

**EVALUATING THE GOVERNMENT OF NAMIBIA SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY  
AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT**

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**DECLARATION**

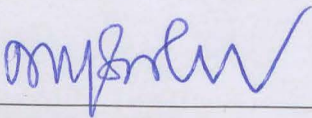
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## DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my husband, Mr Samuel Tangeni Nakanduungile, our beloved new-born Mbushe Amor Nakanduungile, who during the whole part of this thesis has been in attention competition with my academic studies. I also dedicate this work to my other children Esmi Sara Nasheya and Rio Nasimane Nakandunngile, family and friends for their kindness, devotion and endless support, and above all to God who has been my pillar in all that I do.

## ABSTRACT

The Social Media Use Policy (SMUP) of Namibia and the Implementation Plan was developed for implementation in 2016 by ministries, offices, and agencies, local as well as regional authorities to assist the Namibian government to utilise social media as an aid to effective citizens' engagement as well as to guide the manner in which social media is to be used. The aim of this study was to assess the SMUP and the implementation plan by determining whether each government entity does recognize and implement the social media use policy, identifying the main types of social media platforms established and used by government agencies, examining the level of adherence to guidelines in the use of social media by government communicators and evaluating whether the selected social media strategies reflect minimum standard components as established by the SMUP. To collect and analyze relevant data, a mixed-methods research approach was adopted that involved interviews with government public relations practitioners, survey of social media users in Namibia as well as document analysis of government departments' social media reports and sites. The main findings of the study were conclusive of the fact that despite various types of social media prescribed by the SMUP, Facebook was mainly utilised by government institutions. In addition, the level of influence and engagement with citizens via social media was found to be below expected levels in relation to the number of social media users in the country. This findings point to the fact that government institutions are not entirely adhering to the SMUP guidance. While the present study was a broad national overview, it should be replicated regionally to help identify weaknesses and track progress towards speeding up the effectiveness of social media in service delivery to the citizenry.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

### CHAPTER ONE

GCSI	Government Communication and Information System Department
MICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMAs	Offices Ministries and Agencies
PR	Public Relations
SMUP	Social Media Use Policy
WPC	Web Points of Contacts

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Technology has contributed significantly towards reshaping how people interact and relate evidenced by several changes in social norms, values and cultures of various communities (Peters, 2012).

According to Smith (2019) as of January 2019, out of the total worldwide population of 7.7 billion; 4.2 billion people use the internet; 3.397 billion are active social media users with an average 5.54 social media accounts; and social media users spend an average of 116 minutes a day on social media. Social media can be traced as far as 2005 when Tim O'Reilly introduced the term 'Web 2.0' (O'Reilly, 2005). O'Reilly (2015) described Web 2.0 as a platform spanning all connected devices which is characterized by transparency, honesty, trust and reputation while underpinned by a simple, usable, participatory, self-service and decentralized model.

It was based on this initiation that other users collective intelligence co-created platforms such as Google, Amazon, Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter and many others. Seltzer and Mitrook (2007) simplified the definition of social media as an interactive platform for authors and readers of generated content. Social media can be generally understood as internet-based applications that carry consumer-generated content which encompasses media impressions created by consumers, typically informed by relevant experience, and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable consumers (Blackshaw, 2006). Social media platforms foster discussions

amongst users hence proving to be an effective mode of communication that knows no geographical boundaries.

Clearly social media is a two-way communication and network opportunity for friends, family, peers or just people with the same interests to connect and interact. The communication is not limited to downloading information but characterized by knowledge sharing, fast-paced information dissemination and instant commutation through text, voice or video. Social media platforms continue to emerge over the last decade. The figure 1.1 shows popular media platforms that are being used all over the world.

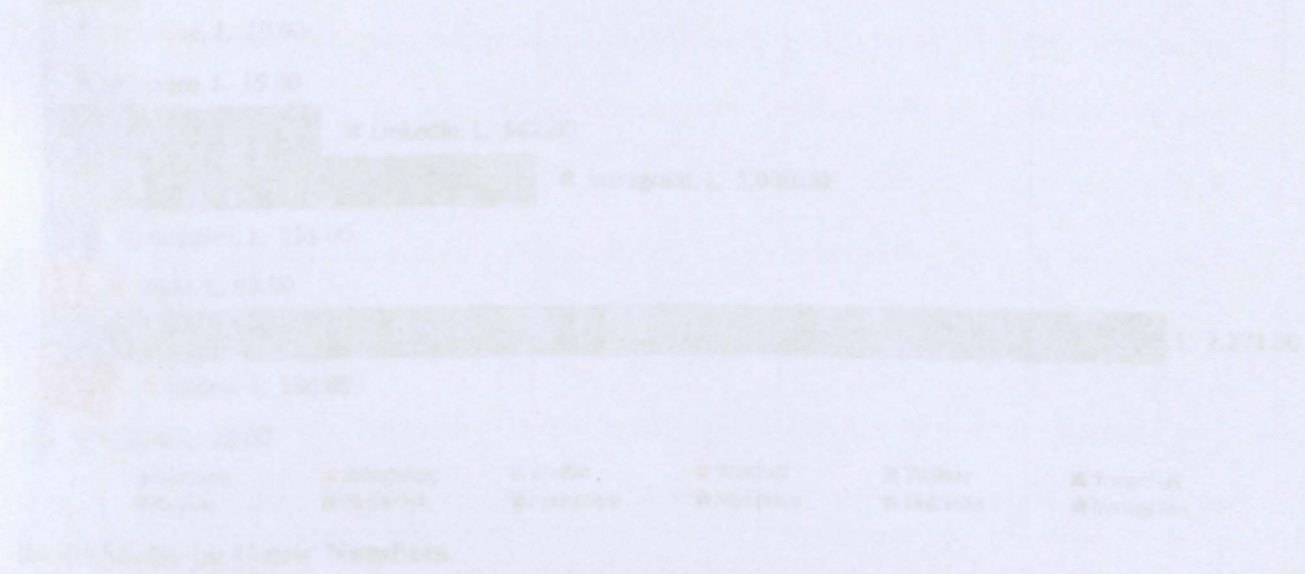
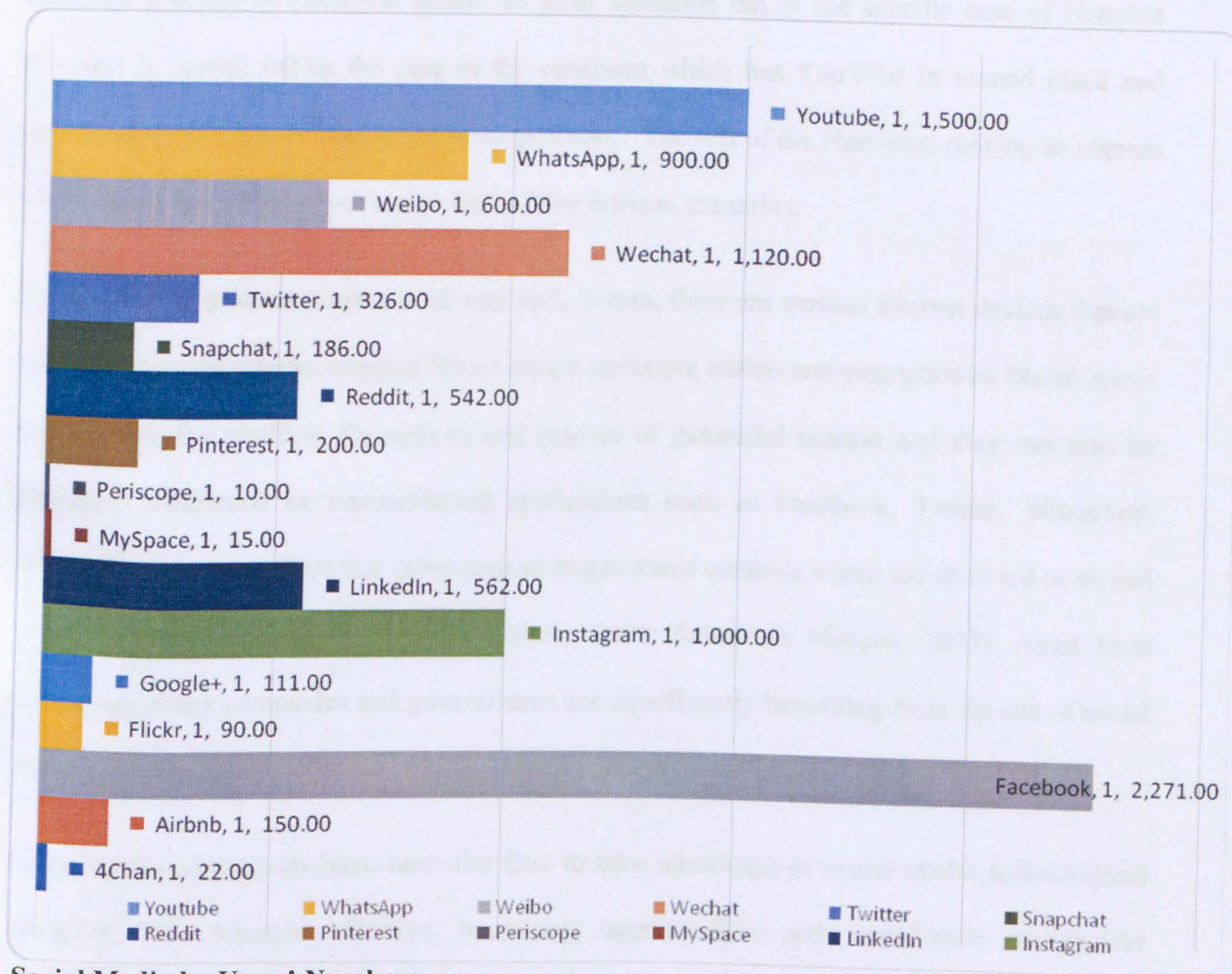


Figure 1.1 shows popular media platforms that are being used all over the world. Facebook (36.44%), YouTube (28.47%), Twitter (14.11%), LinkedIn (10.00%), and Instagram (7.98%) are the most used social media platforms across the world (Statista, 2018). There is a slight difference in usage between regions where YouTube jumps in second place (28.47%) and Facebook (36.44%) is slightly different from the global and the African continent. Other popular platforms include LinkedIn (10.00%) and Instagram (7.98%).

## Social Media by User Numbers



Social Media by Users' Numbers

Source: Survey Results (2018) Social Media Use in 2018, Pew Research Center

Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and You Tube, ranked in that order are among the most used social media platforms all over the world (Statcounter, 2020a). There is a slight difference in terms of preference amongst users in Africa in that YouTube jumps to second place (Statcounter, 2020b). The Namibian case is slightly different from the global and the African situations with the following ranking: Facebook [36.64%], Pinterest [28.47%], Twitter [14.11%],

Instagram [11.99%], YouTube [8.14%], Tumblr [0.37%] (Statcounter, 2020c). This shows the dominant position of Facebook across all three scenarios but in the specific case of Namibia Pinterest is second unlike the case in the continent which has YouTube in second place and worldwide which has Twitter in the same position. The rest of the Namibian ranking as regards social media use reflects both the global and the African scenarios.

Social media applications use the internet and, in turn, there are various internet devices that are used to access the internet ranging from laptops, desktops, tablets and smartphones. Social media is an interactive platform for authors and readers of generated content and they can also be generally understood as internet-based applications such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and many others that carry consumer-generated contents which are archived or shared online for easy access by others (Blackshaw, 2006; Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007). Apart from individuals many companies and governments are significantly benefiting from the use of social media (OECD, 2013).

Many private enterprises have been the first to take advantage of social media technological advances that presents effective marketing opportunities and world-wide stakeholder engagement (Statcounter, 2020a). Public enterprises have followed suit in a bid to improve communication in turn improving service delivery (Schmidt, 2012). Social media platforms have given public voice to the many hence it has become unavoidable that the public now demands regular interaction with government agencies (Howard, 2012). Despite demands from the public, social media developments present benefits from a governmental perspective. Government agencies face austerity measures and intensive scrutiny of budgets resulting to governments

embracing affordable forms of innovation in delivering public services (Lagos& Kutsikos, 2011).

An e-Government survey conducted by the OECD (2013) pointed out that the issue is no longer whether government agencies should embrace social media but rather how productively social media technologies can be used. Results of a study conducted by Mergel (2013) show that government agencies have adopted social media network technologies as part of their communication and information dissemination strategies. For instance, South Africa already developed and implemented a social media policy in 2011 (Government Communication and Information System Department [GCSI], 2011).

Namibia followed suit, resulting in the introduction of a Social Media Use Policy (SMUP) by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) in 2016 (SMUP, 2016). This SMUP and Implementation Plan was developed as a single document combining policy and strategy on social media for the entire government of Namibia. Though the custodian of the policy and implementation plan is the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Technology, it is the mandate of all government structures to implement it (SMUP, 2016).

Information dissemination in government service delivery is now taking place in a new and changed world with a noteworthy level of social, economic, and political activity at play on the internet and social media. Nowadays, society purchases products and services online, search for information online and most importantly share their day to day experiences with colleagues, friends, families and strangers through social networks producing enormous influence into how society perceives anything (Ford & Ravansari, 2017).

This in itself, has forced the government of Namibia to adopt social media as a channel for public and stakeholder engagement so as to remain relevant and competitive. The adoption of social media communications in the public sector has triggered a need for the government to formulate policies and social media strategic plans as important administrative tools for use at government level. Social media use policy and implementation plan serves an important role in guiding implementers on what is to be done when, to who and how.

The Harambee Prosperity Plan (2016) identified governance and improved service delivery as key pillars to fulfill Namibia's development goals. Social media is considered as a key strategy in improving information dissemination within all Offices Ministries and Agencies (OMAs), Regional Councils and Local Authorities (SMUP, 2016). SMUP (2016) outlines commitments set for government agencies. In order to ensure professional government engagement with the public: all employees assigned with the responsibility of Web Points of Contacts (WPC) shall sign an oath as a demonstration of commitment to the Government Social Media policy, WPC shall be the first points of contact on social media and other web activities and all employees assigned as WPC shall be provided with online training and refresher training on a regular basis. (SMUP, p7).

Currently, the SMUP implementation plan is entering its third year and a committee was set up to manage and monitor the implementation of this plan. The WPC Committee set up by the Ministry of ICT, meet quarterly to share best practices and coordinate efforts. The Committee comprise of all Heads of Public Relations, Information and Media units of all O/M/As, Regional Councils and Local Authorities. The Committee is deployed to assist and advise O/M/As,

Regional Councils and Local Authorities in the event of a communication crisis where necessary. (SMUP, p7).

A challenge at play is how effective is the implementation of the social media use policy and the implementation plan? Are the government structures complying with the guidelines of the social media use policy? Are they also effectively implementing the implementation plan provided? And if so, to what extent? The study sought to investigate the effectiveness of policy and implementation plan execution by the entire government of Namibia machinery.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Scholars and commentators have identified various benefits in implementing a social media strategy: connecting people so much so that geographical distance is no longer a barrier; fostering change in communities; assisting various entities achieve their vision and mission through enhanced communication capabilities; understanding the different tastes, preferences and opinions of current and potential customers; promoting products and brands; and gaining insight on competition as well as marketing knowledge (Edosomwan & Prakasan, 2011).

The ultimate goal of the Namibian SMUP is aligned with these viewpoints and is intended to ensure improved service delivery to the public through use and improved dissemination of information via social media. According to the SMUP (2016), a Web Points of Contact (WPC) Committee from government agencies' media departments was set up by the MICT to share best practices and coordinate efforts through quarterly meetings. Apart from the presence of a committee that monitors the progress of this plan, evidence to show the progress of implementation of this plan is lacking.

Hence, the trigger for this research was the need to assess whether the government structures of Namibia effectively implemented the social media use policy and the implementation plan developed to guide the implementers during their public and stakeholder engagement through social media channels. The study sought to identify if there were any possible gaps in the implementation of the social media use policy and implementation plan; if there would be any gaps, what would be the possible causes of such gaps as well as the possible solutions to help best implement the said policy and implementation plan within the context of the many benefits of social media alluded to by scholars and commentators.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the SMUP and Implementation Plan developed by the Government of Namibia. The evaluation would focus on the following sub-objectives:

- To investigate the level of adherence to guidelines in the use of the Social Media Use Policy and Implementation Plan by government institutions.
- To evaluate policy implementation outcomes and their impact from the view of citizens.
- To identify if there are any possible challenges that are affecting the effective use of the SMUP and Implementation Plan
- To investigate the best possible recommended solutions to overcome the challenges affecting the effective implementation of the SMUP and Implementation Plan.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

The research findings would assist the government of Namibia in their evaluation and monitoring of the SMUP and Implementation Plan by government institutions. It would also assist the government in discovering the best possible measures that ensure effective implementation of the policy and plan. The desk research revealed that there was not enough tools and resources to facilitate evaluation, assessment, or measurement of the effectiveness of SMUP and Implementation Plan use by government institutions. This review is the first of its nature and will go a long way in providing benchmark statistics for future assessments as well as make a contribution to the social media strategy and policy literature based on the Namibian perspective.

#### **1.5 Limitation of the study**

There were a number of limitations which should be borne in mind in considering the findings of this study: Some of the respondents were reluctant to participate in the study due to the bureaucratic nature of government institutions. However, since the researcher had conducted work within government ministries in the past, she had contacts that assisted in speeding up the data collection process. Furthermore the adoption of social media in the Namibian context does not necessarily imply the users are active social media users. Others are generally holding social media accounts for social inclusion not necessarily for active engagement. This was brought to the fore based on the findings of this study. The use of purposive sampling was very useful in terms of identification of information-rich subjects, but what this translates to is that the qualitative findings of this study are not generalizable across all Government structures of Namibia.

## 1.6 Delimitation of the study

For the purpose of this study, social media was defined according to the SMUP: Platforms that can be used to engage with internal and external stakeholders in the form of highly accessible digital technologies such as blogs, podcasts, social networks, wikis, micro-blogs, and message boards. This means that the findings of this study was limited to only the identified platforms and cannot be generalized to others that are in use now or in the future. The same principle applies to the study population, site and timing. The study concentrated on government institutions which are located in all 14 regions of the country. In addition, the study was limited to the time period of implementation of the plan, which is 2016 to 2020. Collection of data within these parameters assisted for a thorough evaluation of the plan.

## 1.7 Definition of terms

**OMAs**-This is a central executive branch of government of Namibia and it consists of Offices, Ministries, and Agencies. Currently there are eight Offices of central government, twenty-three Ministries and eight Agencies of the central government in Namibia ([www.gov.na](http://www.gov.na), 2020).

**SMUP and Implementation plan**-A social media use policy simply outlines how people should conduct themselves via the web. The policy provides guidance for citizens on use of social media, which include blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

**Stakeholder engagement**- this is the process by which an organization involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of its decisions.

**Interactivity**-is the communication process that takes place between humans and computer software.

**Social Media**-these are forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).

**Digital media**-this is digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks. This can include text, audio, video, and graphics.

**Open government**-Open government is the governing doctrine which holds that citizens have the right to access the documents and proceedings of the government to allow for effective public oversight.

## 1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the introduction of the first chapter, as well as the background of the study. The problem statement was articulated, and the purpose of the study was explained. The importance of the study to theory and practice was justified. The other sections covered the delimitations, and as well as the limitations of the study. The other parts of the chapter covered the definition of specific terms as well as the chapter summary. The chapter to follow discusses the literature review.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on the theoretical and empirical information that helps create a better understanding of social media in the context of this study (evaluation of Social Media Use Policy and Implementation Plan of the Government of Namibia), social media significance to government communication, purposes of policing the government communication through social media as well as a comprehensive analysis of social media presence in Namibia.

The literature further highlights various theoretical models that can be used in the evaluation of government policy implementation by those institutions utilizing social media. The literature review involved relevant national and international literature relating to the evaluation of social media policy evaluation. These include texts and journal articles and other publications. The literature review identified gaps which the research sought to address as well as providing a basis for evaluation of the use of social media policies by government institutions.

#### 2.1 Social Media in modern-day communication

Social media is the collective term for internet-based networks of users who interact, share information and communicate with multiple similarly connected users in real-time (Cavico, Mujtaba, Muffler & Samuel 2013). Miller (2011) defined social media as the colonization of the space between traditional broadcast and private dynamic communication, providing people with a scale of group size and degrees of privacy that we have termed scalable sociality.

Social media can be described as a platform that allows users to develop individual profiles operating within a controlled system connecting various users with controlled access to navigate through other users' profiles (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The SMUP (2016) defines social media by the types of platforms such as blogs, podcasts, social networks, wikis, micro-blogs and message board. Similarly, Levy (2006) defines and describes social media as any web site powered by the user on a constant and mandatory basis.

Despite the fact that there are different ways of describing social media as also evidenced by the various platforms that are available, social media in this research includes the phenomenon as well as a description of the social media technologies. The most befitting definition in relation to this study is the description of social media by Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley (2011) who describe social media as platforms that rely on Web-based technologies to turn discrete, usually rather short, user contributions such as status updates or comments into an activity stream.

In light of these definitions, assessing and exploring the use of social media entails analysis of how social media tools contribute towards the generation and dissemination of information as well as how the consumption of this information influences discussions.

Social media has contributed significantly towards an improved global engagement, be it social engagement or business engagement (Smith, 2019). Communication, collaboration and the use of multimedia are the key characteristics that describe social media. Smith (2019), suggests that the significance of social media is for collaboration and communication via the use of a range of multimedia. According to Smith (2019), communication has been pioneered through the use of blogs, locations, social networks as well as aggregators in addition to collaboration through conferencing, wikis, social news, social bookmarking.

Social media has been embraced by various stakeholders in various ways. The popularity of social media came into light because of its ability to connect people despite their geographical distance and location. A company like Facebook's sole mandate was to socially connect people, (Arlington, 2010).

As social media progressed, it became a huge platform for writers to connect with various audiences and its ability to connect communities provided opportunities to bring change in communities through the adverts, campaigns, articles as well as multimedia content (Oliveira & Welch, 2013). More people recognized the effortless and value of social media as a communication tool leading to more business players to take advantage of social media's unique ability, (Arlington, 2009).

According to Hootsuite (2015), many businesses have used social media to understand different tastes, preferences and opinions of current and potential customers. In addition, the site reports that business has benefited from the use of social media through the promotion of products and brands, gaining insight on competition as well as marketing knowledge.

In other ways, businesses have improved communication and collaboration within their companies as a result of the use of social media. According to Edosomwan and Prakasan (2011), there is more collaboration among team players in the use of social media. Edosomwan and Prakasan point out that social media acts as a platform that allows people to develop and share ideas that result in better outputs. This point of view demonstrates that social media is an effective communication tool that is up-to-date, provides quick feedback while also reaching a wider range of audiences.

## 2.2 Social media use in Africa

In the mid-1990s, as the use of mobile phones started its rapid spread in much of the developed world, few thought of Africa as a potential market. Now, with more than 500 million subscribers, its market is larger than North America's. Africa took the lead in the global shift from fixed to mobile telephones, notes a report by the UN International Telecommunications Union.

According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), studies suggest that when Africans go online (predominantly with their mobile phones) they spend much of their time on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and so on). Sending and reading e-mails, reading news and posting research queries have become less important activities for Africans.

In June 2019, more people in Africa accessed the internet than did in Latin America, North America, or the Middle East. There were 525 million internet users in Africa, 447 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, 328 million in North America, and 174 million in the Middle East (Cavico, 2019).

According to Statcounter (2020b), about 40 percent of all Africans were online in June 2019, but usage varies from country to country. In Kenya it was 83 percent; in South Africa, 56 percent; and in Nigeria, 60 percent. However, Nigeria is so much bigger in population than any other African country; its citizens comprised about 20 percent of all African internet users. Though Africa is behind only Asia and Europe in the absolute number of internet users, it lags behind every other region in the proportion of internet users. June

2019 internet users comprised 52 percent of Asians, 87 percent of Europeans, and 89 percent of North Americans.

The good news, simply put, is that 40 percent of all Africans have access of some sort to the internet. On a continent in which, by and large, newspapers are expensive, telephone landlines are underdeveloped, authoritarian governments seek to manipulate the media, and most people have traditionally received news from the radio, often broadcasting in local languages, the internet provides access to a new and much bigger world. The downside, of course, is that the internet is unfiltered, with both wisdom and garbage. There are also fewer ways to verify internet stories than in other parts of the world where other forms of media are more developed.

Internet penetration is likely to grow at a faster rate than elsewhere in the world, and the fact that there are already more than half a billion internet users in Africa raises the possibility of a greater number of profound social, political, and economic changes. Internet usage may be a sign that the African giant is awakening.

### **2.3 Social Media Use in Namibia**

Surveys conducted in Namibia indicate that to date, WhatsApp and Facebook remains the social media network of choice in both urban and rural areas, with fewer Namibians being on Twitter, Instagram, Google + (Tyson, 2015). In both urban and rural communities, social media use is estimated at between 5 and 10 hours a day.

In her study on social media, Isabel Bento studied university students in the Faculties of Law and Humanities and Social Sciences. Results of the study indicated that Facebook was the most popular social network among students. Her study also looked at the amount of time students spent on their cell phones. It was established that more than half of the students checked for SMS messages three times a day (Tyson, 2015). Most had been using SMS messaging for over two years.

The researcher also investigated which technology (computer, tablet, laptop or smart phone) was mostly used by students to access their social networking account, and the results revealed that smart phones remained the most common platform (Tyson, 2015). In Namibia, as in many other sub-Saharan countries, social media platforms have become increasingly popular.

H. Ellis (personal communication, April 17, 2018) noted that many young urban dwellers had become very comfortable accessing news online. His take is substantiated by recent statistics from the latest Afrobarometer survey from 2017 (Afrobarometer, 2018). Overall, 40 percent of respondents said that they accessed news a few times a week or on a daily basis from social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. This is a sizeable number of Namibians, especially in comparison with other media use figures from traditional media such as newspapers and TV.

The responses also bear out the perception that younger citizens in particular make use of social media in Namibia. Thus, when disaggregating the answers by age group, nearly 72 percent of the respondents accessing news on social media a few times a week or daily were between 18 and 35. In contrast, the same age group with the same user habits only made up 65.5 percent of newspaper readers.

Namibia's availability of internet has increased for the last decade, especially in the urban centres (Ryan, Magro, & Sharp, 2010). This has enabled the growth and development of social media presence in the country. Namibia has a well-established infrastructure that is catalyzed by high-speed internet. In addition, mobile phones with internet applications are owned by a majority of people, both in urban and rural settings.

Apart from creating forums for public participation in governance through social media, the government has also developed various initiatives to embrace digital technology and therefore important issues can be tackled through Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, Blogs, My Space, YouTube, Instagram, We chat, and other means of social media platforms. Consequently, many state officers are currently engaging with the public through social media on issues pertaining to the welfare of the country (Wangui, 2014).

During the 2019 electoral campaigns, almost all the presidential candidates had Facebook pages, Twitter handles, and other social media networks. Other candidates vying for presidencies such as President Hage G. Geingob, Opposition Party Candidate McHenry Venaani and members of parliament also had intensified activities in the social media forums, (Immanuel 2015). The might of a candidate could be reflected by the number of followers each of those candidates had.

The social media pages mostly in Facebook and Twitter carried posters and manifestos of those candidates, but more importantly, carried the daily posts of campaign meetings showing photographs of large campaign gatherings of each candidate. Social media provided forums for the citizens to interact with their preferred candidates, while also providing means of convincing the neutrals to join their camps (Wasswa, 2013). This enhanced the levels of citizen

participation. The citizens had chances to engage the candidate's right from the comfort of their sitting room.

Many government departments are also actively involved in social media. This is mostly through the use of Twitter handles to communicate what they are doing to the general public. One of the most notable departments actively involved in the social media is the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology during this period of COVID-19 Pandemic where it regularly updated the citizens on the progress of the operations through their official Facebook and Twitter and social media platforms, (Ryan, Magro & Sharp, 2011).

