.9 Defining social media

Because of their ages and a high level of exposure to technological advancements, 100% of the respondents understood the meaning of the term social media. Their definitions were more or less in line with the definition provided in the literature of the research as defined by previous writers. This, the researcher deduced, could be because of adequate level of education by most or all respondents targeted. This is because the research sample targeted students from UNAM and IUM as well as staffs from respective institutions and who are all literate with modern technological gadgets which could be linked to their education credentials.

4.10 Social media usefulness

Out of all 90 respondents who successfully took part in the research 85 of them (94%) confirmed that social media was useful to them because it afforded them a full licence to connect and interact with different people as well as catching up with friends. People felt much closer to each other than ever because they can communicate with each other in distance. Social media enabled people to get news update on an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly basis. They also indicated that social media has become part of their job and educational purposes. Just as in the chart above, 60% of the respondents ranked social media

usage for educational purposes with very high usage rate and this portrays that social media is simply not just a platform to interact with people, but it comes with a wide range of tools and benefits that people can utilise as well. Only 5 (6%) respondents had despised social media.

4.11 Most preferable social media platform

Data collected from the questionnaires indicated that five people (25%) of the respondents preferred WhatsApp as their most favourable platform. They noted that WhatsApp is easier to use and more efficient. Also, WhatsApp allows people with each other's contact numbers to see other people's status updates. Respondents felt that WhatsApp groups also provides an educational platform through those discussion groups. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents have chosen Twitter as their most preferred platform. People felt that Twitter is the most flexible social media platform due to its features as it allows people to do multiple things at the same time. Facebook collected 10% of the respondent, YouTube with 20%, 15% Instagram and 5% for LinkedIn. Linked in is described as probably the highest rated app for office use where most job-related advertisements are shared. The app also consisted of high-profile companies and one can expose him/herself to various companies.

4.12 Feelings towards social media and information sharing

Social networking sites spread information faster than any other media. All 90 respondents (100%) indicated that they learn about breaking news on social media. Social networking sites help students do better at school. 100% of students with access to social media reported that they use social networking sites to discuss educational topics and use the sites to talk

about school assignments. Social networking sites allow people to improve their relationships and make new friends. 100% of respondents participated in social networking sites to connect with friends and family, and increased online communication strengthens relationships.

4.13 Question on whether respondents would recommend Namibians to make use of social media

Participants in the survey were asked if they would recommend Namibians to make use of social media and all 90 respondents (100%) replied that they would definitely do so because of the ability that these sites have in helping people who are socially isolated or shy connect with other people. Respondents also felt that social networking sites help citizens feel more connected to society. Social networking sites offers students a platform for collaboration with other students and communication with lecturers outside the classroom. A study found that 100% of university students use social media for educational resources. Participants also cited that social media is used to keep in touch with friends and extended families. All the respondents who took part in this study recommend Namibians to make use various social media applications to network career opportunities, find people across the globe with like-minded interests, and share their thoughts, feelings, insights, and emotions. Some respondents went on to say that despite its negativities. They would not imagine a nation without social media.

Conclusion

The chapter presented and analysed data on the investigation of social media and its impacts on the quality of communication. The analysed data largely revealed that social media was held in high regard pertaining to its effectiveness as a communications tool. A number of suggestions on what and how social media has become were proffered by respondents and these helped to formulate the recommendations as presented in the next and final chapter of this research project.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed account of the discussion of the findings from the research. In this section, the discussions provide a review of the results including interpretations that attempt to provide logical explanations about the presence of social media and how it impacts on the quality of communication in Windhoek. The findings are also related to the trends and developments outlined in the literature review in the first chapter.

5.2 Discussions of findings

The researcher was committed on ensuring that the research study was determined on the essence of people/respondents approached for participation. The population targeted were Windhoek residents from the age of 18 years going up. The researcher had to ensure that the selected population sample and that of course includes the age composition resonated with the research objectives which were to find out how social media impacted the quality of communication in Windhoek.

