AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN EFFECTIVE

COMMUNICATION TOOL IN NAMIBIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE AFFIRMATIVE

REPOSITIONING MOVEMENT (ARM)

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ABSTRACT

The study assesses the impact of social media, as a communication tool, its efficacy and the paradigm change it has brought to the communication process in Namibia. Using a qualitative method in the form of a case study, the researcher focuses on Namibia's socio-political movement, the Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM) to predict the impact of social media in Namibia, particularly Facebook. ARM is a youth driven movement which put immense pressure on the Government of Namibia to make access to land to the Namibian youth imperative. Participants of the study, selected using purposive sampling, are 10, comprised of five (5) most active users on the ARM Facebook page; one (1) news editor of New Era; one (1) news editor of the Namibian Sun, one (1) news editor from the Namibian and two (2) leaders of ARM. Interview guides with semi-structured questions was used to collect data from self-administered interview sessions. The study established that 100 percent of respondents who participated successfully confirmed they are connected to social media sites including Facebook and that all of them have substantial knowledge of ARM and its activities. The study further highlights that ARM's land campaign was deemed successful credited to the group's aggressive use of social media, particularly Facebook. Despite its popularity, social media challenges are recorded such as the quick spread of incorrect information as well as compromised security for internet users, hence the recommendation that social media host companies need to improve internet security by installing firewalls that prevent hacking of data and customer accounts. Further, the researcher recommends that law makers should ensure that the regulation of social media does not infringe on the citizens' rights to freedom of expression. Finally, the study recommended that Namibians should embrace social media as a tool for learning.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to everyone who assisted me in one way or another but most notable to God Almighty, I will serve him until I take my last breath.

DECLARATION

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

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONOMS

ARM	Affirmative Repositioning Movement
BBS	Bulletin Board System
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
IWS	Internet World Statistics
MENG	Marketing Executives Networking Group
MTC	Mobile Telecommunications Company
MICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
NHE	National Housing Enterprise
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
SNS	Social Networking Service
WWW	World Wide Web

DIAGRAMS, TABLES AND FIGURES

1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Orientation of the study

The recent advances in communication technology such as Web 2.0 and especially the participative social media internet, has had dramatic impact in transforming the patterns of communication (Fox & Jones, 2009). Social media, in particular, has increased both connectivity and participation in all spheres of social life, transforming what was previously known as audience to netizens (Luoma-aho, 2010). This transformation has been observed in Namibia where the number of people using internet daily has risen from 16 percent in November 2012 to 39 percent in September 2014 (Stoman & Stoman, 2014) but the extent of the impact remains undocumented.

This study investigated the impact of social media, its efficacy and the paradigm change it has brought to the communication process in Namibia. The researcher used the case study of Namibia's socio-political movement, the Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM) to predict the impact of social media in Namibia. ARM is a youth driven movement which put an immense pressure on the Government of Namibia to make access to land to the Namibian youth imperative.

Initially, ARM opted for land grabbing (Immanuel & Mongudhi, 2014) for which it was severely criticized. Later, ARM saw a window of opportunity by adopting an aggressive use of social media to press on with their demands for access to land. The ARM leadership embarked on a mass mobilisation of the Namibian youth to apply for land (Immanuel, 2015) through which it coerced government into action in favour of its demands. A deadline of 31 July 2015 was set for government to act or face a nation-wide conundrum of land grabbing by the youth. ARM's

mobilization strategy through the use of social media yielded astounding results as the youth responded in numbers and caught local authorities by surprise when close to 51,000 Namibian youth submitted applications for land (Haidula & Mongudhi, 2015) through various municipalities around the country. This study only used Facebook to measure the impact of this social media platform on the activities of ARM as it was the social media platform that was extensively used by ARM to achieve many of their objectives. According to (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer, & Johnston, 2009) Facebook is a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and co-workers by facilitating the sharing of information and political beliefs. The ARM case study offers opportunity to assess the impact of social media in Namibia and the findings of this study can offer better understanding of the development, impact and efficacy of social media in the country.

According to Eltantawy & Wiest (2011), new communication technology, especially social media, has become an important resource for the mobilization of collective action and subsequent creation, organisation and implementation of social movements around the world. The two researchers further state that there is little doubt that social media played a significant role in the revolutions that have struck the Arab world. In December 2010, some governments in the Arab States were overthrown through the Arab uprising via social media which has since been referred to as the "Twitter Revolution". According to (Kasslm, 2012) in countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen, rising action plans such as protests made up of thousands, have been organized through social media such as Facebook and Twitter arguing that it is important to understand that new platforms of social media didn't cause Arab Spring but played a role of communication that aids the revolutions in the long run. Kasslm (2012) further contends that

social networks have broken the psychological barrier of fear by helping many to connect and share information and that it has given most people in the Arab world the knowledge that they are not alone, that there are others experiencing just as much brutality, just as much hardships, just as much lack of justice. In Namibia, it is hypothesised that the mass application of land by the Namibian youth, is an impact that can be attributed to the adoption of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter by the ARM.

The advent of technology brought with it mobile phones that enable people to communicate easily through voice calls and internet communication. Social media makes use of internet-linked devices such as mobile smart phones, i-pads, tablets and computers, among others. Namibia is privileged to be one of the African countries with a higher rate of smart phone penetration, thanks to marketing and advertising initiatives of companies like the Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC) which run promotions aimed at migrating their customers from basic mobile to smart mobile phones. According to Malumo (2012) approximately 470 000 Namibian citizens had access to mobile cell phones with potential to internet while figures from the Internet World Statistics (2016) indicate that the number has grown to 520 000 in 2016 representing 23.4 percent of the 2.2 million population. In order to understand the proliferation of social media into Namibia, the researcher looked at how Facebook started.

Unlike previous social media platforms such as Friendster, the original intention of Mark Zuckerberg in designing Facebook was to support distinct college networks at Harvard University only (Ellison, 2007). For one to join Facebook, they had to have a Harvard.edu email address to use as log in or access details. With time, Facebook began supporting other colleges

whereby those users were also required to have university email addresses associated with their institutions. As an additional requirement, the network had to keep the site relatively closed and contributed to users' perceptions of the site as an intimate, private community. The social platform allowed the user to create a profile page from which personal information and views could be shared. With each upload of information other users connected to the profile page were alerted and could then offer comments or liked what was posted.

With minimal exceptions, available research suggests that most social media primarily support pre-existing social relations. When Facebook was initially launched in 2004, "there were just three things that users could do on the site; create a profile with their picture and information, view other people's profiles and add people as friends" (Chaffey et al., 2009, p.493). Because of continuous migration, social media is used to maintain relationships intact as opposed to meeting new people because Facebook has introduced other functions to create the Facebook experience (Ellison, 2007). Even though there may not be direct or physical contacts, users derive comfort and assurance through pictographic images. Thus, research has investigated how online interactions interface with offline ones and found that Facebook users engage in "searching" for people with whom they have an offline connection more than they "browse" for complete strangers to meet. Likewise, Pew research found that 91 per cent of U.S. teens who use social media do so to connect with friends (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

From September 2005, Facebook expanded to include high school students, professionals inside corporate networks in the United States of America, Canada, and Mexico and was also made available in many universities in the United Kingdom, Australia and subsequently to the entire

world (Chaffey et al., 2009). The change to open signup did not mean that new users could easily access users in closed networks gaining access to corporate networks still required the appropriate dot com address, while gaining access to high school networks required administrator approval. Unlike other social media, Facebook users are unable to make their full profiles public to all users. Another feature that differentiates Facebook is the ability for outside developers to build "applications" which allow users to personalize their profiles and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories.

While most social media focus on growing broadly and exponentially, others explicitly seek narrower audiences. While some intentionally restrict access to appear selective and elite, other identity-driven sites like BlackPlanet, and affiliation-focused sites like MyChurch are limited by their target demographic and thus tend to be smaller. Currently, there is limited data regarding how many people use social network although marketing research indicates that social networking sites are growing in popularity worldwide (comScore, 2007). This growth has prompted many corporations to invest time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting, and advertising social media communication. For purposes of productivity at the workplace institutions and business organisations are blocking their employees from accessing the social networking sites. Additionally, the United States of America's military banned soldiers from accessing MySpace (Frosch, 2007) and the Canadian government prohibited employees from Facebook (Benzie, 2007), while the U.S. Congress had to propose legislation to ban youth from accessing their Facebook profiles at school and in libraries.

The rise of social media indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. While websites dedicated to communities of interest still exist and prosper, social media are primarily organized around people, not interests. Early public online communities such as Usenet and public discussion forums were structured by topics or according to topical hierarchies, but social network sites are structured as personal networks, with the individual at the centre of their own community. This more accurately mirrors unmediated social structures, where "the world is composed of networks, not groups" (Wellman, 1988, p.37). The introduction of Social Networking Service (SNS) features has introduced a new organizational framework for online communities, and with it, a vibrant new research context.

1.2   Statement of the problem

The uptake of social media in Namibia has been exponential especially among the youths as can be seen from Facebook and Twitter users (Stoman & Stoman, 2014). However, research to backup this conclusion is lacking. As an emerging highly participative and empowerment communication channel, social media has an impact on the way people communicate. It connects people faster and has an advantage of instant communication where the exposure, engagement and the exchange is long lasting and constant.

This study, *The Impact of Social Media as an effective Communication Tool: A case study of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM),* examined the impact of social media on the Affirmative Repositioning Movement. ARM aggressively used social media, and in particular, Facebook, to campaign for the mass application of land to local authorities. Having limited access to traditional media, the leaders of ARM, opted to adopt the use of social media platform to promote their cause. The response surprised local authorities as close to 51,000 Namibian youth submitted applications for land (Haidula & Mongudhi, 2015). This research aims to

investigate the impact this adoption and usage of social media had on ARM's primary mission of garnering support of the Namibian youth for the mass application of land to local authorities.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of social media as an effective communication tool on socio-political groups such as the Affirmative Repositioning Movement. The subsets of the main objective are:

1. To establish the impact of social media as a communication tool on ARM's cause to champion the mass application for land by the Namibian youth;

2. To establish the power associated with social media platform such as Facebook; and

3. To establish the effectiveness of social media platform as an empowerment tool to display the collective opinion of users that led to the mass application of land by the Namibian youth.

1.4   Significance of the study

The importance of this study lies in its ability to measure the impact of social media as an effective communication tool. Although still a developing nation, Namibia is part and parcel of the global village which is embracing technology fast. Knowing how social media fares as a communication tool will certainly remove bottlenecks of conventional methods thereby enhancing efficiency and effectiveness across the entire spectrum of the Namibian service industry and to influence communication change in such organisations including the ARM. While some governments and other social institutions seem to appreciate social media platforms, the Namibian government continue to apply breaks in restricting the use of social media during working hours. State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) such as the National Housing Enterprise (NHE) do not allow using social media in its entirety. This study has the potential to give policy makers

an opportunity to review current policies and may influence the review of such restrictions with informed and credible information for decision making. Furthermore, it may have a psychological advantage and capacity to influence social media engagements amongst Namibians with a drive for influencing decision making. The study can serve as a point of reference to future researchers as there is limited literature on the use of social media in the Namibian context.