#### **2.4 A Case Study of Social Media Use in the Government of Kenya**

In Kenya, Twitter and Facebook have been used by the government to communicate to citizens on issues affecting them in an effort to generate support before major decisions are made. For example, the President and his Deputy always ask for Kenyans' views and support before tabling bills in Parliament or signing them into law. Through social media, the President asked for the support of the terror Bill by giving their opinions (Chai, 2014). Social media platform offers the ability to connect each and every individual. Such interaction also enables the marginalised to participate in discussions and present their point of view, thereby improving the political position of marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and minorities. For example, in Kenya, social media has helped the marginalised to communicate their needs for socio-economic opportunities. In this way, the government has set aside funds for marginalised and vulnerable groups (DANIDA, 2012)

Social media in Kenya has also been actively used in community policing. This is best demonstrated by the efforts of one Chief Kariuki, who uses Twitter to curb crime in Lanet, Nakuru County. Due to his versatility in the use of Twitter, he is popularly referred to as “the tweeting chief.” The chief has trained other chiefs in Nakuru County on how to use Twitter to help curb crime in their areas of jurisdiction. Also, through such efforts, the Chief has been able to strengthen the ‘Nyumba Kumi’ (Kiswahili phrase meaning ten households) security initiative in his locality (Chiuri, 2015). The initiative is based on community policing, whereby ten households in a neighbourhood make one cluster of a security administrator. The cluster is supposed to be politically neutral but can discuss social and economic issues.

The cluster tackles a range of security problems from gender-based violence and crime to lack of trust between community and security providers, inter-ethnic tensions or weapons proliferation (DANIDA, 2012). The head of each cluster works hand in hand with the government administrator, such as chief and police officers. In case of any security problem, members of the cluster alert their leader and discuss the issue before taking it to the next level depending. Communication is done through mobile phones and verbally, (DANIDA, 2012).

## **2.5 Social Media Usage in South Africa**

The use of social media in South Africa has continued to grow, specifically with reference to the number of users and the intensity of use by current social media members (Tyson, 2015). SA leads as one of the countries with the most mobile social networking users on the continent (UNICEF, 2012). For the second consecutive year, social media apps have dominated user downloads from all three major app stores within SA, displaying how genuinely embedded

mobile social media apps have become in the country. According to Tyson (2015), social networking in SA has overcome the age barrier and the urban-rural divide.

According to the research conducted, it has been revealed that Facebook and Twitter have grown at a similar rate in South Africa at around 100,000 new users a month in 2014 (Afrobarometer, 2018). LinkedIn has also grown substantially, but at a slightly lower rate to reach 1.93 million South Africans and remains popular to business to business (B2B) because of its focus on professional conversations, while Pinterest is the fledgling among the major social networks, with only 150,000 users in South Africa according to Afrobarometer (2018).

Twitter adoption in the country has increased dramatically as it rose by 129% in a year, as registered users more than doubled from 2.4 million in 2012 to 5.5 million in 2013, (Lamey, 2018). From less than 100,000 users in 2012, Instagram has been making its mark in the country, adding more than half a million users in a year (Lamey, 2018). In 2013 this increased to 680,000 users, suggesting that this figure was only going to grow further as Android adoption in the country took off. At that time, Instagram was limited by the fact that BlackBerry held a dominant share of the South African smartphone market, and the app was only available on iOS and android (Lamey, 2018).

## **2.6 Significance of Social Media to Government Communication**

The benefits that came along with social media developments have not been ignored by governments as more and more departments are beginning to embrace the use of social media. This is simply evident in the deployment of social media policies by various countries. Undoubtedly, both citizens and businesses increasingly prefer digital interaction with public

authorities. In 2013, Accenture conducted a comparative study (Hootsuite, 2015) in 10 countries (Brazil, Germany, India, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the UK and the USA) to assess their use of “digital government” and found out that 81% of citizens considered it important to have more digital government services while 64% of citizens preferred to interact with government through social media. For instance, South African developed its social media policy in 2011 and Namibia in 2016 while international organization such the US Centres for Disease Control (CDC) developed theirs in 2011.

Similarly, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) e-Government Survey (2013) found out that most OECD countries regard the use of social media as important tools that enhances economic growth improves the quality of public services and promotes government transparency and accountability. The OECD study found out that more than half of the countries (56%) have incorporated the use of social media in implementing many aspects of their strategy and that the use of social media tends to correlates with governments that value transparency, openness, creation of new businesses and volume increase for private sector business(OECD, 2013).

The application of social media in the public sector produces several advantages. Among the advantages is e-participation, which enables citizens to participate in various national activities (Univeristy of Michigan, 2010). E-participation empowers citizens both receiver and an active partner of the government in creating and sharing information. For the government to increase e-participation, it is imperative to adopt existing social media platforms which are familiar to citizens rather than creating new ones (Chang & Kannan, 2008). Through social media, the government can collect citizens’ comments via feedbacks and views on different issues.

Comments collected may help the government to understand the perception of the citizens and devise appropriate measures on the issue.

Social media is of significant use to instantly disseminate information to the society to inform citizens of any current emergency or any expected events (Ryan, Magro, & Sharp, 2010). For example, in emergency situations such as floods and earthquakes, social media could assist the government in informing the citizens on evacuation plans and safety tips.

Millions of people around the world now interact with each other with respect to politics, business, education, entertainment, and other social networking forums. As the technology evolves, the public institutions across the globe are left with no choice other than adopting the new digital technology.

## **2.7 Challenges brought forth by Social Media in Communication**

Social media is being used by people of all races and walks of life, whether young or old, and also in all the fields of life like in business, education, and religion. Many people socially interact and create, share or exchange information, ideas, pictures, videos and many other things. With this great evolution and adoption of social media as part of our daily lives, the question of adverse impacts of social media cannot be ignored (Ryan, 2010).

The arrival of broad reaching and unrestricted social channel of communications has brought up the issue of consumer vulnerability to scams and deception. This has led to social media receiving a lot of attention in terms of credibility. Several issues have emerged, which revolve around user privacy, scamming, public bashing, impersonation, and anonymous profiles (Chang & Kannan, 2008).

In the 21st century, the revolutions experienced by states may not be televised, but will likely be tweeted, blogged, texted, and organized on Facebook. The social media can be considered the first weapon of mass construction that can be deployed to by masses to destroy, hate, and conflict. Social media faces the following challenges in governance issues:

Various challenges which may be encountered by the government during the utilisation of social media include social media accessibility requires large Internet bandwidth usage, misuse of social media, such as posting personal issues or unrelated information to government services, in addition, reputation damage may occur due to the use of abusive language, text, audio and video (Chang & Kannan, 2008).

### **2.7.1 Privacy issues**

User privacy in social media can be violated by harming the credibility of an individual. For example, sharing the profile information of an individual without his/ her consent can lead to damaging of character and reputation of the individual. Scamming is also an unethical issue since user profiles are filled with promotional messages which are mostly deceiving and misleading (Scamwatch, 2014). Such messages end up ruining the social platform for the sharing of useful information.

### **2.7.2 Public bashing**

Public bashing is whereby the users of social media post negative sentiments about others, especially those they are in competition with. This may end up ruining an individual's image and reputation, and may even end up in legal suits.

### **2.7.3 Impersonation**

Impersonation has also escalated and has become a big issue in social media. Some people have been opening accounts and profiles using the names of others, especially celebrities and public figures, without their awareness or permission. This can end up ruining the image of that a person if the profile is used for the wrong reasons.

### **2.7.4 Anonymous profiles**

Anonymous profiles, as the name suggests, are not attributed to anybody. Such profiles are mostly used for unethical motives, such as promoting hatred, fraud, and posting inappropriate contents like pornography in social sites. This is unethical since any user can access such content. More often than not, the content ends up being viewed by underage children, who access such social sites without the knowledge of their parents.

### **2.7.5 Cyber Utopianism**

Cyber utopianism is the belief that online communication is in itself emancipatory, and that the internet favours the oppressed rather than the oppressor. It overestimates the revolutionary potential of social media. It is a form of organising that favours the weak-tie connections that give us access to information over the strong-tie connections that help us persevere in the face of danger. Cyber utopianism is seen by elitists as naïve and stubborn since it plants in the mind of the users' ideas that cannot be put into practice.

### **2.7.6 Freedom of Expression**

Social media gives freedom of expression, but the freedom is misused, over-indulged, or abused due to the impersonal nature of communication on media.

### **2.7.7 Cyber Crime**

Cybercrime involves using the internet as the subject of the crime. Namibia is experiencing a growing number of cybercrimes that threaten national security, information, communications and technology, infrastructure, as well as citizens' privacy. This include but not limited to spam and is usually in the form of unwanted e-mail advertising about a product sent to a list of e-mails or group of email addresses. Spammers send the unwanted mails or messages to billions of users of social networks in order to lure them to giving vital information that assist in gathering the personal information of the unsuspecting users.

### **2.7.8 Scams**

This is the situation whereby some people send e-mails or messages with links to users who ask for the profile information and tell the users that they would add new followers. These links sent to the users would be applications, games, etc. So, whenever users post their details in the link, the details would be received by scammers, and the information would be misused (Information Security Awareness, 2014).

### **2.7.9 Phishing**

This is the creation of a fake site just similar to the original site. Social network phishing comes up with fake emails and messages like offering some specialized themes, updating the profile, updating the security applications/ features, etc. In order to see the updates, the user needs to follow a link and log in, through which the credentials are taken by the attacker. The linked page is a fake copy of the original login page, focused on stealing user account credentials (Information Security Awareness, 2014).

### **2.7.10 Clickjacking**

This is a malicious technique of tricking web users into revealing confidential information or taking control of their computer while clicking on seemingly innocuous web pages. Due to vulnerability across a variety of browsers and platforms, a clickjacking takes the form of embedded code or script that can run without the user's knowledge. The same is followed in the social networking domain. The objective behind such an attack is that users can be tricked into clicking on the links, icons, buttons, etc. which could trigger running of processes at the background without the knowledge of the user (Information Security Awareness, 2014).

### **2.7.11 Malicious applications**

This is infecting a computer through different applications while using or installing software. More often than not, malicious applications are acquired by opening the social networking application to start the installation process. In order to fulfill its intended operation, the application requests for some privileges from the user like access to basic information, updates on the user's social network wall, etc. In this case, the criminal sends malicious software to a person's computer and uses the software once installed to gain access to the user's computer. Such malicious software is sent as a link via social media (Information Security Awareness, 2014).

### **2.7.12 Social hacking**

This is the act of manipulating outcomes of social behavior through orchestrated actions. The general function of social hacking is to gain access to restricted information without proper permission. Most often, social hacking attacks are achieved by impersonating an individual or group that is directly or indirectly known to the victims or by representing an individual or group in a position of authority (Information Security Awareness, 2014).

### **2.7.13 Double-Edged Sword**

Social media can build and destroy. Namibia is a signatory to international and regional instruments guaranteeing the right of freedom of expression and the right of access to information. There is a mismatch between allowing citizens their right to freedom of expression and hate speech. Also, there is no clear differentiation between harmful content (which must be prohibited) and objectionable content (which is not prohibited).

### **2.7.14 Romanticizing Serious Issues**

Social media tends to dismiss serious issues as mere fantasies. Since communication is not face to face and thus impersonal, users of social media tend to bring humor, jest, and mockery to certain issues of local or national importance. In the end, a serious issue, strategy, plan, or debate is tugged down to a failed attempt at manipulating Namibians.

### **2.7.15 Treats for Selfish Gain**

More often than not, social media has been used as a tool for fixing others negatively. Some people get on social media to frame, criticize, mock, or put pressure on individuals to ruin their reputations (Dadashzadeh, 2014). Such use of social media is dangerous when it targets leaders, especially those that are elected as representatives of the people. Instead of using social media as a tool for national integration and cohesion, it is used as an instrument of mockery, ridicule, and division. No respect for authority is given or observed in the numerous negative posts on Twitter and Facebook (Dadashzadeh, 2014).

Worse still, the posts can be deleted, thus easing the evasion of court cases for hate speech. The application of social media is considered a cost-effective method in government service delivery.

This is because they do not require heavy investment for the set-up since they do not run in government platforms.

Social media run on a private platform which allows individuals or organizations to create and own accounts. This helps to reduce the cost, which may be incurred by the government in developing and maintaining its own social media platform for communicating with citizens (Dadashzadeh, 2014). Therefore, the utilization of social media in the public sector does not only improve services' accessibility but also increases transparency and hence good governance.

## **2.8 Policing social media use by Governments**

It is a true fact that social media does come along with significant benefits to government business. However, according to Cavico et al (2013), social media brings both benefits and exposure to business risks. Cavico et al (2013), further says that, through social media, you will find that employees publish and post negative or damaging material to millions of people around the world, thereby causing harm to employer's economic interests, brand image as well as organizational reputation.

Government employees are an important asset to stimulating and maintaining the reputation of government structures. It is important to note that employee views and actions on social media can either build or break the organization's reputation (Gotsi & Wilson 2001). Social media has also been an instrument for orchestrating abuse of others, plagiarism, copyright infringement, character assassination, executives impersonating, criminal acts, and driving politically-motivated narratives by employees. (Merrill, Latham, Santalessa & Navetta, 2001).

According to InfoLaw (2013), the biggest challenges to introducing and implementing social media at the institutional level is the fact that the employees in their capacity as citizens of the country will continue to retain their rights to freedom of expression as enshrined in the constitution of the country at the same time they will be the instrument in which the government disseminate official information to the same audience.

Therefore, the difficulty is in drawing the line between the employee publishing their views and organisational views. It is generally difficult for an executive director in a line ministry to separate his private life from work life from the perspective of the public InfoLaw (2013). Developing a social media policy for use by government employees has been regarded as an important foundational step for those governments considering using social media. Social Media Use Policy can also be viewed as the key enabler for responsible and effective leveraging of social media tools. According to LaPlaca and Winkeller (2010), adopting and enforcing policy on social media is the best available action to minimise liability as a result of social media use by employees.

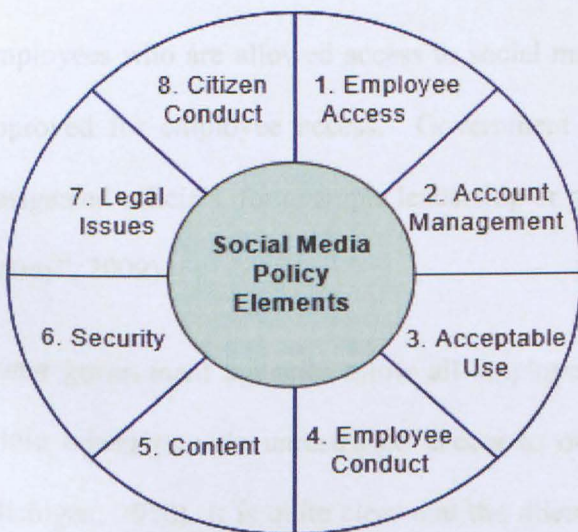
In order to balance the benefits and risks associated with employees making use of social media, organizations have an obligation to put in place policies and processes that protect their assets and reputations against any form of damage as a result of the actions of employees. The prevention of such damage and abuse requires employers to put in place measures and strategies that are effective in mitigating social media-related risks. This includes the implementation and practical application of a social media policy, social media strategic plans, training of employees on its scope and impact, and enforcing the policy.

## 2.9 Developing Social Media Policies

There are various elements to consider when developing a social media policy. Hardinova, Helbeig and Peters (2010) conducted an analysis of 26 government policy documents and concluded that the major elements to focus on when developing and accessing a social media policy are employee access, account management, acceptable use, employee conduct, content, security, legal issues and citizen conduct.

On the other hand, Schmidt (2019) focus on a wide range of components of social media namely microblogs, RSS Feeds, Widgets, linking and posting, content rating, bookmarking sites and audio podcasting in assessing social media policy implementation. Schmidt (2019) components merely describe one element of social media; that is content. Issues of social media risks, use, account management and legal issues are not catered for. This part of literature will focus on the elements of a social media policy as advanced by Hardinova et al (2010).

Figure 1: Social Medial Elements



Source: (Hardinova, Helbeig & Peters, 2010)

It is of paramount importance to analyse literature of elements that Hardinova et al (2010) conducted where he did an analysis of 26 government policy documents on the use of social media covering guidelines and policies and found out that the elements in Figure 1 are the major elements that should be expected in the social media policy document and they are explained as follows;

### **2.9.1 Employee Access**

Governments have discretion, through Web site filtering tools, to restrict access to areas of the internet deemed non-work related, such as personal email or leisure Web sites (Mergel, 2013). The development of social media has introduced tools that governments cannot control since most of these accounts can be created for non-work related purposes. This has clearly resulted in the difficulties in drawing lines between personal, professional, and official agency.

This confusion requires that employee access to official and personal social media sites be controlled. Government agencies are managing access by controlling the number or types of employees who are allowed access to social media sites and limiting the types of sites that are approved for employee access. Government agencies allow access to social media to few designated officials, for example leadership or public relations officers (“Arlington Social Media Policy”, 2009).

Some government agencies allow all employees to have unrestricted access to social media, while others provide unrestricted access to only approved social media sites (University of Michigan, 2010). It is quite clear that the dilemma does arise when it comes to the choice and approval of restricted or unrestricted social media sites. Some agencies may value the potential opportunities for professional development when employees are engaged in educational,

collaborative, or knowledge sharing activities fostered by open access to social media sites while some driven by the potential security risks and abuse of social media platforms.

### **2.9.2 Social Media Account Management**

Restricted access use of social media automatically brings with it the need for account management. Social Media Account Management Account management encompasses the creation, maintenance, and destruction of social media accounts (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Establishing an account on a social media site provides an employee with the full range of tools and capabilities for that site, such as joining networks or posting information.

The presence of a defined policy on account management ensures that the use of approved types, controlled and managed creation and maintenance. Therefore, a critical element to a social media policy for many is establishing who may set up an agency or professional social media account, as well as a procedure for establishing an account.

Different government agencies employ different strategies where the creation and removal of accounts are approved by only one designated officer while other strategies involve the approval of more than one designated officer from various departments. An example of involved account managers could be personnel from the public relations and Information Department.

### **2.9.3 Acceptable Use**

Acceptable use is often one of the key aspects addressed in policies as it includes the use of social media by employees for personal or work purposes (GCIS, 2011). Acceptable use policies typically outline an organization's position on how employees are expected to use agency

resources, restrictions on use for personal interests, and consequences for violating the policy. Sample language outlining multiple approvals needed to create a social media account.

In many policies, acceptable use spanned from employee authorization account opening, specifications of accounts to be used, language to be used, and type of content to be used. Policies also dictated acceptable use of common electronic and information resources such as telephone, computer, or Internet access (CDC, 2011). However, as the use of social media in government involves spending official time, acceptable use policies should also address the blurring boundaries around personal, professional, and official agency use.

According to Hardinová, Helbeig and Peters (2010) many government agencies struggle with what is acceptable in terms of employees' personal and professional use of social media as common questions such as how much time an employee should spend on a personal Facebook page while at work or how much time an employee should devote to participating in peer-to-peer networking on sites. Unlike the question of acceptable personal use during designated times or non-work hours, the question of acceptable employee use for professional and official agency reasons remains complicated.

#### **2.9.4 Employee Conduct**

Generally, professional employee conduct is governed by policies such as an ethical code of conduct that determines what is right or wrong in terms of employees' behavior and spells out the consequences resulting from deviation from stipulated conduct, (Hardinová et al, 2010). Most codes of conduct in government agencies have been tailor-made to address issues to do with offensive language, transparency, respect and openness in interactions via social media (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

However, most of the policies fail to directly address the consequences of inappropriate conduct on personal social media sites. Outlining which aspects are simply recommendations for personal behavior and which ones are potential grounds for certain punitive measures could prove to be vital for employees and their managers trying to navigate and define the parameters of the personal/professional divide.

### **2.9.5 Content**

The issues of who is allowed to post content on official agency social media pages and who is responsible for ensuring its accuracy are common issues that are discussed under the contents policy. Content management strategies range from exerting minimal editorial controls over content freely written by employees on various mission-related topics to content creation and management. This is solely the responsibility of the public information officer (Hardinová et al, 2010).

### **2.9.6 Security**

The technology concerns addressed in the policies focused on password security, functionality, authentication of identity using public key infrastructures, and virus scans. Most policies include specific requirements, such as the need for users to maintain complex passwords (Simon, 1957). A few policies required a designated official to hold all username and passwords for social media accounts. The behavioral security concerns refer to those threats that result from employees' intentional or inadvertent actions when engaging with social media sites and tools.

According to the Guidelines of Social Media (2010) policy document for the University of Michigan (2010), there are two major threats that rely on certain types of behaviours by the user

that is spear phishing and social engineering. For example, employees may inadvertently post information about themselves or the agency on social media sites, which attackers then use to manipulate users.

A related concern is the inadvertent posting of citizens' personal and protected information by agency employees. While these concerns are not new, many of the reviewed policies mentioned the need to protect confidential information that is personally identifiable or could endanger the agency mission.

### **2.9.7 Legal Issues**

The use of social media tools raises the issue for many agencies about how to ensure that their employees are abiding by all existing laws and regulations. Some policies take a general approach to legal issues, using generic text that requires all employees to adhere to all applicable laws and regulations without actually specifying which laws and regulations are applicable. Others point to specific areas of law such as privacy, freedom of speech, freedom of information, public records management, public disclosure, and accessibility, (Yang & Callahan, 2007).

Some policies proactively address potential legal issues by requiring the use of various disclaimers on social media sites. One example of a standard disclaimer is for use by employees when engaging in social media activities and is intended to detach the opinions and actions of individual employees from their employer while other standard disclaimers concern public records, external links, endorsements, copyright, privacy, and offensive behavior, (Yang & Callahan, 2007).

### **2.9.8 Citizen Conduct**

Social media sites, unlike more traditional media such as newspaper or radio, allow for instant two-way public communication between government and citizens. Citizens are able to directly post audio, video, and text to many social media sites. There is a need for agencies to decide whether to allow two-way communication, such as the use of comment boxes and how to handle this engagement with citizens.

For agencies that decide to elicit citizen feedback via official agency social media sites, rules for acceptable conduct of citizens are often developed. These rules generally refer to limitations on offensive language, inciting violence, or promoting illegal activity. Similar rules are often already used on agencies' websites and can be reused for social media purposes. Other policies stipulate personnel with the responsibility of approving public comments without going into detail as to what makes a comment acceptable (Nabatchi & Mergel, 2010);

## **2.10 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.10.1 Public Policy and Theories**

There are several types of policy, each of which can operate at different levels (national, state, local, or organizational) Legislative policies are laws or ordinances created by elected representatives. Regulatory policies include rules, guidelines, principles, or methods created by government agencies with regulatory authority for products or services. Organizational policies include rules or practices established within an agency or organization.

When looking into public policies, it is important to understand that the concept of public policies should be enough wide and abstract to adapt itself to various applications and contexts. For such reasons, over the past 50 years, many definitions have been coined to define them. Such definitions have different meanings because the authors bring into different focus aspects as a process, subjects, objects and decision levels.

We usually view policy as designating behavior of some actor or set of actors, such as an official, or government agency, or legislator, in area of activity such as public enterprise or poverty reduction. CDC (2011) then defines "Policy" as "a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions." CDC (2011) further asserts that policies generally operate at the systems level and can influence complex systems in ways that can improve the welfare and safety of a population. Public policy may be seen as whatever a government chooses to do or not to do. According to Anderson, (1997), such definitions may be sufficient for ordinary discourse, but inadequate for a systematic analysis of public policy, hence a more precise definition is needed to structure one's thinking and to facilitate effective communication with one another.

Furthermore, more if we define public policy as to what the government intends to do to achieve certain goals, according to Anderson (1997) again, this definition makes public policy look like a mere decision. That is to say, a mere declaration of intentions, wishes, principles, or expression of desires cannot be called public policy. Anderson (1997) asserts that public policy should mean actual resource allocation presented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems and challenges requiring government action for their solution. That is,

it should mean hard patterns of resource allocation presented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public demands

Starting from the above definitions, we can identify six main characteristics of public policies, that is relations between multiple subjects, different institutional levels, duration over time, use of public resources, decisions or no-decisions and outcomes or consequences.

These features do not always have the same relevance: in different contexts, these characteristics assume different undertones and worth in order to highlight and specify the alternative foundational concepts, relevant for each specific aim.

Imitating the words of Johnson (1975), in our specific case we want to underline that every public policy is a process that implies a set of decisions in a public context; thus, it is a public decision process. This process is developed over a period of time and involves different decisional levels, each one of them interacts with the others with respect to a set of determined rules. The process and the related interactions are developed in order to solve a problem having the characteristic of a public issue, or rather a problem in which resources and rationality are public.

The concept of “public issue” is not always clear: the issue that the policy will face is a sign which conveys meaning. Giving the name to public policy is the action of defining a signifier, and it implies the legitimation of the signified. Thus, every subject affected by the policy-makers, experts and citizens, stakeholder make-up his own meaning of the policy, legitimated by its name and definition (Johnson 1975).

In this context, a public decision is a public choice, and it implies an allocation of public resources. Even no-action in a determined field is considered a policy because it implies the public choice of maintaining the same resource-allocation than before. Speaking about public resources, governments/public subjects have to make understandable how and why they use public resources in order to solve problems. The public decision process is requested to be accountable to the public in contrast to the complexity of the entire process (Anderson, 1997).

Thus, we need an operational definition able to summarise the characteristics introduced: “We consider a public policy as a portfolio of actions aiming at achieving a number of objectives settled by the public decision-maker, considered as an organization” (Dlakwa, 2014). In the concept of public policy as defined above, we want to highlight that policy has a meaning for the stakeholders affected by the policy itself and for the citizens in general. In fact, it not only pursues quantifiable objectives, but it generates a legitimating space, thus producing inclusion and/or exclusion.

### **2.10.2 Public Policy Theories and Models**

Political and social scientists have developed many theories, models and approaches for analyzing policy-making and also public administrators have often displayed more facilities and verve for theorizing about public-policy making than for actually studying policy and policymaking process (Anyebe, 2018: 8.). Nonetheless, theories are needed to guide the study of public policy, to facilitate communication, and to suggest possible explanations for policy action (Anyebe 2018). They are useful to the extent that they direct our attention to the important political phenomenon, help clarify and organize our thinking, and suggest explanations for

political activities such as public policies. Strengths and limitations are pointed out as the discussion proceeds.

The theoretical approaches include elite theory, group theory, political systems theory and institutionalism, policy output analysis, incremental theory and rational-choice theory which are primarily concerned with public policy-making as a process. Each of these theories is briefly discussed.

### **2.10.2.1 Elite Theory**

This model asserts that public policy is by and large the mirror image of the ruling elite's interest. The elite group is divided into governing and non-governing ones. These few possess unique qualities such as skills, material wealth, cunning and intelligence and have the rights to supreme leadership, while the bulk of the population (masses) is destined to be ruled hence forming social classes (Obi, Nwachukwu & Obiora, 2008). Approached from perspectives of elite theory, public policy can be regarded as reflecting the values and preferences of governing elite.

The essential argument of the elite theory is that public policy is not determined by the demands and actions of the people or the masses but rather by ruling elite whose preferences are carried into effect by political officials and agencies. In other words, according to this theory, the elite simply believe that they alone have the ability to determine the policies to promote the welfare of the masses and implement them. Thus policies flow downward from the elite to the masses. The policies made by the elites reflect elite values and prefer the status quo to radical changes.

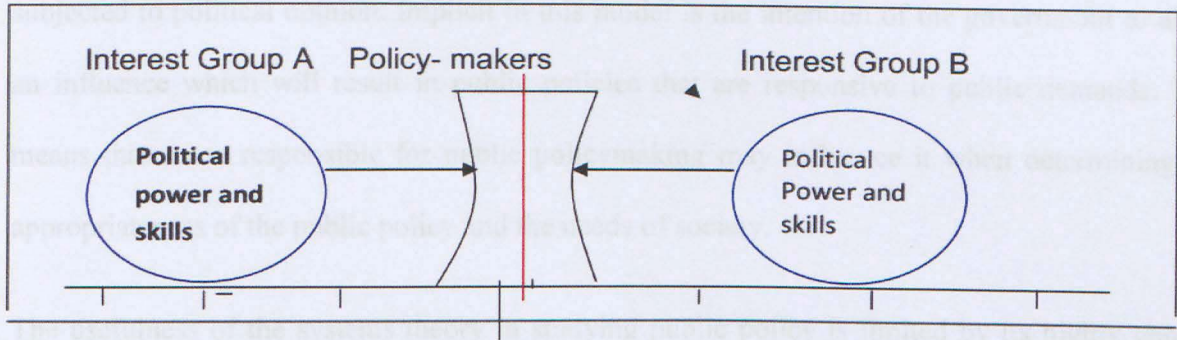
The essence of this model is that public policy is determined by the ruling elite and carried into effect by public bureaucrats and agencies. Dye (1990) summarizes the implication of this theory as indicating that public policy reflects elite values, serves elite ends, and is a product of the elite. The corollary of this assumption is that the general citizenry or the masses are apathetic and ill-informed and do not determine or influence policy through their demands or actions. So stated, elite theory is a provocative theory of policy formation because policy here, is the product of elites, reflecting their values and serving their ends, one of which may be a desire to provide in some way for the welfare of the masses, (Dye, 1990). One other limitation of this model is that it assumes a highly structured and stratified society. In structurally diffused societies, elite formation and therefore, elite values and elite identity is relatively undeveloped.