The results indicated that most of the active social media users were the millennials who engage through various social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn etc. The results also indicated that a lot more numbers of males' participants than females to have participated in the study.

However, social media attainability was more ascribed to income. Only 17 percent of respondents were income receivers which means that more people in Windhoek are limited to accessing social media because they can't afford internet charges. This inaccessibility to social media could also be linked to the digital divide predicament that not only is Windhoek faced with but also the whole country at large. It is still hard to imagine that somehow there

are still areas in Windhoek without adequate network coverage. Subsequently, people might as well afford connectivity fees, but it still does not help because they still might find themselves in unconnected vicinities.

The 90 percent of respondents were on tertiary institutions which gave an indication that most Windhoek residents are academically literate and have a knowhow on using various social media applications. Also, respondents indicated that they are registered on various social media platforms and this is evinced by the fact that over 50 percent of the respondents are students at two tertiary learning institutions and hence possessed technological gadgets such as tablets and smartphones that enabled them to engage with each other. Over 40 percent of the respondents were staff members and they had paying jobs which means that they can simply afford to buy data bundles and stay connected to these apps hence enhancing communication and information sharing among residents.

With regards to social media usage the findings of this study indicate that people make use of several social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram Snapchat etc. However, these findings showed a high usage rate of some social media apps, with YouTube topping the charts, followed by Instagram, Twitter in third and Facebook in the fourth place. These are some of the highly used platforms. The usage of each app may be attributed to specific reasons. The utilisation of YouTube as an online video sharing platform for instance was due to the fact that people particularly students use it for lesson learning videos which help them get visual and sound description of topics at hand. Over 70/90 respondents indicated that they use social media more for communicating, sharing pictures, sharing music and watching videos.

There is a strong conformation with the results and the actual usage rate as per application owing to the fact that these apps were top scorers in usage and they also offers all the usage

features in sharing photos, music and videos. In addition, only few people were recorded to have used these platforms for video blogging and sharing articles. This seems strange because most of the respondents were students and staff workers and by the looks of it these activities should've been top of their daily usage. Now a conclusion can be drawn from these findings that although people acknowledge social media presence, they somehow do not realize how social media could be at establishing daily communication network through blogging and vlogging or their merely lacking information on how to start up one. The fact that YouTube topped the chart with its usage mean that people only use it for watching videos than making up their own video content. This again comes down to the lack of people's understanding of some the platforms.

Results of the survey also indicate that respondents had not only indicated to have a perfect knowledge about social media but also its substantial role in engaging people, with 80 percent of the respondents scaling it as very good in connecting with people. 20 percent of the respondents pointed out that social media is good with connecting people. This yet again demonstrated the confidence that people placed in these sites. We have observed how over the years communication has changed since social media came into existence.

Communication and information now travel faster and faster, and the world seems to get smaller and smaller. As a result, this changes how the world communicates, especially with today's obsession with social media networks.

According to (Edwards, 2015), one of the biggest changes in the way that we interact, due to social media networks, is the sheer number of people that we can interact with. Because of social media networks, we are now able to interact with thousands of people all over the world. This is why we see people who have thousands of Facebook friends or tens of thousands of Twitter followers. Without social media, that would be impossible. Social media networks allow us the opportunity to share opinions with a far wider audience.

“Before social media, we were extremely limited in our means to interact with others, and we were limited largely to the people that we knew in-person. There were things we (those my age and older) had to deal with that millennials do not have to. Your significant other’s parent answering the phone when you called, waiting for a letter in the mail, waiting a week to get your pictures that you sent off to be developed, and so on” Edwards 2015.

Now the internet and social media has drastically changed the way people all over the world interact and communicate and as a result, social networks are becoming one of the dominant ways people communicate through.

