

**SELF-REGULATION AND THE NAMIBIAN MEDIA: A SURVEY OF  
WINDHOEK RESIDENTS**

**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 Namibia,  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Information and  
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**ABSTRACT**

Self-regulation is often being used as an argument in proposing a system that is different from formal regulation by national governments or international regulatory bodies.

The study surveyed 150 Windhoek residents using multi-stage sampling to find out their views about media self-regulation.

Overall, respondents had a good knowledge of what self-regulation of the media is. Participants also indicated a favourable attitude towards the current status quo of self-regulation with regards to the Namibian media. Most of the participants were against the regulation of the media by the government.

The research recommends that future researchers survey other towns in Namibia to fill the gap of generalizing this study's findings to the rest of the country.

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study firstly to my late uncles Dawid Kawela and Lazarus Kavela, also my late grandmother Theopoltina Kapunda Kavela for always believing in me and their support until their last breaths. I also dedicate this study to my parents (Gerhard & Albertina), my siblings (Noni, Ivan, Bane & Junior) for their strength and support, not forgetting my extended family for the necessary support in the completion of this study and my academic journey.

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It would be imperative to express my sense of sincere gratitude to my lecturers and classmates who have been with me throughout the course of this entire journey.

**DECLARATION**

I, Gina- Lez Vetumbuavi Kavela, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof, has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AU	African Union
EFN	Editor Forum of Namibia
LSE	London School of Economics and political science
MCK	Media Council of Kenya
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
Op-Eds	Opposite the Editorial page
PCC	Press Complaints Commission
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia



# **SELF-REGULATION AND THE NAMIBIAN MEDIA: A SURVEY OF WINDHOEK RESIDENTS**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Self-regulation is a model of regulation that has become quite popular with the media in the past few decades (Development, 2017). It has so many alternative definitions by different scholars ( see Nyarko, 2000; Akpabio & Mosanako, 2018; Podger, 2019). According to, Haraszti (2008), media self-regulation is a joint endeavour by media professionals to set up voluntary editorial guidelines and abide by them in a learning process open to the public. In other words, it is the regulation of media practitioners by their peers. Whereby there is an establishment of principles on ethics, laws, and policies while considering or preserving editorial freedom on what to report and what opinions to express.

The Term Self- Regulation is a term that has been a very important discussion on the debate table in so many discourses such as political and academics just to mention a few. Thus, might somewhat pose serious contradictory problems when being examined and explicated. However, for the purpose of this study, it is only right to explain its meaning, purpose, and the influences it has on Media houses respectively. In light of this volume, one meaning of "self-regulation" envelops any endeavours by the human self to adjust any of its inward states or reactions (Baumeister, DeWall, Twenge, & Ciarocco, 2005). We have recently depicted self-regulation as far as individuals directing their considerations, feelings, driving forces or hunger, and errand exhibitions.

In its most extensive form, self-regulation implies that private actors themselves implement the applicable norms and rules and, ideally, monitor compliance and enforce the rules in case

of non-compliance (Koops et al.,2006). Self-regulation is therefore often used as an argument in proposing a system that is different from formal regulation by national governments or international regulatory bodies. However, many different forms of the concept emerged in highly diverse areas in which self-regulatory initiatives have been implemented, varying from norms applicable to the environment, the media, and advertising, to diverse professional standards, such as those applied in the medical profession(Koops et al.,2006). When we talk about self-regulation of the media, we are implying that it is a **“pledge by quality-conscious Media professionals to maintain a dialogue with the public”** (Haraszati, 2008, p.10).

Wondering why the Media needs regulation? Concerns have been expressed all over the African continent (Akpabio & Mosanako, 2018), whereas political office holders have impatiently been wanting to control or rather take over the media. This comes in various guises: subtle forms include taking on the responsibility for the sanitization of the industry in order to make for more professionalism, taking the intimidation route by raiding media houses, seizing copies of publications to imprisonment or disappearance of media professionals (Akpabio & Mosanako, 2018). Hence, there is a need for the Media to regulate themselves as it not only sets limits to freedom but at the same time helps to protect public order and support for instruments of government and justice.

## **1.2 Orientation of the study**

“On World Press Day, I reiterate my support for the 1991 Windhoek Declaration and call for “an independent pluralistic media”. The media as a Fourth Estate is a vital organ of our democratic life. A Free Press must live up to its Code of Ethics and Conduct. #PressFreedomDay” (Geingob, 2018)

Relations of most Media Councils with governments remain precarious, as in some countries the council (Office of the Media Ombudsman) enjoys recognition and is represented in the highest advisory structure of the government. In most instances the question; how long or to what extent can such an embrace by the state authorities go on and how then will this create a conflict of interest or coercion of the media by the state. This then further questions if a self-regulatory body should cooperate with the government on an issue that clearly belongs within the ambit of self-regulation? (If such accreditation is deemed to be necessary in the first place, that is: freedom of expression means that anybody can be a journalist, so accreditation limits freedom of expression) (Bussiek, 2008).

#### **Article 21- Fundamental Freedoms**

(1) All persons shall have the right to:

- (a) freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media; (Assembly Constituent, 1990)

The Namibian Constitution encourages people to participate actively in public life, but they can only do so if they know what is going on. Precisely because the media play such an important role in creating a healthy democracy, media freedom is a crucial right and is guaranteed in the country's constitution (Daniels, 2009).

“As a young country which has opted for a democratic political system, our young Republic is committed to the freedom of the press. The freedom of the media is one of those fundamental rights, and indeed non-derogatory rights, that are enshrined in the constitution of this country under Article 21. As such, the Government of Namibia has no intention whatsoever to regiment thoughts or to interfere with the existence in this country of multiple and autonomous initiatives regarding the ownership and operation of the mass media.

Accordingly, Namibian media practitioners have unrestricted freedom to publish or to put forth ideas, and indeed to protect their sources of information” (Hamutenya, 1992).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Various studies clearly state the importance of a media regulatory body in a country and how the government should not be the force behind this initiative (Joseph, 2011; Samples, 2019; Wasserman, 2020).

However, the statutory regulations of the press are dangerously interfering with the freedom of the press. In response to this problem, the study proposes to survey the views of Windhoek residents in Namibia, on self-regulation and statutory regulation of the media, and which body should regulate the media.

Despite the growing number of Media houses in Namibia, it is notable that in all countries surveyed, self-regulation systems were put into place only after governments threatened to introduce statutory regulation: **“They are reactions to the government’s action”** (Bussiek, 2008).

A few years ago, an article published by the 'The Namibian' newspaper, shed light on media regulation, where the editor spoke out about, the governments’ wish to implement a regulations council for the media. Some editors of Media houses viewed it as an attempt by Government to control the media, and as militating against the spirit of the Constitution (Shinana, 2008).

The Editors Forum of Namibia (EFN) has increased the fine for violations of the code of ethics that was intended to send out a strong message that repeated violations by members of the Media houses would not be tolerated (Shapwanale, 2017). Subsequently, this shows that Media houses contravene the serious explications of how serious Codes set forth to aid self-regulation are.



The regulation sets limits to freedom, but at the same time helps to protect public order and support for instruments of government and justice. It further protects individual, sectional, and interests that might be harmed by unrestricted use of public means of communication.

With that said this research will aid in finding out the views of Windhoek residents with regards to self-regulation of the Namibian media houses; to self-regulate without the interference of other external authority bodies, thus helping in the accuracy, freedom of the press to express their opinions freely without being afraid of reprisal.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

- (i) Investigating the views of Windhoek residents on Namibian Media houses and self-regulation.
- (ii) Documenting the Windhoek residents' assessment of the effectiveness of self-regulation.

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is important because it will help the media see where they stand concerning self-regulation. This means that they will get views on if they are self-regulating themselves or if there is external interference by other parties.

This study will also help the Media refresh their minds on the importance of self-regulation and where they stand as the fourth estate with regards to self-regulation.

This study will further help other stakeholders such as the government and the public at large to familiarize themselves with the current stance of the media in regards to self-regulation.

This study will also be very informative, as the Windhoek residents are of different age groups and come from different academic, social and political backgrounds and also there

might be a possibility that some participants must have been part of the Windhoek Declaration which can be an important addition to this study and future researches, thus is very knowledgeable on the scope of the study and can educate the Namibian nation at large on how vital self-regulation is or not.