#### **2.10.2.2 Group Theory**

According to Fox, Bayat and Ferriera (2006, p. 12), public policy may derive from interest groups who continuously interact with policymakers to influence the policymaking process. In seeking to define this model, Fox, et al. (2006) states that some policies may be made by judges in consultation with other groups but only to discover that the President has great influence over what policy areas are given attention. This implies that a monopoly of influence over some policies areas can be perpetuated by this model during public policy formulation.

Frosch, Tam, and Kravitz (2010) use the following figure to describe the public policy process as influenced by the group model. It shows how each interest group (in this case group A) gains dominance over another interest group (group B) resulting in group A having a greater influence on the policy as policymakers move towards public policy outcomes favorable to group A as the figure below shows.

Figure 2: Group Theory of Policy Development



Source: Fox et al. 2006

Hence after pressurising, lobbying, and consultation, public policy formulation comes to fruition with one interest group having dominated the public policy. This model implies that public policies implemented will be bearing the influence of those that have applied more power, influence, and skills. This is significant for this study, as it suggests a top-down approach to public policymaking and implementation.

### 2.10.2.3 Systems Theory

According to Fox et al. (2006, p. 42), the Systems model is a response by the political system to the goals, problems, needs, wants and demands of society comprising both individuals and interest groups. They further elaborate that this model allows for debates, proposals, counterproposals, adaptations, consensus on public policy, review of implementation and feedback. According to Obi et al, (2008) when political context influences public policy, the Systems model assumes the view that demands and support (inputs) enter and filter through a government system into the public policy process.

This suggests that the Systems model can evolve on inputs (demands and support) which are subjected to political opinion. Implicit in this model is the intention of the government to allow an influence which will result in public policies that are responsive to public demands. This means that those responsible for public policymaking may influence it when determining the appropriateness of the public policy and the needs of society.

The usefulness of the systems theory in studying public policy is limited by its highly general and abstract nature. It does not, moreover, say much about the procedures and processes by which decisions are made, and policy is developed within the “black box” called the political system. Indeed, systems theory results are sometimes characterized as input-output studies (Obi et al, 2008). Nonetheless, this approach can be helpful in organising inquiry into policy formation, and it also alerts us to some important facets of the political process, such as these: how do inputs from the environment affect the content of the public policy and the operation of the political system? How, in turn, does public policy affect the environment and the subsequent demands for policy actions?

#### **2.10.2.4 Institutional Model**

According to Anderson, (1997) public sector institutions are integral to the public policymaking process. Inherently, they influence public policies and their implementation. Fox et al. (2006, p.12) claim that the Institutional model is premised on the basis that public policy is the product of public institutions, whose structures are responsible for public policy implementation. This, therefore, highlights the dependency factor of public policy to Institutional model. It can be further deduced that institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, have an impact on a public policy process.

This model studies the official structures and functions of government departments and institutions in an attempt to learn how public policy takes shape. It focuses on the organization chart of the government. However, this model has shown little concern about the connections between a department and the public policy emanating from it (Anderson, 1997).

#### **2.10.2.5 Incremental Model**

According to this approach, the policy-makers examine a limited number of policy alternatives and implement change in a series of small steps. It may be noted that each of the alternatives available to the policy-maker represents only a small change in the status quo. According to Frosch, Tam, and Kravitz (2010), the incremental model is a reaction to the comprehensive rational model and is a continuation of existing government activities with the potential for small, incremental adoptions.

This approach recognizes the less than ideal circumstances under which administrators must make policies. There are very real limits of time, brains money to name a few for the administrators to retain enough capacity and ability to understand complex problems and make different policies about them, (Simon, 1957). The term increment means addition. The author outlines that the proponents of this model present the following reasons in supporting the model, namely:

- That incremental change is more expeditious than comprehensive change
- That the potential for conflict is considerably lower than with radical changes since there are limited public policy alternatives available in incremental fashion and
- That incremental adaptation contributes to a redefinition of public policy on a continuous basis.

This implies that the incremental model advocates for adding to what already exists, rather than a complete overhaul of the processes. Gotsi & Wilson (2001) asserts that incrementalism is politically expedient because it is easier to reach an agreement when the matters in dispute among various groups are only limited modifications of existing programmes rather than policy issues of great magnitude or of an all-or-nothing character.

Because policymakers operate under conditions of uncertainty about the future consequences of their actions, incremental decisions tend to reduce the risks and cost of uncertainty. Incrementalism is also realistic because it recognizes that policymakers lack the time, intelligence, and other resources needed to engage in a comprehensive analysis of all alternative solutions to existing problems, (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). Moreover, people are essentially pragmatic seeking not always a single best way to deal with a problem but, more modestly, something that would work. In a nut-shell, incrementalism utilizes limited analysis to yield limited, practical, acceptable decisions.

Several criticisms have greeted incrementalism. One is that it is too conservative, to focus on the current order; hence, it is a barrier to innovation, which is often necessary for effective policies, (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). Another is that in crisis situations, incrementalism provides no guidelines for handling the tasks of decisions. Third, geared as it is to pass actions and existing programmes and to limited changes in them, incrementalism may discourage the search for or use of other readily available alternatives (Anderson, 1997). Fourth, incrementalism does not eliminate the need for theory in policy-making, are some of the more enthusiastic advocates contend.

### 2.10.2.6 Rational-Choice Theory

The rational-choice theory, which is sometimes called social-choice, public-choice, or formal theory, originated with economists and involved applying the principles of microeconomic theory to the analysis and explanation of political behavior or nonmarket decision-making, (Anderson, 1997).

This approach is based on economic principles such as cost-benefit analysis. According to Levy (2006):

One tries to learn all the value preferences extant in society, assign each value a relative weight, discover all the policy alternatives available, know all the consequences of each alternative, calculate how the selection of any one policy will affect the remaining alternatives in terms of opportunity costs, and ultimately select the policy alternative that is the most efficient in terms of costs and benefits of social values (Levy, 2006).

The rationalist model asserts that policymakers using it are expected to take the following steps:

- Identify all the value preferences currently existing in a society.
- Assign each value a relative weight,
- Discover all the alternative policies available to accomplish these values,
- Know all the costs and consequences of each alternative policy,
- Select the best alternative, which is also the most efficient in terms of the costs and benefits of social values.

The rationalist model is appealing in its simplicity. But, there are problems that lie with its implementation. For instance, it lacks explicit concern for the political environment in which

public policy must be carried out. Furthermore, according to Braybrooke and Lindblom (1964), the rational policy-making process, ideally, is based on knowledge of all of society's value preferences, and their relative weight, all of the alternatives, all of the potential consequences (costs and benefits) of each policy alternative. The final selection must be that alternative that maximizes the weighted value preference. The obvious limitation of this approach is its demand for knowledge (facts and information) not within reach of mere mortals.

### **2.10.3 Summary overview of the theoretical models of public policy**

The core objective of this study is to evaluate the implementation of the Social Media Use Policy for the Government of Namibia. Therefore, it is to be understood that the development, implementation and evaluation of the Social Media Use Policy is inevitably and covertly underlaid by models that shape the above mentioned public policies and national guidelines.

One cannot authoritatively say which of these theoretical approaches is the best or the most satisfactory as each approach focuses on different aspects of policy-making, and this seems more useful for understanding some situations or events than others. It seems wise not to be bound too rigidly to one approach. A good rule for the policymaker is to be diverse and flexible, and to draw from theories that seem most useful for the satisfactory and fair-minded description and explanation of policies.

Therefore, it is envisaged that seeking in to establish the significance of models to the public policy process will enhance the general understanding of what informs the public policy process. Enhanced understanding of underlying models, especially their implication to the policy implementation and evaluation, will contribute to the analyses of aspects of the public policy

process, which culminate in the public policy implementation and evaluation, in order to effectively give an informed view in this study.

## **2.11 Policy Evaluation**

Policy evaluation applies evaluation principles and methods to examine the content, implementation, or impact of a policy. Evaluation is the activity through which we develop an understanding of the merit, worth, and utility of a policy (CDC, 2011).

According to Johnson (1975), Epstein and Tripodi (1977) and Pitz and Mckillip (2009) public policy evaluation is a coordinated set of processes whose aim is to measure, analyze, plan and interpret the fulfillment of the objectives, evaluate the policy's results, receive feedback, and control the distribution of resources of the public administration. Public policy evaluation is a process through which feasibility, effectiveness, and impact of the policy could be assessed (Dlakwa 2014).

On the other hand, Lee and Kwak (2012) perceive public policy evaluation or assessment as a judging process to compare explicit and implicit public policy objectives with real or projected outcomes or impacts. Lee and Kwak (2012) further assert that public policy evaluation is all processes and tools employed to comparatively determine the extent to which public policy outcomes meet the pre-set public policy objectives.

### **2.11.1 Objectives of executing public policy evaluation**

According to Peters (2012) policy evaluation is purpose-driven whose intention is;

- To gather the information that will provide a framework for improvement,

- To pass judgment with a view of determining public policy's total effects, and
- To learn from identified challenges during implementation in order to ensure that they are not duplicated.

### **2.11.2 Significance of Public Policy Evaluation**

According to CDC, (2011) public policy evaluation is a significant activity which promises to yield the following benefits;

- It provides a precise evaluation of the nature and extent of the impacts expected, thus assisting planners to identify programmes that are likely to give value for money.
- It detects whether unsatisfactory situation is due to internal or external factors, thus enabling the avoidance of programmes that are likely to yield undesired results.
- It identifies factors contributing to programme impact, which in turn assists in enhancing programme design.
- It helps identify groups that are likely to benefit the least.
- It estimates the time period during which the impact of public policy implantation is likely to occur.

The afore-mentioned benefits of public policy evaluation do not only bolster the purposefulness of public policy evaluation, but they enhance planning and strategy development to the public.

## **2.12 A Review of Conceptual Models and Frameworks for Evaluating Government Policies**

Models are theoretically systematic groupings of interdependent concepts and principles that give a framework to, or tie together, a significant area of knowledge as scattered data are not

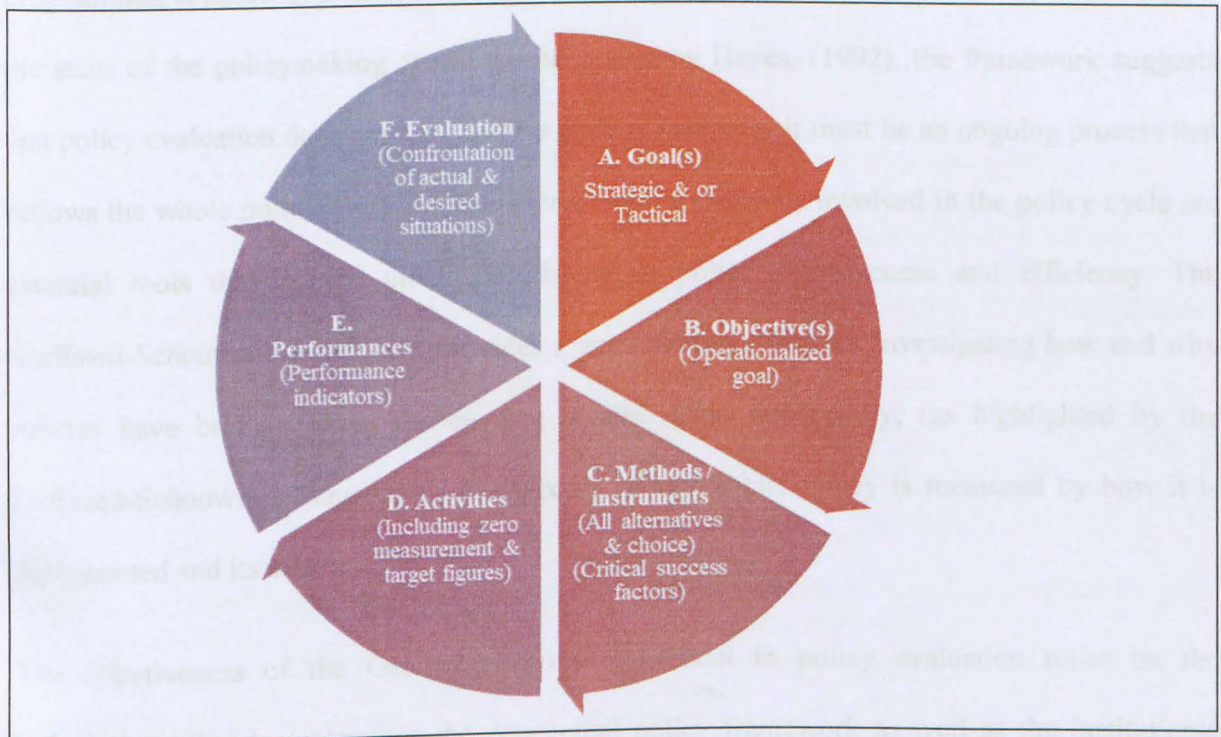
information unless the observer has knowledge of the theory that will explain relationships (Henry, 2004). Thus theories and theoretical models provide criteria for what is relevant, they enable us to communicate efficiently, and they challenge us to keep learning about our World or the field we operate in as the environment is ever-changing (Chiuri, 2015).

There are some commonly used models and frameworks available for researchers and managers in the areas of public policy evaluation, but in this study, an explanatory model of policy evaluation which follows policy process development called Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework will be presented. Preceding that, two other public sector client-oriented policy evaluation models was looked into elaborately.

### **2.12.1 The Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework**

The Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework is a schematic representation of the policy process from development through implementation to evaluation, as shown in figure 2.3 below.

Figure 1: The Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework



Source: Schoustra (2013)

As illustrated in the Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework, the policy-making cycle consists of six fundamental elements or steps: namely goals, objectives, methods and instruments, activities, performance and evaluation (A – F). According to Schoustra (2013), Geelhoed-Schouwstra model helps us to broaden the scope of policy evaluations in order to capture the most important factors that generally influence the outcome of a policy. Schoustra (2013), asserts that it will increase constraints and obliterate objectivity of evaluation if we ignore the whole aspect of the policy cycle. Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework is a model that can be used by academics and evaluators to evaluate policies and which policymakers can use as an instrument to improve the effectiveness of their policies.

When the Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework is used for analyzing and evaluating policies and programmes, it provides a useful instrument to evaluate policies by systematically following all the steps of the policymaking cycle. As elaborated by Hayes, (1992), the framework suggests that policy evaluation does not have to be a once-off activity; it must be an ongoing process that follows the whole policy cycle. It also asserts that the elements involved in the policy cycle are essential tools that can be utilised to determine policy effectiveness and efficiency. The Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework provides a good starting point for investigating how and why policies have brought about the ensuing results. Most importantly, (as highlighted by the Geelhoed-Schouwstra framework), the success of any public policy is measured by how it is implemented and its effect.

The effectiveness of the Geelhoed-Schouwstra model in policy evaluation relies on the evaluator's ability to understand the conceptual policy framework as well as the institutional policy framework. The conceptual framework refers to the ideology, the norms and values to which people adhere to, the theories and assumptions upon which they base their policies and programmes, the definitions they use, and their attitudes and behavior (Pitz & McKillip 2009). The institutional framework, on the other side, refers to the political, social and economic setting in which a policy has to be implemented. These two have forbearance in shaping policy cycle and evaluation outcomes.

Furthermore, the other important aspect influencing the policy outcomes and the effectiveness of all elements in the policy cycle is the ability to engage and to involve all stakeholders affected by the policy itself. Pitz & McKillip, (2009), suggests that the public who are the consumers of the services, the institutions in the policy territory and the implementers of the policy are important

key stakeholders who must (at all possible costs) never be excluded from consultation and involvement in the policy cycle because they also bear remarkable influence on public policy cycle and its policy outcomes.

This, therefore, leads us to a review of three other models of policy evaluation which entail that evaluation must be performed with the involvement of important stakeholders or institutions to the policy concerned. These models are Client-Oriented Evaluation Model, User's Satisfaction Model, and Participative Evaluation Model, (Rogers, 2008).

### **2.12.2 Client Oriented Evaluation Model**

The client-oriented model is defined by Pitz & McKillip (2009) as the value expressed by the wishes, expectations, assumptions, and issues of the clients. This model suggests that the client is king; the client is the evaluator and has their own factors and criteria, which then become the benchmark of evaluating public policy outcomes. According to Schmidt (2012), these criteria can be determined according to the following dimensions: quality of service, satisfaction with the service, understanding the ability of the procedures, client-centred orientation, adaptability of rules to client needs, and coordination of the personnel. The only challenge with this model is that it limits the client's criteria of evaluation to the policy goals and objectives as set by the government.

### **2.12.3 User's Satisfaction Evaluation Model**

This model suggests that every policy developed has been designed to bring service consumer satisfaction of which in public policy, it is the citizens of the country (Crow et al., 2002). According to Ruggeri, Farington & Brayne (2013), the quality of public service in itself is policy

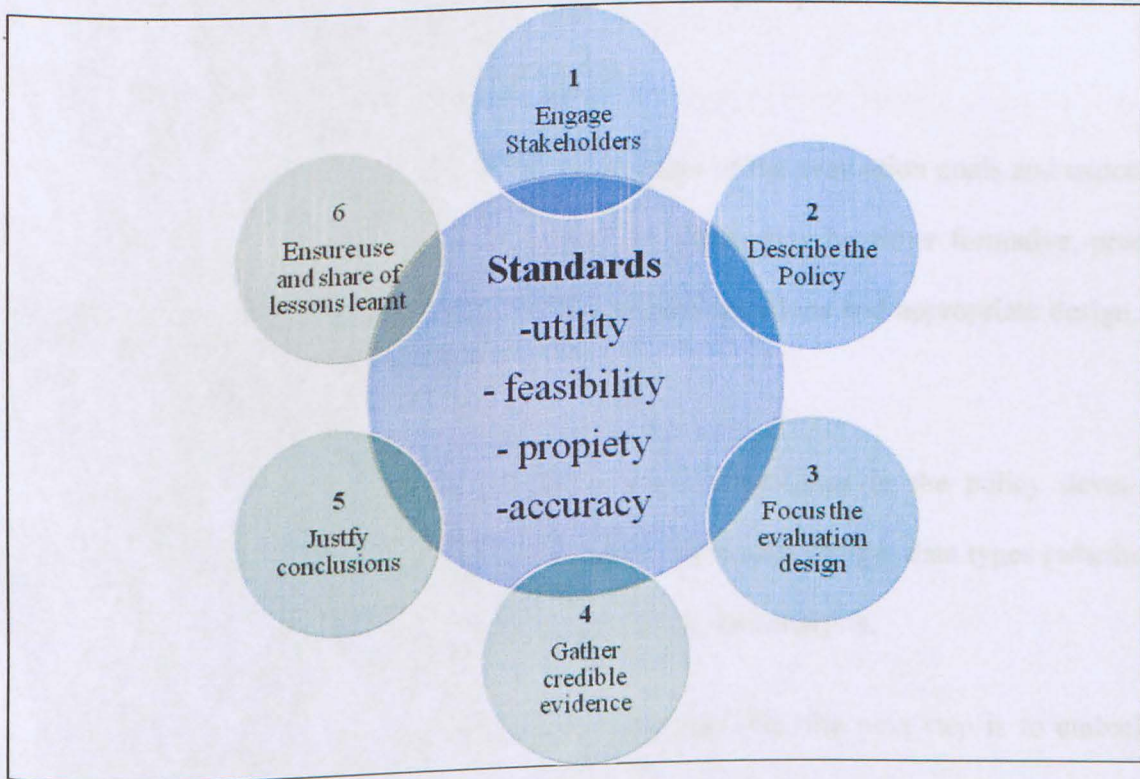
outcome whose extent can be measured by user perception and satisfaction of that quality which can only be discovered through research. Alawneh, Al Refai and Batiha (2013), assert that the User's Satisfaction Evaluation Model utilizes five dimensions that have been useful in the evaluation of service quality (Servqual) and service performance (Servperf) namely;

- **Reliability:** the ability to fulfill the objectives with the least number of possible errors;
- **Responsiveness:** willingness to help users and provide immediate service;
- **Assurance:** professionalism, ability to inspire confidence in the service provided;
- **Empathy:** individualized and personalized attention to the needs of the citizens; and
- **Tangibles:** appearance and usefulness of equipment, infrastructure, installations and communication materials.

#### 2.12.4 Centre for Disease Control Policy Evaluation Framework

The Centre for Disease Control in the United Kingdom developed an extensive policy evaluation framework for implementation in public health services (CDC 2011). This Framework outlines an ongoing process comprising six steps of program evaluation. These six steps provide a guide for implementing a thorough evaluation and can be applied in other areas of public policy.

Figure 2: Centre for Disease Control Policy Evaluation Framework



**Engaging Stakeholders:** Stakeholder engagement is the process of involving those individuals and institutions or groups who have an interest, impact and influence on the development and successful implementation of the policy. Most often the following stakeholders may be deemed important, namely policy experts, subject matter experts, evaluation experts and implementers. It can also be valuable to involve some of the stakeholders who were or are opposed to the policy. These can provide valuable insight into initial or on-going resistance to the policy and implementation, and their involvement can lend credibility to evaluation findings.

**Describing the Policy Being Evaluated:** According to the CDC (2011) when planning the policy evaluation, it's important to have clarity and consensus on the components of the policy

being evaluated, what it is supposed to accomplish, and its underlying logic (i.e., why should this policy achieve the intended impact?). Describing the policy can also assist with selecting appropriate indicators and points of measurement.

**Focusing the Evaluation:** This entails the clarification of the evaluation goals and expectations as well as to identify the focus for the evaluation, which may be either formative, process or impact). This clarity guides the selection of evaluation questions and appropriate design, and it helps ensure efficient use of resources.

**Gathering the credible evidence:** Gathering credible evidence in the policy development process implies the use of research activities namely; research design, data types (whether field or desk), data collection tools, data collection as well as data analysis.

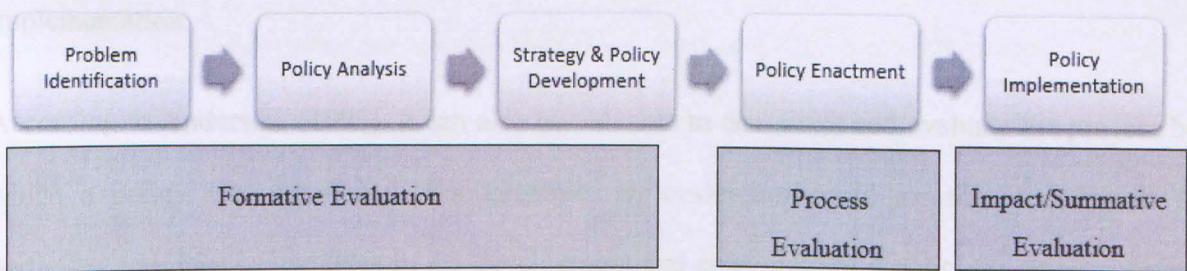
**Justifying conclusions:** Once analyzed results are available, the next step is to embark on a process of justifying conclusions. In essence, this entails the testing and interpretation of findings, explanations, and conclusions with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure that various explanations are considered. The process of justifying conclusions can help to generate recommendations for internal use. This process may include the input of a variety of stakeholders and consideration of all of the available data to ensure that the recommendations are based on the best information available and consideration of a variety of different perspectives.

**Using and Sharing Lessons Learnt:** This stage of policy evaluation entails the communication of evaluation findings to the target audience, which may be the stakeholders including but not limited to policymakers, the public, policy experts etc.

### 2.13 Types of Policy Evaluation

It is important to understand how policy evaluation fits into the larger policy process. Understanding this context provides an increased understanding of why policy evaluation is critical to advancing the field of policy. Although there are many theories regarding the policy process and mechanisms of policy change, the policy change process is often conceptualized in several key stages as depicted on the figure below.

Figure 3: Policy Development Phases and Evaluation Approaches



Evaluation is an integral part of each step in the policy process. Although these steps are laid out in a row, in reality, the steps are circular in nature. The three main types of evaluation, shown in the bottom row of Figure 1.5 each focus on a different phase of the policy process and these are policy content evaluation, policy implementation evaluation, and policy impact evaluation. Figure 1.5 illustrates the relationship between the main stages of the policy process and the three types of evaluation.

According to OECD (2013), the type of evaluation selected depends on many factors, and often more than one type of evaluation will be needed. Each type of evaluation can provide valuable information for the planning and interpretation of the other types of evaluation (formative,

process, and impact) in addition to uncovering unintentional consequences. However, it is critical for each evaluation to be focused, so the most appropriate design and methodology are selected.

### **2.13.1 Formative evaluation**

This evaluation process is frequently required at a very early stage to undertake a formal assessment of the feasibility of different public policy options. The formative evaluation also assesses whether or not content clearly articulate the goals of the policy and its implementation. Evaluating the development of a policy helps to understand the context, content, and implementation.

According to Anderson, (1997), it can also be valuable to document and evaluate the process by which a policy was developed. For example, an evaluation could examine the impact of particular activities or variables in the development and enactment of a policy by using a design that can demonstrate changes in certain key variables over time. These designs measure target indicators before and after the particular activities occurred (Anderson, 1997). If it is not possible to obtain pre and post data, a more appropriate design may be a non-experimental descriptive design, such as a case study. Understanding the process by which a policy was developed can be helpful in fully understanding the policy and interpreting the results of future evaluations (Anderson, 1997). A variety of measures can be used for evaluating the process of developing and enacting a policy. Ensure the types of measures and indicators used will tie back to the evaluation design and evaluation questions (Anderson, 1997).

### **2.13.1.1 Purposes of Formative Evaluation**

According to O' Reilly (2005), Formative evaluation can have multiple aims or purposes, including:

- Identifying the extent to which the content of the policy clearly articulates requirements.
- Comparing policies across communities to identify key similarities and differences.
- Understanding the process by which a policy is selected and passed.
- Improving policy implementation and future policy development.
- Informing development and interpretation of implementation and impact evaluations.

### **2.13.1.2 Factors to consider during the implementation of formative evaluation**

There are also a number of variables to consider when examining formative evaluation of policy and these include

- Interpretation of policy language.
- Consistency or conflict with similar policies at other levels.
- Complexity of policy, including number of different components.
- Steps and timeline between policy enactment and implementation.
- Potential for influence of policy in surrounding communities.
- Adjudication, enforcement, and compliance requirements.
- Political and stakeholder influences.

### **2.13.1.3 Formative Evaluation Content Sources**

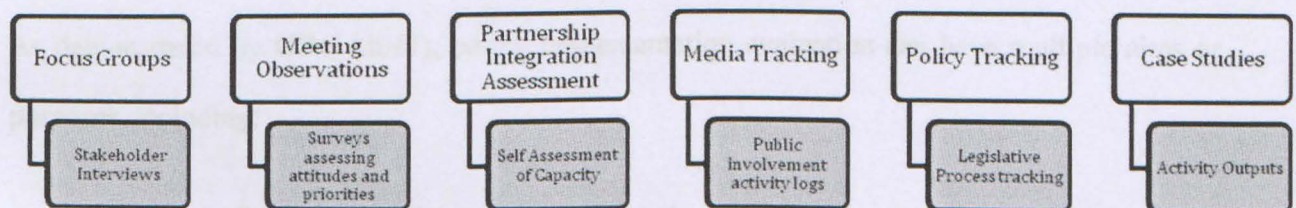
Looking into the sources of information in formative evaluation, ideally, relevant content information will be already available within the policy itself. However, this ideal is rarely the

case. This means that additional sources of information may be required, which may include legal documents, regulations, amendments or court rulings, committee hearings, legislative databases, and stakeholder interviews. It is also important to consider any changes to the policy over time by examining policy revisions, amendments, revised regulations, court rulings, or other formal changes to the policy before venturing into police evaluation, (O' Reilly 2005).