1.5   Limitations of the study

The Limitations are described as potential weaknesses in a study which are out of a researcher's control. The study is limited to the activities of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM) during the period of November 2014 to July 2015 as the base point of the study while the activities of the movement spanned beyond July 2015 where significant events may have occurred and consequently are not covered in this study in order to give it focus. Further, there is a possibility of inconsistent social media presence due to high internet costs. Finally, the study is limited in that the researcher has no control over the responses given during interview hence respondents might provide answers they believe are socially acceptable and not necessarily a reflection of the truth.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review in this research shall cover literature relevant to the research topic, gaps in knowledge, theoretical and methodological shortcomings and demonstrate the need for further research on the topic. The literature review exhibits previous evidences on similar topics which the researcher can utilize to defend his argument, findings and recommendations. It also gives the researcher an opportunity to review the presented literature, evaluate it and give comments. The literature review further gives the researcher an opportunity to re-evaluate the presented literature and relate it to the research topic and objectives. The purpose of a literature review is to exhibit previous evidences on the similar topics which the researcher can utilise to defend his argument, findings and recommendations.

2.2 Understanding social media, its impact and effectiveness

Luoma-aho (2010, p.3) defines social media as "writing and broadcasting carried out by the people formally known as the audience." This change from audience to creators of information, signals a huge transformation in the communication media because information users and receivers have become information generators (Ngai, Tao & Moon, 2014). This conclusion is supported by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, p.61) who defines social media as "a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". The former audience, who are now the generators of information, can use social media to create, share and exchange information in a virtual community. The digital revolution as Levick (2012) suggests, has changed several aspects of society including democracy and the way human beings react to certain situation. Miller (2011) concurs and contends that the impact of Facebook on humanity is immense such

that by 2010, six years after the application was launched, it was evident that Facebook would be a useful tool for socialisation for all age groups especially the elderly. "Signs abounds that the free democratisation of the free market system is underway" (Levick, 2012) entrenching increasing sense of democracy on socio-political and economic fronts.

The advantage of this constant virtual connection and sharing of information, ideas and opinions helps to display a collective opinion that has not been experienced before in the traditional media. Holmes, Hadwin & Mottershead, (2013) argue in favour of the link between social power and the media and their views are supported by Ngai, Tao & Moon (2014) who catalogue the impact and changes brought by the social media. Tang, Gu & Whinston (2012), argue that the benefits of participating and engaging in this virtual community, can help build reputations, bring out career opportunities or even generate direct monetary revenue. Improvement in technology has made it feasible to access the Internet almost anywhere with Siapera (2012: 8) suggesting that portability of communication devices such as cell phones has had a huge impact in the growth and usage of social media claiming that "this portability introduces an element of continuous availability and connectivity to the Internet across boundaries of space and time". Livingstone & Brake (2009) contend that social networking have been adopted quickly by young people world-wide which enables them to present themselves, learn and build relationships while concerns of privacy, bullying and harmful contact continue to grow.

Politicians too can also derive benefits from using social media. The 2008 United States of America elections is the case in point. Chang (2010) cited the United States President Barack Obama to have used social media during the 2008 US Presidential elections to raise money and advance his cause which propelled him to the White House and to be rated as the most effective online politician. Some have attributed his election victory to the way he aggressively used social

media such as Facebook. In Namibia, although the figures keep surging, politicians such as President Hage Geingob and the leader of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) which is the official opposition party, McHenry Venaani, are active on social media platforms (Stoman & Stoman, 2014). In November 2014, Amupanda and his allies occupied a piece of land in the affluent suburb of Kleine Kuppe and subsequently formed the ARM. Amupanda and his allies immediately introduced a Facebook Page (Affirmative Repossession ERF 2014) which received over 4 000 followers in just one day and the number continued to grow (Amupanda, 2014). This may be partially attributed to the increased number of social media handlers in Namibia with the Internet World Statistics (2016) suggesting that almost every individual that has internet connection in the country is connected to social media arguing that approximately 515 000 of the 520 000 with internet connection are Facebook subscribers.

From November 2014, the leaders of ARM were relentless in campaigning for the Namibian youth to have access to land using social media in championing this cause. This campaign culminated in the mass application of land to local authorities. The dimensions of social media are that it exposes, engages, shares and provides instant feedback making it a communication channel with impact that has not been seen before. The introduction of Facebook in 2004 was a major transformation in the history of communication (Miller, 2011) and this medium has grown in popularity with over one billion users worldwide surpassing Google to become the most visited site on the Internet (Miller, 2011). The growth of Facebook in popularity is also documented by Chaffey et all., (2009) who state that the social network site had 30 million active users in July 2007 with an average of 250 000 new registrations per day. Chaffey et all., (2009)

further argue that more than half of active users retain to the site daily and spend an average of 20 minutes browsing through.

Social media and new media are changing the ways in which information moves, the speed at which it travels and the transparency of such information (Mayfield III, 2009). Hesmondhalgh & Toynbee (2008) argue in favour of their value in social and political life stating that social media sites bear crucial democratic values and constitute tenets of liberal democracy. This is supported by Huaye & Sakamoto (2014) who maintain that social media such as Facebook, Twitter and other platforms come with benefits of collective opinion that can influence people's actions. Miller (2011) contends that the impact of Facebook on humanity is immense such that by 2010, six years after the application was launched; it was evident that Facebook would be a useful tool for socialisation for all age groups.

Social media involves creating and posting content interesting enough to stimulate immediate sharing by followers thereby generating a larger circle of those interested in the topic or brand (Ryan, 2015). Online social networks have permeated all generations of internet users becoming a prominent communications tool, particularly amongst the young generation. Henceforth, institutions are increasingly using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to connect with audiences. The understanding of social media as a marketing tool cannot happen without first defining Web 2.0: a term that describes a new way in which end users use the World Wide Web, a place where content is continuously altered by all operators in a sharing and collaborative way (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010). "It is much more to do with what people are doing with the technology than the technology itself, for rather than merely retrieving information, users are now creating and consuming it, and hence adding value to the websites

that permit them to do so" (Campbell et al., 2011). Web 2.0 has evolved from simple information retrieval to interactivity, interoperability, and collaboration (Campbell et al., 2011).

Social media improves multi-tasking while one is working. Research indicates that it is not enough to have a new, unique "hook" to keep users around forever. For example; Twitter's low character counts were acceptable back in the day, but now the more dynamic users are getting frustrated with the gimmick (generally) (Ryan, 2015). The most popular platforms are ones that consistently evolve with new consumer trends, for example, Instagram is introducing new features on a regular basis, and has become a much more approachable platform than its original niche would allow. The key to longevity therefore is the fact that a future social media platform will only survive if it allows itself to change function and format over the years lest it fails (Ryan, 2015).

While for many, social media is a simple means of communication making it easier to stay in contact with friends and family, it is for others an inexpensive marketing channel we can leverage to power our businesses (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). In both contexts, social media has become a permanent fixture of society, and it's almost impossible to imagine a future without it. The brands might change and the platforms might evolve, but the social media concept is here to stay. That being said, social media isn't perfect, and it's not without challenges. Consumers and brands alike are starting to notice the flaws and weaknesses of these systems, and even major players like Twitter are starting to feel the pressure to address these fault points (or fall out of relevance). As the world look towards the future of social media, there are pivotal challenges associated with privacy and the legitimacy of information that circulates on social media that the

next generation's platforms will need to address (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). Acknowledging and anticipating these changes can help organisations to balance and carefully monitor their involvement with social media in the marketing world.

Consistently, the pattern of successful social media platforms have followed a pattern of increasing "immersion," which allows users to integrate social media further and more naturally into their daily lives (Ryan, 2015). The jump to mobile devices, the real-world applications of "checking in" and geographic identifiers, and the upcoming virtual reality technologies are all examples of this. Social brands that aren't able to address these challenges will eventually fade away, to be replaced with the platforms that are highly interactive and offer an opportunity for engagement almost anytime, anywhere as long as there is Internet connection. That means, to be prepared for the next generation of social acceptance and visibility amongst clients, a brand has to be prepared for these evolutions (Ryan, 2015). That means preparing for platforms with highly specific niches, mediums, and angles, seeking a balance between public and private consumer engagements one seeks (and offer), investing in the platforms with the highest degree of adaptability, and focusing on ways to immerse customers. Predicting the future of social media beyond a couple of years is highly speculative, and arguably a little risky (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012).

Bradshaw (2011) maintains that the incredible growth of social media has dominated the Web 2.0 decade as most users stumble across online news while looking for something else therefore news organisations can no more ignore social media. Bradshaw (2011) further states that social media has brought with it drastic changes to the communication channel changing gatekeepers to "gatewatchers" which has meant in increased role for media, not just in processing copy but in

reacting to, verifying and contextualising stories that have already circulated on social media platforms.

According to Chu (2011), Facebook groups maintain more favourable attitude towards social media and advertising. Users who have more positive attitudes towards advertising are more likely to join retailing groups or brands on Facebook. In Namibia, the majority of social media users are the young people between the ages of 15 and 45 years. Their activities and sustained engagement on the platforms bring about social movements like the ARM. Social movements is defined as networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts on the basis of shared collective identities (Diani, 1992). Social movements by nature are pressure groups that characteristically seek to challenge the status quo to the core and push for radical changes to be made. Because of this, social movements are considered leftist and somewhat a threat to political order as they sensitise the public on key issues related to governance and its deficiencies.

2.2.1 Impact on politics

Because of their important role in many elections around the world, including in the U.S., Iran, and India, every politician in need of support and popularity quickly joins the social media bandwagon. Social media has served to rally people for a cause, and have inspired mass movements and political unrests in many countries including the "Arab Spring" uprising (Ryan, 2015).

2.2.2 Impact on Business

Internet-savvy companies are using social media to advertise their products, build customer loyalty and many other functions. Interactions and feedback from customers help businesses to

understand the market, and fine-tune their products and strategies (Ryan, 2015). Many business organisations organize promotions, contests and give away prizes to enthuse consumers to visit their social website page more often. Compared to television advertisements and other expensive forms of marketing, social media presence is a cheap and effective means to enhance brand image and popularity (Ryan, 2015).

2.2.3 Impact on Productivity

Many companies have blocked social networks on their office Internet as addicted employees can distract themselves on such sites, instead of focusing on work. In fact, studies show that British companies have lost billions of dollars per year in productivity because of social media addiction among employees (Ryan, 2015).

2.2.4 Effect on Socialization

With social networks, people have the opportunity to re-connect with their old friends and acquaintances, make new friends, trade ideas, share content and pictures, and many other activities. Social media users can stay abreast of the latest global and local developments, and participate in campaigns and activities of their choice. Professionals use social media sites like LinkedIn to enhance their career and business prospects. Students can collaborate with their peers to improve their academic proficiency and communication skills. One can learn about different cultures and societies by connecting with people in other countries (Ryan, 2015).

2.2.5 Impact on Costs

Research indicates that costs of many social media campaigns are extremely modest compared to other campaign forms. For instance, the setting up of surveillance and monitoring systems can be free or executed with a very small advertising budget. Furthermore, using video and graphic art

contests, organizations can encourage the public to create compelling campaign material to provide testimonials. It is technically feasible to produce low cost video and audio clips using a desk top computer and video- and audio-editing software while the creation of high quality video content or podcasts is generally contracted out to professional media companies at traditional market rates (Ryan, 2015).