This study will form bases for other researchers in the field, as it will help them formulate other researchable topics relating to this one.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

The researcher narrowed this study to only the views of Windhoek residents and not those of the residents from other towns in the country. This can influence the findings as the study will not be able to be generalized. As the views will not necessarily be those of the other stakeholders of the media in the rest of the country except Windhoek. The study only focuses on the residents of Windhoek, not on the views of other residents across the country, the continent or the rest of the world. In a simpler stance, the researcher is limited to a smaller geographical area thus an overall scope cannot be achieved.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

Initially, this study will confine itself to surveying and observing the views of Windhoek residents on self-regulation and the attitude they perceive media houses project towards self-regulation.

This study does not cover the views of a large population but a small population. Thus does not cover the views of media houses and all other stakeholders from other towns/regions involved in shaping and regulating the media. Geographically, this study focuses on Namibia and not necessarily the whole world. Gender does not play a huge role in this research but might have a partial influence on how the residents of interest might respond to the questions by the researcher.

Political affiliation might also be a huge influence on the responses of Windhoek residents as the researcher does not know what their political affiliation is. Political affiliation can influence the researchers finding in terms of the relationship the residents might have with the current government and how they view certain aspects with regards to the self-regulation of the media, state interference, and other aspects that revolve around this topic.

Amidst the Corona Virus pandemic, the duration of the study had to be cut short, because of the repercussion of the researcher relocating to another town in the process. Thus, this will make it difficult for the research to have a face to face interview with the participants. Hence, the researcher will have to administer questionnaires through other alternatives such as phone calls, emails, google online questionnaires etc. In some instances, the scope of discussion will be compromised on many levels as the researcher might not have many years of experience in researching and producing academic papers of a large size individually. Thus, may impact the study's findings.

## **1.8 Summary**

The above chapter has aimed to inform the reader about the research understudy, mainly about the research problem that led to this research project. The overall overview of this chapter is the circumstantiality of the study, statement of the problem, aims, limitations and delimitations as well as the implications of the study. This chapter further gave the layout which provides the reader with an understanding of the research, as well as the specific aims of this research project. With Self-regulation being an influential factor with regards to press freedom, this study intended to solve a research problem of Media Self- Regulation and mainly focused on the views of Windhoek residents.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Print Media are largely regulated and newspapers and magazines can print nearly anything as long as they don't slander anyone (Government Regulation of the Media, 2010). In the past recorded years, various studies have clearly shown the importance of the media regulatory body in a country and how the government should not be the force behind this initiative. However, in the past few years, there has been a deliberation from different Media houses around the world on how Statutory regulation of the press is dangerously interfering with the freedom of the press. In response, this chapter will explain in-depth all the relevant literature writings that will aid and enable the researcher to discover and uncover the importance of self-regulation, the role of the media, the media council as well as media ombudsman in Namibia with case studies that will further deliberate more on self-regulation of the media.

#### **2.2 About Self-Regulation**

The argument concerning the independence of the Press is an old one that will probably never be resolved, especially amongst those with an ideological interest in the matter. The Code of Ethics only arose after journalists felt threatened by the State and realised that there must be a voice of unity on matters that affect their profession directly. This effort at all costs should not be seen as a form of Self-restriction out of fear, but an exercise to fulfil the media's obligation to the public to whom they are ultimately responsible (Africa- The Press, 1992).

Developing a code of ethics is only the first step towards effective media self-regulation. It is crucial to establish a body to supervise it and provide sanctions against those who break its rules. These bodies may have various forms (Gore, 2008).

With Self-regulation emerging in various writing, no hesitation on what is meant should be made, but rather embraced. Self-regulation is a combination of standards that set out the appropriate codes of behaviour for the media that are necessary to support freedom of expression, and process how those behaviours will be monitored or held to account (Puddephatt, 2011).

Self- Regulation jely autonomy of the media and shields it from hardliner government obstruction. It very well may be more productive as an arrangement of regulation as the media comprehend their current circumstance better than government (however they may utilize that information to add their business advantages instead of the public interest). As the media climate gets worldwide (through the advancement of the web and computerized stages) and inquiries of purview become more perplexing then self- Regulation can fill the subsequent hole. It is less expensive to the government since the industry bears the cost and can be more adaptable than government regulation also known as State Regulation (Puddephatt, 2011).

### **2.3 Self- Regulation of the Media in different countries around the world**

In the People's Republic of China, policy changes by the government in the late 1970s had a widespread and profound effect on most aspects of Chinese society, including the media. The period of 1980-1999 saw the deregulation of media content and a decrease in subsidies of media industries. Before deregulation and the ending of subsidies, the government issued content guidelines that media agencies would follow. After deregulation and the ending of subsidies, media agencies have greater freedoms in creating content, although subjects

deemed taboo by the government are still heavily regulated and sometimes even censored. In 2016, a watchdog group called Freedom House ranked China 176 out of 180 for freedom of the press. Journalists are often imprisoned for violating rules. Websites that it deems dangerous, such as Wikipedia, are often blocked. Most recently, the government censored a liberal-leaning newspaper based in Guangzhou, resulting in a week-long confrontation between the government and the newspaper (Xu & Albert, 2017).

The Media Council of Tanzania provides an example of a strong self-regulatory system in Africa (Duncan, 2014), as it has accepted the need for third-party complaints but has limited its definition of complainants to prevent abuses of the system. The council in Tanzania has defined a "complainant" as any individual acting in his or her interest, on behalf of another person, in the name of a group or class or people, on behalf of a corporate or unincorporated body, or acting in the "public interest" (Media Council of Tanzania, 2011, cited in (Duncan, 2014)).

According to Obuya (2012), the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) was established by the Media Act of 2007 as a press council to enforce ethical journalism and to mediate any disputes among the public, the government, and the media, through a process of self-regulation. In a 2012 study, the author found that while media practitioners embraced self-regulation as the best tool for media accountability, the consensus was that the MCK was performing below expectations as the council was "invisible and ineffective". Obuya (2012), found that the self-regulation of the media industry in Kenya was faced with many challenges. These included funding shortfalls, poor publicity of the role and authority of the council, lack of confidence in the council due to inefficiency, and a lack of commitment to accountability as the media industry did not genuinely desire accountability but rather saw the council as just "buying time from state control".

## **2.4 Self-Regulation of the Media in Namibia**

Despite the growing number of Media houses in Namibia, very little is known about how they are regulated and if they follow the necessary procedures set up by the Media Ombudsman. For the past decade and a half, Media houses have been on self-regulation, because there was no media council present until November 2009. Self-regulation of the media development was slow, due to only one professional body, the National Editors Forum of Namibia, which was established in 2007 and abided by an internal code of ethics.

According to (Bussiek, 2008) a Media Council was set before in 1992 but never became fully functional. Part-time Media Ombudsman at the time installed an initiative of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), which also never became functional. A few years ago, 'The Namibian' newspaper, where the editors spoke out about, the governments' intention to implement a regulations council for the media. The Namibian spoke to some editors of Media houses on their views, and many viewed it as an attempt by the government to control the media, and as militating against the spirit of the constitution (Shinana, 2008).

A former Namibian Sun Editor Tabby Moyo commented to this effect stating that "While I acknowledge the need for a body to regulate media operations in the country, in any country for that matter, I don't think Government should be the force behind such an initiative" (Moyo, 2008). According to House of Common (2007) in (Freedom House, 2015), a House of Commons committee concluded yet another investigation into self-regulation, this one after a journalist was convicted of illegally accessing phone messages of members of the royal family, and a row over the publication of intrusive pictures of Kate Middleton, the girlfriend of a member of the royal family. The committee criticized the media and said the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) should have acted more vigorously but come down in favour of the system of self-regulation. "We do not believe that there is a case for a statutory regulator for the press, which would represent a very dangerous interference with the

freedom of the press," it said. To shun such an occurrence, an independent Media Ombudsman was appointed in 2009 to prevent a state-controlled Media Council. To hear complaints against media practitioners acts independently of the government as an element of the Namibian media's self-regulatory framework (Freedom House, 2015).