On the usage consistency of social media, the majority of respondents (80%) revealed they only use social media for few hours. Most of these people were not income receivers and could not afford to pay for internet which is one of the hinderances that people are faced with. These people had as much interest in using these platforms however it is for this reason that they could not. Also, when looking at how people rated the importance of social media, we can conclude that limitations to people accessing social media had not persuaded people towards despising social media importance and if they had the tools required to accessing social media, they would’ve definitely cherished every second of it. In short, even when these people couldn’t access social media for longer periods, they still think of social media with high regards. The findings also discovered that 15% of the respondents make use of social media all day long and only 5% made use of it every hour. These numbers shows that majority of these include staff workers which means that had jobs to do and clearly social media is part of that. The conclusion here is that consistency in utilisation of social media varies, but that does not necessarily mean people who rarely uses it deride social media. This could be linked to several factors.

With respect to the relationship between social networking site use and perceptions of social networking sites, the two constructs that the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were related to both frequency and the amount of social networking site use. The correlation results also indicated that people with more internet experience use social media sites more often and spend more time on the venues.

Respondents were asked to reveal what limits them from accessing social media platforms of which 46 percent indicated that they were not able to afford connection fees. 32 percent of the participants specified that network connection was a stumbling block towards accessing social media and only 22 percent reported that there were no limitations at all towards accessing of social networking sites. In this regard, affordability is cited as one of the biggest challenges to internet uptake and use. Service providers and users' services such as Namibia Telecommunication Limited and Telecom Namibia have become the main entry point to the internet for most users in the prepaid mobile environment that characterises most Namibian markets. So, it thus can be argued that respondents have somehow become price-sensitive due to the unavailability of subsidised data and hence it has affected internet access and use. This then discourage access to the internet for first-time users and slow down the intensity of use, depriving people to explore the internet due to concerns of cost. Also, the fact that only few people have indicated to have no problems with internet fees and network issues again suggests that network and connection provision around the country is a real issue and that means that network facilitators have not distributed enough network antennas over the country which made for limited network and internet in some places.

This study's findings also indicate that more people (60%) claimed that they cannot live without social media. Some people reasoned they have become accustomed to it and it is now a norm, while others stated that social media accounts for everything they do in their life, ranging from learning and education activities to social life including their professional

working environments. We have to admit that ever since social media started to spread, it became an essential part that almost no one can live without. If you were to observe your daily use of social media platforms, you will find out that you are on social media almost all day. It became a part of your daily life, job, and in some certain cases, your job revolves around it.

According to (Think Marketing, 2020), “we can’t deny that social media reshaped people’s mindset and spread awareness regarding many topics. Some of the society’s harmful traditions had changed due to the awareness that people spread on social media, we understood, and we were introduced to many expressions and concepts that we never knew about that helped open our eyes to what’s right and what’s wrong”.

Another reason that justifies this finding is that one of the things that social media had done is connecting people to the other side of the world and it is now easy to know what is happening in other countries.

However social media still poses a threat to some extent and there are still people who believe that they can live without social media. 40 percent of the respondents indicated that social media poses greater privacy concerns. One respondent also stated that “I think it helps me to keep focused on what I am doing so I don't have any distractions. I don't need to scroll my phone every five or two minutes like everybody else”.

Respondents were also asked on how their satisfaction and ranking of social media usage for educational purposes, research, interaction and communication, social networking and news and information sharing. Results indicate that 60 percent respondents ranked social media with very high usage for educational purposes, 20 percent ranked its usage rate on high usage. Only 5 percent of the respondents ranked social media usage for educational purposes with low usage. Social media contribution to research ranking percentages was 55 percent for

having a very high usage rate, Communication and interaction had 65 percent on very high usage rate, Social networking also picked up 65 percent for having a very high usage rate while News and information sharing accumulated a massive 75 percent on its usage rate ranked with a very high usage. The rest of the percentages were either on high usage, moderate and low usage. Now looking at these findings, it is clearer that social media is highly regarded in education, the same with communication and interaction and in news and information sharing. However, there is a big distinction which is not necessarily supposed to be between social media ranking per its educational role and research. Research normally goes hand in hand with education or in other words it is simply a component of education, but it seems that people deemed social media as a tool for research on low standards. This could be linked that people don't know how to utilise social media when it comes to research.