Bennett (2009) noted that many research trials of communication interventions were extremely inexpensive to develop and deliver; however, the relatively small study population sizes and relatively short duration of research studies limits the instructiveness of these studies, at least for agencies considering implementing long-term campaigns to reach broad audiences. Some applications, such as mobile text messaging, are usually contracted out to serve the communication purpose.

2.3 Social media as a marketing tool

The research topic enquired on the relevance of social media as an effective communication tool in Namibia. By extension, marketing is a form of communication, hence the inclusion of this section as part of relevant literature. Therefore, prior understanding of effects of social media as a marketing tool would assist in building the case regarding the impact of social media as an effective communication tool in a developing country like Namibia. Since its discovery, social media has had a huge influence on activities of business organisations, marketing and on how businesses engage with their target market. Given that the use of social media in sharing and engaging with others continues to grow, it would be wise for business enterprises to develop and implement a sustainable social media strategy in order to successfully take advantage of this rapidly changing business environment (Bennett, 2014).

The invention of 'trending topics' social media is another big influence. Twitter refers to a trending topic as a hash tag-driven topic that is immediately popular at a particular time. Based on who you follow and where you're located, trends are determined by an algorithm that monitors hot subjects (Vanessa, 2012). The author further states that trends – as they are commonly referred to as – assist organizations in knowing what are acceptable and what is not at a particular time in the market.

"Social media marketing is a recent phenomenon that began with social media dominating online communication" (Hensel and Deis, 2010). Social media marketing is a form of internet marketing that implements various social media networks in order to achieve marketing communication and branding goals. Social media marketing primarily covers activities involving social sharing of content, videos, and images for marketing purposes. Social media marketing programs usually centre on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks, resulting in electronic word of mouth (Assad and Gomez, 2011).

When the underlying message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself, this form. Marketing techniques adopted by social media marketing include targeting Consumer's online brand related activities, electronic word of mouth and these techniques are used to successfully advertise online. Social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter provide advertisers with information about the likes and dislikes of their consumers which is

crucial, as it provides the businesses with a "target audience". Consumer's online brand related activities (COBRAs) are another method used by advertisers to promote their products. An activity such as uploading a picture of a product purchased on Facebook is an example of a COBRA (Chenhall, 2005).

Another technique for social media marketing is the electronic word of mouth (EWOM). Electronic recommendations and appraisals are a convenient manner to have a product promoted via consumer to consumer interactions. An example would be a review of a company online. A good service would result in a positive review which gets the company free advertising via social media, however a poor service will result in a negative consumer review which can potentially ruin the company's reputation of marketing results in earned media rather than paid media.

Vanessa (2012) posits that increasing exposure and increasing traffic are the top two benefits of social media marketing. Further research studies indicate that marketers revealed that their social media engagements have generated increased exposure for their businesses particularly increasing traffic which seemed the second major benefit (Bennett, 2014). Studies indicate that the majority of people who own mobile phones and almost all business organizations have an active presence on the social media. The most used social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest. For instance, as at March 2015, Facebook had 1.415 billion active users while Twitter trailed behind with 288 million monthly active users (Chenhall, 2015). According to Bacon (2011), there are various ways to maintaining a successful online and social media presence, which some may have been employed by the ARM, which include:

a) Contents

This is the backbone of social media which dictates that online and social media platforms will not command traffic unless they publish fresh, relevant information on a regular basis for their audience' consumption. When social media networks and accounts that do not publish fresh contents they are considered dead (Bacon, 2011).

b) Engagement

The second aspect to consider for running a successful social media campaign is audience engagement. When organizations and individuals engage their online audience, they are generally seen as friendly and responsive plus many other positive perceptions, all of which translate into sales, patronage, goodwill, brand affiliation, loyalty and an army of brand ambassadors who will go to any length to promote/defend a name, brand, product, service or cause (Bacon, 2011).

c) Skills

Bacon (2011) observed that there were technical skills required to drive a vibrant social media presence which included graphics, research, designs, backend management, analytics, optimization, monitoring and others. Not knowing which to deploy, when and how to deploy it or utilizing them wrongly is a sure road to virtual comatose or disaster.

d) Consistency

The knowledge of knowing what to do in order to have a winning social media formula and how to do may not be considered as guarantee for success unless that knowledge is backed by relentless efforts and commitment to doing it all the time (Bacon, 2011). Lack of consistence accounts mostly for the online failure of multinationals, institutions and public figures, who have all it takes as well as the budget to be vibrant and visible online, but whose activities are a

whimper (Bennett, 2014). According to Colliander and Dahlem (2011), most marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans of about (70%) or more and gain at least (71%) marketplace intelligence.

e) Improved sales

Bacon (2011) further states that it takes time to develop relationships that lead to sales as a large percentage of marketers who take the time to find great results. Research indicates that more than half of marketers that have been using social media for a minimum of three years report it has helped them improve sales. On the other hand, because they lack the needed tools to track sales, 50 per cent of all marketers taking this survey report social media have not improved in their sales (Bacon, 2011)

f) Increased exposure

Colliander and Dahlem (2011) suggested that the vast majority of marketers indicated their social media efforts increased exposure for their businesses. Nearly all marketers who have been employing social media marketing for one year or longer report it generates exposure for their businesses

g) Business partnerships

The more time marketers invest in social media networking, the more they gain business partnerships (Bacon, 2011). More than half of marketers that have invested at least 1 year in social media marketing report that new partnerships were gained. Empirical evidences have proved that more than half of those investing only 6 hours in social media weekly were able to build new partnerships. Marketers selling to other businesses were more likely to achieve this benefit than those selling to consumers (Chenhall, 2015)

h) Generated leads

By spending as little as 6 hours per week, 66%+ of marketers see lead generation benefits with social media. More than half of marketers with at least one year of social media experience were generating leads with social platforms (Chenhall, 2015).

    i)   Reduced marketing expenses

Close to half of companies that spend at least 6 hours on social media efforts weekly managed to reduce their marketing expenditure.

    j)   Improved search rankings

Improved search engine rankings were most prevalent among those who've been using social media for one year or longer, with 58%+ reporting a rise. Research states that at least 60 per cent of those investing a minimum of 6 hours per week in social media marketing saw improvements in search engine rankings (Bacon, 2011)

    k)   Increased traffic

A significant number of participants found that increased traffic occurred with as little as 6 hours per week invested in social media marketing. And those who've used social media for one year or more reported substantially better results reported benefits compared with those with less experience (Bacon, 2011)

    l)   Provided marketplace insight

Bacon (2011) stressed that of those with at least one year of experience, 69 per cent or more found social platforms provided marketplace insight; At least businesses spending at least six hours per week were more likely to gain marketplace insight.

    m) Developed loyal fans

Further research indicated that business to company (B2C) marketers were much more likely to develop a loyal fan base through social media than business to business (B2B) marketers.

2.4 Social media usage amongst young people in Namibia

Social media influences people's lives both positively and negatively (Miller, 2011). Social media can make people more aware of what is happening on a local, national and global level. It also has the ability to warp one's opinion of the truth. By encouraging false ideals, praising selfishness and making the possession of fame, fortune and talent qualifications to be considered a valuable person, social media has the capacity to ruin society (Chang, 2010). Societies with strong moral roots are in direct opposition with social media landscape on many levels. The Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry posits that "some media messages have been linked to the cause of numerous health concerns for youth" (Miller, 2011). Static or motion pictures posted on social media for entertainment purposes can provide graphic, sexualized and negative representations of what life is like and what is considered acceptable.

Because of its addictive influence, social media quite often influences young people of all ages and cultures as they attempt to imitate the "prominent, glamorous role models they observe in the media". Social media has contributed towards many young people developing unhealthy eating habits, low self-esteem, psychological complications and other difficulties through the internalization of negative ideas found in movies, television, radio and advertisements. Negative media influences can twist the values and conduct needed to steer youth in the right direction (Ryan, 2015).

Some advantages of social networking include open communication and networking opportunities. On a personal level, it allows friends and family to connect no matter where they are in the world, and on a business level it allows companies to share information with

employees and customers quickly (Ryan, 2015). No matter which profession an individual works in, networking is a vital part of success. Social media makes connecting with like-minded professionals easy and, through quality interactions, professionals can significantly grow their contact lists. However, one of the downsides of social media is the overshare of personal information. Not only does this reflect a lack of social etiquette on the participant's part, it also endangers the security of their privacy. This is especially relevant when employees use social media in the workplace, as they may inadvertently give away information which compromises company security (Miller, 2011).

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 + (New Era, 2014). In both urban and rural communities, social media use is estimated at between five 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 (New Era, 2014). Most had been using SMS messaging for over two years. The researcher also investigated which technology (computer, tablet, laptop or smartphone) was mostly used by students to access their social networking account, and the results revealed that smartphones remained the most common platform (New Era, 2014).

On the other hand, Petrus Muronga conducted a research on "the usage of social networking sites for educational purposes at institutions of higher learning in Namibia" where he looked at how students used social media and whether academic institutions used these tools for education. Although some lecturers used Facebook, for instance, to communicate with students, the study found that the majority of Namibian students regard social media as more useful for communication among themselves, with friends or relatives. Only a minority used it for researching information or for study purposes. As with Bento's study, Muronga found that most students used their smartphones to access social media. Muronga's study recommended that academic institutions should "integrate these tools within a given time frame" and "implement institutional policies on the use of social media in the educational environment." He noted, however, that there were concerns that had to be addressed regarding security and privacy issues on social networks (New Era, 2014).

2.5 Challenges associated with social media

2.5.1 Reduced academic performance

In today's highly technological environment, high school and college students are exposed to all types of gadgets including laptops, e-readers, cell phones and tablets which enable them access to social media at any given time (Ryan, 2015). Studies have indicated that social networking sites have the potential to reduce the academic performance of high school and college students when they spend more time on the networks. For instance, students try to manage their work while also interacting with the virtual environment effectively at the same time thereby impeding on their consistent concentration levels.

Such a scenario can be considered a serious dilemma given that Common Sense Media (2012) assert that out of the more than one billion Facebook users, 90 per cent are young people. This

could be very true given that in a country like Namibia, many learners based in the rural areas with no access to smart phone technology because of rural lifestyles, seem to perform better than their urban counterparts.

2.5.2 Health hazard

Addiction with social media is tantamount to unhealthy lifestyle especially for young people as they now spend most of their time communicating via internet. This prevents them from going out and physically interacting with others as well as engaging in some form of physical sporting activities which are known to reduce the accumulation of body fat. Furthermore, Thomas (2011) observed that too much time on social network sites may lead to internet addiction. Empirical evidences indicate that students around the world spend a lot of time on social network sites which leads to serious consequences. For instance; excessive time spent on social media could lead to the behavioural phenomenon known as internet addiction.

Kandell (1998) state that internet addiction is a psychological dependence on or a behavioural addiction to the internet resulting in excessive usage. Additionally, many researchers have argued that the attractiveness of the internet could lead to excessive use. On the other hand, Young (1998) argued that the Internet itself is not addictive, but highly interactive applications like online chatting can be addictive. The studies further indicated that using Facebook can result in a serious addiction with the social networking site.