Anderson, (1997), asserts that the level of specificity or detail in a policy can have a strong influence on how a policy is implemented and on how much impact it has. For example, many social media policies may require that before publishing any content on media it must pass through an internal audit by an authorised person. If the policy language is unclear as to what it is meant by an authorised person, the policy will be implemented in varying ways. This lack of specificity can result in less-than-ideal implementation of a policy or create the need for further education and direction for stakeholders and implementers.

#### 2.13.1.4 Formative Evaluation of Data Collection Methods

Figure 4: Formative Evaluation of Data Collection Methods



### **2.13.2 Process Evaluation**

According to O' Reilly (2005), this is the assessment of whether the policy was and is being implemented as intended. The implementation of a policy is a critical component in understanding its effectiveness. Evaluation of policy implementation can provide important information about the barriers to and facilitators of implementation and a comparison between different components or intensities of implementation.

Depending on previous research and evaluation results, specific criteria or standards may be established to assess implementation. The standards may be established by the stakeholders and may cover required inputs, activities, and outputs. Each of the standards may have a corresponding indicator that will allow it to be measured, (Johnson, 1975). Comparing actual implementation to established standards can clarify discrepancies between planned and actual implementation, identify which components or features of implementation are barriers or catalysts for implementation, linked to policy impacts, or allow for comparisons between different levels and components of the evaluation, (Johnson, 1975).

#### **2.13.2.1 Purposes of Policy Process or Implementation Evaluation**

As demonstrated by CDC (2011), policy implementation evaluation can have multiple aims or purposes, including:

- Understanding how a policy was implemented.
- Identifying critical differences between planned and actual implementation.
- Identifying barriers to and facilitators of implementation.
- Documenting and comparing different intensities or variations of policy.

- Collecting information to support interpretation of future evaluations of policy impact.
- Documenting the relationships between logic model components and external influences.
- Improving the implementation process.
- Informing future policy development.

### 2.13.2.2 Sample Process or Implementation Evaluation Questions

Extracting from the CDC (2011), evaluation guidelines, it is advised that once the purpose and focus of the evaluation are determined, specific evaluation questions will be identified, and these may include but not limited to

- Whether the policy clearly identified the critical implementation steps
- Whether the policy was implemented according to the policy requirements
- Whether inputs and resources were required to implement the policy. If that is the case, examine whether all of these inputs and resources were available
- Whether the key activities were completed during policy implementation
- Whether the activities resulted in the anticipated outputs
- Whether the was policy implemented consistently across communities or environments
- Whether there were any unintended consequences, and also
- Whether the external factors did influence the implementation

### 2.13.2.3 Process or Implementation Evaluation Sources of Data

Matland (1995) asserts that qualitative and process evaluation data are useful in evaluating policy implementation because each can provide detailed information about how a policy was implemented or provide insight as to why certain things happened during implementation.

Matland (1995) further says that data for implementation evaluation is usually intentionally descriptive and uses a variety of measures and types of data to complete a thorough picture of the implementation.

#### **2.13.2.4 Process or Implementation Evaluation Data Collection Methods**

Process or Implementation evaluation often relies on non-experimental descriptive or exploratory designs such as case studies and cross-sectional designs. The focus of the design is on accurately describing the implementation process rather than on “proving” any specific hypothesis or demonstrating relations between variables (Matland, 1995). The evaluation design may also include exploration of differences in implementation in different contexts or for different variations of the policy.

If the key components of the policy or levels of its implementation vary across settings, evaluators can make comparisons between implementing jurisdictions. In these cases, a cross-sectional design or multiple case studies may be indicated. Measuring key contextual differences between the jurisdictions is important to interpreting results accurately. This information can be valuable in comparing the relative effectiveness of the various components, (Matland, 1995).

#### **2.13.3 Summative or Impact Evaluation**

According to CDC (2011), this is the process of assessing whether the policy produces the intended outcomes and impact? The evaluation is conducted at the completion of public policy to assess general results and impacts of the concerned policy. Within the social media use context, the intended impact may be the creation of a well-informed public.

### 2.13.3.1 Purposes of Policy Impact Evaluation

As explained by Johnson (1975). Policy impact evaluation can have multiple aims or purposes, including

- Demonstrating the impact of the policy, by measuring changes in short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes.
- Determining whether changes in outcomes can be attributed to the policy.
- Comparing relative impacts of policies with different components.
- Identifying the relative cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness of a policy.

### 2.13.3.2 Policy Impact Evaluation Questions

Upon determining the purpose and focus of the evaluation, the following specific evaluation question may be essential.

- Whether there is a change in the outcomes and impacts of interest
- Whether the policy did contribute to a change in the outcomes and impacts of interest
- Whether there were any unintended consequences of the policy
- Whether there were any contextual factors influencing the level of impact
- Whether any significant economic impact of the policy (cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit)

### 2.13.3.3 Policy Impact Data Collection Methods

Saunders (2009) counsels that impact evaluations typically rely on quantitative data. Some evaluation designs require collection of population-level data at multiple times over a long

period. Surveillance data is often a cost-effective source of data. A randomized experimental design is sometimes considered the gold standard for conducting an impact evaluation because it produces the strongest evidence that a policy contributed to changes in behavior or other outcomes.

## 2.14 Public Policy Evaluation Criterion

Rogers (2008), advises that the following set of criteria listed below can be used to evaluate the actual results of each public policy implemented;

- **Efficiency:** to determine whether the actual result was achieved within the given time.
- **Effectiveness:** to determine the extent of costs in terms of resources like personnel and finance, for the development and implementation of public policies.
- **Suitability:** to determine to what extent the implemented public policy counter-acts the challenges it intended to alleviate, e.g. lack of support as a public policy challenge.
- **Fairness:** to determine how the results of implemented public policy meet the expectations of all the actors involved.
- **Impact:** to check if the actual results of the evaluated public policy, managed by the appointed personnel, meet the expectations and the needs of the community.
- **Applicability:** to determine if the actual results of the evaluated public policy are applicable in promoting effective and efficient programme for public policy implementation.

The above-mentioned criteria for evaluating the implemented public policies, suggests a traceable trend upon which the feedback could be based and by which it could be informed.

## 2.15 Policy Evaluation Challenges

While all evaluations encounter challenges, some are particularly relevant to policy evaluation, and some of these are listed below. Many of these challenges can be easily addressed by using appropriate design, indicators, and methods. Moreover, Pitz & Mckillip (2009) provides an overview of the challenges and potential solutions when conducting policy evaluation. These are

Evaluation Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of resources or clear responsibility for evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of strong evidence base to support policy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fear of evaluation and lack of familiarity with policy evaluation methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● External and contextual factors such as economic conditions or public awareness</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of “control” over policy implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to appropriate data</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rapid pace of policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of appropriate measures</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political scrutiny and desire for quick production of results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in identifying appropriate comparison communities</li> </ul>
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### 2.16 Social media measurement outcomes as an indicator of policy performance

The issue of accountability is critical, particularly in governments where public mistrust of government work is high. Many researchers working in the field of public management and government services identify the need to demonstrate integrity in government practice and efficiency in service delivery. There is recognition that in order to effectively support democratic processes, government agencies, officials and employees must strengthen the ties and build relationships with the public in order to enable greater citizen participation, (Yang & Callahan, 2007).

Yang and Callahan (2007) noted that many public administration degree programs acknowledge the useful role that performance measurement can play and have targeted courses for considering performance measurement practices across various functions such as budgeting, strategic planning, transparency efforts and E-governance.

In fact, the awareness of the value of performance measurement in government services is such that government representatives can locate information and train online and outside the scope of degreed programs. Among the challenges facing those who would seek to implement performance measurement in government, processes are that there is still no clear core curriculum that has been endorsed by a majority of researchers, policymakers, or practitioners.

Thus, finding ways to realize accountability through performance measurement that is valid, reliable and cost-effective is a goal that public management researchers need to continue to work toward (McCarthy, 2011).

In the interim, this is a gap that can clearly be addressed by social media. As applications for social media in local government continue to expand at a rapid rate, the issue of evaluating the efficiency and impacts of particular social media uses becomes increasingly important. This is especially important as previous studies provided only limited evidence of a positive impact of e-government initiatives on citizen engagement (Mergel, 2013a).

However, research indicates that social media metrics and analytics are not widely in use. Reports on a 2010 study by the Public Technology Institute (2010) revealed very low usage of social media metrics among organizations generally, with the main reasons including lack of time, perceived complexity or lack of training and low interest among organizational leaders. One of the challenges in this area is how to capture the more qualitative aspects of social media usage, relating to the key goal of improved citizen engagement.

In cases where the public managers did review metrics information, studies indicate that this is generally limited to the number of page views and the duration of visits and other basic tracking functions that revealed little to nothing about the effectiveness of the town's or city's online presence (Mergel, 2013a). The most frequently used social media applications provide useful metrics that can help local officials determine what types of issues are capturing local citizens' attention and they can identify those citizens who might be engaged to advocate for particular government services or to participate in supporting the implementation of government efforts in the community – such as “Facebook fans” and supportive “Tweeters.”

Mobile media networks that allow citizens to forward real-time photos, video and, text reports of emergencies (such as road accidents or hazards) to the proper authorities can enhance local agency response. Yang & Callahan, (2007), noted that social media can provide efficiencies through citizen engagement while building public trust through participatory and responsive governance and those public managers should remain open to social media's potential for effecting more open communication and regular interactions with the public.

Critical to the efficiency of social media applications is a judicious understanding of social media's uses. It is imperative that social media tools be selected and employed with an eye to specific objectives in engaging the public to ensure that the correct application is being used to communicate. As with the introduction of any new system or reform effort, it is critical that clear identification of goals should be articulated, (Yang and Pandey, 2007).

Another useful way to consider social media efficiency is to track rates of use and areas of interest for new users, particularly those who emerge as potential advocates through tweeting or liking on Facebook. In addition to considering the cost-effectiveness of social media efforts (e.g., through cost per unique visitor metrics), it is important to define specific values so the impact can be identified and tracked through user comments and recommendations. The most salient use of social media is to increase citizen participation, to improve responsiveness to citizen concerns, and to create greater government transparency and accountability. Social media can facilitate these efforts and can do so often via cost-effective communications (Yang & Pandey, 2007).

Close attention must also be paid to how information gathered through social media networks will be processed, managed, and archived. While social media can greatly enhance and streamline communications, their effective use in government outreach to citizens necessitates

care and attention. Public administrators and employees must be designated to maintain and monitor input and feedback and organize information so that neither citizen nor government users are overwhelmed or receive misdirected or improper communications.

Public managers must determine what type of “back office” structures they must put in place to support their governments’ social media efforts: “they must devise protocols and procedures for collecting, processing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, and otherwise translating and transforming citizen comments in ways that are easily digestible and useful for public managers, elected officials, and other audiences,” (Nabatchi & Mergel, 2010, p. 85).

These systems can help public managers navigate the potential information overload that may come from engaging citizen participation across a variety of issues and, where applicable, multiple tools.

### **2.16.1 Measuring Social Media Impact**

Social media can be considered to be a new form of communication and engagement tools. In light of this, there are variably new methods, tools and techniques that are constantly being developed in order to measure its effectiveness. According to Turner (2017) metrics that measure social media impact should target the level of engagement, awareness and influence resulting from the use of social media.

Similarly, Smith (2019) suggested that social media introduction to the internet has significantly contributed to the rise of social engagement amongst internet users. Deriving from such understanding the researcher posits that the most it is important to understand the metrics that

measure the level of engagement resulting from the use of various social media applications, the influence caused by social media and lastly awareness.

The research intended to establish whether the use of the SMUP has resulted in any improvement in stakeholder engagement. In order to ascertain this, the research used measurement metrics guided by the literature (Hardinova et al, 2010; Sajithra & Patil, 2013; Turner, 2017) to measure stakeholder engagement and results.

Examples of metrics to measure awareness range from volume, reach, exposure, amplification. Volume was measured by the number of social media users that are associated with the social media page based on a number of likes, members, comments and views and these indicators were able to also depict the extent of exposure of a particular social media page.

Amplification relates to the way the message was shared across current and potential users on social media (Nam, 2012). Engagement is one of the key indicators of assessing social media, examples such as re-tweets, comments, replies, number of participants, frequency of participating and the form of participation. Measurement of social media was achieved through the tracking of contributors and influence. This involves tracking of URL shares, clicks and conversions which measure the movement of users moving from social media external websites.

This section provides measures and metrics for the factors, as suggested by various researchers. The most popularly discussed measures and metrics were centered on transparency, participation, collaboration and comfort over social media platforms.

### 2.16.1.1 Transparency measures and metrics

Measure	Metric
Number of published posts	Number of published posts ÷ maximum number of posts in sample
Number of posts that include calendar events	Number of posts that include calendar events ÷ maximum number of posts that include a calendar in sample
Number of posts that includes multi-media: Photos	Number of posts that include photos ÷ maximum number of posts that include photos in the sample.
Number of posts that includes multi-media: Videos	Number of posts that include videos ÷ maximum number of posts that include videos in the sample.
Number of posts that includes multi-media: Audios	Number of posts that include Audios ÷ maximum number of posts that include Audios in the sample.
Number of posts that include multi-media: Other social media posts	Number of posts that include social media ÷ maximum number of posts that include social media in the sample.

### 2.16.1.2 Participation measures and metrics

Measure	Metric
Government website enables their stakeholder to post over the page	If the government enables its stakeholders to post, a value of 1 was allocated, else zero was allocated.
Number of posts that include a survey tool.	$\text{Number of posts that include survey tool} \div \text{maximum number of posts that include survey tool in the sample.}$

### 2.16.1.3 Collaboration measures and metrics

Measure	Metric
Number of posts that request citizens to engage.	$\text{Number of posts that request citizens to engage} \div \text{maximum number of posts that include a request to engage in the sample.}$
Number of posts that request from stakeholders to co-create	$\text{Number of posts that request co-creation (design)} \div \text{maximum number of posts that include co-creation in the sample.}$

### 2.16.1.4 Comfort measures and metrics

Measure	Metric
Presences of a link to e-government website	If a link exists, a value of 1 was allocated, else zero was taken.

Number of posts that include a link to the e-government website	Number of posts with a link to e-government website ÷ maximum number of posts that include a link to a government website in sample
Number of posts that have a link to the external website.	Number of posts with a link to external website ÷ maximum number of posts that include a link to the external website in sample
Number of posts that include application started on Facebook and redirected to the e-government website	Number of posts that include posts with application started on Facebook and redirected to e-government web site ÷ maximum number of post that includes application redirected to e-government website in sample
Number of posts that include application started and completed in Facebook page	Number of posts that include application started and completed in Facebook page ÷ maximum number of posts that include application started and completed in the Facebook website in sample

### 2.16.1.5 Communication success measures and metrics

Measure	Metric
Like	Total likes for each Facebook page ÷ total followers for each Facebook page

Comment	Total comments for each Facebook page ÷ total followers for each Facebook page
Share	Total shares for each Facebook page ÷ total followers for each Facebook page
Reply	Total Replies for each Facebook page ÷ total

Transparency, governments should make the information as public assets, to enable their stakeholders to be intellectual in governments discourse (Mergel, 2013a). Various researches has shown that there is a relationship between the success of transparency and e-government level of development (Camacho & Kumar, 2012).

In addition, governments should enable stakeholders to participate in government topics by opening the dialogue between citizen and governments and this can be done by enabling their stakeholders to post on their pages or use surveys to collect information from stakeholders (McDermott, 2010; Mergel, 2013b). Web 2.0 tools were extensively proposed by Camacho & Kumar 2012) to enrich and support all levels of e-participation as a result leading to better communication and eventually the success of e-government.

Collaboration between governments and other stakeholders, collaboration enable the government to benefit from stakeholder's experience, knowledge and opinions. Collaboration is one of the highest levels in participation and a major dimension for government agencies as it is vital for in engaging other shareholders to co-create or co-design processes or services (Hofmann, Beverungen, Räckers, & Becker, 2013).

The use of social media by governments in communicating with its stakeholders for publishing information, provision of services, or getting feedback from them attains the comfort level required from e-services (Lee & Kwak, 2012). When governments use the favorite community channel for each stakeholder, they make the communication more comfortable rather than forcing citizens to visit the physical agency whenever they want to get a service or a piece of information. This depends on the goal of communication via social media. Using available and obvious measures like the number of likes, comments, shares and reply will provide an indication of polarity of this page and will provide also an indication of stakeholders' engagement with government's activities via social media such as Facebook (Hofmann, Beverungen, Räckers, & Becker, 2013).

## **2.17 Chapter Summary**

The preceding chapter presented literature review in line with the research objectives, thus, the chapter types of social media, the role of networking, the importance of social media and the various elements and components of social media policies. The literature review also discussed the different metrics used to measure social media engagement. The policy process is essential for developing measures and strategies for mitigating social media related risks. The policy, however, involves the identification of the problem, policy analysis, strategy and policy development, policy enactment as well as policy implementation plan. In the process, the scope, relevance, knowledge gaps, areas of agreement and disagreements as well as the overall implication of the study was discussed. The following chapter looks at the methodology aspects of the research as the researcher tries to find answers to the research problems highlighted in Chapter One.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.0 Introduction

The main aim of the chapter is to outline the research methodology that was used in the collection and analysis of findings. Research methodology also comprises the approach and strategy utilized to study a phenomenon of interest (Gray, 2012). This chapter will clearly explain the research design, population, sampling techniques, research instruments, procedure, research validity, data analysis, as well as ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

In considering the research design to adopt, it is vital that a research philosophy sets the tone. Research literature posits that there are many research philosophies that can help one in preparing for a research process. The research objectives of this study required the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, as such; the pragmatic paradigm research philosophy was best placed to guide this research process. According to Gray (2012):

The pragmatic paradigm approach does not associate or cannot be identified with any particular design. In addition, pragmatist researchers focus on the 'what' and the 'how' of the research problem which clearly requires the fusion of a variety of mixed methods to answer such research questions (Gray, 2012).

According to Wimmer & Dominick (2006) the pragmatic paradigm philosophy has often been associated with mixed methods research design since it is a flexible approach that can be used

with any paradigm. The study concerns ascertaining the extent to which the SMUP has been adopted and implemented. The study sought to establish what has been done or not, as a result, the mixed research method was adopted in this respect as well as in the triangulation results (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The use of different methods enriched and confirmed the actual picture with regards to the progress in the implementation of the SMUP. The study targeted different types of target participants meaning the mixed method approach provided an opportunity to target the different categories of the participants with a unique set of data collection tools (Saunders, 2009). This assisted in mapping a broader view of the research questions and provides themes or areas for further investigation. Lastly, is the surplus with which the approach provided, the research was able to study the phenomenon in different ways deemed appropriate and use the results in ways that brought about positive consequences.

### **3.2 Sources of Data Collection**

#### **3.2.1 Primary Data**

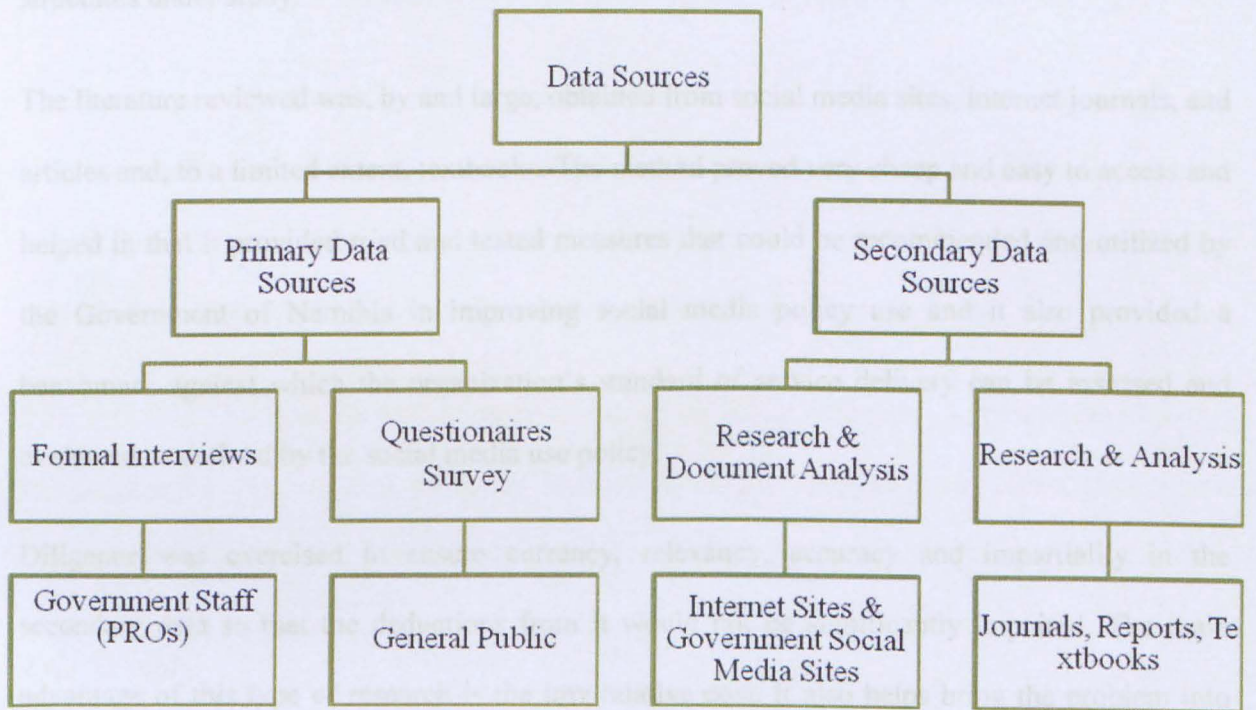
The researchers used primary and secondary data sources to gather information relevant to the topic under study broken down summarily as shown in the diagram below.

research question, the data collected by the researcher was relevant to the research question, the population and used for the purpose of the research. Qualitative research involves data collection using the techniques employed by the researcher in the collection of primary data.

#### **3.2.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary (or desk) research is about collecting and collating data that is already available having been initially gathered for a purpose other than the one at hand. It can be defined as research that involves the use of existing data. Examples include textbooks, magazines, journals, and internet sites. The researcher used this type of research for the information analyzed in the Literature Review section and in developing

Figure 5: Sources of Data Collection



### 3.2.1 Primary Data

Primary research occurs where the data being collected are designed specifically to answer the research question. The data collected by the researcher was taken directly from the target population and used for the purpose of the research. Questionnaires surveys and interviews were the techniques employed by the researcher in the collection of primary data.

### 3.2.2 Secondary Data

Secondary (or desk) research is about collecting and collating data that is already available having been initially gathered for a purpose other than the one at hand (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Examples include textbooks, magazines, journals, and internet sites. The researcher used this type of research for the information analyzed in the Literature Review section and in drawing

insight on necessary developments by analyzing social media sites data related to government structures under study.

The literature reviewed was, by and large, obtained from social media sites, internet journals, and articles and, to a limited extent, textbooks. The method proved very cheap and easy to access and helped in that it provided tried and tested measures that could be recommended and utilized by the Government of Namibia in improving social media policy use and it also provided a benchmark against which the organization's standard of service delivery can be assessed and evaluated as defined by the social media use policy.

Diligence was exercised to ensure currency, relevancy, accuracy and impartiality in the secondary data so that the deductions from it would not be significantly impaired. The main advantage of this type of research is the low relative cost. It also helps bring the problem into perspective and thus improve its definition. However, the data may be predisposed to obsolescence, irrelevancy and impartiality since it may have been collected long back and for a different purpose. Secondary data is also often exposed to manipulation by the original researcher.

### **3.3 Population**

The population is the group of individuals to which the findings, discussion of the findings, and the implications of the research are to be generalized (Saunders, 2009). According to Wiley (2013), it is essential to define the target population of a study in terms of elements, geographical boundaries and time (Gray, 2012). In this case study, the target population is the 50 government

structures namely; offices, ministries, agencies, local authorities and regional councils and the general public (with a total population of 2 540 905 [2020])(Government of Namibia, n.d.).

Various elements were considered in this study, as different sources of information were required to satisfactorily answer the research questions. To be able to evaluate the social media public policy, the elements of the population under study constituted Public Relations (PR) practitioners from OMAs, Regional Councils and Local Authorities and the general public.

The SMUP is a nationwide policy, hence to extract sufficient information in the evaluation and implementation of the policy, the study focused on all 387 PR practitioners from government offices across all regions in Namibia and the general public from various regions of the country.

### **3.4 Sample**

The SMUP has been in operation since 2016. In order to collect reliable and sufficient data, it was of paramount importance for the study to gather data from government PR practitioners that had more than three years' experience working in the PR department. However, there are no criteria set for the public in terms of time factor.

Given the nature of the study, it is seldom possible for the researcher to collect evidence from all the members of the population under study. A subset of all the possible respondents from the population was selected. In light of this, the study sample was chosen in a way that minimized the differences that exist between the sample and the population in all important characteristics (Saunders, 2009). Sampling is the process of selecting a statistically representative sample of individuals from the population of interest (Kamangar & Islami, 2013).

Probability and non-probability sampling are the two major types of sampling designs. In probability sampling participants have some known chance of being selected in the study sample, while in non-probability sampling, there is no predetermined chance that participants will be selected (Kamangar & Islami, 2013).

Due to the fact that the study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, both the non-probability and probability sampling techniques were adopted. The researcher sampled a subset of respondents using purposive sampling as the criterion for selection of the target population sample within the government structures and random sampling in the selection of the target population sample within the general public.

#### **3.4.1 Purposive Sampling**

The research placed importance in selecting the way the data was obtained and considered sources from which data should be obtained. Consequently, the purposive sampling technique was used in the qualitative data collection process. The purposive sampling technique, also known as the judgment sampling, is a non-probability technique that emphasises on the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

Purposive sampling is best suited in this case because it focuses on respondents with knowledge and expertise in the subject matter (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The searcher decided what sort of data that needed to be collected and set out to seek participants who could and were willing to provide information by virtue of knowledge, interest and experience.

The purposive sampling method was the appropriate technique to identify the PR practitioners who were best placed to provide sufficient data. Purposive sampling was also used to identify the appropriate social media pages that were used to evaluate the SMUP by the various government agencies. The research targeted a sample of 15 participants who were PR practitioners from different government agencies and 15 social media pages operated by the same PR practitioners.

### **3.4.2 Random Sampling**

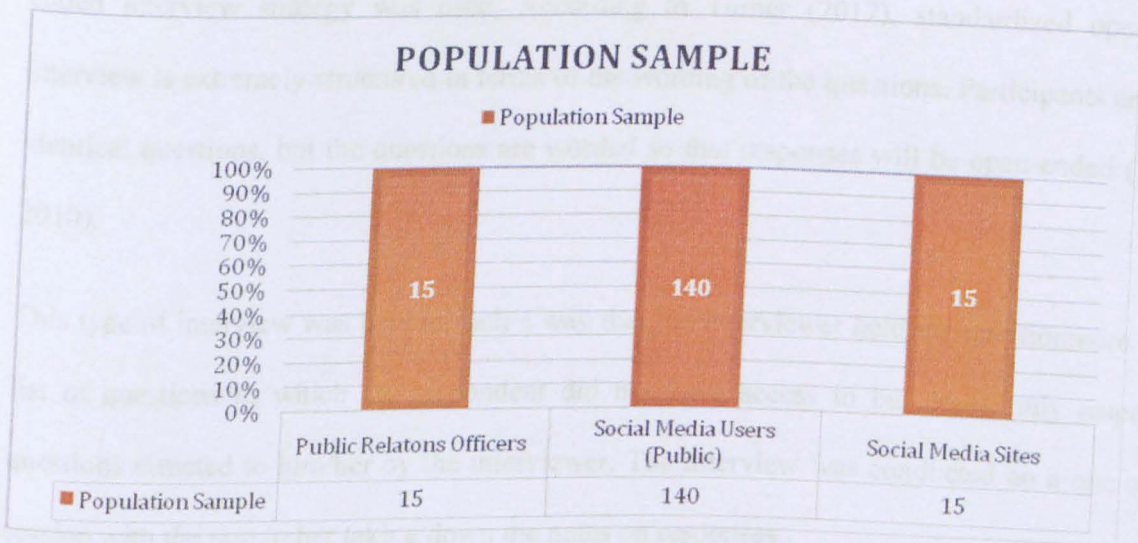
On the hand, the simple random sampling was used to select a sample of participants' representative of the population with internet access in Namibia. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), simple random sampling is a type of sampling where each and every element of the population has an equal chance to be selected in the sample. The main common characteristics of this population are that all the members despite any demographic discrepancies are that they all have regular access to the internet. Simple random sampling occurs when each member of the study population has an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

Hence, simple random sample reduces the potential for human bias in the selection of cases to be included in the sample. On the other hand, systematic sampling is a type of probability sampling method in which sample members from a larger population are selected according to a random starting point but with a fixed, periodic interval. This interval, called the sampling interval, may be calculated by dividing the population size by the desired sample size. A sample of 140 participants was randomly selected from the population and utilized as sources of data required for this study.