Print media are largely unregulated, and newspapers and magazines can print nearly anything as long as they don't slander anyone (Government Regulation of the Media, 2010). The former Media Ombudsman of Namibia echoes this sentiment as it states that, in Namibia and other democratic countries, newspapers, radio, TV and other media bear a heavy responsibility to keep the public informed and this is a vital function. Further stating that the Namibian Constitution encourages people to participate actively in public life, but they can only do so if they know what is going on. Precisely because the media play such an important role in creating a healthy democracy, media freedom is a crucial right and is guaranteed in the country's constitution (Daniels, 2009).

In 2017, the Editors Forum of Namibia (EFN) together with the office of the Media Ombudsman revamped and consolidated the Code of Ethics and Conduct for Namibian print, broadcast, and online media, in order to raise the standards of journalism in Namibia, and also to keep up with the African Union's (AU) principles on media self-regulation (Editor's Forum of Namibia; The Media Ombudsman, 2017). With Namibia ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries and the top free press ranking in Africa, should Self-regulation still be questioned? (Bethel, 2021).

## **2.5 The views of Media Ombudsmen**

Ombudsmen act on issues of precision, reasonableness, tone, and balance submitted by daily paper readers or radio audience members. The public, private offices, government offices,



and other organizations may raise these issues with respect to the decency of stories and approaches or strategies of media outlets.

For the most part, ombudsmen do not make coordinated choices; they do make proposals to editors and administrators. The ombudsman involves a position of moral influence instead of one of outright authority, and these positions are frequently distributed. Usually, a great way to reach community pioneers who are more able to study the publications and op-eds (Dorbian, 2008).

## **2.6 The Media Councils**

Press Council was a body set up in 1953 by newspaper owners and writers to forestall the public authority administering to control the press by indicating that it could mindfully self-regulate. It was supplanted in 1991 by the PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION. (Press Council, 2006)

To self-regulate, or to be regulated by the state? This is an inquiry that is not so much of a decision standing up to journalists, as it is a circumstance to be haggled between the media, people with great influence, and the general public. Regularly the showdowns between these three significant entertainers request a critical exchange, and media councils also known as media boards can be arbiters or the site of intercession.

In countries, such as South Africa self- regulation dates back to 1950 during the Apartheid when the government first ordered commissions of inquiry into the press and through this proposed statutory regulation. In response, this led to the establishment of a press council named the " Pressboard of Reference" which later became the " non-statutory Media Council" (Edwards, 2012).

In some countries though, such as Botswana, the Press Council enjoys recognition and is represented in the highest advisory structures of government. The question is how far such

an embrace by state authorities should go and at what stage this will create conflicts of interest or allow pressure or coercion to be brought to bear (Bussiek, 2008).

In Malawi, government media policy mandates the Media Council to work with the government towards the accreditation of journalists. But should a self-regulatory body cooperate with the government on an issue that clearly belongs within the ambit of self-regulation? If such accreditation is deemed as important, then it can be taken as freedom of expression entails that anyone can report news and thus accreditation limits freedom of expression (Bussiek, 2008).

## **2.7 Case Studies with regards to Self-Regulation and the Media**

### **2.7.1 Regulating the news media to balance press freedom with individual rights**

In July 2011, London was shaken by disclosures that the cell phone of killed student Milly Dowler had been hacked by somebody at the News of the World, a famous UK newspaper. After two days, public clamour prompted the closure of the News of the World. A multi-week from that point onward, the UK Government set up the Leveson Inquiry to investigate the supposed telephone hacking of many individuals, a rundown that included entertainers Sienna Miller and Hugh Grant, supermodel Elle MacPherson, individuals from the British Royal family, and many other public figures (The London School of Economics and Political science, 2015).

Notwithstanding deciding the degree of unlawful or inappropriate media lead, the Leveson Inquiry was entrusted with suggesting changes in how the UK media worked going ahead, zeroing in on two wide difficulties. The first was how much the press could viably manage itself rather than being held all the more intently under Government scrutiny, which had critical ramifications for the harmony between press freedom and individual rights. A

subsequent test was the way future guidelines could most successfully be applied across a quickly changing media landscape that included print and broadcast media as well as on the web and online media with moment reach across worldwide outskirts and progressively, a scene wherein single media associations frequently controlled substance, organizations, and various types of appropriation.

Tambini investigated the tension between media freedom and responsibility, and in particular what role governance should play in this process. Tambini is a specialist in media and correspondences guideline and strategy, and dynamic in policymaking as well as academic research (The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2020).

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

This section of the research presents theories on which the study will be based. These are the Public Sphere theory and the Social Responsibility theory.

According to Eisenhart (1991), a theoretical framework is a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory, that is, the framework is constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships (Eisenhart, 1991,p.205).

We all operate on the basis of the theories we hold. In one sense theories are the generalizations we make about variables and the relationships among them. We use these generalizations to make decisions and predict outcomes (Cooper & Schindler, 2011, p.65).

A theory is a set of systematically interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that are advanced to explain and predict phenomena (facts) (Cooper & Schindler, 2011, p.66).

To devise a definition for the purpose of this study, it is only right to look into a few scholars definitions of media self-regulation. Many professions have outlined the importance of self-regulation (Kruger, 2009, p. 13), thus there is no single definition for self-regulation as it can take on different meanings in digital and non-digital contexts (Black, 1996).

According to Haraszti (2008), Media self-regulation is a joint endeavour by media professionals to set up voluntary editorial guidelines and abide by them in a learning process open to the public (p.9). By doing so, the independent media accept their share of responsibility for the quality of public discourse in the nation, while fully preserving their editorial autonomy in shaping it (p.9). In contrast to Haraszti's definition, McQuail (2010), on the other hand, defines self-regulation as responsibilities assigned to media operators to implement by themselves or that are voluntarily chosen by them. The scholar continues as he further states that such rules often have the character of desirable goals, guidelines or principles, rather than fixed or compulsory standards to be achieved (McQuail, 2010).

A report in 2012 by Reid stated how it is not a coincidence that almost all of the countries with the highest press freedom ratings in the world practice self-regulation of the press. Reid further stated that self-regulation of the media could never be a flawed system that gives a healthy haven to press freedom (Reid, 2012).

Ljiljana Zurovac a program director at the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina states that media self-regulation equally includes media professionals and citizens; in which media persona guard their professional standards independent of the government, political parties, or any other influence. This encourages people to fight for their human rights on accurate and timely information (Zurovac, 2018, p.2). According to Bandura (1991a), "Self-regulatory systems lie at the very heart of causal processes. They not only mediate the effects of most external influences but provide the very basis for purposeful action (Bandura, 1991, p.248)".

Regulation has 3 components: *legislation*, that is, defining appropriate rules; *enforcement*, such as initiating actions against violators; and *adjudication*, which is deciding whether a

violation has taken place and imposing an appropriate sanction (Campbell, 1999, p.714-715).

### **2.8.1 Public Sphere Theory**

To understand the meaning and nature of the public sphere today, it is helpful to look at the historical development of the term. The historical trajectory highlights the relevance of the public sphere for promoting democracy and political accountability. Originally, the public sphere was a specific meeting place. With the development of the media and communication technology, the character of the public sphere changed from a location to a communication network.

According to Jürgen Habermas, it is a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed, whereas access is also guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the Public Sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body (Habermas & Lennox, 1974). They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere (Habermas & Lennox, 1974).

The “public sphere” is generally conceived as the social space in which different opinions are expressed, problems of general concern are discussed, and collective solutions are developed communicatively. Thus, the public sphere is the central arena for societal communication. In large-scale societies, mass media and, more recently, online network media support and sustain communication in the public sphere (Wessler & Freudenthaler, 2018).

Gerard A. Hauser further defines the public sphere as "a discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgement about them" (Hauser, 1999).

Habermas' public sphere theory contributes and has a good relationship when it comes to the term self-regulation. The notion of the public sphere is at the centre of participatory approaches to democracy.

A few authors have explored the most substantial shortcomings of Habermas theory of the public sphere, Simon (2011), pinpoints how the approach not only succeed in offering useful insights into the structural transformation of the public sphere in the early modern period but gave some destructive criticism of it not providing an adequate theoretical framework for understanding the structural transformation of public spheres in late modern societies (Simon, 2011).