On the understanding of the term "social media", 100 percent of the respondents gave an indication that Windhoek residents have gained extensive knowledge on the new internet-based concept of communication. This has made for faster and efficient communication across citizens, and this can also be attributed to the rise in new technological tools that have taken people by storm. Windhoek as a country's capitol city is particularly elevated and people have tried to keep up with the internet trend. As stated in the literature review, people make use of various social media applications and websites such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook etc., to interact with one another through sharing videos and photos, by creating accounts of these platforms (Hudson, 2020).

95 percent of the participants indicated that social media was useful to them. Respondents opined that not only is social media a communication channel, but it's also informative and an educational tool. According to a research study journal by (Blaschke, 2014), "social media technology provides educators with an opportunity to engage learners in the online classroom, as well as to support development of learner skills and competencies."

The internet as mentioned in the previous chapters has transformed communication and as a component of the internet, social media has massively taken communication to another level. This is backed up the (Education magazine, n.d.) argument which accentuate that “the first and the most significant benefit that comes across is the increase in the speed of communication, adding that the significant flaw of the traditional communication system was its slow nature, and social media seems to be a solution to that now. Messages are getting delivered within split seconds.” These findings manifest just how splendid social media has become and now people have embraced its existence.

“According to surveys, 39% of respondents felt closer to their friends because of social media while 26% felt they had more friends because of social media. Representatives of various cultures also come together without any boundaries or constraints. Social media helps random people meet each other by initiating the conversation (the education magazine, n.d).”

In fact, the 21st century’s technological and internet existence has undoubtedly manipulated communication to an extent that it doesn’t seem to dip any time in the future. People seem to find new rhythm to communication and information access and there seems to be a special injection in communication as a result.

The findings also revealed that (25%) of the respondents preferred WhatsApp as their most favourable platform. They noted that WhatsApp is much easier to use and more efficient. People with each other’s contact numbers can view other people’s status updates which means that not only do people communicate through voice and text messages but also allows for image views. WhatsApp allows people to connect irrelevant of distance. You can connect with someone in another country which wasn’t the case in the old days. WhatsApp groups also provides an educational platform through discussion groups. In the current times, looking especially at the way classes were cancelled and online learning became the way, this

again shed light on why social media platforms are vital and seen as the way in the future. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents have chosen Twitter as their most preferred platform. Twitter is the most flexible social media platform due to its features as it allows people to do multiple things at the same time. Twitter is such a professional social media channel due to the fact that high profile people such as presidents are connected to their nations and the world through this platform were, they receive mass followers. Twitter in Tunisia in the Arab Spring of 2011, the Spanish indignados, and later Occupy Wall Street (Gerbaudo, 2012), for instance were lauded as key tools to facilitate the organization of social movements by serving as a stitching mechanism. That is, protestors were able to use Twitter to stitch together a network of both human and technology-based networks (Agarwal, Bennett, Johnson, & Walker, 2014; Bennett, Segerberg, & Walker, 2014).

Facebook collected 10% of the respondents. Facebook is amongst one of the highly used social media platforms across the globe and its palpable to see it getting more votes in this study as well. Facebook as a social network specialise in connecting and exchanging thoughts, ideas, and content with other users (Hudson, 2020), often with users who share tastes and interests. People across various origins, institutions and organisations have Facebook accounts/pages where they interact with other people.