2.5.3 Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying occurs when stalkers use social media to harass targets on internet based platforms (Vakhitova & Reynald, 2014). Many introverts and socially reclusive users place too much emphasis on virtual interaction, and ignore the real world outside. Without due care,

unscrupulous people can target you for cyber bullying and harassment on social sites. School children, young girls, and women can fall prey to online attacks which can create tension and distress (Ryan, 2015).

2.5.4 Privacy concerns

Privacy has always been a topical issue with social media; uploading personal information on a public profile leaves users vulnerable to hackers, stalkers, abusers, law enforcement, and even potential hirers. For some brands, public status is a key advantage, for instance; one of the reasons Twitter came to be popular was its total open-forum approach (Ryan, 2015). While privacy has become a greater concern to match user outcry (as with Facebook's constant doling out of new privacy updates) for some, others have responded by making platforms as private as possible, for instance; SnapChat. Because social media has an inherently public aspect, it can never be 100 percent private, and being 100 percent public is something that almost nobody desires. It can therefore be concluded that tomorrow's social media platforms will have to find a new way to marry these two ideas together in a way that keeps users happy.

2.6 The future of social media

Since the early days of the telephone, BBS and IRS, social media has since come a long way with new applications that enable free international calls being developed (Ryan, 2015). It is quite clear that with time and continuous improvements in technology, social media will continue evolving to something much better. Given the current rate at which social media sites are evolving, it can be concluded that social media is not just but another technology phase which will pass anytime soon (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012). It is therefore difficult to imagine what social media will be in the next ten years. The advent of iPads, iPhones and Tablets from

conventional mobile handsets has heightened the popularity of social media with more and more people acquiring these gadgets.

Given the impact of Youtube video's that quickly generate viewing hits, it can be argued with certainty that video is the next big thing in social media. The combination of low entry costs broadband and the ease of video production using smartphones made social videos an instant hit. Social media videos make it easier for the aspect of privacy as content can be clearly attributed to the source.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Creswell (2008) defines theoretical framework as a summary of theory regarding a particular problem that is developed through a review of previously tested knowledge of the variables involved. It identifies a plan for investigation and interpretation of the findings. Although there are several theories that can be applied to this trend analysis, the researcher considered only one theory. This study will use the Social Network Theory which is the collective term comprising of all social factors which are involved in the communication processes such as social influence (Kelman, 1958), social identity and capital, and social interaction and ties (Chang & Chuang, 2011). This theory has been used to study users' attitudes, influence, intentions and actions in relation to their adoption and use of social media. Because of its relevance in explaining the impact of social media, which is the focus of this study, the researcher, will therefore, employ this theory to explicate how the use of Facebook impacted on the Affirmative Repositioning Movement as a result of its adoption and usage as communication tools of empowerment.

The Social Network theory emphasizes on how people, organizations and groups interact with others who are part of their network (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012). An understanding of the theory is easier when one conducts an examination of the individual pieces starting with the largest element – networks - and working down to the smallest element - the actors. The theory further elaborates that in some ways, networks can be considered as neighbourhood because they are comprised of the actors and the relationships between those actors (Ryan, 2015). Commonly referred to as nodes, these actors can be individuals, organizations or even companies. Regardless of what they are, they are always the smallest single unit inside a network. For instance; if the United Nations is viewed as a social network, the United States would be considered a node or actor inside the network.

According to social scientists there exist three types of social networks namely; ego-centric networks, socio-centric networks, and open-system networks. Ego-centric networks are connected with a single node or individual. Socio-centric networks are closed networks by default. Two commonly-used examples of this type of network are children in a classroom or workers inside an organization. In open-system networks, the boundary lines are not clearly defined. A few examples in this type of network are Namibia's elite class, connections between corporations, or the chain of influencers of a particular decision (Ryan, 2015). Due to the lack of clearly-defined boundaries, this type of network is considered the most difficult to study.

Where networks are just a list of close friends or the people one works with, there would be nothing to study. Social scientists are concerned with the interactions between each of the members of the network. These connections or ties, happen to be at the heart of what social

scientists seek to study and understand. Why do the individuals interact, how do they interact and what is the level of closeness - usually referred to as connectedness between group members. The Social Network theory further states that although, there are many types of relationships, including reciprocal, directional and others, each of the types can be reduced to either a strong tie or a weak tie (Ryan, 2015).

2.7.1 Comparing weak and strong ties

Networks that can be considered as strong ties are close enough to such an extent that one has their contact numbers whereas weak ties would be those that would be surprised when communicated with (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012). However, research shows that the weak ties within networks are in some ways more valuable. One study conducted by Johns Hopkins University determined individuals who sought employment most often received more quality job leads from weak links than from strong ones. Nodes refer to individual players or actors inside the network. Inside this part, which is the smallest piece of the social network puzzle, is where scientists, marketers and even politicians, try to analyse the ties a node has with the other members of the network. As an example of a social network, consider the members of a church. Despite the fact all of them are connected by the overall network, not all the individuals are connected with the same degree of closeness. It's these varying degrees of closeness, or connectedness that determine the value of that node to the network (Ryan, 2015).

An actor's location inside the social network can be an indicator of the strength of the ties associated with him. A person near the centre of the network often has more ties or links between himself and the other actors, as opposed to someone on the outer fringes of a network (Taprial

and Kanwar, 2012). A person on the outer edge of the network could be connected to the network by only one link.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Social Network Theory is the six degrees of separation concept. This concept was the outcome of a late 1960s social experiment called The Small World Problem, conducted by Stanley Milgram, in which 100 letters were sent to randomly chosen individuals with a set of instructions to get the letter to a specific individual who lived in Sharon, Massachusetts. However, a couple of stipulations determined how the letter could reach the Sharon, MA target (Ryan, 2015):

a) First, recipients of the letter could only send the letter to someone they knew first-hand, but that person should be someone they thought may know someone who knew the target; and

b) Second, if the recipient knew the target, they were to directly mail the letter to the target.

During the experiment, Milgram determined that there were, on average, six steps between the initial person who received the letter and the Sharon, MA target. The theory also led to the creation of a common trivia game (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012)

Due to the complexity of any social network, using the theory to understand actors and the relationships between them is crucial to the social scientists, theorists, politicians, and even marketers. Many of the researchers often try to glean a better understanding of the inner workings of a network so they can further their cause or simply sell a product (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012). The theory, though, does have some inherent strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

a) The theory offers an explanation for how random people are connected:

b) It's useful in the study of large groups and understanding how their members relate to others in the group; and

c) It provides insight into viral phenomena, such as viral content, the spread of diseases like Zika virus, Ebola, the Arab uprising and many others.

Weaknesses:

a) It's difficult to scientifically replicate; and

b) Interpreting relationships/ties can be subjective (Ryan, 2015).

The Social Network theory is used to understand everything from high employee turnover to the intricate webs associated with terrorist networks. In other words, it is the formula behind social network theory that explains how a piece of social media content goes viral in a relatively short time (Ryan, 2015). This math, power functions, shows how a small change in one area can have a huge impact in the overall network. When a change is initiated at the node level, the change moves first from the node, along its ties to the various connected relationships, before being pushed out to additional nodes and their relationships, creating a change throughout the entire social network.

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of the chapter is to describe the methods used in the study to collect and analyse data including the research design, methodology, population, sampling techniques, data collecting procedures as well as ethical consideration. This chapter is considered relevant in research as it proves the researcher's ability to conduct an academic study using different methods. Through this exercise, the research methodology chapter aids in the development and sharpening of the candidate's critical analysis and thinking skills.

3.2 Research design

Burns & Grove (2003, p.195) define a research design as "a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings". This study is carried out using a qualitative method in the form of a case study which Marshall & Rossman (1999) suggest that it offers opportunities for conducting exploratory and descriptive research that uses the context and setting to search for deeper understanding of the subject of investigation and therefore best suited for this study. The purpose of a case study is to understand the case under investigation in its natural setting, acknowledging its complexity and context (Maree, 2007, p.83). The Affirmative Repositioning Movement was the unit of analysis to determine how a social media platform such as Facebook, can have significant impact on its users. This research method is suitable for elaborative explanation of the impact of Facebook which was extensively used by the Affirmative Repositioning Movement during its 10 months campaign for access to land from November 2014 to July 2015.

3.2.1 Case Study Approach

Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, (2005) state that case study pertains to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis is studied intensively while Creswell (2008) defines the case study as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection meaning that a case under investigation is contained in terms of place, physical boundary as well as time. Cresswell (2008) further outlines three types of cases that a reseracher can utilise:

a) **Intristic cases** – selected because they are unusual and have merit in themselves;

b) **Instrumental cases** – selected because they serve the purpose of illuminating a particular issue; and

c) **Multiple cases** – selected to provide insight into an issue or issues.

This study aims to illuminate particular informationon the use of social media in Namibia using the ARM as a case study hence the reseracher uses instrumental case as it serves the purpose of enlightening the issue being studied.

3.3 Population

Creswell (2008) defines population as a total number of individuals with common characteristics, and are of particular interest to the researcher while Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, (2005) describes population as the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. Therefore, the research population for this study consisted of the leaders of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement, news editors of the traditional media and members of the ARM who are active on Facebook. This target population was identified as it constituted the audiences who were involved with the ARM activities for one reason or the other. Leaders of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement were the initiators of the land activism communication which is under review in this study. News editors were

responsible for editing reportage on the ARM activities while Facebook account holders, especially the youth debated the issue with intensity.

3.4   Sample

Sampling is defined as the process of choosing a small group of respondents from a larger defined target population, assuming that the results obtained from the small group allows the researcher to make conclusions concerning the larger group (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2003). Purposeful sampling is employed in this study as it allows the researcher to accurately classify the sample according to their distinct characteristics and was deemed advantageous as it provides in-depth understanding of the subject by way of obtaining answers from respondents who have had first-hand experience in the subject under investigation (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2011). Purposive sampling is described as a process of selecting a sample based on the knowledge of a population (Babbie, 2004). Creswell (2008) maintains that purposive sampling is advantageous as it saves time and money.

The total sample of 10 comprised of five (5) most active users on the ARM Facebook page; one (1) news editor of New Era; one (1) news editor of the Namibian Sun, one (1) news editor from the Namibian and two (2) leaders of ARM. News editors formed part of the sample because the activities of ARM were highly reported in the traditional media, especially newspapers. Respondents were purposefully chosen to ensure inclusivity and horizontal coverage as the matter was reported by various media houses. Interview requests with active users on the ARM Facebook page were done via Facebook messaging after which interview sessions were scheduled at the earliest convenience of respondents. Respondents in the locale of Windhoek were given the opportunity to choose their preferred venues for interviews while those who could

not be available for face to face interview for various reasons including geographical distance had interview questions sent to their Facebook inboxes for reply. To this end, six face to face interviews were conducted at various locations and dates in Windhoek while two interview guides were answered electronically via Facebook messaging due to geographical distance between the researcher and respondents. Out of the ten (10) chosen respondents, two from the most active Facebook users on the ARM page failed to meet with the interviewer despite having agreed and promised to do the interview after the initial contact was made giving this study a 80 percent participation of interviewees. Several efforts were made to convince the two respondents to partake in the study; however it proved the efforts were in vain.