Although critics are surrounding the Habermasian ideology, authors such a Dahlberg state how Jürgen Habermas remains the starting line for a large proportion of those theorists' understandings of the general public sphere as a result of, he continues to produce the foremost consistently developed vital theory of the concept (Dahlberg, 2005).

### **2.8.2 The Social Responsibility Theory**

The definition of Social Responsibility in the media system follows back to an important milestone within the field. A report was made by the Commission on the freedom of the Press, also called the Hutchins Commission. The founder of Time magazine Henry Luce mentioned the venture in 1942, all through the Second World War, at a time once it had been accepted that central opportunities were in effect continuously powerless by the increment of authoritarian systems all through the world (Gupta, 2015).

The main formal theory was propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in their book "Four Theories of the Press" in 1956, after 10 years. The authors were motivated by the Hutchins drive. These writers composed concerning elective theories like authoritarian, libertarian and Soviet theories in their book. One highlighted characteristic from their book is a weight on the media's obligation to utilize its powerful position to ensure acceptable delivery of information to the public (Ugangu, 2012).

Social Responsibility is the best of the normative theories, as it has ethics that guide any activity, be it in media or different associations, which put an obligation towards climate, society, culture and economy. The media like some other ought not to hurt, but promote, environmental and socio-social viewpoints in relation to the economy of the place (Bajracharya, 2018).

If the media fail to meet their responsibilities to society, the social responsibility theory holds that the government should encourage the media to comply by the way of controlling them (Uzuegbunam, 2015).

According to Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003), "historically, the state has often been perceived as the main enemy of freedom of individual expression, while at the same time it has also become, through constitutions and legal systems, the effective guarantor of freedom in important respects." (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003, p.183). This statement can be further backed up by Louis Hodges words where he states that, "we cannot reasonably demand that the press give an account of itself or improve its performance until we determine what it is the press is responsible for doing" (Hodges, 1986).

This is where Dr Owens-Ibie's model comes in. As we know Namibia is a developing country, it is only right to align theory with the type of country we are in. Dr Owens-Ibie

tried to detail a brief definition for Social Responsibility in the media, according to the point of view of a developing country (Owens-Ibie, 1994).

The hypothesis and theory of social responsibility is an augmentation of the libertarian theory in that the media recognize their obligation to resolve conflicts through conversation and to advance public opinions, consumer activity, private rights, and significant social interests. This hypothesis has its significant reason that freedom carries concurrent obligations. The press has a commitment to be dependable to people in general. On the off chance that it is not the case, an agency of the public should enforce it. Popular assessment promotion consumer activity can ensure that the press acts. This hypothesis prompted the institution of Press Councils, draw up Codes of Ethics and antimonopoly laws in numerous nations (Ineji, Nkanu, & Okoi, 2020).

All in all, the two theories work interchangeably so in order for the media to carry out their responsibilities they need to be protected. Thus Habermas also makes emphasis on his account about the latter statement.

## **2.9 Summary**

This chapter has reviewed and provided comprehensive information that forms the basis of the importance of Self-regulation within a democratic country that guarantees Press Freedom. It further provided a clear context for and an understanding of the stance of self-regulatory media in the world which is the current debate where the contravening of the state with regards to freedom of the press is contested.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will explain the method adopted by this research. This chapter will mention every component involved in conducting this research from a population, population frame, and sampling techniques used for constructing the questionnaire. Finally, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of the selected mode of analysis used and the data collection method.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design is the blueprint for fulfilling objectives and answering questions. Selecting a design may be complicated by the availability of a large variety of methods, techniques, procedures, protocols, and sampling plans (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Although selecting an appropriate design may be complicated by this range of options, the creative researcher actually benefits from this confusing array of options (Cooper & Schindler, 2011, p.87).

The determination of a research design is additionally based on the nature of the plan for an issue or issues being tended to, the researchers' individual experiences, and the groups of interviewees for the study (Creswell, 2009).

This study was mainly concerned with gaining insights and understanding of underlying reasons and motivations. Thus, the researcher used Quantitative data collection methods as they involved complex statistics and when you collect quantitative data, the type of results would tell you which statistical tests are appropriate to use. As a result, interpreting your data and presenting those findings is straightforward and less open to error and subjectivity (Devault, 2020).

This study used primary sources, being the Windhoek residents which the researcher needed to survey and formulated a questionnaire that was administered through Google document forms.

### **3.3 Population**

In research terminology, the Population can be clarified as a comprehensive group of people, institutions, objects, and so forth who have common characteristics which are the interests of a researcher. The common characteristics of the groups are recognized from other groups, institutions, objects and so forward. The term universe is additionally utilized as an equivalent word to population (Rafeedali, 2020).

The Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) after every 10 years (a decade), administers census with the most recent being in 2011. According to the 2011 Population and Housing Census Regional Profile of the Khomas Region, the total population size was 342 141 with a female population of 172 469 and a male population of 169 672 (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2011).

The population of this study consisted of the residents of Windhoek, which is the Capital city of Namibia, a country that has an approximate population of 2 587,344 to date with Windhoek's population topping up to 268,132 of the population, according to a recent report by World population review a website that records live population growth rate in 2021. It further states that these are projections of the latest United Nations data which was recorded on 1 July 2021 (UN World Population Prospects (2019 Revision), 2021). The population is growing steadily at 2% per year and this trend is expected to continue for a few more years (UN World Population Prospects (2019 Revision), 2021).

The reason why the researcher chose the residents of Windhoek is that the researcher had to formulate eligibility criteria which are defined as a bunch of predefined qualities used to

distinguish subjects who were considered for a research study. Incorporation models, alongside prohibition standards, make up the determination or qualification rules used to control in or out the objective populace for the study. Consideration measures ought to react to the logical target of the investigation and are basic to achieve it. Legitimate determination of incorporation standards advanced the outer and interior legitimacy of the examination, improved its plausibility, brought down its expenses, and limited moral concerns; explicitly, great choice measures guaranteed the homogeneity of the example populace, diminish jumbling, and improved the probability of finding a genuine relationship between presentation/mediation and results (Salkind, Research Methods, 2010).

Thus, the Windhoek residents were the sources based on the scope of the study, “**The views of Windhoek residents**”; furthermore these residents had a fair chance of participating in the study.

### **3.4 Sample**

The study focused on probability sampling methods and participation was voluntary thus participants could opt-out without being sanctioned. The type of sampling approach that was used in this study was cluster sampling, where everyone in the population had an equal chance of getting selected. The whole population was divided into clusters or groups (Taherdoost, 2016).

Random sampling was used to compliment the main approach which was cluster sampling. Random sampling is a technique in which researchers choose samples from a larger population by using a method based on the theory of probability. This was also because the population was diverse and the researcher wanted to create an accurate sample.

The type of sampling approach that was used in this study was Multi-stage Cluster Sampling, which refers to sampling that divides large populations into stages to make the

sampling process more practical, a combination of stratified sampling or cluster sampling is usually used (Glen, 2014).

A sample size of 150 samples was selected by the researcher, to avoid unnecessary errors of inaccurate reports of data thus allowing the fair selection of participants and realistic data reports.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

A questionnaire which is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (McLeod, 2018) was used to gather data.

The researcher developed six to eight neutral, closed-ended questions (which could easily be converted into quantitative data (McLeod, 2018)) focusing on self-regulation of the media in Namibia, to obtain the views of the Windhoek residents.

### **3.6 Reliability and Validity**

The participants in this research were selected according to their significance to the study, thus the researcher only acquired the needed information. The research showed validity based on the different questions in the questionnaire that was administered to the participants. Thus all this was achieved through all the data that was collected throughout the entire process of the research.

### **3.7 Procedures**

The researcher at first submitted a research topic that was approved by the department. This resulted in a written proposal which initially is chapter one of this study. The researcher then carried on the following steps which were obtaining a consent form from the department, that was sent to participants, and further contacting and transferring the form to the participants including a summary of the initial aim of the study and how their input was of great importance to the results of the study.

Data collection procedures that were used in the study involved questionnaires that were administered through Google document forms. To mostly avoid misinterpretations of information.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Analysis of data is perhaps the main and most vital component of research. The weak analysis produces off base outcomes that hamper the authenticity of the exploration as well as make the discoveries unusable. It's imperative to pick your information examination strategies cautiously to guarantee that your discoveries are adroit and noteworthy (BHATIA, 2018).