The findings indicated a 100 percent response rate on the question on what people feel about social media and information sharing. People cited that they learn about breaking news on social media. Social networking sites help students do better at school. 100% of students with access to social media reported that they use social networking sites to discuss educational topics and use the sites to talk about school assignments. Sanlad (2020) stated that with social media, “a data mining approach is used to determine the trends in social media as information in getting types of information, information sharing, and trends of social media used by different organisations. The results shows that one’s motivation in sharing information tends

to be consistent for each type of information that is to share the impression of social media users on a matter.” People felt much closer to one another which means that they can connect with families and friends due to the optimum speed within communication. In the old times, a message would take days, or you would require someone to relay the message to the other person which takes some time. Now social media has changed that. This sort of communication is exactly what people need. It is fantastic, you always informed and an online text away.

100 percent of the respondents also indicated they would recommend Namibians to make use of social media platforms. These platforms help citizens feel more connected to society.

Social networking sites offers students a platform for collaboration with other students and communication with lecturers outside the classroom. A study found that 100% of university students use social media for educational resources. Information is power and through these platforms people are well informed of particular decisions that their leaders have to make.

Social media has grown tremendously over the years. Social media is not just information based. Many companies in Namibia are making use of social media to connect with existing and potential customers which helps in boosting the business industry in the country.

Namibians can make use of such tools in every aspect of their lives. We have seen how the developed world has embarked on using social media a political tool for instance. This is common in the United States where political parties engage with supporters through various social media channels. If more Namibian people can gain knowledge of this occurrence, they can appreciate social media and the country’s development status will enhance of course.

6. Summary of findings

The rise in social media usage has significantly altered communication in most Namibian parts, particularly Windhoek and it’s no coincidence that most people has come to appreciate social media. Communication has been made easy; people can receive updates on anything in

an instant regardless of where they are as long as they have internet network coverage. In the times we're living, it's easy to adopt any culture remotely because you can be in Namibia but because you feed yourself with American daily content, you learn about their ways of living and culture through these platforms. Also, with social media, we must look at it differently to see the bigger picture. Now as far as social media has gone in stretching communication, there's however a more profound effect to almost any life aspect, could be political, social or economic. We tend to see more companies now turning to social media for customer and product engagement. People somehow have a view that an ad shared on social media looks different than the one shared on traditional channels such as newspaper for instance. Social media ads seem to breathe life and faster to reach more people in a short period and hence companies and businesses has taken advantage of the emergence of these platforms to interlink clients with their brands. Ku (2021) believe that due to Covid-19, 2020 B2B (Business to Business) marketers were forced to rapidly change their strategies. Between events cancelling, budget cuts, and uncertainty all around, the most agile of marketers were those best positioned to meet their goals, and this led many marketing professionals to refocus on their social media marketing strategy.

“Social media allows marketers to connect and engage potential customers where they are at: LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, and even some of the younger platforms like TikTok. With a strong social media strategy and the ability to create engaging content, marketers can engage their audience (Ku, 2021)”. This is modern advertising and all thanks to social media.

The study has proven that social media possess an incredible capacity in making communication much easier. 100 percent of the respondent indicated that they talk to others online through social media platforms and this highlights how enormously society has changed since the rise of social media. The research study found out that most people who

use these types of platforms are millennials within the age range of 18-40. 100 percent of the participants also revealed that they are all too well familiar with the term social media.

However, there are limitations that impedes people from accessing social media, such as the unaffordability of data bundles which can be attributed to lack of income among the people with only 25 percent of the respondents indicating that they were income receivers. This means that people are increasingly interested in social media, but the internet cost is the challenge they are faced with. Another challenge is the network issue around the regions which means that there are still some disadvantaged people who generally cannot access the internet due to poor network around the country.

Overall, this research study has highlighted that respondents in all honest took social media as part of their lives. 95 percent of the participants stated that social media is useful to them although they had their most favourable apps they're obsessed with. People use various apps for various purposes such as education and research, entertainment communication and interaction etc. 100 percent also advised that Namibians make use of social media because it keeps people connected to the society and everything that happens within it. People signified that although social media has its own shortcomings, its existence is such central to their livelihoods and that they could not figure out what life would be without it.

