SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF THE

NAMIBIAN POLICE FORCE'S FACEBOOK PAGE

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish if the people who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page found the page useful from the purview of police-community relations; to determine if there is a difference in perception of police-community relations between those who have "liked" the page and those who have not liked the page; to determine if demographic variables impacted respondents' views on interactivity and engagement of NAMPOL's Facebook page.

The study involved a survey of online respondents and Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) for Windhoek residents who did not 'like' the NAMPOL Facebook page. Similar to international studies that found that most public relations practitioners are using new media the same ways as they do with traditional media, this study, established that the public relations division of NAMPOL is not making use of the power of social media by actively engaging the community as equal partners on Facebook. This is despite special emphasis by NAMPOL on the use of ICTs as well as involving the community as equal partners in its functions and activities.

Additionally, the study determined that the public and in particular the youths, who are a majority on social media, are also not fully exploiting the power of social media which are seen as powerful, and if used correctly can change the modern communication sphere for the better. The platform is one which they use to receive information and not necessarily engage the police to their advantage. They are rather passive recipients of information/updates from NAMPOL as very few reported that they wanted to interact with the police on this platform.

The study further established that demographic variables such as age, gender and employment status impacted on respondents' views, on interactivity and engagement with the

NAMPOL Facebook page. In addition, there is not much of a difference in perception between those who 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page and the public, as both believe Facebook, if used optimally, can effect change for the better.

The study thus recommends that the NAMPOL public relations division should consider in its communication strategies, the importance of two-way communication, especially when engaging its most important stakeholder, the public, as indicated in their strategic plan.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my dear parents, Samuel and Lidwina Kapitako. This thesis is also dedicated to my sister, Rosalinde Kapitako.

Declaration

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

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Alvine Kapitako (   )   Date: April 2016

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List of acronyms

NAMPOL   Namibian Police Force

FGDs   Focus Group Discussions

ICTs   Information Communication Technologies

WWW   World Wide Web

GSM   Global system for mobile telephone

P.R   Public Relations

GBV   Gender-Based Violence

Chapter 1

Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a succinct background to the study and discusses the statement of the problem, objectives, significance and limitations of the study.

1.2 Orientation of the Study

Crime in Namibia has been on the increase since independence. The Oxford dictionary defines crime as an act or the commission of a duty that is forbidden or the omission of a duty that is commended by a public law and that makes the offender liable to punishment by law; especially a gross violation of the law.

Recent statistics from the Windhoek police indicate that crime in Windhoek is on the increase. Between 17 August and 20 September 2015, 260 cases of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm were reported, (Shinana, 2015). During the same period, 12 cases of rape and 16 of attempted murder were investigated by the police and six murder cases w ere opened. A total of 264 robberies were reported, of which 129 were armed robberies.

Comparing figures from 1 January to 27 September for both 2014 and 2015, attempted murder was the only crime that declined, by around 13%. The murder rate increased by 32% during that period while the number of rapes increased by 64%. There were 10% more robberies and 1% more armed robbery. Assault increased by 4%. The average increase in crime from the indicated period in 2014 to 2015 is 5% (Shinana, 2015, par. 2).

Furthermore, Gender based violence (GBV) is one of the criminal offences that continues to increase unabated in Namibia. GBV in Namibia includes domestic violence, rape and other forms of sexual abuse, sexual harassment at work and school, some forms of human trafficking, forced prostitution and early marriages. GBV also encompasses harmful practices such as when a widow is deprived of the property she shared with her deceased husband, (National Plan of Action, 2012).

In addition to the Namibian constitution, Namibia is signatory to international instruments which have a bearing on GBV, and has brought into force a number of national policies and laws to combat GBV. "National police statistics showed that women accounted for 92-94% of complainants in reported rape cases" (National Plan of Action, 2012, p. 9). Further expanding on domestic violence, the National Plan of Action (2012) indicates that both men and women can suffer from domestic violence. In practice, however, the victims and survivors are overwhelmingly women. Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression, sexual and emotional abuse or domineering behaviour, (Namibia Demographic Health Survey, 2013). "Domestic violence is an endemic problem in Namibia and may be the most underreported form of violence against both women and men," (Namibia Demographic Health Survey, 2013, p. 295). Thus "as a result of the escalating numbers of domestic violence cases in the country, the government of Namibia has enacted several laws to protect survivors and punish perpetrators of domestic violence " (Namibia Demographic Health Survey, 2013, p.295).