In this study, the researcher used inferential statistics. These complex analyses show the relationships between multiple variables to generalize results and make predictions (BHATIA, 2018).

The researcher collected data from the relevant participants of interest and analyzed it. This approach allowed in-depth flexibility in the interpretation of the data, thus enabling the researcher to analyze more complex data with ease by coding and sorting them into broad themes. Further, the researcher analyzed the data achieved through the latent approach as the researcher had to decide what kind of approach to take in the inferential statistics analysis method. The latent approach enabled the researcher to read into the subtext and assumptions underlying the data and not have presumed assumptions of the opinions stated by the participants.

### **3.9 Research Ethics**

The researcher obtained an ethical clearance letter from the University of Namibia, as written in the UNAM's Research Ethics Policy 2013 before the researcher embarked on the project. Participants were not subjected to any form of psychological distress and

discomfort; their anonymity and confidentiality were protected. This research avoided any form of deceptive practices and provided participants with the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

The participants were clearly explained that they are taking part in research and what was required of them to do. All this was done in clear guidance through the university's Research ethics policy, which also states that researchers are accountable to society, their professions, the university and affiliated associations, and by other relevant professional bodies, statutory councils and government institutions and the university expect all researchers to ensure that they are familiar with and comply with applicable norms, policies and legislation.

### **3.10 Summary**

The chapter provided more information about the research methods, which were used in this study, as well as the procedures and instruments that were used for data collection through quantitative methods; questionnaires and further analysed through inferential statistics analysis.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data collected from surveying the residents of Windhoek. These are residents from different locations in Windhoek. It further presents reduced accumulated data of residents that participated in the study. The main objective of this study was to investigate the views of Windhoek residents on Namibian Media houses and self-regulation by documenting these residents assessments of the effectiveness of self-regulation.

This chapter consists of two sections namely, Section A which looks at the demographic characteristics of research participants which include gender, age, education and occupation of all the participants in the study. Meanwhile, section B looks at the participant's responses on their knowledge on questions of self-regulation and the Namibian Media.

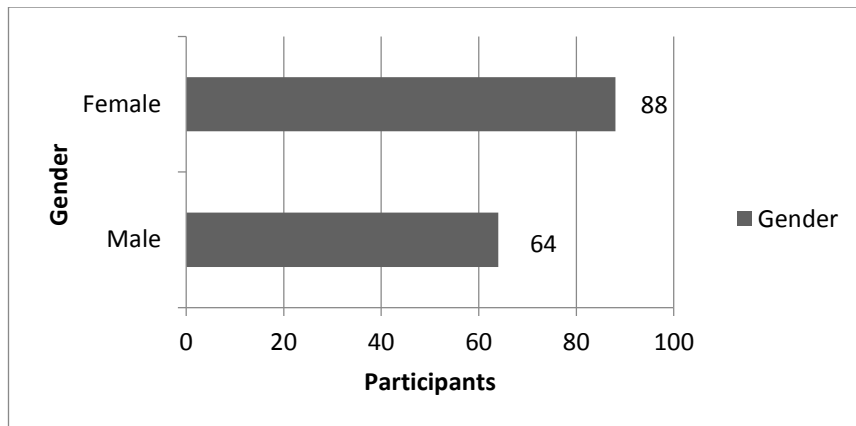
#### 4.2 Section A: Demographic Information

The term *demographics* refers to particular characteristics of a population and is derived from the Greek words for *people* (*demos*) and *picture* (*graphy*). The characteristics include age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, income, education, homeownership, sexual orientation, marital status, family size, health and disability status, and psychiatric diagnosis (Salkind, 2010).

##### 4.2.1 The representation of the Gender of the study respondents

###### Figure 1

###### Gender

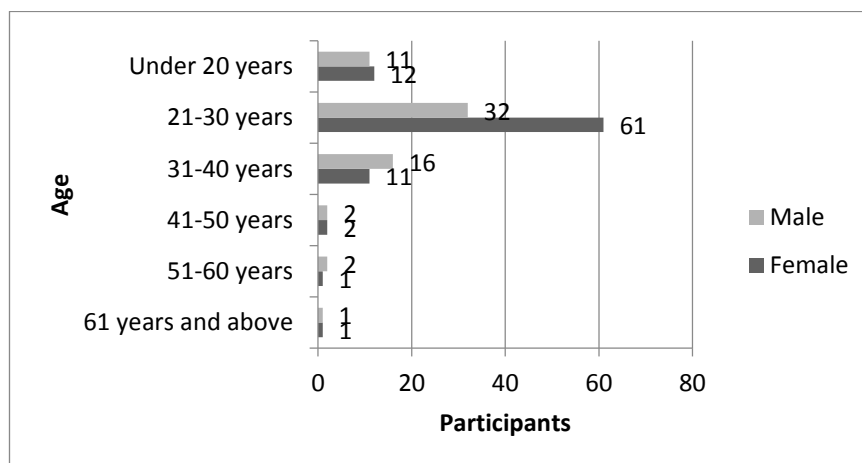


A total number of 88 females and 64 males participated in the study in which the females have a participatory percentage of 57.9% and the males 42.1% respectively. As shown in the table above.

#### 4.2.2 The representation of the Age of the study respondents

**Figure 2**

#### Age



There were 6 categories of age ranges which consisted of under 20 years which had 23 (15.1%) respondents consisting of 12 females and 11 males. A 21-30 years range with 93 (61.2%) respondents consisting of 61 females and 32 males. A 31-40 years range with 27

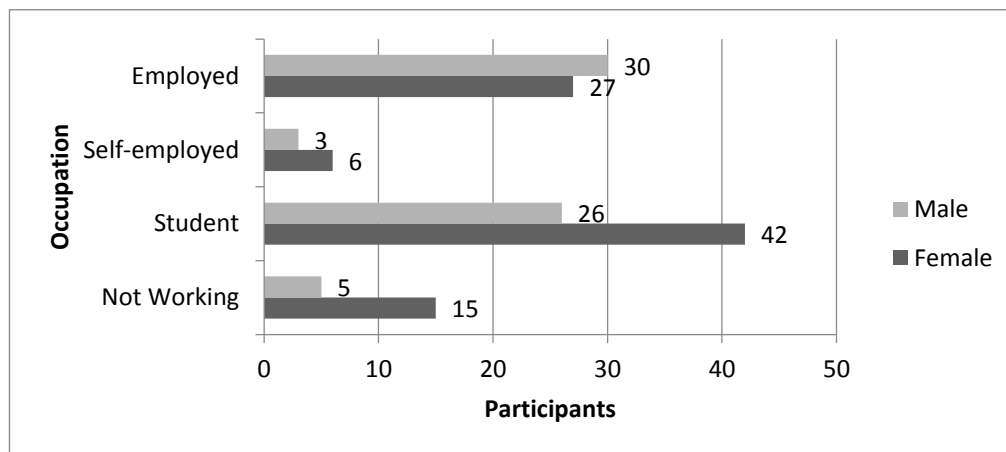


(17.8) respondents which consist of 11 females and 16 males. A 41-50 years range with four (2.6%) respondents which consist of two females and two males. A 51-60 years range with three (2%) respondents which consist of one female and two males. A 61 year and above range with two (1.3%) respondents which consists of one female and one male.

#### 4.2.3 The representation of the Occupation of the study respondents

**Figure 3**

#### **Occupation**



Looking at their socio-economic demographic information, out of the 152 respondents comprised four categories namely, employed, self-employed, student and not working. The employed category consists of 57 (37.5%) respondents of which comprised of 27 females and 30 males respectively. The self-employed category consists of nine (5.9%) respondents of which comprised of six females and three males. The student category consists of 68 (44.7%) respondents of which comprised of 42 females and 26 males. The not working category consists of 20 (13.2%) respondents of which comprised of 15 females and five males respectively.