6.1 Conclusions

As from the findings of this research study, an inference can be drawn that social media utility has greatly impacted communication and people are now communicating in faster ways as opposed to the conservative times of sending letters and waiting for another week or even months for response. Social media is a powerful communications medium, with widespread influence over cities as well as remote areas. However, this is attributed to the

digital revolution that we are witnessing. Digital transformation has not only influenced businesses and made the world more accessible, but it has also changed the way we communicate.

According to (Mohsin, 2021), there are 3.2 billion social media users all around the world, which is about 42% of the Earth's population. In addition, there are roughly 4.5 billion internet users across the world today. These statistics are proof of the growing dominance of digital media in our daily lives.

Dean (2021) statistics revealed that social media has made great strides as communication tool around the world with the average social media user engages with an average of 6.6 various social media platforms. The social media growth rate since 2015 is an average of 12.5% year-over-year. Globally, the average time a person spends on social media a day is 2 hours 24 minutes; if someone signed up at 16 and lived to 70, they would spend 5.7 years of their life on it. Facebook is the leading social network at 2.9 billion monthly active users, followed by YouTube (2.3 billion), WhatsApp (2 billion), FB Messenger (1.3 billion), and WeChat (1.2 billion). According to the Global Web Index, the average number of social media accounts a millennial is 8.4 worldwide, up 75% from 4.8 accounts in 2014.

Most businesses have also adopted social media for their marketing strategy. According to the (Marketing Insider Group, 2018), social media provides immense potential for businesses because consumers habitually log on to it daily and are exposed to companies. Social platforms help business connect with your customers, increase awareness about their brands, and boost leads and sales. With more than three billion people around the world using social media every month, the users and engagement on major platforms just keep increasing.

Social media have become a prerequisite in every work department across the world. People

use social media for work related activities such as hosting meetings with the CEOs and other employees. 40% of all internet users worldwide utilize social media for work purposes.

The research findings as discussed in this chapter shows that social media has not only helped in finding out how its usage transformed communication, but overall helped in providing a definite understanding that people has come to appreciate and value its existence. Large numbers of people are increasingly creating social media accounts and communicating with others through these platforms. It should be clear that even with the negativities associated with it, communication evolve with time and same communication tools had their weaknesses as well but with social media there appears to be a seamless integration of these types of communication tools in our societies. Social media has simply taken communication to another level and it has become a gateway to communication as a result.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are used to call for action or solutions to the problems that have been investigated in the research study. Recommendations highlight detailed solutions and measures to be implemented based on the findings of the research. The population of this study was the residents of Windhoek, but it also impacts on other stakeholders such as the wide-ranging Namibian nation especially the youth, civil society, the government, telecommunications and technology companies, researchers and scholars. This research study hence proposes 10 recommendations directed towards these parties for contemplation.

1. The Namibian people should consider using social media platforms because it is such a driving force and a gateway to communication. The country will have more exposure to information access and news spread among the public.

2. Societies need to organise community outreach programmes aimed at sensitising communities on the need for social engagement via various social media channels. This will involve education programmes that enlightens people on the advantages of making use of these platforms.
3. The broad-ranging Namibians and youths in particular need to appreciate social media existence as a tool to unlock and discover new opportunities. There is more that people can do with social media. People can use social media for economical purposes to make money through becoming social media influencers.
4. Mobile telecommunications companies such as Namibia Communications Limited and Telecom Namibia should consider offering more promotions with regards to internet connectivity for the broader public to have access to social media. In this way, people can anticipate social media utility.
5. Due to the various social media concerns associated with this trend, host companies such as Facebook, Twitter etc., need to offer more to improve internet security of their servers and software operating systems, for instance, installing firewalls that prevent hacking of data and customer accounts.
6. The government should aim to install network terminals and transmitters to make for adequate network coverage across the country to ensure effective online communication over all its regions. This will mean huge allocations of budget to this cause.
7. The Namibian government needs to continue promoting smooth flow of information but find ways to maintain law and order over the usage of social media in Namibia, for instance; enacting laws and introducing policies that discourage the posting of harmful images or language on social media.