### 3.5 Structure of the Sample

The figure below illustrates the total values of the sample of the population under study that is projected to be the source data to be collected. The researcher is confident that if there is 100% response rate from the overall strata of the sample population, the data collected will be sufficient to provide relevant outcomes.

Figure 6: Population Sample



### 3.6 Research Instruments

The researcher made use of various research instruments in collecting primary data. Research instruments are tools used for collecting data needed to address the research questions under investigation, according to Wimmer & Dominick (2010). The study used the mixed-method approach in designing instruments to collect the data. Mixed method research uses qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, instruments and analysis procedures either at the same time or one after the other (Saunders, 2009). Various types of research instruments were

used to conduct in-depth interviews, collect data from social media sites and finally complete data collection by administering closed-ended questionnaire survey. Multiple methods were adopted to provide better opportunities for the researcher to answer the research questions.

### **3.6.1 Interview Survey**

Interviews provide in-depth information relating to respondents' experiences, opinions and perspectives of a particular phenomenon. For the purpose of this study a standardized open-ended interview strategy was used. According to Turner (2017), standardized open-ended interview is extremely structured in terms of the wording of the questions. Participants are asked identical questions, but the questions are worded so that responses will be open-ended (Turner, 2010).

This type of interview was held in such a way that the interviewer held the questionnaire with a list of questions to which the respondent did not have access to but could only respond to questions directed to him/her by the interviewer. The interview was conducted on a one on one session with the researcher taking down the notes on responses.

### **3.6.2 Questionnaire Survey**

A questionnaire is defined as a document that seeks responses to a set of standard questions where all the participants are given a chance to respond to questions at their own discretion by filling in the information in spaces provided (Saunders, 2009). The questionnaire design incorporated a Likert Scale which is the best tool for providing quantitative data that is designed around opinion statements as a means of exploring respondents' perceptions (Saunders, 2009).

The different variables were measured on a maximum of five-point Likert-type scale, with a score of 1 representing worst case (for example to disagree strongly) and a score of 5 representing the best case (for example to agree strongly). This type of questionnaire was adopted because of its anonymous nature as respondents would honestly respond to questions of any nature and within the context of the study. The questionnaire was simplified so as to be easily understood by all the respondents in the various categories.

### **3.6.3 Document Analysis**

Document analysis was used to collect data on hard copy, electronic reports on Namibia's SMUP as well as the social media pages of 50 government institutions under study. According to Strauss and Corbin (2008), document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic, which may be computer-based and or internet-transmitted material (Rapley, 2007) alludes and asserts that document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.

According to Silverman (2000), document analysis involves skimming and reading as well as interpretation. He further says that document analysis is an iterative process that combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is the process of organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research while thematic analysis is a form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In utilizing thematic analysis, the process involves a careful, more focused re-reading and review of the data. The reviewer takes a

closer look at the selected data and performs coding and category construction, based on the data's characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon.

### **3.7 Procedure**

Data collection procedure is the process of gathering and measuring information on a particular phenomenon in an established systematic fashion, which in turn enables the study to answer the research questions and evaluate outcomes (Gray, 2012). The researcher initially conducted interviews with PR practitioners. Prior to data collection, approval was sought from the relevant government offices after which the researcher then sent emails, made telephone calls and embarked on personal visits to set up interviews at mutually agreed venues. The interviews were conducted face to face and some were conducted telephonically in order to save time and financial resources.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Instruments used to evaluate research data must be valid and precise, otherwise the information collected from the study is likely to be biased or factually flawed (Gray, 2012). The mixed research approach used open-ended interviews and questionnaires to gather qualitative and quantitative data, respectively. The validity of a questionnaire can be affected by the wording and even the language, poor structuring and sequencing; all these have a potential to threaten the validity of questions even though all the questions address the research objective at hand (Lee & Kwak, 2012). To deal with such possible pitfalls, the study ensured that the questionnaire was drafted in simple terms and the questions were arranged in the order of their relevance to the

objective. Experts were engaged to review the questions as well as the data collection tools to ensure the appropriateness of the tools to collect valid data prior to the actual data collection process. Generally, reliability refers to the consistency of the results. In research, reliability refers to the extent which a measure of a phenomenon would deliver the exact same results despite being applied to random members of the same target group and it can be assessed by determining the degree an instrument or line of action would give the same at different occasions if duplicated under similar circumstances (Gray, 2012).

### 3.10 Chapter Summary

The cornerstone of ensuring the reliability of this study is mainly focused on the research instruments used in data collection. In order to reduce the threat of reliability, the researcher consulted research experts to review the tools. Once the necessary input and adjustments were made on the survey tools, several of pilot data collection rounds were piloted at different locations like the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and Ministry of Works and Transport.

This findings point to the fact that government institutions are not entirely adhering to the SMUP guidance. The government agencies confirmed that they use more social networks in the form of Facebook and Instagram more than microblogs such as Twitter. There was a confirmation to the effect that government agencies social networking sites are mostly visited by the public.

### 3.9 Research Ethics

Ethics in research refers to the appropriateness of behavior with regards to the rights of participants or subjects affected by the research (Saunders, 2009). Due to the nature of the study, issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, and informants' consent were key ethical

considerations. The study ensured the subjects clearly understood the nature of the study, appreciate consequences of participating in the study while, most importantly, assuring anonymity and confidentiality through signing the study's consent form as well as providing official letters from the University of Namibia to prove academic purpose/authority to collect data. The study data will be kept in a sealed cabinet for five years and then shredded (American Psychological Association, 2010).

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the various elements adopted and used in the research methodology. These were research philosophy, research design, population, targeted participants, data sampling, data collection, validity, reliability, ethical considerations, data analysis, and the chapter summary. The next chapter shall focus on the analysis and presentation of data.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

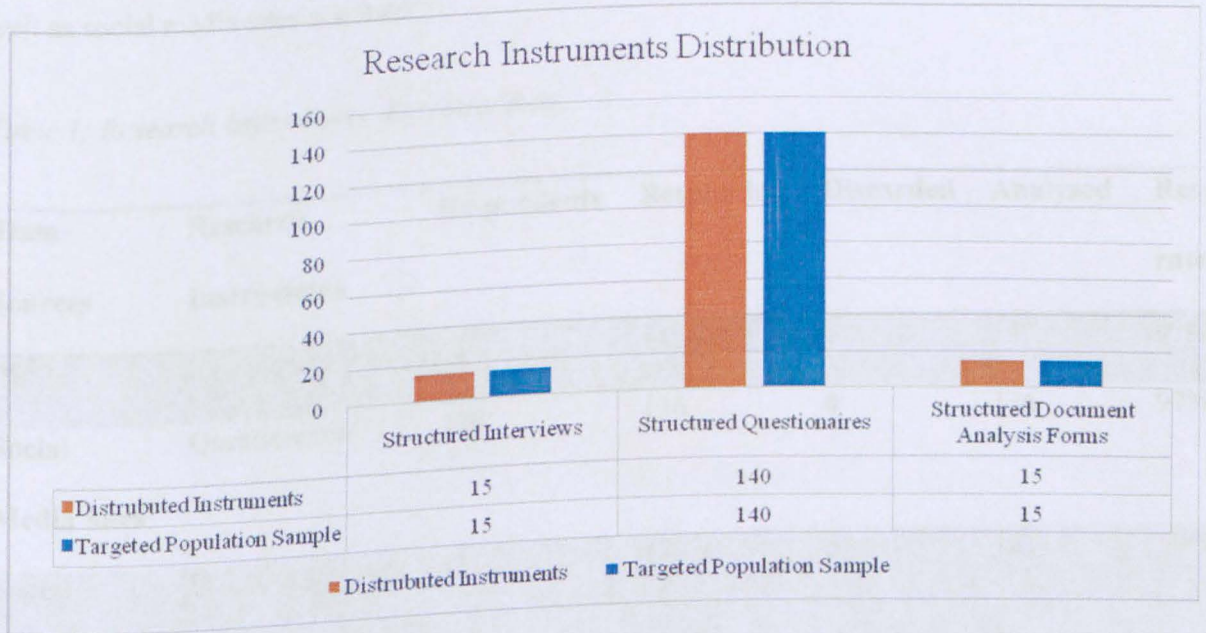
### 4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the methodology that was followed in this research. This chapter looks at data presentation, analysis and presentation. The research presented data in both tabular format and the use of different types of graphs ranging from bar graphs, pie charts, and doughnuts among some of the diagrams of presenting data. This was done to clearly illustrate the results and to facilitate easy data analysis.

### 4.1 Research instruments distribution

The following research instruments targeting specific respondents or source of data were used. These were structured formal interviews, structured questionnaires, and document analysis framework. The structured interviews were specifically designed to source data from Public Relations Officers, structured questionnaires were designed to obtain data from the general public (social media users), and then the document analysis was designed to obtain data from social media sites.

Figure 7: Research Instruments Distribution



Source: Primary Data

#### 4.2 Response rate

The initial goal of the study was to obtain response from all targeted respondents for interviews survey, questionnaire survey and also to access all the targeted social media sites. From the respondent's feedback it was discovered that they were very defensive about responding to questions which sound to be interfering with their privacy. Therefore, the researcher eliminated the resultant problems by briefly explaining the research needs. The analysis and interpretation made and the conclusions and recommendations drawn were based on 14 interview respondents (PROs), 133 questionnaire survey respondents (social media users), and analysis of 13 groups of government social media sites. These were considered representative of the population under study and justified to make research conclusions which are valid. The Table below details a

comparison of the number of research responses received against the respondents accessed as well as social media sites accessed.

*Table 1: Research Instruments' Response Rate*

<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Research Instruments</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responded</b>	<b>Discarded</b>	<b>Analysed</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
<b>PROs</b>	Interviews	15	14	1	14	93%
<b>Social Media Sites</b>	Questionnaire	140	136	4	136	97%
<b>Social Media users</b>	Document analysis	15	12	3	12	80%

*Source: Primary Data*

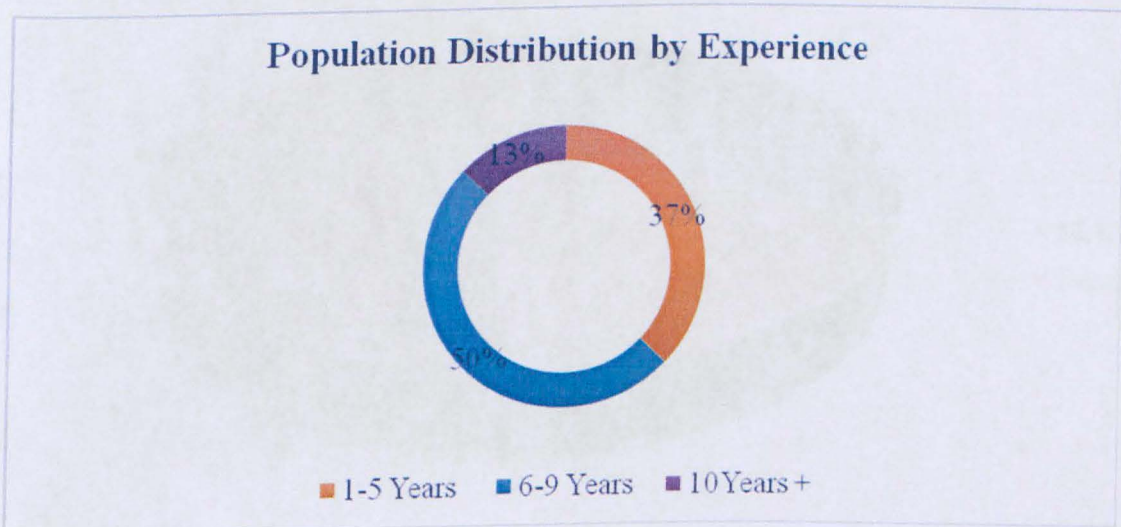
The table above shows that of the 15 PROs interviews targeted only one interview was turned down. As for the 140 social media users targeted for the questionnaire survey, only 4 of them were brought back incomplete. The researcher also managed to access information on 12 government social sites and could not access information on only three sites. Therefore, a 93% response rate was received from the PROs subset, 97% from the Social Media Users subset and an 80% response rate for Social Media Sites information access.

### 4.3 PROs Demographics

#### 4.3.1 Experience

The research included the collection of data from respondents who are the PR practitioners from the government departments. The figure below depicts the statistical distribution in terms of experience.

Figure 8: Population Distribution by Experience



Source: Primary Data

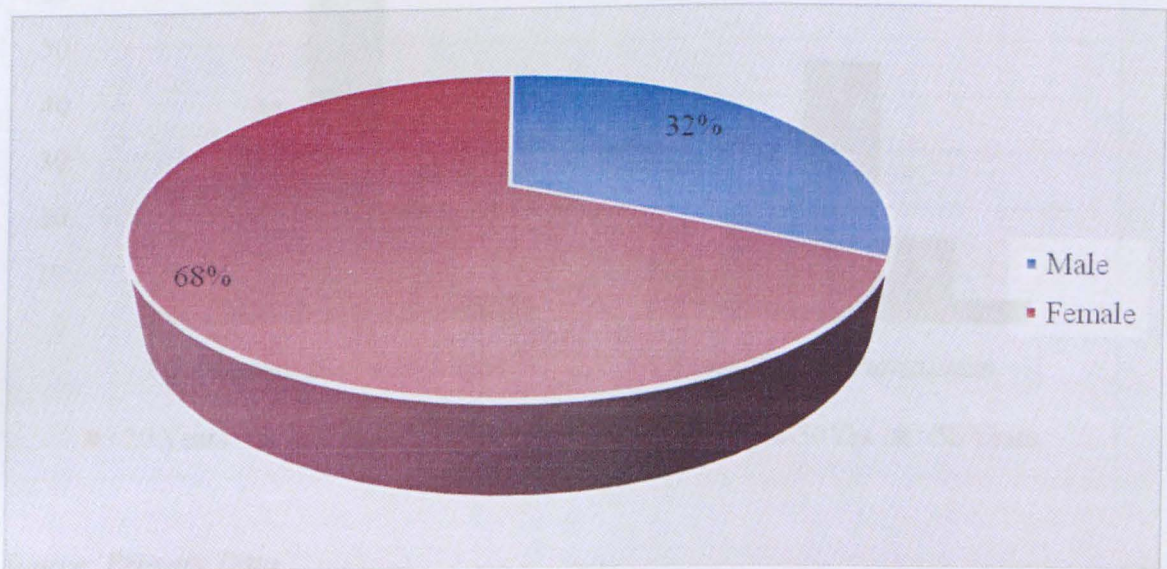
The experience was considered vital when targeting PR practitioners' respondents for interviews. 50% of the practitioners' experience ranged between 6-9 years and this was the greatest (see figure 10). The recorded mean experience of 7.8 years was sufficient enough to provide an array of well-informed responses.

#### 4.4 Social Media Users Demographics

##### 4.4.1 Gender

Gender was considered important when conducting the survey on Social Media Users. Figure below shows how gender was distributed among the participants of the study.

Figure 9: Gender distribution among participants



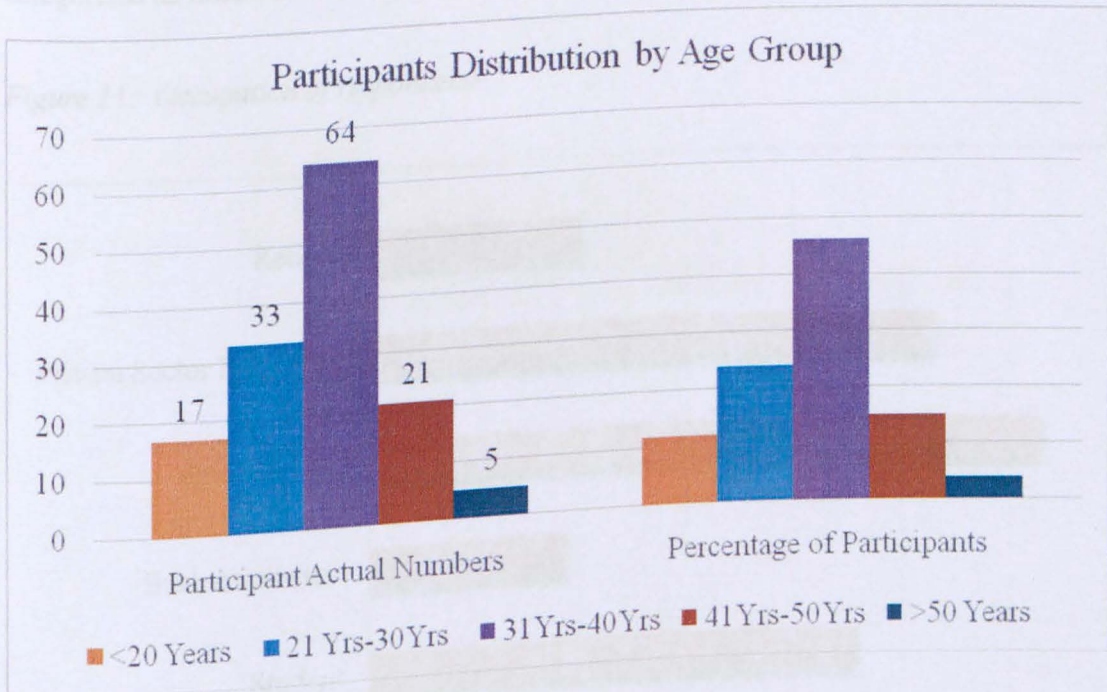
Source: Primary Data

As depicted by the pie chart above, of the 140 participants involved in the study, 68% were female, while 32% were male. This distribution of participants enhanced the validity of research as it is widely accepted that the population of females is more than that of males in Namibia estimated (sex ratio of the total Namibian population was 0.990 (990 males per 1 000 females) in 2018 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [2019]). This in itself has significance in public policy relevance.

#### 4.4.2 Age Distribution

Figure below shows the age distribution of the participants who were involved in the study.

Figure 10: Age distribution of survey participants



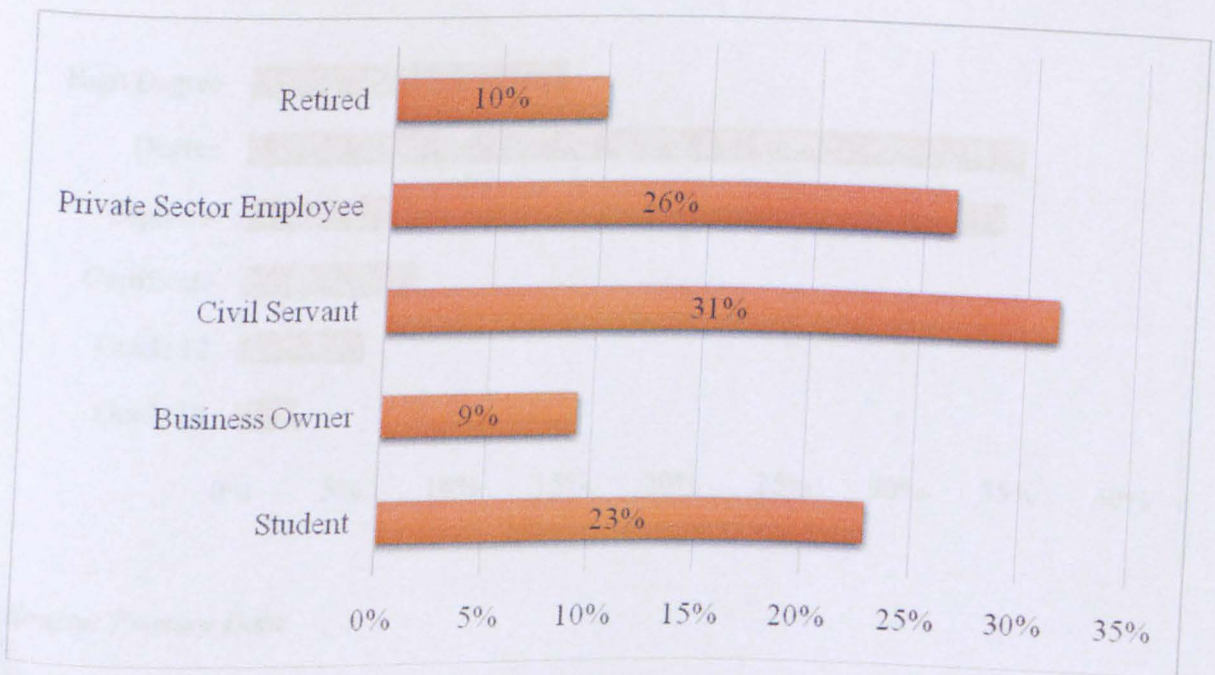
Source: Primary Data

The majority of the survey respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years with a total of 64 participants. The least had 5 participants who were aged 50 years and above (see figure 12). According to Statcounter (2020), 93% of the Millennials (23 to 38 years) use the internet compared to 90% of Gen Exerc (39 to 54 years). The mean age of the respondents was recorded as 35 years, implying that the randomly selected sample is the best place to provide reliable responses.

### 4.4.3 Occupation of respondents

It proved to be vital to assess the difference occupation of the participants to fully understand the profile of active participants on government agencies social media. The occupation was categorised as follows:

Figure 11: Occupation of respondents



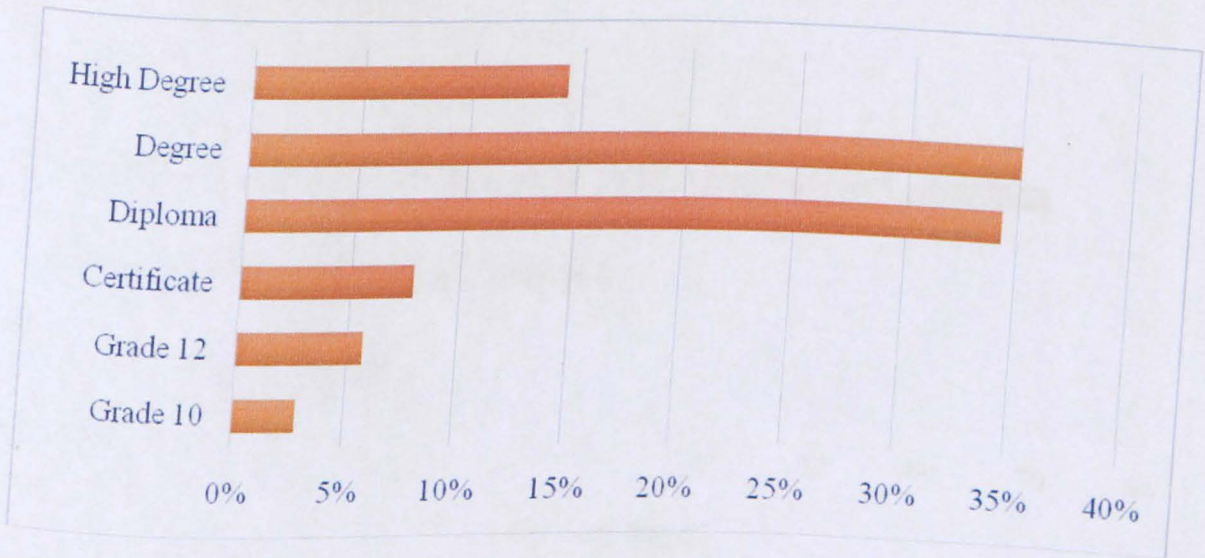
Source: Primary Data

The majority of the respondents, with 31 percentiles, were civil servants. The least respondents, 9%, were business owners (see figure 13). The mean average age of 35 years could possibly imply that this study sample centred more on economically active participants who would possibly have more drive in communicating and engaging with various government agencies via social media.

#### 4.4.4 Qualifications

The level of education has the potential to impact the nature of response for the study as different participants tend to have varying reasons for using social media. Figure 14 shows how the participants were distributed according to various educational qualifications.

Figure 12: Qualifications of respondents



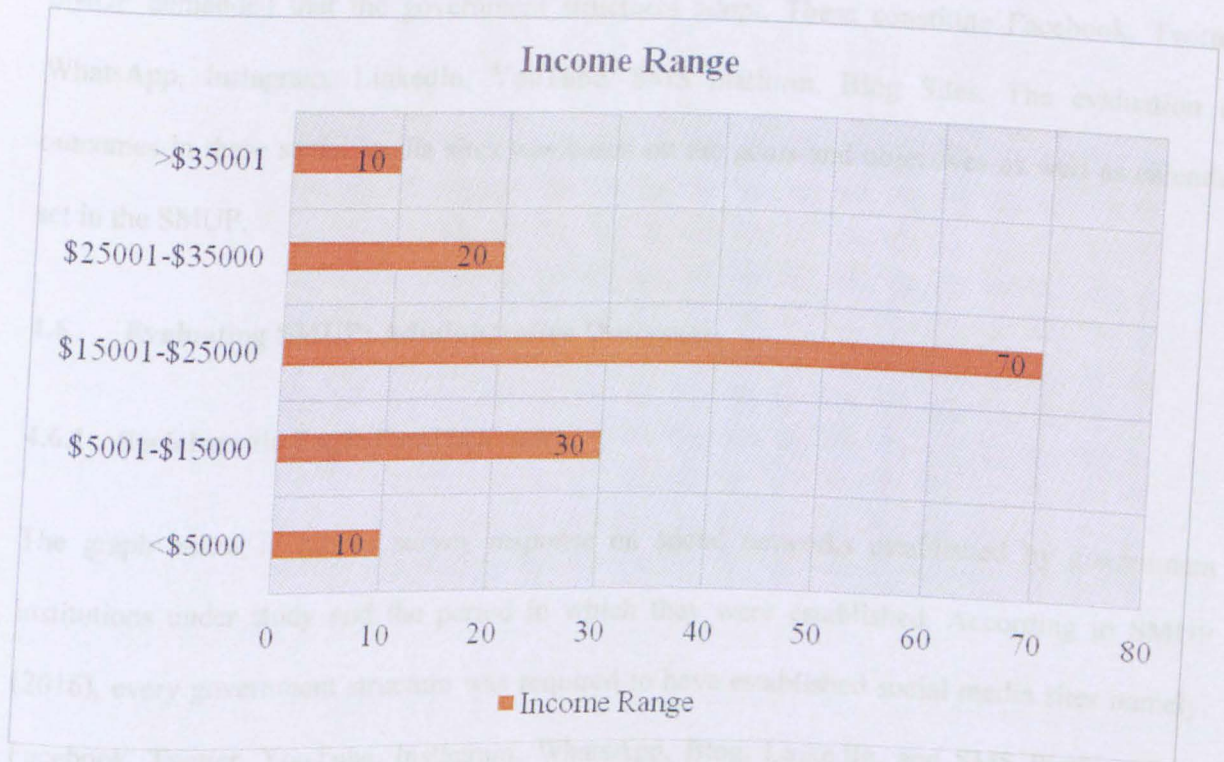
Source: Primary Data

A reference to figure 14 shows that at degreed people were the major respondents, with 35% followed by those with diplomas (34%). Grade 10 holders were the least respondents. There is normal distribution in this sample in terms of education as most certificate, diploma and degreed people are employed; consequently, these would have resources to access social media.

#### 4.4.5 Income Levels

The income levels of all the participants were recorded using the following range as follows;

Figure 13: Social Media Users Income Range



Source: Primary Data

Those who earned between N\$15001 and N\$25000 were the major respondents with a total of 70 people. Only 10 respondents were for those earning below N\$5000 and above N\$35001 (refer to figure 15). According to [www.averagesalariesurvey.com](http://www.averagesalariesurvey.com), the median salary for Namibia was recorded as 17,588.00 NAD in 2019. There is no significant difference between the population parameter and sample statistic; hence, it is highly probable that this sample will provide a reliable, valid, and reliable response.