#### 4.2.4 The representation of the Location in Windhoek of the study respondents

**Table 1**  
**Locations in Windhoek**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
<b>Academia</b>	8
<b>Auasblick</b>	1
<b>Cimbebasia</b>	1
<b>Dorado Park</b>	3
<b>Elisenheim</b>	2
<b>Eros</b>	3
<b>Golgotha</b>	4
<b>Goreangab</b>	1
<b>Greenwell</b>	5
<b>Hakahana</b>	1
<b>Havana</b>	3
<b>Hochland Park</b>	5
<b>Katutura</b>	32
<b>Khomasdal</b>	10
<b>Kleine Kuppe</b>	2
<b>Ludwigsdorf</b>	1
<b>Neudamm</b>	1

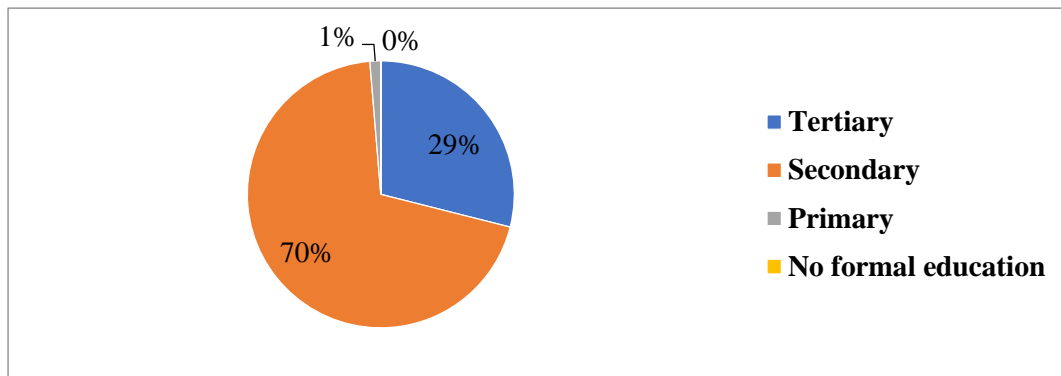
<b>Okuryangava</b>	1
<b>Olympia</b>	4
<b>Otjomuise</b>	7
<b>Pioneers Park</b>	18
<b>Prosperita</b>	1
<b>Rocky Crest</b>	6
<b>Shandumbala</b>	4
<b>Soweto</b>	8
<b>Suiderhof</b>	5
<b>Wanaheda</b>	10
<b>Windhoek North</b>	3
<b>Windhoek West</b>	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>152</b>

The table (*Table 1*) above shows a collective of different administrative divisions of Windhoek which is the different locations where the different respondents that participated in completing the survey are from.

#### **4.2.5 The representation of the highest education level of the respondents of the study**

**Figure 4**

#### **Highest Education Level**



The table above shows the different categories of the highest education level of respondents. These categories are tertiary, secondary, primary and lastly no formal education. In the first category, we have respondents who have tertiary as their highest education level with a percentage of 29% (44 respondents), secondly, we have secondary with 70% (106 respondents), and thirdly primary taking up 1% (two respondents) of the pie chart. Lastly, the last category, no formal education did not occupy any space on the pie chart as it had 0% (zero respondents) respondents.

### **4.3 Section B**

In this section, respondents were given the fair chance to either continue with the study or discontinue the study. The section consists of three questions with the first being a filter question.

#### **4.3.1 The representation of respondents understanding self-regulation or not**

##### **Filter Question**

This is the question that filtered the two respondents who had to discontinue the study from the rest of the 150 respondents who understood what self-regulation of the media is.

Table 2

<b>Do you have an idea of what self-regulation of the media is?</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	150	2
<b>Total</b>	152	

#### **4.3.2 The representation of respondents stance with regards to media self-regulation**

This part covers the last two questions of the survey which the 150 respondents who were filtered from the total 152 respondents had to answer.

In the first question, they had to indicate their stance on whether they are in agreement or disagreement with the eight statements with regards to media self-regulation. They had to choose if they strongly agree, agree, are neutral or strongly disagree or simply just disagree with the statements. See the table below for the responses. The table shows the number of respondents that either strongly agree, agree, where neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements.

Table 3

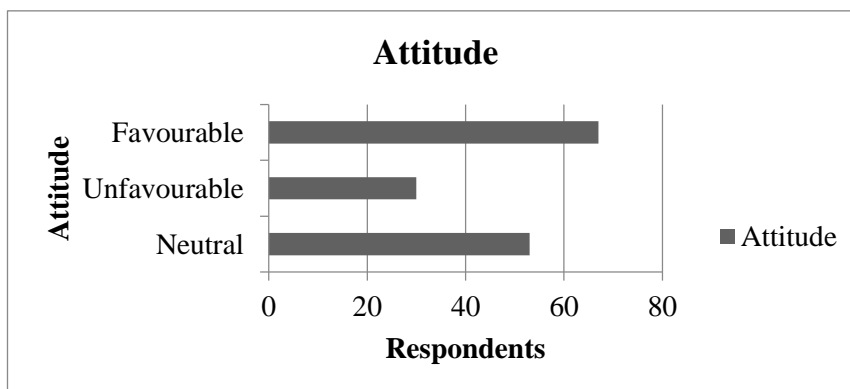
<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>Self-regulation will ensure that the Namibian media is ethical and professional</b>	58 (38.7%)	36 (24%)	43 (28.7%)	2 (1.3%)	11 (7.3%)
<b>I don't trust the media to be able to do a good job of self-regulation</b>	22 (14.7%)	23 (15.3%)	48 (32%)	23 (15.3%)	34 (22.7%)

<b>Government must regulate the media</b>	30 (20%)	20 (13.3%)	39 (26%)	20 (13.3%)	41 (27.3%)
<b>Some media organisations not being part of the self-regulation mechanism is very problematic</b>	40 (26.7%)	32 (21.3%)	43 (28.7%)	8 (5.3%)	27 (18%)
<b>So far, self-regulation by the Namibian media has proved ineffective</b>	27 (18%)	16 (10.7%)	63 (42%)	16 (10.7%)	28 (18.7%)
<b>Self-regulation by the media will ensure that I trust whatever I read, listen to or watch on TV</b>	26 (17.3%)	33 (22%)	49 (32.7%)	14 (9.3%)	28 (18.7%)
<b>Self-regulation will assist to curb excesses and unprofessional conduct of Namibian media workers</b>	53 (35.3%)	33 (22%)	42 (28%)	8 (5.3%)	14 (9.3%)
<b>Self-regulation by the Namibian media has proved very effective.</b>	26 (17.3%)	56 (37.3%)	31 (20.7%)	17 (11.3%)	20 (13.3%)

**4.3.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents and attitudes toward Namibian Media Self-regulation**

**Respondents attitude and Self-regulation of the Namibian Media**

**Figure 5**





Attitude	<b>Favourable</b>	15	40	7	1	3	1	<b>67</b>
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	4	13	11	1	0	1	<b>30</b>
	<b>Neutral</b>	4	38	9	2	0	0	<b>53</b>
Total		<b>23</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>150</b>

Table 5 shows the relationship between the overall attitude and age of the respondents.

**Table 6**

**Attitude \* Occupation Crosstabulation**

		Occupation				
		Employed	Self-employed	Student	Not working	Total
Attitude	<b>Favourable</b>	18	5	33	11	<b>67</b>
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	16	2	9	3	<b>30</b>
	<b>Neutral</b>	23	2	22	6	<b>53</b>
Total		<b>57</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>150</b>

Table 6 shows the relationship between the overall attitude and occupation of the respondents.

**Table 7**

**Attitude \* Highest Education Level**



		Highest Education Level				
		Tertiary	Secondary	Primary	No Formal Education	Total
Attitude	<b>Favourable</b>	22	43	2	0	<b>67</b>
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	5	25	0	0	<b>30</b>
	<b>Neutral</b>	12	41	0	0	<b>53</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>150</b>

Table 7 shows the relationship between overall attitude and the highest education level of the respondents.

#### 4.4 Summary

This chapter was divided into two sections, Section A has given information about the biological data as well as the socio-economic demographic data of the respondents. Meanwhile, Section B presented data on a filter question that allowed respondents to continue or discontinue the study and the stance and attitude of respondents on self-regulation and the Namibian Media.