3.5   Research Instruments

This study used interview guides with semi-structured questions as the data collecting instruments. Interview guides were prepared by the researcher in line with the main research questions as stated in chapter one for primary data collection from participants which data was recorded on audiotape using a voice recorder. Semi-structured interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data and can be used with all age groups (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, (2005) further argue that semi-structured interviews are appropriate in studies where respondents come from divergent backgrounds which is the case in this study. The role of the researcher was to elicit information from key selected informants during the interview sessions. Each respondent's interview was audio recorded then transcribed to cross reference for key themes useful in identity creation and social media influence. Because of time constraints, no pilot research was undertaken in this study. The interview guide consisted of the following eleven (11) questions:

Question 1: What do you understand by the term social media?

Question 2: Are you connected to social media? If 'yes', which ones and how active are you?

Question 3: In your own opinion, what would you consider as the power behind social media platforms such as Facebook?

Question 4: Do you know about the Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM) and its land activism activities?

Question 5: Given your knowledge of social media and ARM, do you think social media had an impact as a communication tool on ARM's cause to champion the mass application for land by the Namibian youth?

Question 6: What impact did social media as a communication and empowerment tool have on the activities of ARM?

Question 7: To what extent is social media effective as an empowerment tool of displaying collective opinion of users over a topical issue?

Question 8: Can social media, particularly Facebook be considered as the most effective form of communication for the future?

Question 9: Do you think Namibians should embrace and rely on social media given some misconceptions peddled on such platforms?

Question 10: What do you think are some of the challenges of social media as an effective communications tool in Namibia?

Question 11: How can the challenges you have mentioned above be addressed?

3.6   Data Collection Procedure

Before personally conducting the interviews with sample respondents as specified, the researcher first sought permission and support from respondents to participate in the interviews. The researcher sent, via Facebook messaging, the Research Permission Letter which was granted by

the University of Namibia to each of the selected respondents. This was done to confirm the legitimacy of the study to respondents and to seek their permission to participate in the study.

Moreover, targeted respondents were asked to answer questions, without necessarily divulging their identities if they wished not to do so. After permission had been granted, the researcher gave all respondents an opportunity to meet them at a restaurant of their choice in Windhoek and six (6) respondents choose to do the interview over lunch or dinner and face to face interviews were conducted in this regard. In some instance where participants did not have transport money, the researcher offered to give them lifts to and from the interview venue. Before the start of each interview session, the researcher once again assured all respondents of their confidentiality and explained the goals and objectives of the study and also informed respondents that the interview would be captured on audio tape. The researcher backed up the interview with voice recording in case he missed something during the interview. The use of the voice recorder enabled the researcher to maintain eye contact and to preserve the participant's words during data collection.

On average, interview sessions took approximately 30 minutes and all were conducted in English. Upon completion, responses were evaluated with the researcher highlighting responses that needed clarity and got back to the respondents. When all data was collected the researcher made hard and soft copies and stored them safely elsewhere as a security measure in the case of unforeseen occurrences like fire or theft.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure validity of the research, the researcher purposively selected a sample population that is capable of providing the needed answers. All interview respondents were given the opportunity to ask for clarification of questions they did not clearly understand. The

researcher further used triangulation to increase validity of findings as it involves deliberate efforts to seek evidence from a wide range of sources and comparing findings from different sources. The research findings were reliable as the data was tested and benchmarked against literature presented with correlations being evident. This research can therefore be used as literature or further studies on similar or related research topics.

3.8   Research Ethics

The researcher sought permission and cooperation from respondents who were assured of the confidentiality of the responses and identity. Participants were informed of their rights for participating in the research or opt out if they so wished. In order to ensure the integrity of the research, the researcher laid aside any preconceived ideas/beliefs. The participants were not guided by the researcher's prior knowledge of the phenomenon, but by their own experiences. For interview confidentiality, the researcher did not share the recorded material with third parties except the university. Prior to using the voice recorder, the researcher sought the permission of each respondent. All recorded material was saved on external storage hard drive as back-up in case of any loss of or technical fault of the voice recorder afterwards.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the analytical part of the study where the impact of social media as an effective communications tool in Namibia was measured through analysis of the effectiveness of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM) and its activities using social media, especially Facebook to advance its cause. The researcher does not only present the research findings but also analyses the data as obtained on the self-administered interview guides used in the study. The researcher used a diverse sample of 10 respondents from different population targets within the media industry, Facebook users and leaders of ARM. Interviews were preferred due to the relative simplicity of the interview guide and their efficiency as a data collection instrument.

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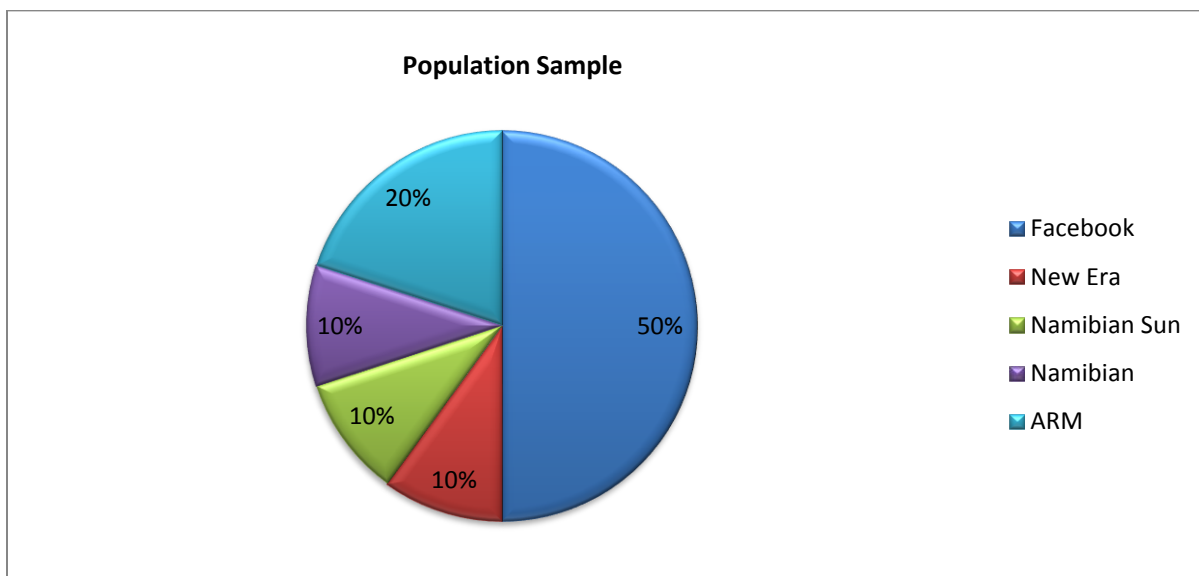
4.2 Sample

The researcher had selected a sample of 10 respondents which comprised of five (5) most active users on the ARM Facebook page; one (1) news editor of *New Era*; one (1) news editor of the *Namibian Sun*, one (1) news editor from *The Namibian* and two (2) leaders of ARM. News editors formed part of the sample because the activities of ARM were highly reported in the

traditional media. Respondents were purposefully chosen to ensure inclusivity and horizontal coverage as the matter was reported by various media houses.

To ensure equilibrium and reliability of study, the researcher chose to balance sample representatives from the mainstream media. All 10 respondents targeted agreed to participate in the study but only eight (8) participated in the interviews representing an 80 per cent response rate. Because of the simplicity with which the interview guide was designed, respondents did not have any challenges in answering questions. This simplicity and the importance of the research topic explain the high response rate experienced in the study.
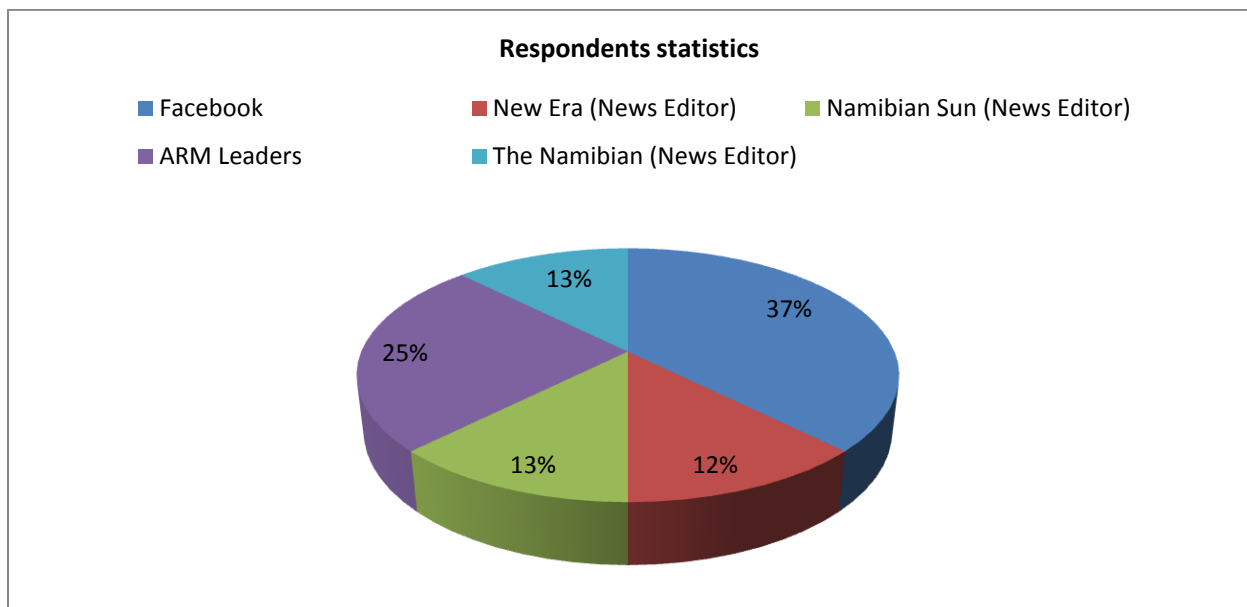
4.3   Data Analysis

Figure 1: Selected Population Sample

Cooper and Schindler (2006) stated that data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques. In this section, the researcher used the constant comparative method and coding

whereby distinct concepts (master headings) and categories (subheadings) were highlighted with one colour code for concepts and another colour code for categories. In the process, the researcher explored the relationship between the concepts and categories into information tables which gave an opportunity for review to ensure that all data was taken into consideration. Simplified tables, charts, and graphs that can be easily interpreted by any reader intending to gain insight into the impact of social media study were used.