8. Namibian business companies and organisations must understand the transformation that social media has brought to advertising and the marketing world and use it to their best interest.
9. The perception that social media leads to a drop in efforts and work rate should die. Social media can be used to the best country's advantage and Namibia should learn from the elite states on how to increase work productivity through the utilisation of social media platforms.
10. Other scholars should deeply dive into the concept of social media and do further research on the social media's influence on communication in the unforeseeable future. This should involve questions on for instance how communication in Namibia will be like in ten years' time.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire on the investigation of social media and its impacts on the quality of communication.

My name is Matias Ameinge, a fourth-year student, studying towards a Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies. I am carrying out a study about social media and the impacts that it has on the quality of communication. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire; it should only take 10 minutes. Please return answered questionnaire to the researcher after completion. Please answer the questions with honesty and without discussing them with anyone else. Your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality, and unless you choose to provide an e-mail address, will be entirely anonymous.

Kindly fill in or cross (x) where applicable or type in the information requested.

Section A

Respondent's demographic characteristics

1. Age

18-30

31-43

44-60

61-75

Other

(Specify).....
.....

2. Gender

Male

Female

3. Income (Do you earn a wage/salary?)

YES

NO

Others.... (Please specify)

.....

.....

4. Educational level

Literacy learning

High school

Tertiary institution

College

Not at all

Other...(Specify).....

Section B

Social media utilisation

1. Kindly select the types of social media platforms you use.

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

LinkedIn

Tumblr

Snapchat

Pinterest

Youtube

Facebook Live

Other...(Specify).....

...

2. What do you use social media for?

Sharing pictures

Sharing music

Video blogging

Sharing articles

Watching videos

Communicating (involve chatting)

Other...

(Specify).....

.....

3. Kindly rate how satisfied are you with each of the following statements by ticking in the appropriate boxes. Rating scale are as follows (A = Very Good) (B = Good) (C = Bad) (D = I have no idea).

Social media connecting with people is?

A= Very Good

B= Good

C= Bad

D= I have no idea

How important is social media to you?

A= Very important

B= Important

C= Less important

D= Not important

Section C

Social media usage consistency

a) How long do you spend on social media a day?

All day long Every hour Few hours Not at all

Others

(Specify).....

.....

b) How often do you access social media a month?

All month long Sporadically

Frequently Not so often Not at al

c) What limits you from accessing social media?

Can't afford connectivity fees

Poor internet connections around

Others (Specify)

.....
.....

d) Can you live without social media? Please give reason for your answer.

YES.....

NO.....

e) Do you think you might do away with social media in the future?

YES

NO

f) How do you rank the usage of social media as per below usage purpose categories?

Ranking scale are as follows: 1= Low usage, 2= Moderate, 3= High usage and 4= Very high usage.

Purpose	Rank
1. Educational purposes	
2. Research purposes	
3. Communication and interaction	
4. Social networking	
5. News and information sharing	
6. Others (Specify)..... 	

g) Thinking of various social media platforms, how satisfied are you with the quality they provide on:

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Satisfied

- a. Educational purposes?.....
- b. Dissemination and sharing of information among people?.....
- c. Social networking?.....

d. Overall quality on communication?.....

Mark one for each category.

h). What do you understand by the term social media?

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.....
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i). Is social media useful to you and why?

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j). What is your most preferable social media platform among others and why?

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k). What are your feelings towards social media on communication and information sharing?

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L). Would you recommend Namibians to make use of social media and why?

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Section D

Questions, Comments and Suggestions

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please hand it back to the research after completion. If you have any additional comments you would like to make, please add them in the spaces provided.

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Thank you very much for your time and participation!