#### **4.5 Social Media Pages Characteristics**

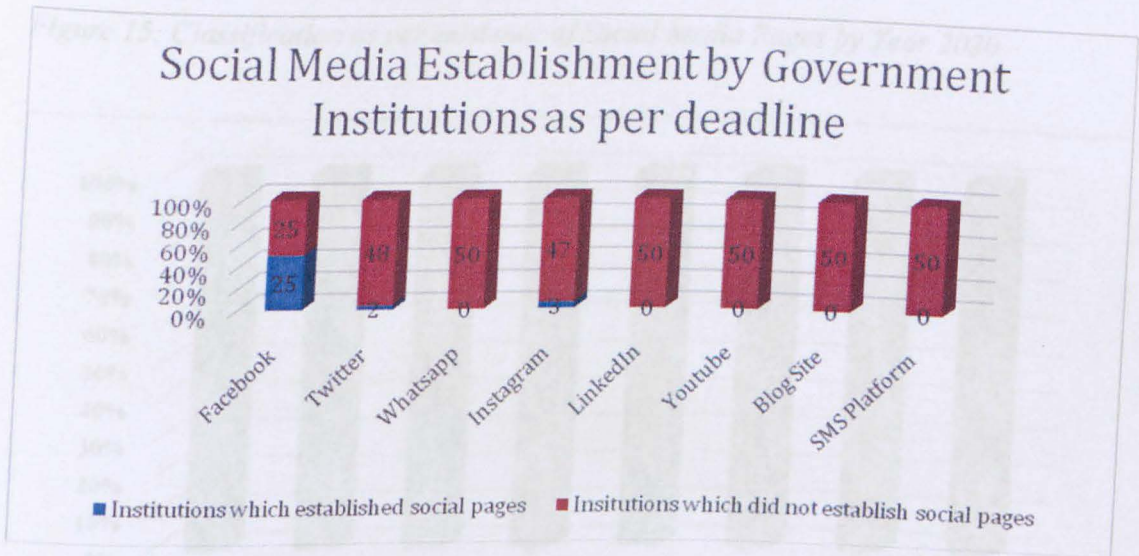
Since there is a vast number of social media sites used globally, this study was limited to those social media sites specified by the SMUP. The evaluation was only limited to the sites which the SMUP demanded that the government structures adopt. These constitute Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, SMS platform, Blog Sites. The evaluation of outcomes in these social media sites was based on the goals and objectives as well as calendar set in the SMUP.

#### **4.6 Evaluating SMUP: Administrative Outcomes**

##### **4.6.1 Social media Pages Establishment.**

The graph below illustrates survey response on social networks established by government institutions under study and the period in which they were established. According to SMUP (2016), every government structure was required to have established social media sites namely, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Blog, LinkedIn, and SMS Platforms. As established by the policy all government agencies were required to have established these social media pages by the month of June 2017. Each specific social site counted represented a particular institution out of 50 institutions.

Figure 14: Classification based on compliance to June 2017 deadline.

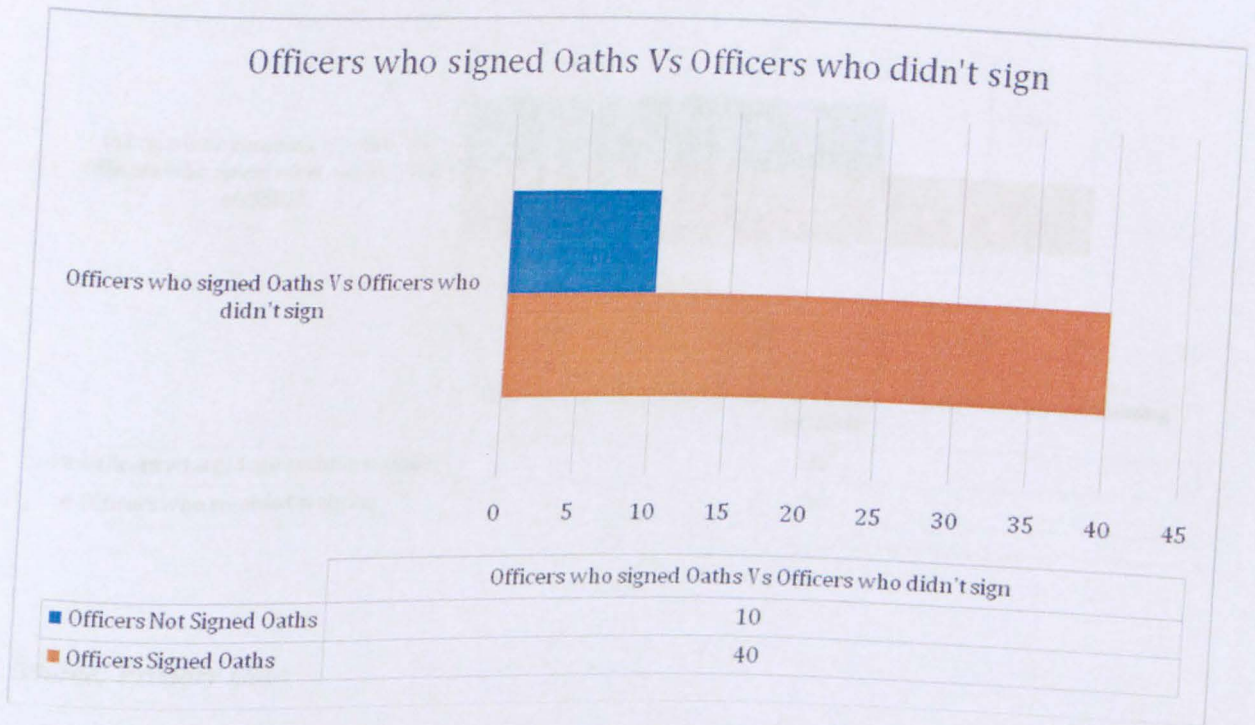


Source: Primary Data

The graph above illustrates the institutions that adhered to the requirements of the SMUP on establishment of social media platforms by government institutions by June 2017. The study shows that out of all the 50 institutions there was no adherence to the deadlines set in the SMUP. Not all social pages were established by the government institutions, only half of the institutions had managed to open Facebook platforms.

### 4.6.3 Officers signing of Oaths as required by policy

Figure 16: Public Relations Officers who Signed Oaths as required by the SMUP



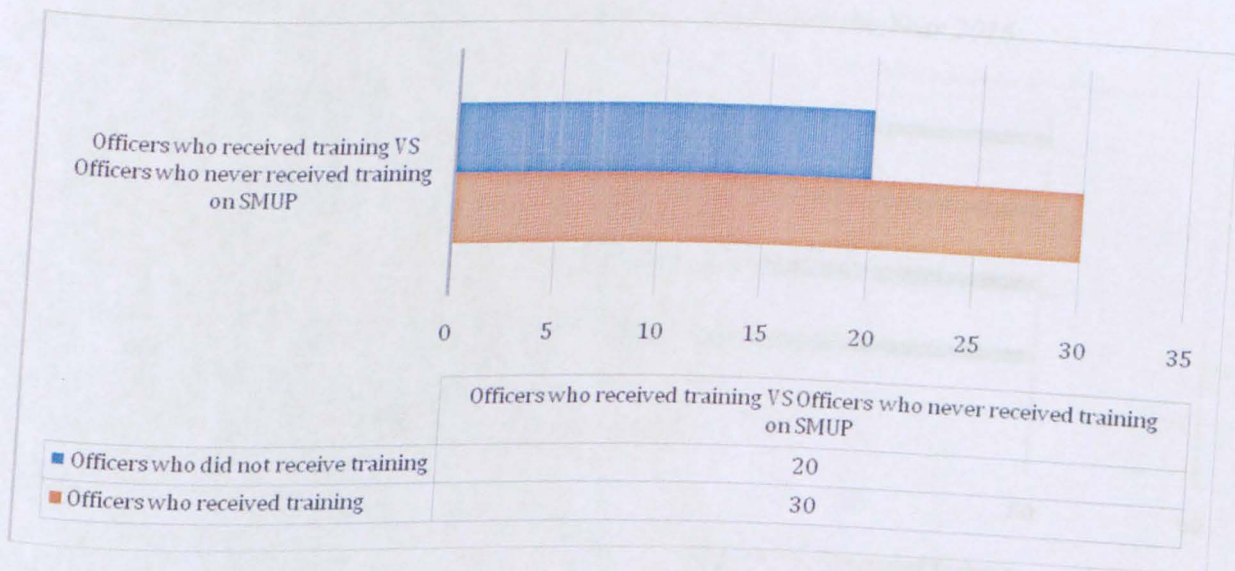
Source: Primary Data

The Social Media Use Policy also required that all information officers sign the oaths to abide by the requirements of the SMUP. From the data collected out of 50 respondents who were information officers of various government institutions, 40 confirmed to have signed the oaths and 10 of them did not sign the oaths.

Compliance to the SMUP is a requirement that is mandatory to every information officer who is custodian of the government implementation plans. The study reveals that the majority of institutions did oblige with the requirement to sign the oaths.

#### 4.6.4 Training of Officers on SMUP as required by the Policy

Figure 17: Assessing whether PROs received SMUP training



Source: Primary Data

The SMUP also required that all government institutions be obliged to train the information officers responsible for implementing the policy. 30 out of 50 officers received training (see figure 19).

#### 4.6.5 Assessment of frequency of PROs Training on SMUP annually as from the Year 2016

From year 2017 to 2020, there was no training offered to the officers (see figure 20 below). The training was offered once during the launch of the SMUP. Regular training is however an important factor to ensure effective implementation of policies because chances are high that

some of the information officers may have been new recruits who joined respective institutions after the year 2016 where the training was issued.

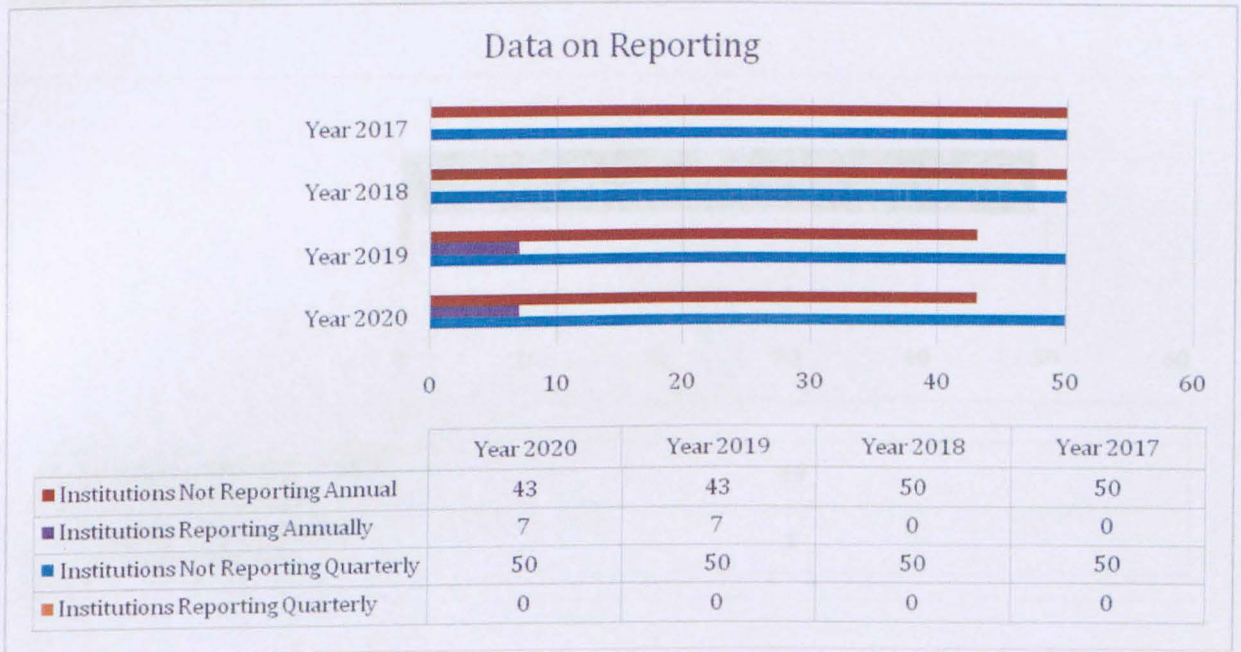
Figure 18: Assessing the frequency of training on SMUP since the Year 2016



Source: Primary Data

#### 4.6.6 Assessing Officers' Reporting on SMUP to the WPC Committee

Figure 19: Public Relations Officers who Signed Oaths as required by the SMUP



Source: Primary Data

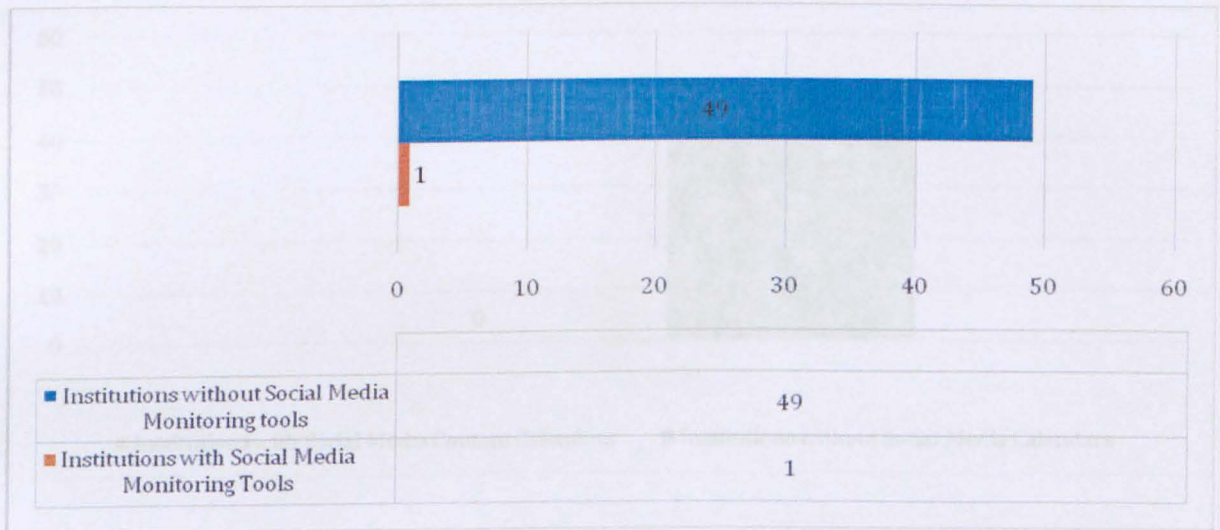
According to the SMUP information officers are required to issue periodical reporting to the WPC committee which was mandated to assess the effective implementation of the policy. The reporting structure is required to be quarterly and annually. From the study executed there was not any institution that did issue any report to the WPC as of year 2017 and 2018 both quarterly and annually.

As shown in figure 21, there was no quarterly reporting for the 4 years. Annual reporting was also not done between 2017 and 2018. 43 out of 50 institutions reported both in 2019 and 2020.

Reporting is an important policy requirement that helps in the provision of information on policy effectiveness and impact.

#### 4.6.7 Social Media Monitoring Tools Used

Figure 20: Institutions with Social Media Monitoring Tools



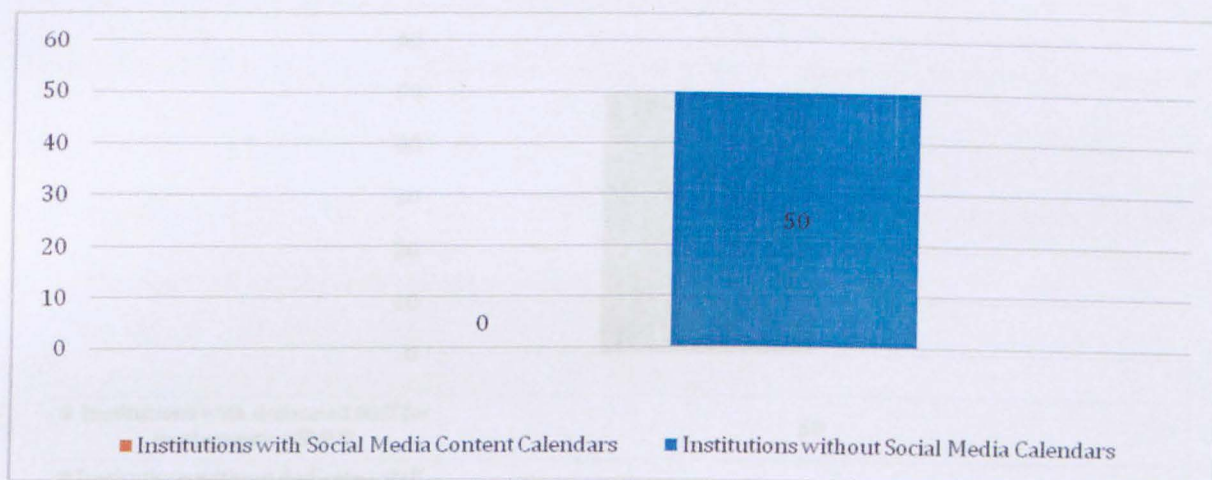
Source: Primary Data

Source: Primary Data

The information officers interviewed were asked whether they also implemented a content management system. Social media management requires that there be use of monitoring tools that help the page managers to be able to track, evaluate and measure the impact, performance and outcomes of their programmes implemented on social networks. Without these tools it becomes difficult to effectively assess the effectiveness of programmes that are being implemented. The majority of the institutions, that is, 49 out of 50, did not have social media monitoring tools (see figure 22).

#### 4.6.8 Availability of Social Media Content Calendar

Figure 23: Institutions with Social Media Content Calendar

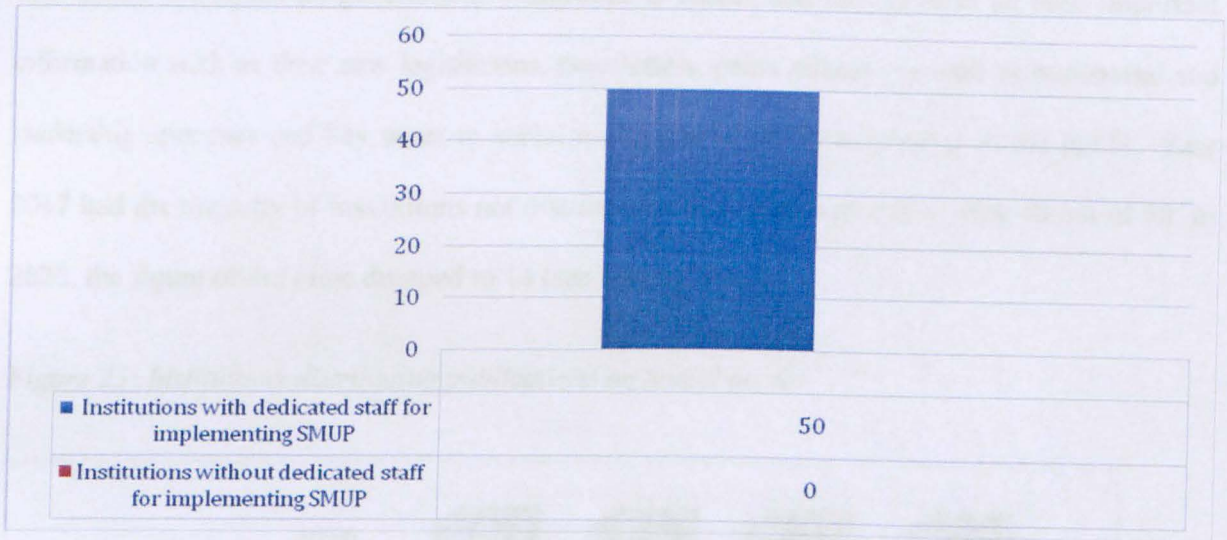


Source: Primary Data

The information officers interviewed were asked whether they also implemented a content calendar. According to the SMUP the information officers are required to develop and implement a calendar of communication programmes together with content creation, upload, and audience engagement. A calendar depicts a schedule of activities to be carried out in advance. All the respondents did not have social media calendars (see figure 23). The study further affirms that the institutions are not adhering to the SMUP.

#### 4.6.9 Availability of staffs dedicated to SMUP implementation

Figure 214: Institutions with departmental staff solely dedicated to SMUP Implementation



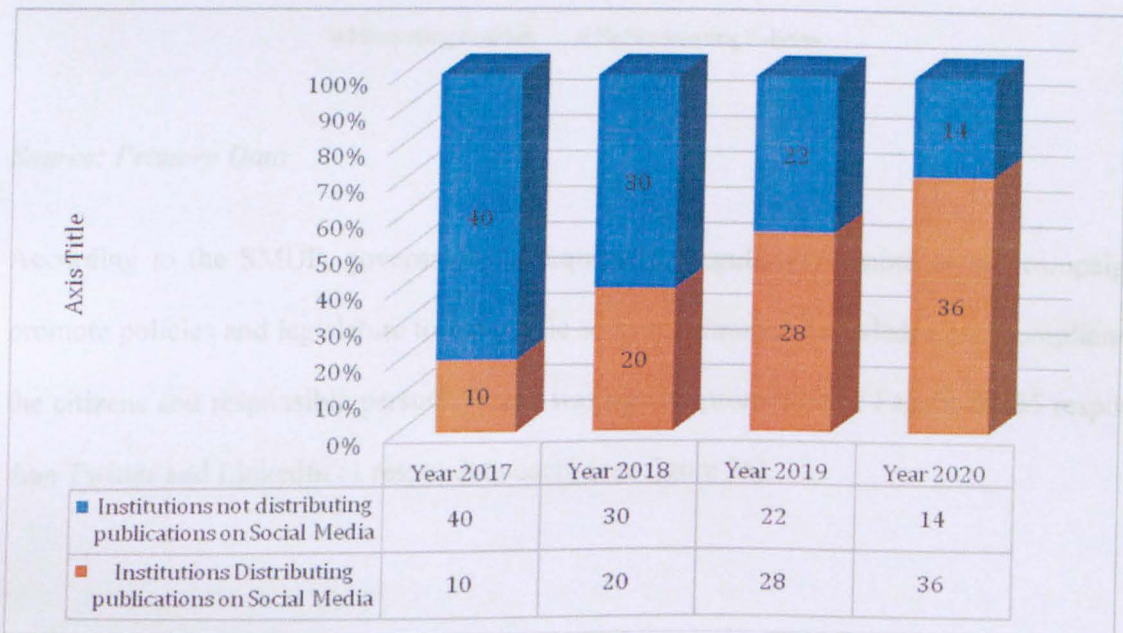
Source: Primary Data

The SMUP also obliged the government institutions to appoint information officers who will be fully dedicated to the implementation of the social media use policy. From the study conducted all respondents (50) confirmed that their institutions have personnel dedicated to social media management and implementation of the SMUP.

#### 4.6.10 Evaluation of distribution of publications, and newsletters, press releases and leadership speeches through social media

The SMUP mandated all government institutions to ensure that they publish all their important information such as their new legislations, newsletters, press releases as well as ministerial and leadership speeches and key notes to social media platforms for awareness to the public. Year 2017 had the majority of institutions not distributing publications and they were 40 out of 50. In 2020, the figure of the same dropped to 14 (see figure 25).

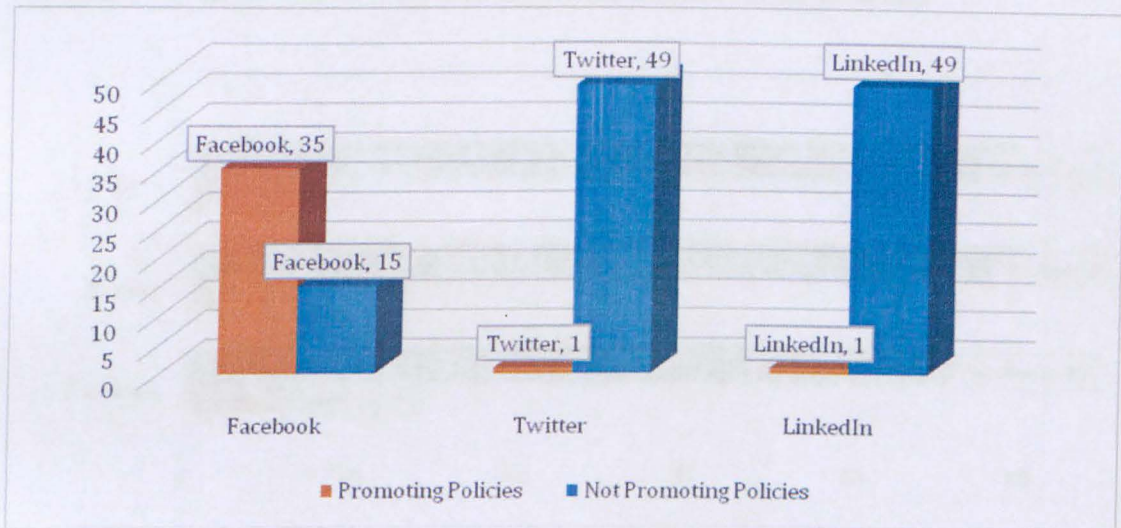
Figure 25: Institutions distributing publications on Social media



Source: Primary Data

#### 4.6.11 Assessment of promotion of policies and legislature on social media

Figure 26: Institutions promoting Policies and Legislature on Social Media

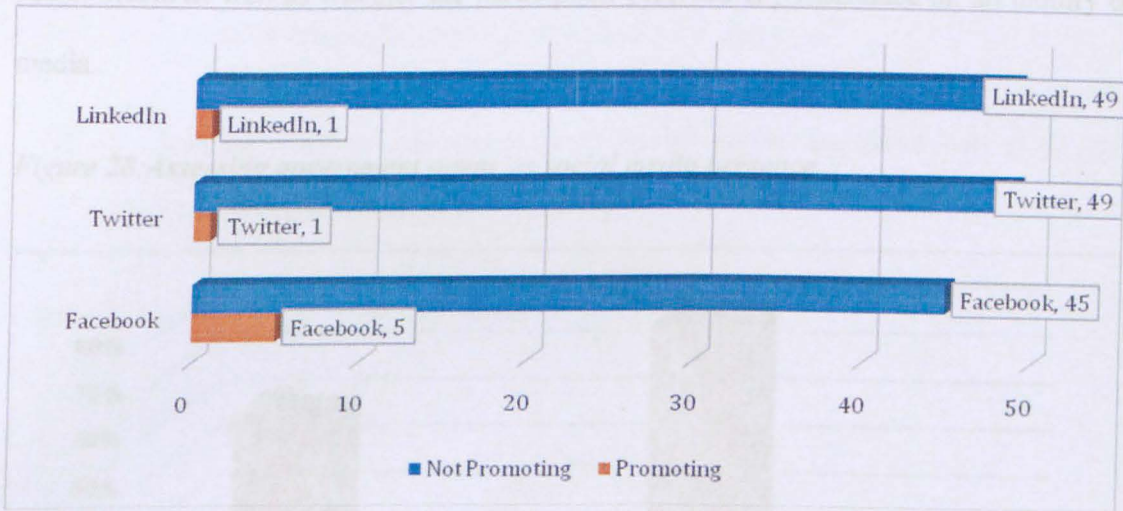


Source: Primary Data

According to the SMUP, government is required to regularly promote or run campaigns that promote policies and legislature to the public so as to stimulate knowledge and compliance from the citizens and responsible persons. There was greater promotion of Facebook (35 respondents) than Twitter and LinkedIn (1 respondent each) (see figure 26).