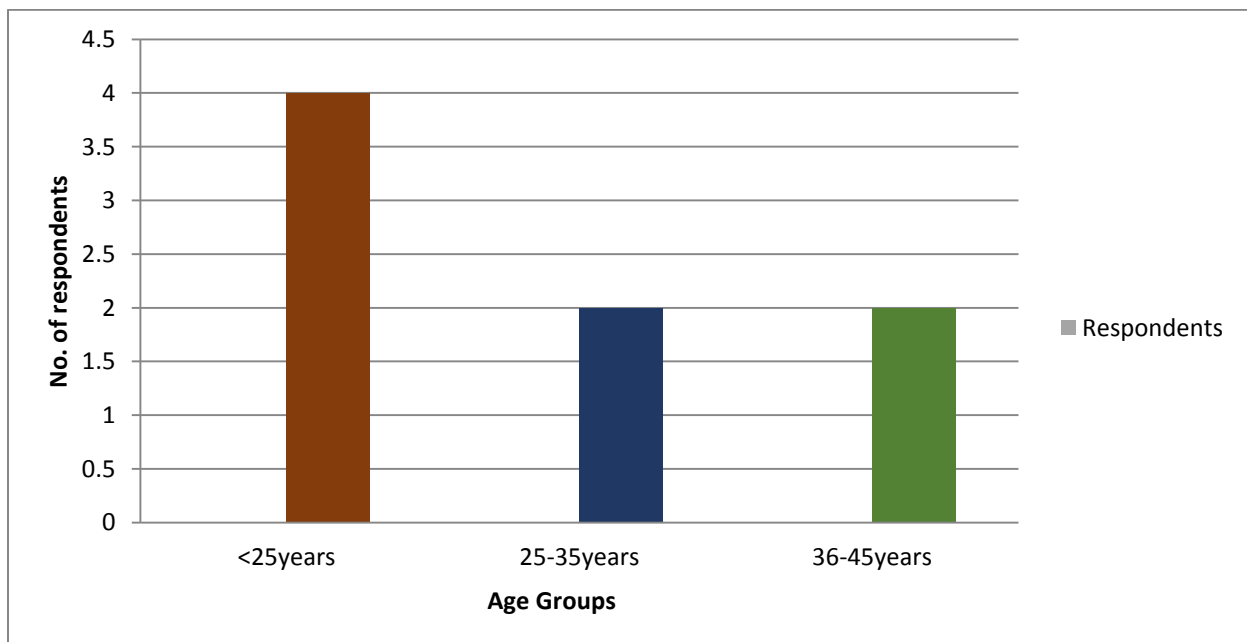## 4.4   Actual Study Participants

Figure 2 below exhibits no major variances between the originally selected population sample and the actual respondents who participated in the interviews. This can be attributed to the simplicity with which the interview guide was designed as well as the significance of the study topic. In considering simplicity of the interview guide, the researcher used basic English in constructing short questions. Given the popularity ARM has enjoyed over its short existence, the importance of its cause especially with regards to urban land ownership, respondents could easily resonate with the study.

Figure 2: Actual Survey Participants

Furthermore, the prevalence of cheaper smart phones and affordable internet packages, social media is being embraced everywhere because of its potential to spread news fast through mobile devices. Respondents could have felt obliged to commit to the study because of these dynamics. Two (2) of the five (5) targeted Facebook user respondents were offline at the time when their interviews were scheduled to take place. The researcher left messages for possible rescheduling but were not responded to until the time of data analysis. This rendered their interview guides to be declared unusable thereby reducing the total sample from the original 10 to 8 respondents.
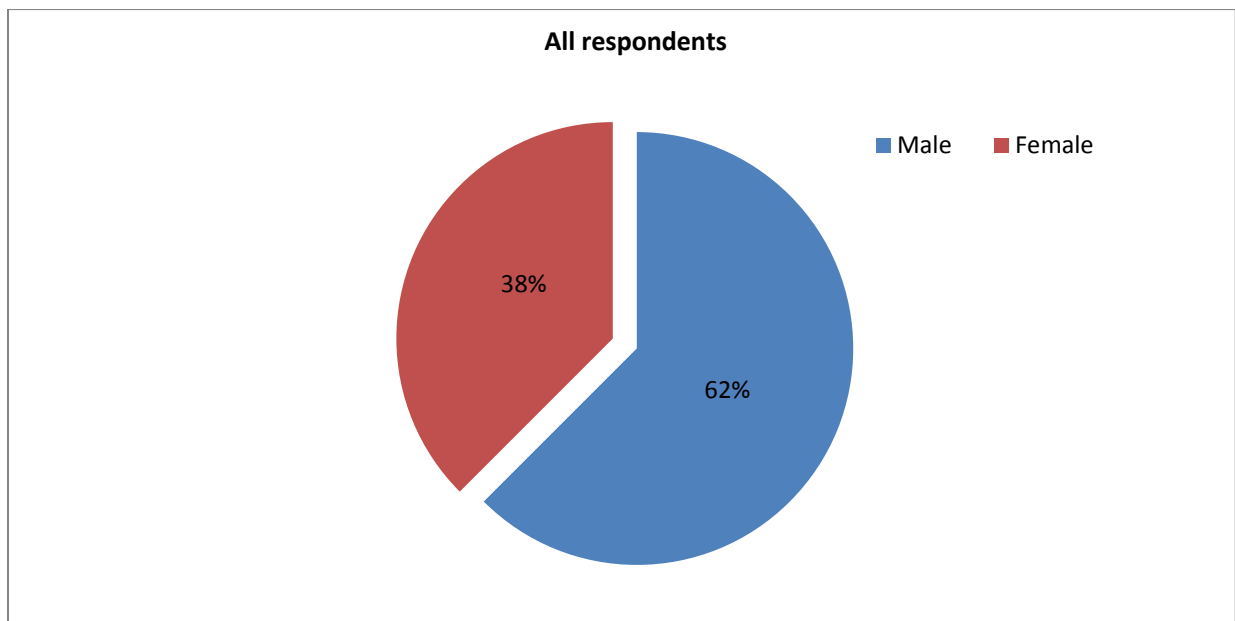
4.5   Age demographics

Figure 3: Sample Age Groups

Out of the 8 respondents who participated in the interviews, the graphic results presented in Figure 3 above shows a greater number (50%) of respondents below 25 years. Study results also indicate that there were equal percentages (25%) of the 25-35years and 36 to 45 years categories. For this study, none of the respondents were above the age of 45 years giving an indication that

social media is dominated by younger and middle age categories. Coincidentally, these are the majority of people that are highly affected by urban land scarcity in Namibia especially those between the 18 and 35 year age groups. One can therefore conclude that the message by the ARM was well received by the Namibian youths because it sought to address issues affecting them socially as well as economically.
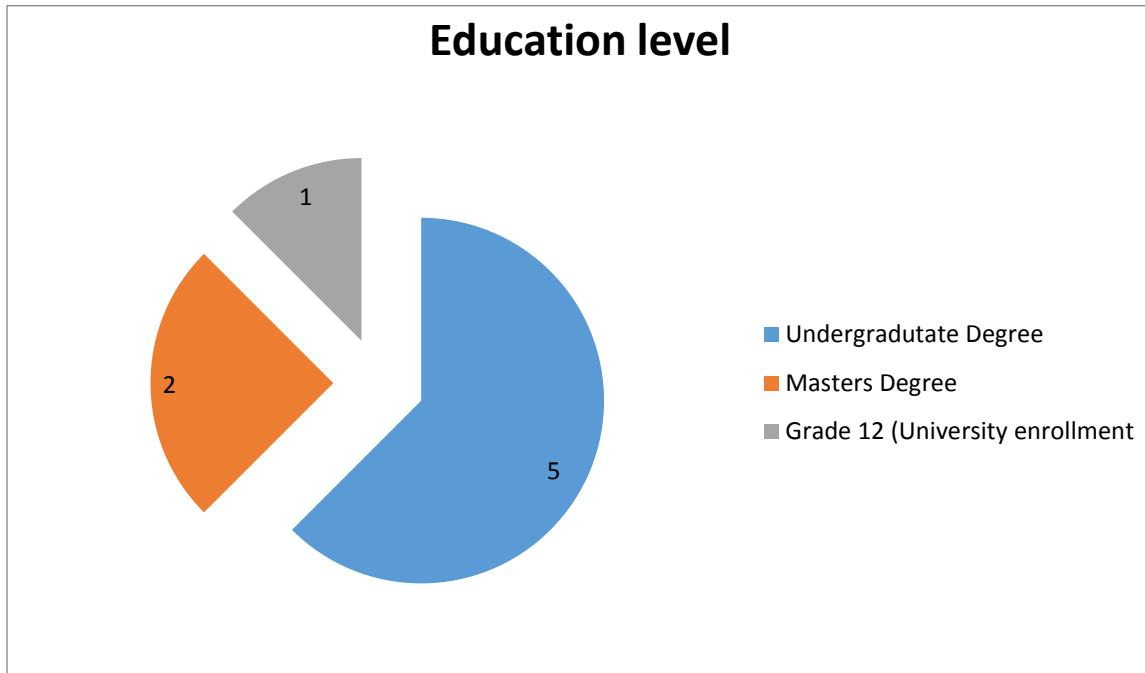
4.6   Respondents according to gender

Figure 4: Gender Composition

High on the agenda of the study was the need to gender balance sample representation between male and female interviewees. Even though the sample was balanced on selection representing 50/50 gender balance, the sudden withdrawal of two respondents meant the total composition of targets in the sample selected produced the following data as recorded on interview guides. Figure 4 shows that there were 5 males and 3 female respondents representing a 63/37% representation in favour of males.

4.7   Respondents' level of education

Figure 5: Respondents' level of education

Out of the eight respondents, 5 (62%) had university undergraduate degrees while 2 (25%) had

undergraduate as well as post graduate Masters Degrees. Only 1 respondent (13%) – a Facebook

user – was still studying towards attainment of formal university qualification. With this sample

taken to represent the entire population, it gives an indication of the educational levels of people

most active on social media.

4.8   Understanding of the term social media

Because of their ages and a high level of exposure to technological advancements, 100% of the

respondents understood the meaning of the term social media and gave various examples

including Facebook, WhatsApp as well as Twitter. Their definitions were more or less in line

with the definition provided in the literature of the research as defined by previous writers. This,

the researcher deduced, could be because of adequate level of education by most or all

respondents targeted. The sample profiled journalists (news editors), Facebook users who have

knowledge of computers and the representatives of ARM whose education credentials are in the public domain as having reached tertiary education.

4.9   Social media connectivity

All 8 respondents (100%) who successfully participated in the research confirmed that they were connected to social media through their mobile devices almost on a 24 hour basis. They attributed this connectivity to cheaper internet rates and the need to stay connected to social media. Six (75%) of them reiterated that they obtained real time information on social media more than they obtained information through other media channels. Hundred per cent respondents confirmed that they were connected to Facebook and that they followed it through joining different Namibian social groups on the networking site. On the periphery of the interview sessions, five (5) of the eight (8) respondents confirmed to the researcher that they depend on Facebook to address some important daily or monthly necessities such as the search for affordable rental accommodation as well other products insisting that they hardly purchase printed newspapers as they read newspaper content when news agencies upload stories on social media.