The data obtained in this chapter was analyzed using descriptive data analysis represented through bar graphs, pie charts, frequency tables and most importantly narration of the data. The data presented will go through thorough perusal and be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study based on the research objectives, furthermore offers a summary, conclusions and recommendations that may be used on the current status quo of how different audiences/ residents feel about self-regulation and the Namibian media houses. The chapter further intends to demonstrate whether the research goals, based on the research objectives and research questions were met and also suggests advice for further research. Below were the research objectives:

- (i) Investigating the views of Windhoek residents on Namibian Media houses and self-regulation.
- (ii) Documenting the Windhoek residents' assessment of the effectiveness of self-regulation.

#### 5.2 Discussion of Findings

In this section, the researcher starts off by stating the research questions of the study and then discussing the findings that answer these specific questions.

This study intended to achieve an estimated response rate of 100% which was successful as the study's target was 150 participants but managed to get 152 participants thus 152 responses in which two participants discontinued as per the advice of the survey, as they did not have an idea of what self-regulation of the media implies.

According to the data analyses, it shows that most of the respondents strongly agreed that self-regulation will ensure ethical and professional behaviour by the Namibian media, as

opposed to the few respondents that disagreed with the statement. This shows that the residents of Windhoek fully understand the implications of media ethics and professional standards that media houses need to inherit through the mechanism of self-regulation.

This is shown by the efforts by the editor's forum and media ombudsman in Namibia through the revamped and consolidated Code of Ethics and Conduct for Namibian print, broadcast, and online media, in order to raise the standards of journalism in Namibia and keep up with the AU principles on media self-regulation (Editor's Forum of Namibia; The Media Ombudsman, 2017).

The findings show that a moderate number of respondents were neutral about the statement although these neutral responses were higher than the disagreement responses but not higher than the agreements responses. This makes much sense as to why some respondents chose to be neutral as this can subsequently be backed up by Robert Johns findings, where he states that neutral responses enable people who are ignorant about or indifferent to a subject hence they select a neutral opinion instead of being forced to choose a response that does not reflect their true beliefs (Johns, 2005).

The findings show that there is a 10% difference between respondents that strongly disagreed with the statement and those that were neutral about the statement. In this regard, the conclusion was that most respondents were positive about the statement as opposed to the ambivalence of those who were negative about the statement.

Consequently, (Ineji, Nkanu, & Okoi, 2020), stated how the social responsibility of the press is dependable to people in the sense that self-regulation prompts them to draw up codes of ethics and antimonopoly laws that help them to be ethical and professional.

The findings show that more respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that they do not trust the media to do a good job of self-regulation.

Scholars (Haraszti, 2008 & Zurovac, 2018) are of the view that media self-regulation equally includes media professionals and citizens, where media professionals accept their share of responsibility and set up voluntary editorial guidelines and abide by them for the quality of public discourse but still preserve their editorial autonomy.

The findings further show that quite a moderate number strongly disagreed and were neutral about the media doing a good job of self-regulation in their views.

Although the findings show that 10% more of the respondents were neutral about the above statement. This does not give definite but ambivalent opinions of these respondents and the study cannot categorize them as agreeing to the statement neither can the study categorize them as disagreeing with the above statement rather the study focuses on them as neutral opinions.

According to (Africa- The Press, 1992), the effort by media at all costs should not be seen as a form of self-restriction out of fear, but an exercise to fulfil the media's obligation to the public to whom the media are ultimately responsible.

According to Hodges (1986), “we cannot reasonably demand that the press give an account of itself or improve its performance until we determine what it is the press is responsible for doing”, simply meaning that instead of not trusting the press we should work with the press closely to help them do a good job.

Although the study's findings were that 38% of the respondents rather trust the media is doing a good job of self-regulation, 30% of the respondents opposed and disagreed in that

regard. Consequently, (Reid, 2012), further states that self-regulation of the media could never be a flawed system that gives a healthy haven to press freedom.

According to Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003), “historically, the state has often been perceived as the main enemy of freedom of individual expression, while at the same time it has also become, through constitutions and legal systems, the effective guarantor of freedom in important respects (p. 183).”

The findings show that most respondents disagreed that government must regulate the media this can be backed up by Moyo who stated that government should not be the force behind such an initiative (Moyo, 2008). If the media fail to meet their responsibilities to society the government should encourage the media to comply by the way of controlling them (Uzuegbunam, 2015).

The study shows that there is a slight difference of 6.8% between respondents that want the government to regulate the media and those that opposed the statement that the government must regulate the media.

The findings show that 40.1% of the respondents disagreed on the government regulating the media. Hence the presence of an independent Media Ombudsman, that prevents state control (Freedom House, 2015). It is less expensive to the government since the industry bears the cost and can be more adaptable than government regulation also known as State Regulation (Puddephatt, 2011).

The findings also show that 33.3% of respondents agreed that the government must regulate the media. The question is how far such an embrace by state authorities should go and at what stage this will create conflicts of interest or allow pressure or coercion to be brought to bear (Bussiek, 2008).

In the literature review, a 2012 study found that while media practitioners embraced self-regulation as the best tool for media accountability, the consensus was that the MCK was performing below expectations as the council was "invisible and ineffective". According to (Obuya, 2012), these included factors such as lack of confidence in the council due to inefficiency, and a lack of commitment to accountability as the media industry did not genuinely desire accountability but rather saw the council as just "buying time from state control". Such occurrences are mostly influenced by instances such as media organizations not being part of the self-regulation mechanism which is deemed as very problematic. This is shown by how respondents in this study's findings fully back up the statement "Some media organizations not being part of the self-regulation mechanism is very problematic".

The findings show that 48% of the respondents agree with the statement that some media organizations not being part of the self-regulation mechanism is very problematic. The findings further revealed that 23.3% of the respondents disagree meanwhile 28.7 were neutral.

The study's findings on this statement overall show that most of the respondents believe media organizations should all be part of the self-regulatory mechanism or else it becomes very problematic when some are not.

The findings show that 42% of the respondents are neutral on whether self-regulation by the Namibian media has proved ineffective. The findings also found that neutral responses were of the respondents who were ambivalent to the statement hence do not have negative or positive thoughts on the said statement. The findings further show that 29.3% of the respondents disagree that the Namibian media has been ineffective with regard to self-regulation. According to Bethel(2021), Namibia is ranked 24th out of 180 countries and the

top free press ranking in Africa. The findings show that 28.7% of the respondent agreed that media self-regulation has proved ineffective by Namibian Media.

According to the research findings, there is a gap between those that belief self-regulation by the media will ensure that they trust whatever they read, listen to or watch on tv and those that disagreed with the latter. The data analysis shows that 39.3% of the respondents agreed that they would trust whatever they read, listen to or watch on TV if the media are self-regulated.

The press has a commitment to be dependable to people in general (Ineji, Nkanu, & Okoi, 2020). The former Media Ombudsman Namibia echoes this sentiment as it states that, in Namibia and other democratic countries, newspapers, radio, TV and other media bear a heavy responsibility to keep the public informed and this is a vital function. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere (Habermas & Lennox, 1974), hence they then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy.

The data analyses further show that 28% disagreed while 32.7% were neutral about the said statement.

According to House of Common (2007) in (Freedom House, 2015), this was one after a journalist was convicted of illegally accessing phone messages of members of the royal family. The study shows that 57.3% of the respondents believe that self-regulation will assist to curb the excesses and unprofessional conduct of Namibian Media. The study further shows that 14.7% disagreed while 28% of the respondents are neutral. The findings show that most Windhoek residents believe that self-regulation will assist to curb the excesses and unprofessional conduct of the Namibian Media.

According to Bethel(2021), Namibia is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries and the top free press ranking in Africa, the study's findings shows that 54.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the Namibian media has proved to be very effective with the self-regulation mechanism meanwhile 24.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 20.7% of the respondents were neutral about the statement.

Lastly, in order to fully answer the objectives of this study the researcher had to administer the most crucial question, on what constituted the respondents' overall attitude towards the self-regulation mechanism of the Namibian media.

According to Bandura (1991a), "Self-regulatory systems lie at the very heart of causal processes. They not only mediate the effects of most external influences but provide the very basis for purposeful action (Bandura, 1991, p.248)".

The findings indicated that most of the respondents (44.7%) found the self-regulation of the Namibian media favourable, this is echoed by the literature review where it states that Namibia is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries, on the Press Freedom Index.

The study also discovered that quite a few respondents (20%), found it to be unfavourable and 35.3% of the respondents were neutral.