#### 4.6.12 Availability of corporate profiles detailing mandate, vision, mission and values pinned on social sites

Figure 27: Institutions promoting their corporate profiles on social media



Source: Primary Data

The figure above indicates that almost all government institutions have corporate profiles displayed in their major social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

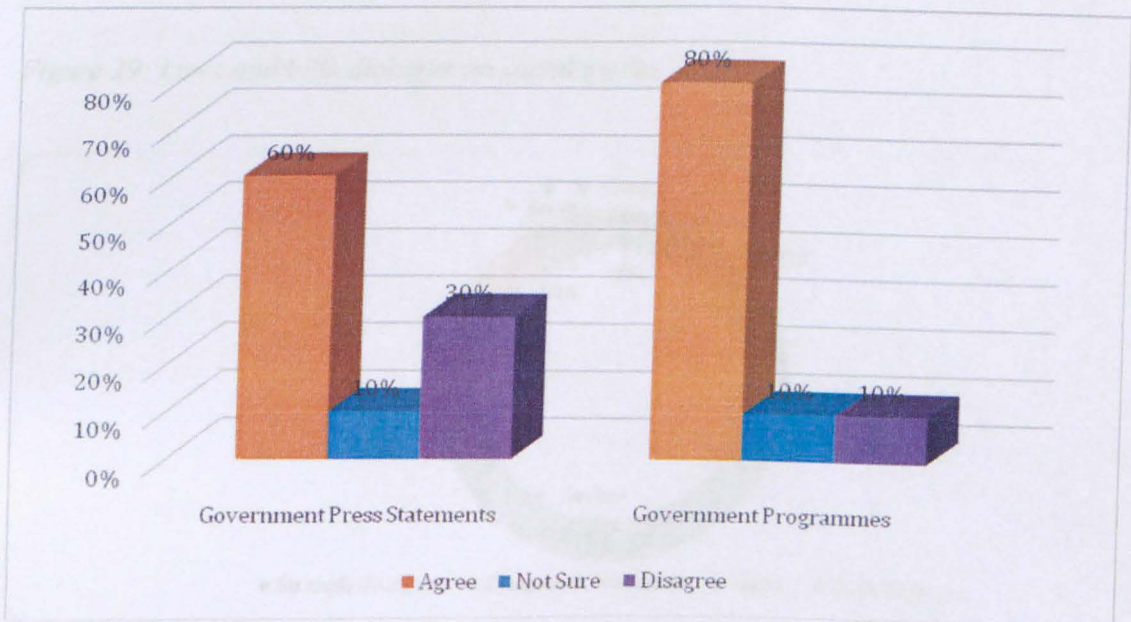
#### 4.7 Evaluating user experience and satisfaction matters

The survey was conducted to find out citizens' perceptions on accessing government social media pages, frequency of visits to the pages, the social media pages that have been accessed, level of engagement with government on social media and issues to do with the elements of the social media policy.

#### 4.7.1 Public views on government agencies social media presence

In order to assess the presence of government agencies on social media, the participants were asked to indicate if they have come across any government programs and press statements on social media as well as whether the participants received any assistance on an inquiry on social media.

Figure 28: Assessing government agencies social media presence



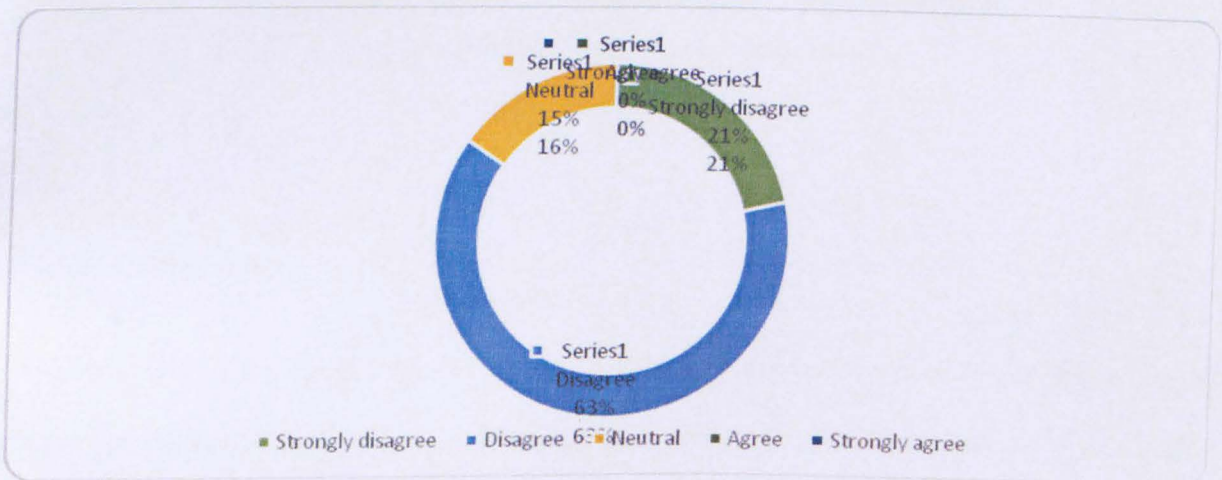
Source: Primary Data

The PR interviews conducted showed that most of the government agencies post-press statements and government programs on social media. In order to ascertain such sentiments, the citizenry was asked to confirm whether they have come across government programs and press statements on social media. The majority of the respondents, 60 % and 80% agreed that they have come across government press statements and government programs, respectively, on

social media (see figure 28). The results imply that government agencies have made inroads in ensuring social media presence despite the fact that they are sharing limited content. Social media presence should be always be complemented by prompt online response to queries and inquiries. The study sought to establish whether the participants received any responses with regards to requests or enquiries made to the government agencies.

#### 4.7.2 Evaluating whether the government social media platform was open to citizen dialogue on policy, bills and legislation.

Figure 29: Laws and bills dialogue on social media



Source: Primary Data

One of the objectives of the SMUP is to improve dialogue between government agencies and citizens via social media. The participants were asked to indicate if they have, at any point, had the opportunity to voice their opinions with respect to bills and laws in Namibia. The majority response of 63% disagreed to the notion (refer to figure 29).

However, as cited in the literature review, microblogging social media is prominent when it comes to quick and short input and surveys on legislations (Mergel, 2013a). It is highly probable that the results depicted in figure 4.8 could be as a result of the fact that the government agencies are using an unsuitable medium to communicate issues that affect legislation.

Collaboration especially in policy development is vital and considered as one of the highest levels in participation and a major dimension for government agencies to co-create or co-design processes or services (Hootsuite, 2015). In this particular case, it is clear that those government agencies are not utilising the potential of social media in collaborating with citizens.

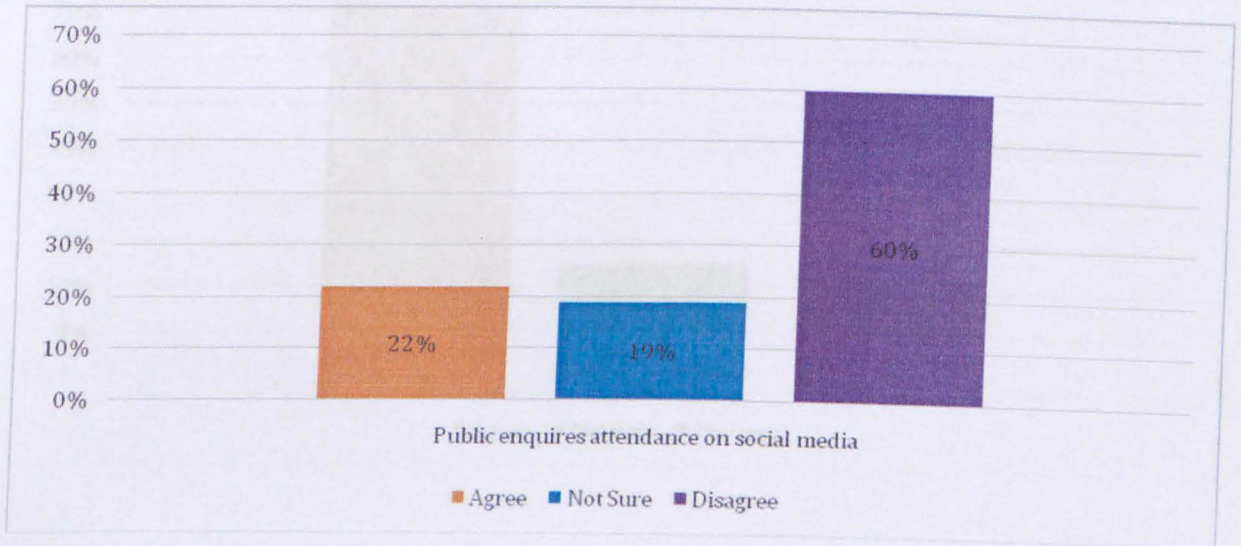
#### Source: Primary Data

The majority of the respondents (60%) indicated that they never received any response on an enquiry on governmental agencies social media pages. 19.3% of the participants were not sure while 21% of the participants agreed that they received responses from governmental agencies (see figure 39). The PR interviewees highlighted that any of the inquiries or queries are being directed to the relevant departments. It is easy to suggest that there is no proper procedure if it deals with social media responses as suggested by the majority of respondents that have seemed to have received a response on social media. As cited in literature government agencies should allow access to social media to few designated officials. For example, leadership or public relations officers who are mandated to

#### 4.7.3 Users' views on whether they have received assistance through government department social media page

Figure 30: Public enquiries attendance on Social Media

Figure 30: Public enquiries attendance on Social Media

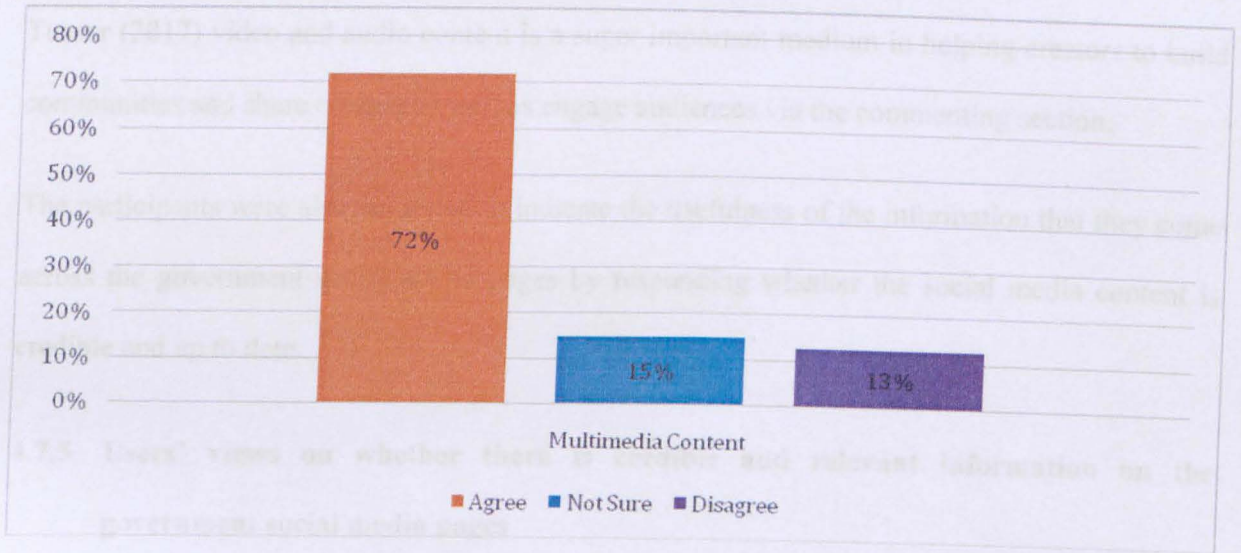


Source: Primary Data

The majority of the respondents, 60%, indicated that they never received any response on an enquiry on government agencies social media pages. 19 % of the participants were not sure while 21% of the participants agreed that they received responses from government agencies (see figure 30). The PR interviews highlighted that any of the enquiries or queries are being directed to the relevant departments. It is easy to suggest that there is no proper procedure that deals with social media responses as suggested by the majority of respondents that have claimed to have received responses on social media. As cited in literature government agencies should allow access to social media to few designated officials, for example, leadership or public relations officers who are mandated to

#### 4.7.4 Users' views on whether there is access to multimedia information

Figure 31: Visibility of multimedia content



Source: Primary Data

The study sort of established the type of content that is posted on the social media of government agencies. In this regard, the participants were asked whether they came across audio or video content on the government agencies social media.

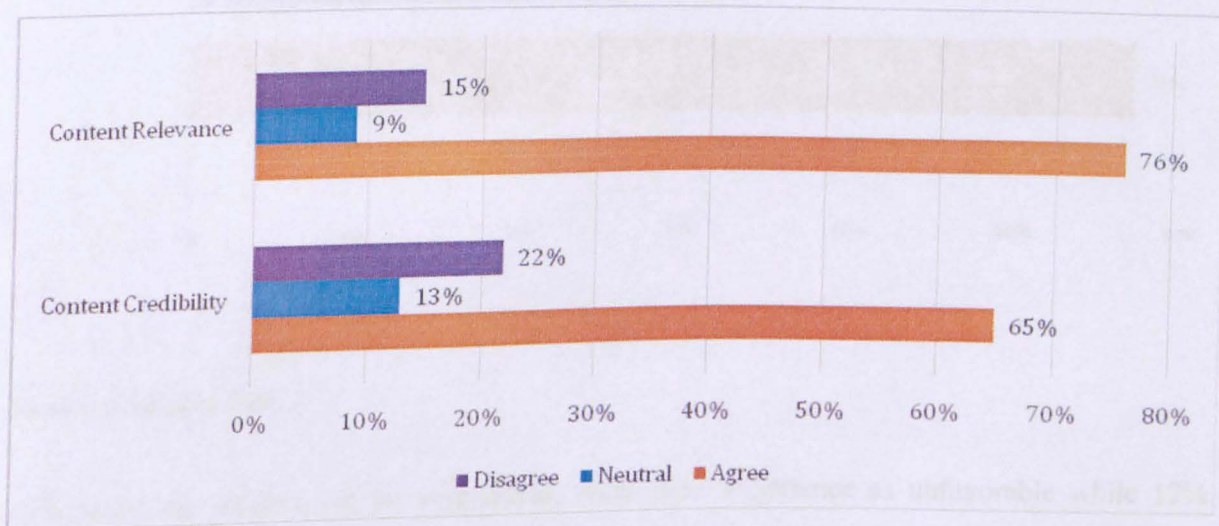
The majority of the participants, 72%, agreed that the social media for government agencies have neither audio nor video content while 15 % of the participants came across audio or video content (reference figure 31). Based on these results, there is a reason to believe there are very few government agencies that are utilising audio and video content on their social media pages. These results could mean that government agencies are not utilising social media platforms that support audio and video content.

Examples of such social media platforms YouTube for Government launched by google as a one-stop-shop where government officials can learn how to get the most out of YouTube as a communication tool (“Technology That Drives Government IT,” 2014). As pointed out by Turner (2017) video and audio content is a super important medium in helping creators to build communities and share content as well as engage audiences via the commenting section.

The participants were also requested to indicate the usefulness of the information that they come across the government social media pages by responding whether the social media content is credible and up to date.

#### 4.7.5 Users’ views on whether there is credible and relevant information on the government social media pages

Figure 32: Content Credibility and Relevance



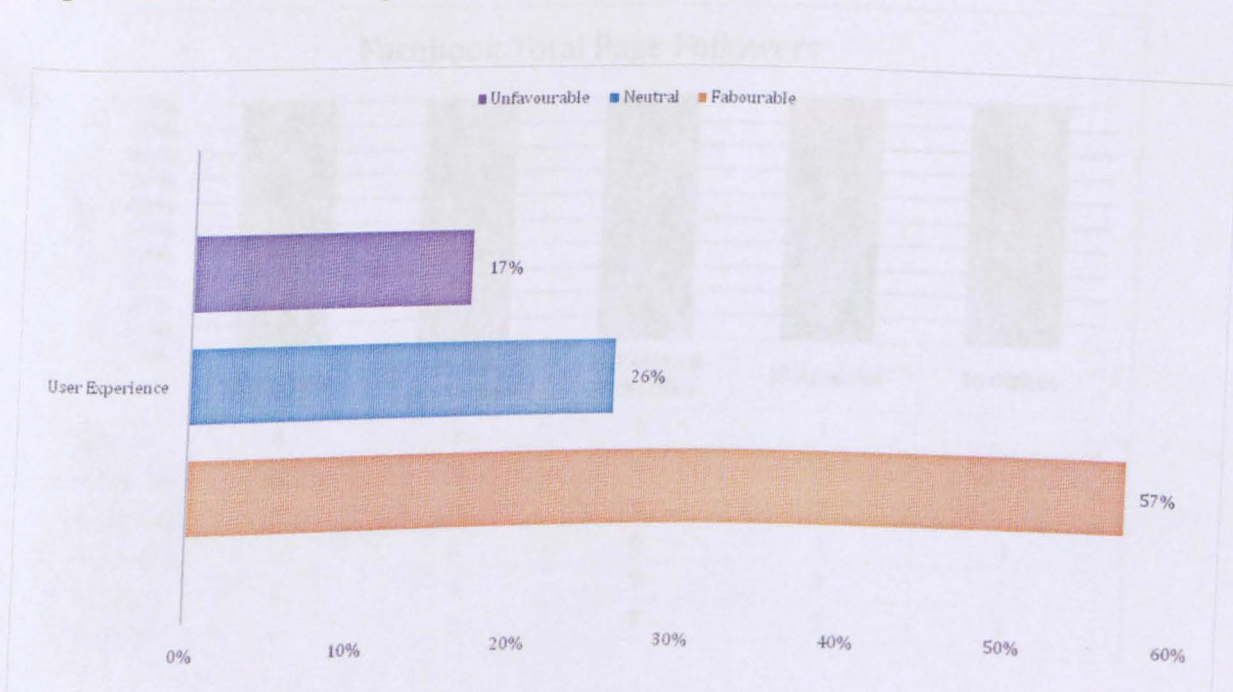
Source: Primary Data

The majority of the respondents agreed that there is content relevance and content credibility of the information gotten on social media (76% and 65% respectively) (see figure 32).

#### 4.7.6 Users' overall experience with Government Agencies Social Media Pages

In concluding the data collection, the participants were asked to rate their overall experience with the government social media pages. Figure 33 summarizes their opinions.

Figure 33: Users' overall experience with government social media



Source: Primary Data

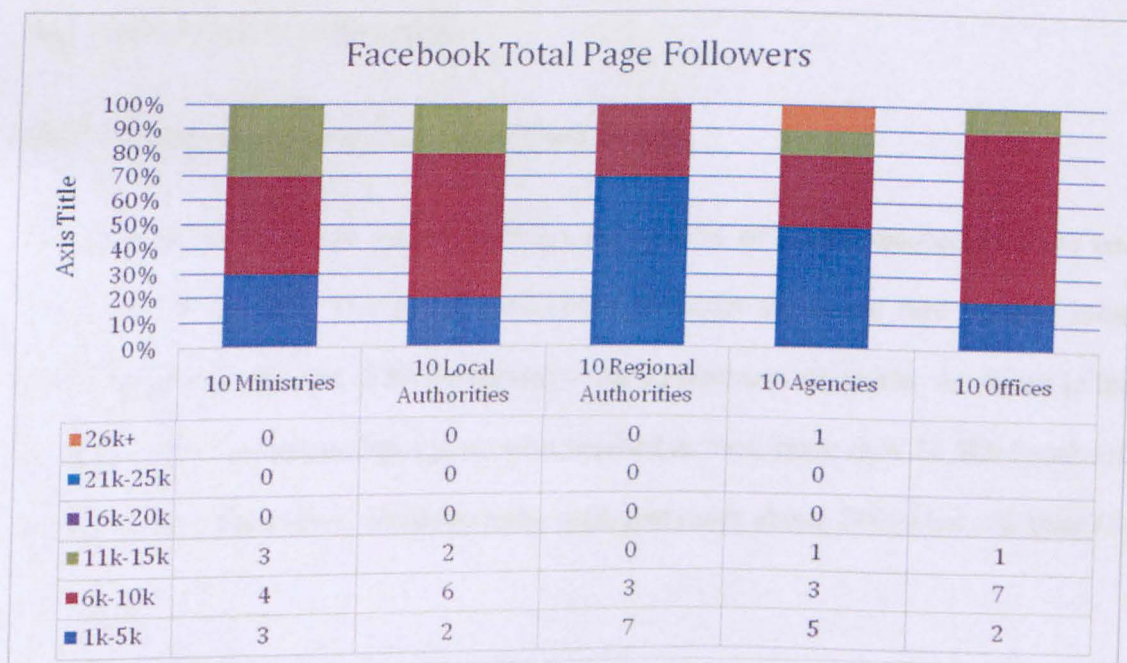
57% being the majority of the respondents rated their experience as unfavorable while 17% respondents rate their experience as favorable. These results are quite consistent with the rest of the finding as content on the social media was deemed to be limited, and with a low number of visitors on the social media platforms. The results also depicted a limited use of social media

platforms with most government agencies using social media networks only and lastly poor engagement on social media.

## 4.8 Facebook Insights

### 4.8.1 Evaluating Government Facebook pages followership

Figure 34: Total page followers



Source: Primary Data

An analysis of 50 Facebook sites from the government institutions, the study revealed that out of 10 ministries only three ministries' Facebook pages had more than 11 thousand followers, while four ministries had above 6 thousand Facebook likes but less than 10 000 likes. Only three of the ministries had a less than 5thousand followership. The 10 local authorities assessed displayed moderate presence on social media with the 2 of the local authorities having more than 11 000

followers, 6 local authorities having less than 10 000 followers but higher than 6000 followers. Only 2 local authorities had less than 5000 followers in total. As for regional authorities the followership was less than 10 000 but above 6000 for 3 regional authorities, while for the rest of the 7 regional authorities there have been less than 5 000 followers. The government agencies also have displayed a moderate presence on social media with one agency having more than 26 000 followers. The rest of the other agencies contained less than 15000 followers where 5 of them displayed less than 5 000 followers. The government offices displayed presence with less than 10 000 followers on Facebook.

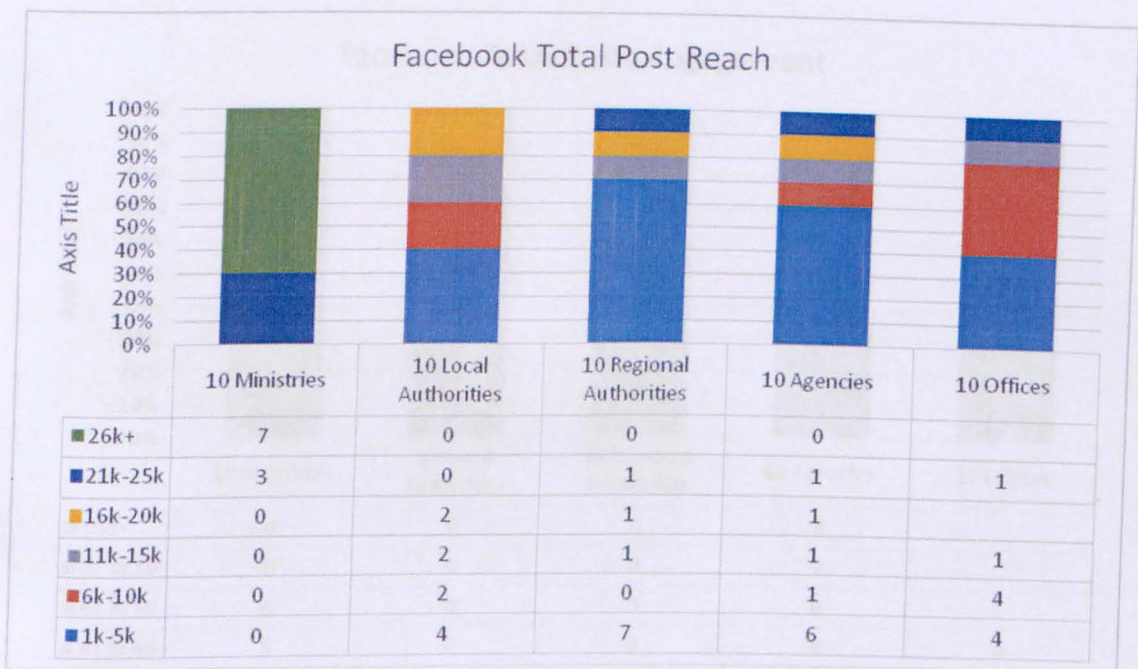
#### **4.8.2 Evaluating Government Pages Posts Reach**

The figure below shows post reach displays, the number of people reached by posts issued out within the last 28 days. The study reveals that ministries are in the fore front of information dissemination than the rest of the categories of the government structures. As shown in the figure above, at most 7 ministries have posts who reached at most more than 26 000 Facebook users, while the rest of the other 3 ministries had a total post reach above 20 000 but less than 25 000.

#### **4.8.3 Assessing Government Facebook Pages Posts Engagement**

The engagement results are consistent for all the government structures under study. The figure clearly shows a low level of user participation and interaction with the government structures. The rest of the selected target population also display engagement of not more than 20 within the last 28 days before the examination was executed.

Figure 35: Facebook total posts reach



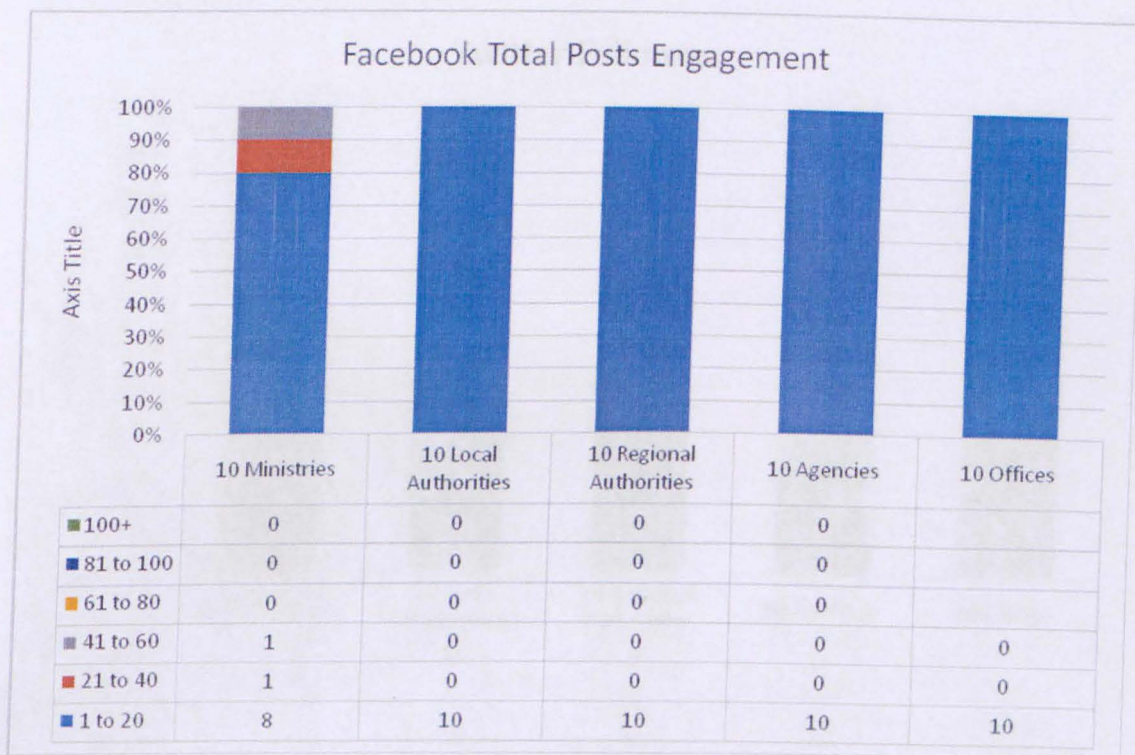
Source: Primary Data

The local authorities have also displayed ample activity with the post reach ranging from 1000 people to as far as 15 000. The regional authorities, agencies and the offices displayed a less impressive post reach as compared to the ministries and local authorities. The majority of them had a post reach of less than 5 000.

#### 4.8.3 Assessing Government Facebook Pages Posts Engagement

The engagement reports are a mountain for all the government structures under study. The figure below shows a low level of user participation and interaction with the government structures. The rest of the selected target population sites display engagement of not more than 20 within the last 28 days before the examination was executed.