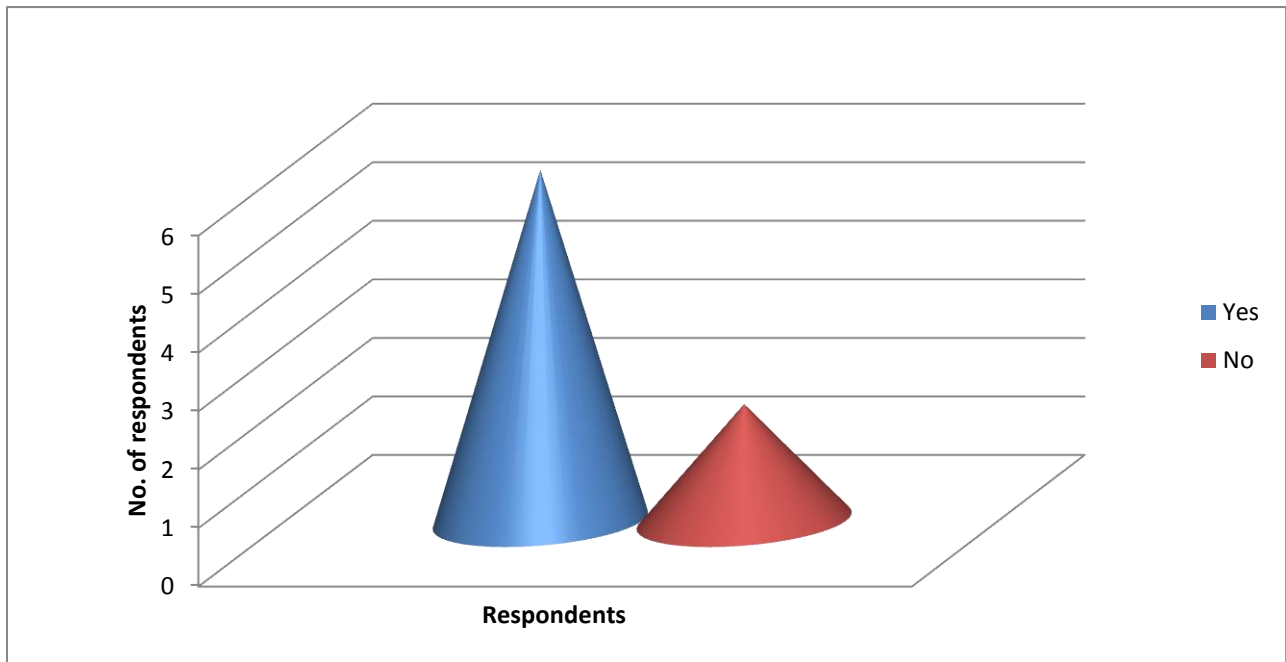## 4.10   Knowledge of Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM)

Just as in 4.6 above, all eight (8) respondents (100%) not only had knowledge of Affirmative Repositioning Movement but were articulate of 6 of its activities especially its mobilisation of young Namibians to submit applications for urban land first at the City of Windhoek head office and later at all other municipal councils countrywide. Seven (7) of the respondents confirmed that they have followed the activities of the ARM and have been part of the ARM Facebook page since its inception. Two (2) of three News Editors who participated in the study established that they have always relied on the ARM Facebook page for news stories.

4.11   Opinion on power behind social media platforms

A similar scenario as in 4.9 and 4.10 obtained whereby all 8 respondents were in agreement that social media is highly effective as a communication tool as alluded to by some writers cited in the literature review chapter. Five (63%) respondents attributed the success of social media in Namibia to the advent of internet and its subsequent popularity through advertising.

4.12   Social media impact on ARM activities

By way of indicating "Yes" or "No", study respondents were asked whether or not they believed social media had an impact on ARM when they used it to mobilise mass land applications. The following chart represents the results gathered from respondents.
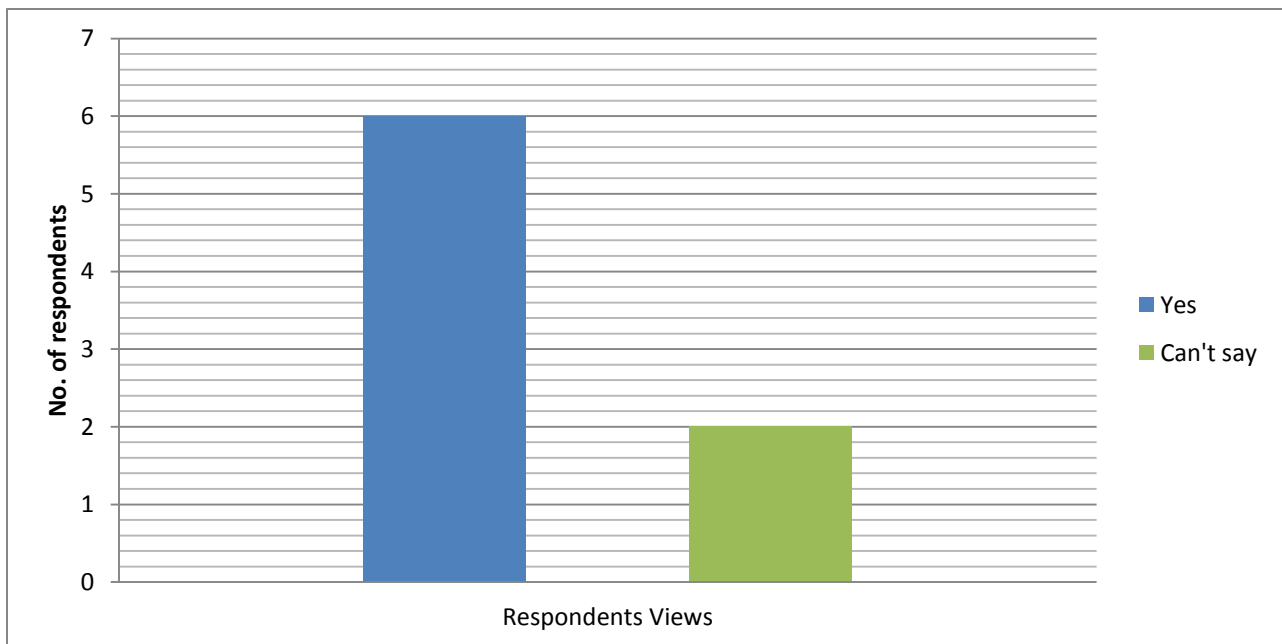

Figure 5: Social Media Impact

Six respondents (75%) believed that indeed ARM's campaign was highly successful because of the high rate of smart phone usage amongst the targeted audience who happen to be between the

ages of 20 and 35 years. Because of internet connectivity, the six respondents are convinced that social media impacted highly on the success of the ARM in championing its cause. The other two respondents (25%) were of the opinion that of course social media had an impact on their information distribution but it was not as "significant as it might look". These represented the section of population that was still getting accustomed to social media and its ever increasing influence hence do not appreciate to the fullest extent how social media can influence the flow or speed at which information is distributed.

4.13   Social media and its effectiveness going into the future

To further proceed with the assessment, respondents were also asked whether or not they viewed social media as an effective tool of communication going into the future.
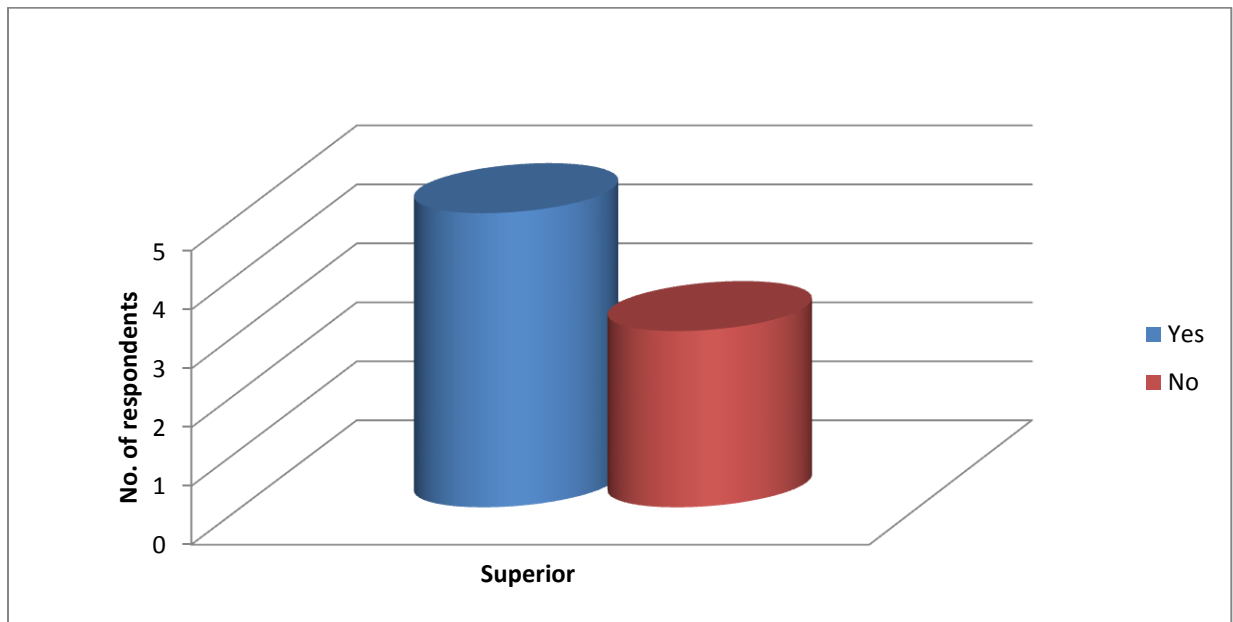

Figure 6: Social Media and Future

Six respondents (75%) were of the opinion that, indeed social media represented the way of the future. They attributed this to the ever increasing proliferation of social network sites, the

incorporation of internet reception on new television models as well as free and affordable internet and migration of cellular manufacturers to smart phone technology. Two respondents (25%) were not sure whether or not they could endorse social media as the future of communications. This could be attributed to possible fear of predicting the unknown.

4.14   Can Namibians rely on social media?

Figure 7: Social Media Reliability

Five of the respondents (63%) were pretty much convinced that social media was dependable. However, the 5 respondents emphasised on the need to verify all information posted before sharing it with others on and off social media networks. They also pointed out that just as the mainstream traditional media, social media was bound to have some falsehoods circulating through them. Three of the respondents (37%) out rightly said since some of the information circulated through social media could not be relied upon, it was getting more and more difficult to trust anything one reads or sees on them at face value.

4.15   Challenges of social media as an effective communications tool

The second last question posed to respondents was on what they perceived as challenges of social media as an effective communications tool. Respondents gave various answers that resonated with the literature on that particular question. Some of the reasons brought forward included; the problem of social media at the workplace where productivity is being compromised; The quick spreading of information which may turn out to be false; the unrestricted sharing of information which may be sensitive, for instance, accident photos that might be sensitive to some viewers; non availability of internet in some areas especially the remote villages; social media's dependence of smart and tablet phones which are deemed expensive by the lower ends of the marketing chain; Security risks created by information posted on the networks, for instance, a post that says "now on holiday in Cape Town" can expose unguarded homes to buglers. These equally matched the challenges presented in the literature which supports the results of the study as reliable.

4.16   How challenges can be addressed

During the interviews, respondents were asked to suggest remedies to solve the problems indicated in the preceding question. The following were suggestions given; the crafting of national legislation that regulates social media in Namibia; individual cross-examination of information posted before reposting and acting upon it; social network users finding alternative ways of communication and not heavily depending on social media; enhancement of security of information posted by social network hosts such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; the limiting of internet connectivity during working hours by public and private sector companies. Two respondents suggested that there was need to conduct research on what could be done to make social media more effective and risk free.

4.17   Conclusion

The chapter presented and analysed data on the effectiveness of social media as a communications tool especially as it related to the ARM's mass mobilisation of land application first at the City of Windhoek and later at municipal councils countrywide. The analysed data largely revealed that social media was held in high regard as it pertains to its effectiveness as a communications tool. A number of suggestions on what could become of social media were proffered by respondents and these helped to formulate the recommendations as presented in the next and final chapter of the research project.