The study's findings reflect that relatively 43 females and 24 males have a positive attitude towards the self-regulation of the Namibian media. This could simply mean that the Namibian media must be doing a great of self-regulation. In the literature review, there is a clear reflection with regards to Namibia's current ranking. The respondents that had a favourable attitude took up 44.7% out of 150 respondents followed by 53 respondents with 35.3% who had a neutral attitude and 30 respondents with 20% who had an unfavourable attitude.



According to the findings, the age range with a high participatory rate are respondents who were between the ages of 21-30 years with 60.7% (91 respondents) out of the 150 respondents. The findings further showed that most of the respondents in this age range are students and employed respondents, hence the possibility that respondents possessed in-depth knowledge of the self-regulation mechanism and the current stance of the Namibian media in that regard. The findings further revealed that out of the 67 respondents, 40 respondents wherefrom the above age range had a favourable attitude.

The findings further show that most of the respondents in this study are students with a 42.6% participatory rate followed by 38% employed and 6% who were self-employed.

The study intended to analyse the highest education level with the respondents' overall attitude towards the self-regulation of the Namibian media. Most of the respondents in this study had secondary as their highest education level, hence the high participatory rate of students is shown in the findings. The data revealed that 72,7% of the respondents had secondary level followed by 26% with tertiary level and 1.3% with primary level. Lastly, the study showed that there were no respondents who had no formal education as all were either at the secondary, tertiary or primary level.

### **5.3 Summary of findings**

The research aimed at finding out the views of Windhoek residents on the self-regulation of media houses in Namibia and further aimed to document their assessment of the effectiveness of self-regulation. The findings show that most of the residents understand what self-regulation of the media is, hence their participation in the survey.

The findings show that when the residents had to indicate their stance to either agree or disagree on the statement surrounding the self-regulation of the Namibian media. The approach to the different statements varied as different residents had different thoughts on

the statements. The findings show that most of the respondents strongly agreed that self-regulation will ensure that the Namibian media is ethical and professional.

The study's findings show that most of the respondents trust the media's ability in doing a good job when self-regulating. The study's findings further show that most of the respondents do not want the government to regulate the media. One of the statements questioned if some media organizations were to disassociate themselves from being part of the advocacy of self-regulation will cause inconveniences to other media organizations thus being problematic. The findings show that most of the respondents agreed that indeed when some organizations not being part of the self-regulation mechanism with other media organizations it becomes a problem.

The findings also show that most of the respondents were neutral on if self-regulation by the Namibian media has proved ineffective. Despite the neutrality towards the statement, 0.6% more of the respondents disagreed compared to those that agreed with the statement. The study's findings show that if the media is self-regulated most of the respondents will trust whatever they read, listen to or watch on TV.

The findings also show that most of the respondents believe that self-regulation will assist to curb the excesses and unprofessional conduct of the Namibian media workers. The study's findings show that most respondents found that the Namibian media to have proved their effectiveness with regards to self-regulation.

Lastly, the findings indicated that most of the respondents found the self-regulation of the media in Namibia favourable, which could indicate that the media in Namibia could be doing a good job with self-regulating themselves as indicated by the study.

## **5.4 Conclusions**

The findings concluded that Windhoek residents views on self-regulation of the media are positive and that they believe that the media should be self-regulated as they would be doing a good job. The findings concluded that the residents believe that the government should not regulate the media and that the divide between various media organizations whereas some are self-regulated and others not causes very problematic inconsistency.

The findings also further concluded that the self-regulation of the media in Namibia is effective and favourable, thus doing a good job so far. The findings concluded that the self-regulation of Namibian media will instil trust in the residents this includes everything they read, listen to and watch on TV produced by the Namibian media.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

The conclusion derived from the findings shows that the Namibian media's self-regulation method is effective. The conclusion also shows that the Windhoek residents want all media houses in Namibia to work together to achieve 100% self-regulation meaning all media houses are independent of the government regulation.

In this regard, the researcher recommends that the media works closely hand in hand with the public sphere which includes the different stakeholders such as all media houses, the public, the government and other privately-owned organizations in order to create a conducive platform for all these stakeholders to freely participate with the input of their everyday life's input. The media will remain independent and self-regulating.

The researcher recommends that future researchers should look into the aspects of co-regulation models that both the media and the government can use to co-exist in regulating the media. This will help unfold which regulation mechanism is best suitable for the media

in years to come; the world evolves every day and different strategies might be needed in different eras.

The future researcher must at least assess other residents in other towns of Namibia on what their views are on the self-regulation of the media in Namibia. This will enable an accurate overall view of the whole country on self-regulation and the Namibian media, which further enables the comparison and contrasting of the results or findings.

## **5.6 Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher presented the views of Windhoek residents on self-regulation and the Namibian media. This chapter further clearly discussed the findings of the study with regard to the research objectives. This chapter presented the discussion of the findings, summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

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## **APPENDIXES**

### **RESEARCH CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH SURVEY**

#### **AN INVESTIGATION ON SELF-REGULATION AND THE NAMIBIAN MEDIA: THE VIEWS OF WINDHOEK RESIDENTS**

The purpose of this study is to investigate self-regulation and the Namibian media: the views of Windhoek residents. The research objectives guiding the study are as under:

1. Investigating the views of Windhoek residents on Namibian Media houses and self-regulation.
2. Documenting Windhoek residents' assessment of the effectiveness of self-regulation.

You have been selected for this study because you are a Windhoek resident which is the study's main focus. You will be asked to respond to questions about Self-regulation of the Media.

Participation is voluntary and your responses will be treated in confidence except you indicate otherwise. No discomfort, stress or risks are anticipated. Your participation will result in a great contribution to this research and can be used to help future researchers and studies in this line of research.

I agree to participate in the study titled "An investigation on self-regulation and the Namibian Media: the views of Windhoek residents" by Gina Lez Vetumbuavi Kavela of the Department of Social Studies, University of Namibia. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the

results of this participation, to the extent that they can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research record or destroyed.

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Researcher

Signature and Date

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Participant

Signature and Date

Research at the University of Namibia that involves human participation is overseen by the Centre for Research Services. Questions and queries as regards your rights as a participant should be addressed to my supervisor, Prof Eno Akpabio, (eakpabio@unam.na; 061-2064794)

## **APPENDIXES**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **TOPIC: SELF-REGULATION AND THE NAMIBIAN MEDIA: A SURVEY OF WINDHOEK RESIDENTS**

My name is Gina Lez Vetumbuavi Kavela, a final year Media Studies student at the University of Namibia. I am surveying Windhoek residents to find out their opinion on self-regulation and the Namibian media for my research project in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of BA (Media Studies) honours degree. The survey takes a few minutes to complete and participation is voluntary. All responses will be treated with utmost confidence. Tick or fill in as appropriate. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

#### **SECTION A**

1. Age:

Under 20 years \_\_\_\_\_

21-30 years \_\_\_\_\_

31-40 years \_\_\_\_\_

41-50 years \_\_\_\_\_

51-60 years \_\_\_\_\_

61 years and above \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender:

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ please \_\_\_\_\_ specify \_\_\_\_\_ -

---

3. Occupation:

Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Self Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Not working \_\_\_\_\_

4. Where do you stay in Windhoek? (**Only specify location; example** PioneersPark, Katutura etc.)

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5. Highest education level

No formal education \_\_\_\_\_

Primary \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary \_\_\_\_\_

Tertiary \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have an idea of what self-regulation of the media is?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If the answer is “no” discontinue the survey

**SECTION B**

7. Indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements as regards  
media self-regulation

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Self-regulation will ensure that the Namibian media is ethical and professional					
I don't trust the media to be able to do a good job of self-regulation					
Government must regulate the media					
Some media organizations not being part of the self-regulation mechanism is very problematic					
So far self-regulation by the Namibian media has proved ineffective					
Self-regulation by the media will ensure that I trust whatever I read, listen to or watch on TV					
Self-regulation will assist to curb excesses and unprofessional conduct of Namibian media workers					
Self-regulation by the Namibian media has proved very effective					

8. What constitutes your overall attitude towards self-regulation by the Namibian media

Favourable \_\_\_\_\_

Unfavourable \_\_\_\_\_

Neutral \_\_\_\_\_