Figure 36: Facebook posts engagement



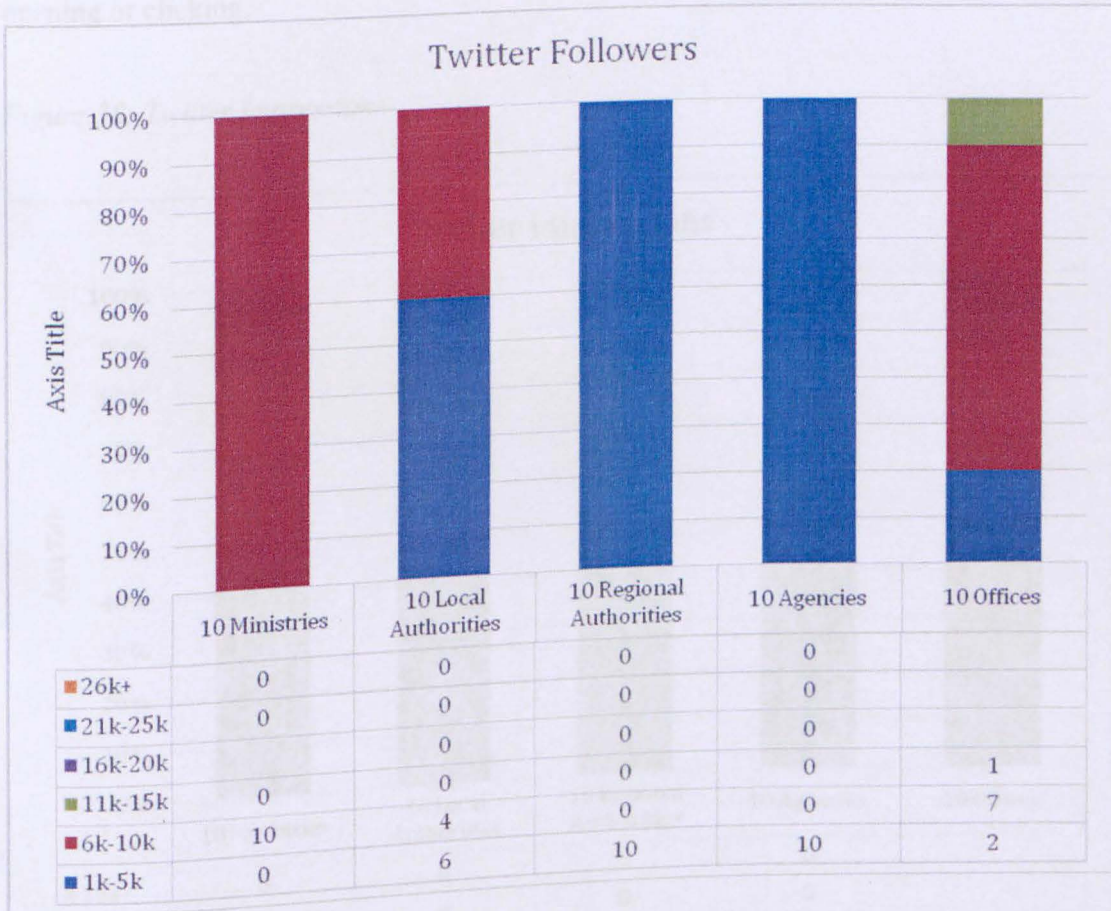
Source: Primary Data

#### 4.9 Twitter Analytics for the government pages

##### 4.9.1 Evaluating twitter followership for government pages

Based on the figure below, analysis of government twitter pages shows that most of the ministries have twitter followership between 6 000 to 10 000, while local authorities have followership not more than 10 000 as well as the government offices. A review of 10 regional authorities and 10 government agencies revealed a very low level of participation or followership on twitter with all pegged at a very low range of 1000 to 5000 followers.

Figure 37: Twitter followers



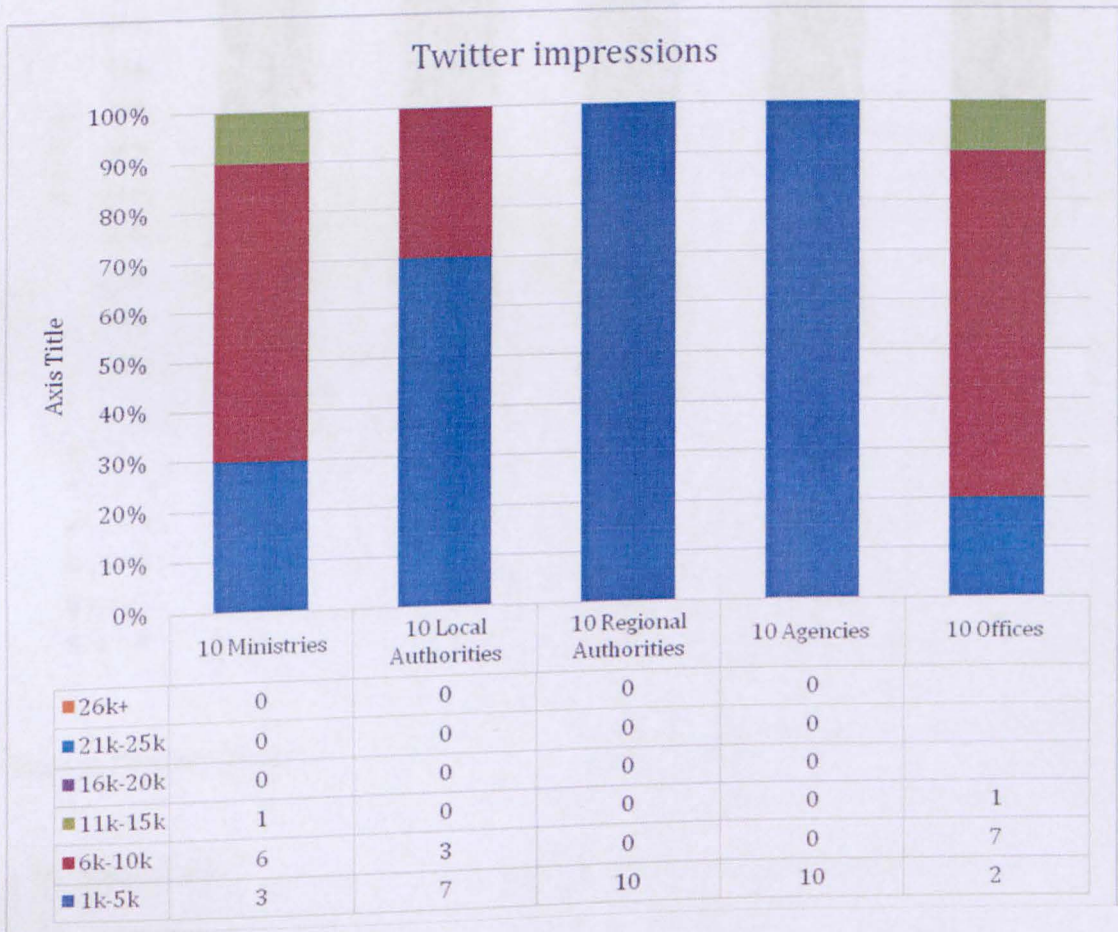
Source: Primary Data

#### 4.9.2 Evaluating government twitter pages posts impressions

The analysis of twitter impressions reveals a huge attention paid to 1 ministry and 1 office of the government with more than 11 000 impressions on both. The study also shows 6 ministries, 3 local authorities and 7 offices to be having significant number of impressions ranging 6000 to 10 000. The rest of the other ministries, local authorities, regional authorities, agencies as well as offices have impressions ranging from 10000 to 5 000. This in itself implies that for every tweet

sent out that is the number of times it has been seen by the audience either by scrolling, or opening or clicking.

Figure 38: Twitter impressions

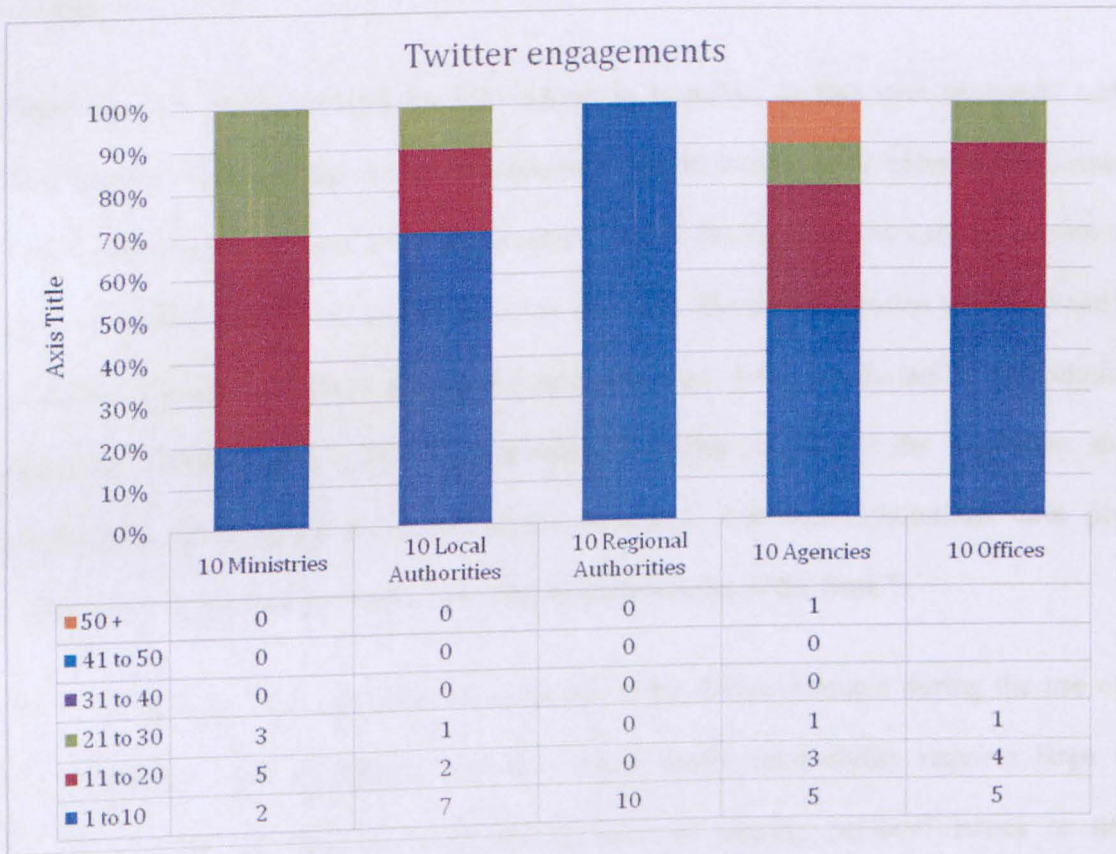


Source: Primary Data

#### 4.9.3 Evaluating government twitter posts engagement

There is also an insignificant level of posts engagement from the last 28 days reported on. The ministries and the local authorities as well as the offices have an active engagement than any other government structure.

Figure 39: Twitter engagements



Source: Primary Data

#### 4.10 Discussion

The use of internet and social media in Namibia and Africa at large has increased drastically in the last decade, especially in the urban centres (Ryan, Magro & Sharp, 2010). This has enabled the growth and development of social media presence in the country. There is now extensive use of platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram, as the major ones. Namibia has a well-established infrastructure that is catalyzed by high-speed internet. In addition, mobile

phones with internet applications are owned by a majority of people, both in urban and rural settings.

There was a growing demand for information in Namibia, in line with economic and social development. This resulted in Namibia coming up with initiatives to address this demand. The SMUP was formulated and later implemented, hence the formulation and the implementation plan. Namibia's policy was implemented as intended. The policy process clearly identified the critical implementation steps and all the activities were followed during its formulation. The Namibian SMUP policy was also implemented evenly across all the ministries and their departments. Most government institutions confirmed that their institutions have personnel dedicated to social media management and implementation of the SMUP.

There are various challenges that are encountered by the government during the use of social media and this may include the fact that social media accessibility requires large internet bandwidth usage, misuse of social media, such as posting personal issues or unrelated information to government services, in addition, reputation damage may occur due to the use of abusive language, text, audio and video (Pettersson & Karlström, 2011; Kavanaugh et al., 2012). The SMUP has failed to address this so that people do not abuse the internet.

The PR practitioners in the government agencies were interviewed to establish whether they were familiar with the SMUP contents and if they were adhering to the SMUP guidelines. The PR employees were interviewed to elaborate the different factors that they considered when selecting a specific social media platform to use, how they promote their social media pages, procedures on handling content for example responses on the social media pages, a database of information, reporting to the MICP and the content of the training they received.

The PR practitioners interviewed highlighted that they used Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, of all these highlighted social media platforms most of the government agencies used Facebook more than all of the other platforms, followed by Instagram and Twitter. Few agencies have adopted the use of the WhatsApp messenger. These findings are consistent with the survey results of a research conducted by Pew Research Centre in 2018. The research interview findings suggested that Facebook is the widely used social media followed by YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp worldwide.

Most of the PR employees highlighted that they developed the social media pages simply because it was mandatory by the MICT to implement the SMUP, while others felt the use of Facebook would make it easy for them to disseminate information. Some felt that the platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram were becoming so popular in Namibia; hence they felt these would be the best platform to build their online presence on. The interview showed that the government agencies promote their social media pages via word of mouth, sharing of the social media pages by the employees, advertising on trade fairs, television, radio and publications.

Of all the 50 PR employees that were interviewed, it was quite clear that the government agencies do not have any documented policies and procedures aligned to the SMUP that guide the use of social media. The management of social media seems to be at the sole discretion of management and leadership. According to Hardinova et al (2010) a social media policy should contain a minimum of 8 procedures that guide employee use of social media, security, content, account management, acceptable respondents conduct, legal issues, employee access and conduct.

PR interview responses also show that there is little promotion to improve awareness of the social media pages used by the government agencies as they only tend to utilise word of mouth, in some cases radio and trade fares to improve use of the social media pages. The results also revealed that there is a limited linkage between the traditional way of sharing information and the developed social media pages.

O'Toole (2010) posits that the feature of interdependence is the most distinctive features of networking which separate parties to the networking relationship on essentially equal footing with no part being subservient to any other part. In light of the recommendation cited by O'Toole, the government agencies seem to fail to implement the important concepts of building proper networks. The PR interviews revealed that the most of the social media pages of the government agencies are updated as to when it is necessary, meaning, there is no adherence to any guideline as information is haphazardly uploaded. There is no evidence of procedures in place that guide the type of content as well as the frequency of uploads.

On the survey that was conducted with Namibian citizens in order to obtain their view as recipients of government services in Namibia. The participants were asked to rank the platforms that they popularly used to access information from government agencies. These findings are also consistent with a study conducted by Fels Institute of Government in 2012 which reported that more than 90% of local governments were utilising Facebook and Twitter to communicate and that the number continues to rise as communities' experiment with these, and other forms of social media, (Immanuel, 2015).

On the contrary, a similar study was conducted in the UK and reported a dramatic increase in 2015 in the use of Instagram by local councils (Afrobarometer, 2018). The use of Instagram has

been equally welcomed in Australia as government agencies use it to share visual information about their work, as well as photos submitted by citizens, in order to help build and strengthen communities (Afrobarometer, 2018).

#### 4.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented and discussed findings acquired through interviews and survey questionnaires. Analysis was done through the use of tables, bar charts, pie charts and other descriptive statistics tools. The findings identified the types of social media used by government agencies while also examining the social media pages to establish adherence to suggested guidelines as well as determine the level of engagement with the community over social media. The findings of the quantitative study were linked to the qualitative research findings as well as the literature review in chapter 2. The next chapter summaries the research, provides a conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research study by focusing on the arising recommendations from the research findings. A statement of the objectives was revised in order to assess if the re study addressed the expectations. An analysis of the achievement of the research objectives has been covered before a summary of the key findings is presented. The conclusion was presented in the guidance of the research objectives.

Recommendations presented has been provided based on the literature analysis, findings of the study as well as the experience in the research process. Recommendations clearly state the areas that the researcher thinks would be significant contributors to the academic literature. The chapter closes by suggesting areas that require further study.

#### 5.1 Key finding and conclusion

This subsection presents the conclusions of the research based on research objectives and other conclusions from the findings and experiences of the researcher. The research placed the objectives at the centre of discussion of all aspects of this study. The study sort of identifying the main types of social media platforms used by government agencies as well as examine the level of adherence to guidelines in the use of social media. The research further evaluated the selected social media strategies to ascertain whether they reflect minimum standard components (awareness, influence etc.) as established by the SMUP. The last part of the research focused on

determining whether social media is contributing to improved stakeholder engagement. The findings and conclusions was be based on the research objectives as presented ahead.

## **5.1.1 Conclusion**

### **5.1.1.1 Research objective 1**

**To investigate the level of adherence to guidelines in the use of the Social Media Use Policy and Implementation Plan by government institutions.**

The government agencies confirmed that they use more social networks in the form of Facebook and Instagram more than microblogs such as Twitter. A survey was conducted with a sample representing the citizens of Namibia confirmed the fact that government agencies social networking sites are mostly visited by the public. 50% of the participants visited government social media networks which in this case on Facebook. The study concludes that of the various types of social media the main platforms being utilised by government agencies Facebook and twitter were the mainly active platforms used. This clearly reflects that the government agencies have not entirely adhered to the SMUP guidance. There are other social media platforms recommended for use by SMUP such as blogs, microblogs, wikis and blogs. There is limited use of all these other platforms. The government agencies attested to the fact that there are no formal and documented procedures in place to guide account management, handling of queries or enquiries, promotion of the social media pages as well as adequate training to ensure the effectiveness of the social media strategy. The survey did confirm these sentiments as the study showed that out of all the participants, 72% of the agreed that the social media for government agencies have neither audio nor video content. On the other hand, the survey confirmed that the content on the government social media is always up to date and credible.

Most of the respondents from the survey felt that the social media pages were that active when it comes to interaction and response to enquiries as evident by the 60% of the participants that indicated they never received a response of any request or enquiry made via social media. These findings clearly show that the government agencies are not entirely adhering to the SMUP guidelines this is evident by the fact that the research also found out that the government agencies are not providing reports while on the other hand there have been limited efforts with regards to training and adoption of the SMUP.

#### **5.1.1.2 Research Objective 2**

##### **To evaluate policy implementation outcomes and their impact from the public experience**

The SMUP was established in order to use social media to engage stakeholders on various issues. The influence and awareness were measured through the survey asking questions around commenting, liking and reposting of government agencies content by the public citizenry. The study found out that less than more than 70% of the participants never commented or reposted government agencies content on social media while of the other hand more than 60% of the participants liked the social media pages. A quick survey was also undertaken to understand whether the participants at any particular time had the opportunity to dialogue with government agencies via social media on laws and bills. The responses saw 85% of the participants indicating that they never got such access or opportunity via social media. Based on these facts it is conclusive that the level of influence by the government social media pages is low while there seems to be a high level of awareness of the social media pages as shown by the high number of participants who liked the pages.

### **5.1.1.3 Research objective 3**

**To identify if any possible challenges are affecting the effective use of the SMUP and Implementation Plan.**

From the interviews conducted a number of issues were highlighted that indicated challenges in the implementation of the social media use policy. The reason why the Government of Namibia resorted to the establishment of SMUP was the added value in using social media networks for communication especially Twitter or Facebook where interested parties would receive faster updates of information. Most social media networks are technologies that support both one-way and two-way communications. Just like the use of websites, chances are high that the same information is repeatedly or statically broadcasted to the public.

However not all people see the real benefit of social media in its support of two-way, interactive communication. Because the social media culture is such that, unless there is a clear reason to do otherwise, users get tired of being sent a steady stream of information that they could always see. This was a reservation which the government officials highlighted. They further hinted a fear of becoming stuck in this familiar mode of communication especially dissemination of policies that are not changing. The public reaction is monotony and irritation towards such communications.

A genuine concern was raised as to how government departments could afford the time to actively support multiple social media outlets to populate information. This could result in misunderstanding communication officers and negative perceptions that they are spending all their time on social media. Another greater concern was whether an expectation that communications officers now be required to respond to direct requests for information. There is

an impact of bureaucracy where responses to social media enquires must always be vetted because government officials cannot just disseminate information that is not approved by the top leadership.

#### 5.1.1.4 Objective Number 4

**To investigate the best possible recommended solutions to overcome the challenges affecting the effective implementation of the SMUP and Implementation Plan.**

In light of the explored study findings which were guided by the research objectives, the researcher made the following recommendations;

1. **Establish clear objectives:** The SMUP needs to differentiate between increasing reach and awareness (message amplification) and expanding the scope of messages (collaborative, iterative message development).
2. **Know your target audiences:** The government agencies need to know their audience in terms of where they prefer to be online and what key trends they engage in for example youth are more likely to be on Instagram while women between in the age of twenties are likely to post on Facebook every day.
3. **Design campaigns for longevity and/or have exit strategies and clear archiving processes:** Material from social media campaigns can “live forever” online and can reappear in circulation years after the campaign ends. It is important to consider date-stamping or to provide explicit local and temporal context to the information in order to prevent users in the future from using dated information that may no longer be appropriate.

4. **Regular and refresher training:** The MICT should invest in the regular training and refresher courses for the PR practitioners to be able to fully utilise the component of social media as well as help them to adapt to new developments of the social media arena.
5. **Determine Resource Needs:** For many platforms that require daily monitoring and responses (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) it is important to allocate sufficient time and resources for ongoing interactions. Similarly, the advocates of the SMUP should also establish a budget and commit funding towards the successful and effective implementation of the policy by government agencies.
6. **Determine an Agency Content-Clearance Processes and Prepare Pre-approved Messaging Scripts:** Some social media platforms require rapid clearance processes to enable real-time interactions with users (SecondLife, Twitter, Facebook) while immediate response is not critical on other platforms (YouTube, 2005).
7. **Encourage or sponsor research investigating:** The government should sponsor research on social media applications and specific objectives aligned to each ministry or government agency.
8. **Encourage coordination of materials and messages with municipal, provincial and government agencies (share resources and leverage national-level campaigns):** Consider incorporating high-quality content from existing campaigns. Integrating popular and high-quality materials from other will not only leverage existing public resources but through cross-linking and redirecting of traffic can improve the visibility of high-quality of information online and through reverse traffic flow, improve your own agency's visibility.

**9. Measurement and tracking of social media strategies:** The government agencies should adopt the use of online applications in order to track the ongoing efforts with regards to social media strategy implementation. Classic examples such as the Klout Score can help in this regard. The Klout Score can help one discover and be recognised for the influence being made in the world by reviewing activity on social media

## **5.2 Summary of recommendations**

Social media is growing rapidly because it supports some important social needs. Government will need to understand how social media support these social needs if government is to use social media well. Social media supports the increased reliance on human networks, the need for rapid interactive communications, the need to blur what is private and public, and the need for engaging multimedia. Whether government can use social media will depend upon how well government can see, understand, and attend to these needs. Social media is about fast, interactive communications. How will bureaucracies adapt to the increased pressures for timely responses is a throbbing question. Social media, therefore, presents fresh and challenging strategic, policy, and managerial issues for many government institutions in Namibia.

## **5.3 Recommendations for further study**

This study should be replicated regionally simply because different government implementing agencies operate in different environments that would require different social media tools due to discrepancies in residents' profile of each district. Another area for further study should be the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan that is able to effectively assess and evaluate efforts in a more standardized manner.

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Please fill in all items (X) where applicable

#### Participant Details

Participant Number \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male  Female

Age: Below 20 years

21 to 30 Years

31 - 40 Years

41 - 50 Years

50 Years and above

## APPENDICES

### PUBLIC SURVEY TOOL

My name is Ester Nakanduungile, I am a student at the University of Namibia (UNAM) where I am studying towards my MA in Media Studies. I am conducting a study on *evaluating the ministry of information and communication technology social media use policy and implementation plan*, in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree.

This research is being conducted according to UNAM guidelines and the information provided will be treated with utmost confidence. Data collected will solely be used for the purpose of this study.

Kindly fill in or cross (X) where applicable

#### Participant Details

Participant Number \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:      Male [ ]      Female [ ]

Age:            Below 20 years [ ]

                  21 to 30 Years [ ]

                  31 - 40 Years [ ]

                  41 - 50 Years [ ]

                  50 Years and above [ ]

Occupation: Student  [ ]  
Business Owner  [ ]  
Civil servant/State employee  [ ]  
Private sector employee  [ ]  
Retired  [ ]

Highest qualification:

Grade 10  [ ]  
Grade 12  [ ]  
Certificate  [ ]  
Diploma  [ ]  
Degree  [ ]  
Higher Degree  [ ]

Marital Status: Single  [ ]

Married  [ ]  
Divorced/Separated  [ ]  
In a relationship  [ ]

Monthly Income:

Below N\$5000  [ ]  
N\$5001-N\$15000  [ ]  
N\$15001-N\$25000  [ ]

Widespread N\$25001-N\$35000 [ ]

Micro-blogs N\$35000 and above [ ]

**Government Social Media Pages**

Do you use social media? Yes [ ] No [ ] (Discontinue survey if answer is "No").

Are often do you use social media? Regularly [ ] Sometimes [ ]

Do you access government of Namibia social media pages? Yes [ ] No [ ]  
(Discontinue survey if answer is "no").

Indicate how often you access government of Namibia social media pages

Daily [ ]

Weekly [ ]

Monthly [ ]

As the need arises [ ]

Others please specify:

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Indicate the government social media pages that you have accessed:

Blogs [ ]

Podcasts [ ]

Social networks [ ]

Wikis [ ]

Micro-blogs [ ]

Message board [ ]

Others, please specify

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Indicate your level of engagement with the post on government social media pages based on the following:

Re-posts      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Commenting      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Replies              Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Likes              Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Others, please specify

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To what extent do you agree with the following statements in relation to government departments social media pages?

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
I have had input on bills and laws on social media					
I have seen government programs on social media					
I usually read press statements of government departments on social media					
Government departments accept criticism on social media					
I have received assistance on government department social media page					
It is easy to find information on government departments on social media					
There is access to audio and video information					
There is credible information on the social media pages					
I go to social media if I want the latest information with regards to government activities					
A government official has responded to my enquires via social media					

Rate your overall experience using government social media pages:

Favourable [ ]

Unfavourable [ ]

Neutral [ ]

## Interview Guide

### EMPLOYEE DATA COLLECTION TOOL

#### Participant Details

#### Participant Number

Gender: Male  Female

Experience: Less Than 5 Years

5 to 10 Years

More than 10 Years

Department: OMA  Regional Council  Local Authority

- 1 Name the social media platforms you have established in the past 3 years
- 2 Which factors did you take into consideration when adopting such platforms?
- 3 What types of content do you upload to your social media platforms?
- 4 How do you promote the use of your social media platforms?
- 5 How often do you post newsletters or any publications on the social media pages?
- 6 Describe the procedure for responding to any requests or questions that are posed on the social media pages.
- 7 Describe the linkages between the social media pages and the traditional ways of sharing information.
- 8 How often are the social media pages updated and what are the reasons informing updates?
- 9 Do you maintain a database of information connected to the social media platforms? Describe the process and uses.

SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

10 Has any training been provided with regards to the use of social media in the following areas?

- Open: Details
- Type of Social Media
- Target Audience Criteria
- Terms of Use and Disclaimer
- Response Handling Procedure
- Non Official Personal Use of Social Media Networks
- Language in Social Media
- Mistake and Error Handling Procedures
- Use of Third Party Websites
- Reporting and Monitoring

3 Number of Participants (Annually)

11 How many reports have you submitted to the WPC Committee since 2016?

3 Annual reports on WPC WPC

12 How often do you report to the WPC Committee?

3 Annual reports on WPC WPC

Awareness: Which factors did you take into consideration when adopting such platforms?

# SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Participant Details

Type of Social Media

Date Established

Department

OMA

Regional Council

Local Authority

Engagement

2016 2017 2018

- 1 What are the number of participants/followers/posters?
- 2 Number of likes (interests)
- 3 Number of Participants (Annually)
- 4 Number of Comments
- 5 Highest responses on survey/post
- 6 Lowest responses on survey/post

Awareness Which factors did you take into consideration when adopting such platforms?

1 Which of the following are captured by the profile?

Mandate

Mission

Vision

Logo

2 Is there a disclaimer and use statement on the social medial platform?

Yes

No

3 Highest number of people who saw one post

4 Lowest number of people who saw one post

Influence Which factors did you take into consideration when adopting such platforms?

2016 2017 2018

1 Number of shares

2 Number of click throughs

3 Number of contributors

4 To what extent are the following group of people active on the social media page?

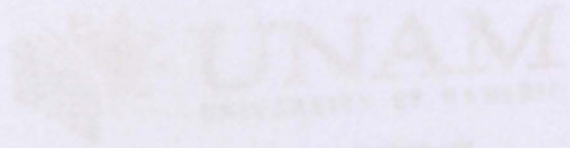
Less Extent Normal Greater Extent

Male

Female

Youth

Adults



*[Faint, illegible text, likely a certificate or document]*

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*



**UNAM**  
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FHSS/496/2019      Date: 30 September, 2019

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Evaluating The Ministry Of Information And Communication Technology (MICT) Social Media Use Policy And Implementation Plan

Student: ESTER NAKANDUUNGILE

Student Number: 200114360

Supervisor(s): *Prof. E. Alpaño*

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
  - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
  - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

HREC wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. E. de Villiers: HREC Chairperson



Ms. P. Claassen: HREC Secretary