5   CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents discussion of the findings from the research. It is a critical review of the results and what they represent and/or entail regarding the impact of social media as an effective tool of communication in Namibia just as it is in other countries especially developed world.

5.2 Discussion

Because of the nature of the research study, the researcher had to ensure that the chosen population resonated with groups that were most active on social media during the ARM's mass mobilisation for land applications. From the results of the study, it is clear that the majority of sample participants were young people who are the most actively engaged age groups on social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. In terms of gender composition, results indicated that there were more men than women who successfully took part in the survey.

The 100 percent level of respondents understanding of social media gave an indication that Namibian citizens have gained considerable internet education which enables them to know how to use internet technology. Since the research was conducted in Windhoek, such knowledge of internet comes as no surprise as most Windhoek residents own mobile smart phones which enables them to be on the internet.

Because of competition, the two main mobile telephone technology companies in Namibia offer cheaper internet connectivity thereby enabling most cellular phone owners to afford data and stay connected to the internet hence are able to access information through social media mediums. These cheaper internet charges contributed tremendously to the Affirmative

Reposition Movement's mass mobilisation for land applications as most people consumed their message quickly. The 3G and 4G internet technological speed and the ease of connecting to Facebook and WhatsApp also contribute to the high internet subscriptions rates by Namibians. Thus the moment the ARM news broke out; Namibians started sharing the news mostly via WhatsApp and Facebook.

Despite its formation a few months before the mass mobilisation for urban land applications by the youth, results of the survey indicate that 100 per cent of respondents had not only perfect knowledge of ARM but also its ambitious activities. Before starting the ARM, Job Amupanda – one of the principal founders, was a well-known vocal member of the Swapo Youth League which was headed by Dr Eliah Ngurare. Because of the popularity he commanded within the Swapo youth wing at the time, Amupanda had a huge following on his Facebook page where he posted political and social commentary. Amupanda's huge Facebook following combined with the NBC's television news coverage of their sensational temporary occupation of a Klein Kuppe plot translated to huge knowledge of ARM at its inception when it was formed. Windhoek residents were thrilled by the three ARM members' actions which were quickly regarded as heroic across the length and breadth of Namibia as indicative by the number of people who followed their activities immediately after forming the arm.

On the power of social media, the majority of respondents opined the advent of internet technology as the show foundation for its popularity. Because of modernisation and education which permeated into the Namibian citizenry, it can be reasonably deduced that the majority of

Windhoek residents have acquired a certain level of education which enables them to have knowledge of the existence of internet and social media.

Since news of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement's infamous Klein Kuppe temporary occupation and self-addressing of a piece of land broke, the movement's activities have been getting more popular via internet platforms namely Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. The founders of the ARM implemented the strategy of opening social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter accounts which gained instant thousands of followers mostly from the younger population. The fact that the majority of Namibia's population is under 46 years aided in ARM' activities becoming more popular through internet as that age category is highly active on social media.

Having 75 per cent respondents confirming that the ARM mass mobilization of urban land applications by the youth was highly successful means that social media is an effective form of modern communication. The impressive short time it took for the massive response to ARM's call for land applications first in Windhoek and later the whole country is incomparable. Later there were unconfirmed reports that the youths who were in the villages managed to find their way to urban centres after receiving multiple messages from relatives and friends who had heard about it first through social media.

On the question of whether Namibians can rely on social media or not, results indicate that 63 per cent respondents are of the opinion that indeed internet has become a huge part of our everyday lives. The paramount reason for this mentality is that social media is and continues to

dominate as the latest competitive form of communication. For instance, the Arab Spring which started in Algeria and later spread to other Arab countries was precipitated by a social media message that mobilised people to demonstrate against bad governance after an unemployed young Algerian vendor burnt himself in protest.

However, with or without any other conditions remaining constant, social media still has its challenges. These challenges among others include its influence on young scholars who may end up getting addicted to social media at the expense of the college and university studies; the unintentional recruitment into drug syndicates via internet without knowing, exposure to robberies and burglaries as a result of giving away too much information via social media; productive inefficiency in both the public and private sector work settings which impedes on national development.

5.3 Conclusion

From the results gathered in this research study, it is clear that since the advent of internet, consumption of information via traditional methods such as television and newspaper have been losing their strength as we forge ahead in the 21st century. Dutta-Bergman (2004) suggests that this significant shift from the use of traditional media methods can be attributed to the formation and growth of - first the World Wide Web – then social media. For instance, in the second quarter of 2008 alone, Forrester research predicted that 75 per cent of all internet surfers use social media by either posting videos to sites such as YouTube, joining social networks on websites such as Facebook, or even posting blogs, showcasing increase from the year before (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Furthermore, research conducted by the Nielsen Company (2010) in the United States of America indicated that citizens spend virtually 25 per cent of their free time on social networks and blogs. Although the number of individuals that are using social media avenues to connect to others is increasingly growing, many agree that a Facebook fan page or a Twitter account is not a substitute for an integrated marketing plan to reach a target market.

In an attempt to understand why individuals are more susceptible to attend to one particular media avenue versus another, various media consumption theories have been proffered. Although this study did not centre on determining which marketing method (new or old) is better, it is imperative to understand why individuals obtain information from the sources that they do. It is theorized that if any individual is interested in one particular topic, s/he will consume information on that topic in not only one medium, but most likely read, watch, or listen to information that is closely related to this topic in various other forms of media (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). Although social media can be measured in various ways, Turner (2010) believes that quantitative metrics, qualitative metrics, and return-on-investment metrics are the most substantial categories that determine the effectiveness of an awareness campaign promoted via social media.

The research findings as discussed in this chapter indicate that social media is a communication force to be reckoned with. Pressure groups such as ARM and other can take advantage of the prevalence of smartphones to plan and disseminate information that can assist the citizenry in, for instance, staying in touch with government ministries and departments.

6　SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1　Introduction

This chapter presents specific recommendations based on the findings and analysis as discussed in the second part of chapter 4. The researcher conducted the study with the main aim of investigating social media as an effective communications tool. The Affirmative Repositioning Movement (ARM) was used as a case study after it successfully mass-mobilised Namibia youths to apply for urban land at the various municipal councils countrywide. These recommendations are not only for ARM but different other institutions that stand to benefit from embracing social media as an effective communication tool.

6.2　Summary if findings

Social media has grown tremendously in recent years and is emerging into the marketing plan of businesses worldwide. Originally, social media was used solely for ―friendships with others, now it is being utilized as a form of advertising and information sharing. The Marketing Executives Networking Group (MENG) commissioned research and found that those surveyed believe that the advantages of social media include its ability to develop its customer engagement and communications, the capacity to obtain feedback rapidly, and the ability for companies to cost effectively build a brand (MENG, 2008).

The short time it took for the mass mobilisation by the Affirmative Repositioning Movement and the overwhelming response and criticism from different quarters inspired the researcher to conduct a research around the topic. With the purpose of social media being to communicate electronically via different platforms that use internet, the researcher found it relevant to

establish the relative worth of this new medium of communication still making inroads in Namibia. The study has indeed proven that social media and Facebook in particular played a pivotal role in the success of the ARM in its crusade for land allocation to the Namibian youth as 75 percent of respondents are convinced of this finding. All respondents understand the meaning of the term social media. This study has further proven that social media is most popular among the youth and middle aged as all respondents were below the age of 45 and are all active on various social media platforms, including Facebook. All respondents did acknowledge knowing the ARM and its activities and that they receive most information regarding the ARM through social media and that they use social media for other functions such as the search for rental accommodation as well as reading news. The high connectivity to social media by Namibians can be attributed to the upsurge in mobile smart phone usage over the past four years, wide range of network (3G) connectivity around the country as well as affordable data bundles offered by various service providers such as the Mobile Telecommunications Company and Telecom Namibia. These aspects are enabling Namibians to have social media connectivity even when they are in remote areas. For example, through his presence on social media, the researcher has discovered that it has now become a trend that information regarding accidents on highways is filtering fast via social media before it reached conventional media.

This study has also brought to the fore the fact that almost every Namibian who has access to internet connection has social media connectivity thereby proving that Namibians are stimulated on social media usage and they find it useful for information distribution. It is further worth pointing out that all respondents in this study had created Facebook accounts before the emergence of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement. After they had occupied a piece of land

in Kleine Kuppe, the ARM created a Facebook page which garnered approximately 4000 followers within the first 24 hours confirming that the ARM's message and campaign was received positively especially among the youth. Having successfully completed the study, it is the researcher's anticipation that it will inspire further research into similar or related topics as there is a wide spectrum associated with this topic that other scholars can explore. As for the Affirmative Repositioning Movement, it can be said with certainty that its successful launch and activism was made possible by the movement's choice of opting to reach out to the public via social media. It can be argued that had the ARM chosen a different mode of communication results would not have been the same.

6.3   Recommendations

Recommendations are important suggestions of what can be done to improve the performance of a person or particular situation. The population of this study was the media, social media users and ARM, but it also impact on other stakeholders such as Namibian public especially the youth, civil society, the government, telecommunications and technology companies, researchers and scholars. The following recommendations are therefore directed at these stakeholders for consideration;

a) The Affirmative Repositioning Movement should consider having different social media pages - especially on Facebook - where they communicate in all vernacular languages and reach out to diverse population targets.

b) In order to increase its effectiveness and further advance its cause, the ARM should also consider running a public group on the WhatsApp platform which continues to draw a larger audience across the entire cross section of Namibia.

c) The ARM should consider using the same platform to reach out to other civil sector organisations and encourage them to also mobilise support for their activities via social media.

d) Mobile telecommunications companies need to consider running more promotions offering smart and tablet phones with internet connectivity for the broader public to have access to social media.

e) Social media host companies need to do more to improve internet security of their servers and software operating systems, for instance, installing firewalls that prevent hacking of data and customer accounts

f) The Namibian government needs to continue promoting smooth flow of information but find ways to maintain law and order over the usage of social media in Namibia, for instance; enacting laws and introducing policies that discourage the posting of harmful images or language on social media.

g) Mobile telecommunications companies need to revise their internet data charges to enable every second person on the grassroots to afford internet and promote knowledge and exposure

h) The civic society needs to organise community outreach programmes aimed at sensitising communities on the need for social engagement via social media

i) Namibians in general and youths in particular need to embrace social media as a tool for learning rather than just entertainment and disseminating potentially untruthful information.

j) Corporate organisations and state owned enterprises need to discourage their employees from using social during working hours as they compromise productivity.

k) Law makers need to ensure that any proposed bill to regulate social media will not infringe on the citizens' rights to freedom of expression.

l) Other scholars should do further research on the subject looking at other social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Twitter to establish their effectiveness especially among corporate entities.

6.4   Research implications

Because of its practical approach, it can be argued that this study attained new ground in terms of conducting research on the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool. Future researchers could consider looking into investigating the background interests of the participants prior to the event mobilised via social media. The variables of interest and intent may be increased if the event has the potential to be of interest to the participant. Furthermore, future researchers could consider replicating this research study in different ways in terms of examining which types of social media messages are most substantial to increasing one's interest, awareness, and intent of attending a special event.

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