The same survey found that 32% of married women between 15-49 yeas experienced physical violence at least once. In addition, 6% of women reported experiencing violence during pregnancy. Baby dumping is another form of crime that is prevalent in Namibia and Windhoek in particular. "Baby dumping refers to the abandoning of an infant without care, exposing the child to danger or death. It may entail more active attempts to harm or kill the infant"

(National Plan of Action, 2012, p.12). Namibia lacks accurate figures on the incidence of infanticide (baby dumping) which is not reported separately from other murders, (National Plan of Action, 2012). "Prosecutions of infanticide are usually linked with charges of concealment of birth, incidences of which have risen in recent years, (National Plan of Action, 2012, p.17). The Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) whose functions are to maintain law and order, investigate alleged offences, prevent crime and protect lives, (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 4) in an effort to fight crime prioritised the community (community policing) as important to its functions. NAMPOL views community policing, which is premised on the principle that the community needs to work together as "equal partners to identify, prioritise and solve contemporary problems, such as crime and social disorder, with the aim of ensuring the overall safety and security of all people for a peaceful co-existence" as vitally important (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011, p. 19).

The same document (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011) also places special emphasis on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). As a result, NAMPOL public relations division created a Facebook page in 2012 in order to engage with the public.

Facebook users can choose to like the Facebook page and thus be kept abreast of NAMPOL's activities, vision and mission etc. The main feature of the page is the wall, which is an open space for messages, photos and videos. Facebook allows users to send virtual gifts to their friends, which then appear on their profile, as well as use other applications that interact with Facebook features amongst other functionalities (Brown, 2009).

Social media, in itself, is not a strange phenomenon in Namibia. Before giving statistics on Facebook usage in Namibia, it is important to define social media. Social media involves the use of technology to facilitate interaction and the sharing of information (Coombs, 2008) hence bringing to the fore what communication is in essence- interaction and sharing - thus making them arenas where users create and broadcast content (Luoma-aho, 2010). And these media

forms are becoming increasingly popular, however Grunig (2009) argues that many public relations (P.R) practitioners are using the new media in the same ways they used the old - as a means of dumping messages on the general population rather than as a strategic avenue for interacting with the public. If the social media are used to their full potential, they will inexorably make public relations practice more effective and focussed.

The Facebook penetration rate in Namibia is 10.7% with 231,340 (Facebook) users in the country (Internet World Stats, 2015). Given the activity of Namibians on this platform, commentators and policy makers have decried the use of social media to tarnish the reputations of others and called for more stringent regulations (Immanuel, 2014; Kapitako, 2014; Menges, 2013). Given this high subscription rate among Namibians, Gustavo's (2014) postulation to the effect that monitoring social media and responding accordingly, becomes germane.

Despite this, academic research on the effect, impact and role of public relations and new media in the Namibian context is lacking. Hence, this study sought to assess the effect of the NAMPOL Facebook page in advancing police-community relations.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Many public relations practitioners are using new media in the same ways they used the old-as a means of dumping messages on the general population rather than as a strategic means of interacting with the public and bringing information from the environment into organisational decision making (Grunig, 2009).

Clearly, if social media are used to their full potential, they will undoubtedly make for more effective communication. Since the creation of the NAMPOL Facebook page in 2012, no study has been conducted to determine its impact on police-community relations, reporting of crime and in the fight against crime generally. The present study sought to find out from Windhoek residents, as well as those who have liked the NAMPOL Facebook page, whether the page has made a difference in terms of communication between the police and members of the public.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To establish if the persons who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page found the page useful from the purview of police-community relations.

2. To determine if there exists a difference in the perception of police-community relations between those who have "liked" the page and those who have not liked the page.

3. To determine if demographic variables impacted respondents' views on interactivity and engagement of NAMPOL's Facebook page.

1.5 Significance of the study

It was vital to embark on this study because it provides feedback to NAMPOL on the level of engagement of Namibians with their Facebook page, so that the organisation can use the findings to enhance its communication with its stakeholders. In addition, the study will contribute to the academic body of knowledge on the subject of new/social media and public relations from the Namibian perspective.

1.6 Limitation of the study

This study was limited to online users who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page as well as Windhoek residents. The rate of internet penetration and the city's status as a melting pot for all Namibians informed the choice of Windhoek as a study site but this also means that the views of other Namibians who do not live in Windhoek were not accommodated. Given that Namibians have access to internet in other locations, other scholars may wish to replicate this study in other sites to confirm or dispute the findings.

Chapter 2

Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into literature related to the new/digital media platforms, the police and public relations. A wide variety of literature was engaged to understand the emergence of new/digital media and the role they play in modern times. The extant literature indicates that the new/digital media are appreciated as important platforms to effect change. But, how effective are these platforms in contributing to the reduction of crime in society? This review discusses the definition of new/digital/social media as well as their roles. This chapter also gives an insight on Namibia in terms of crime and how new media, particularly Facebook is embraced and used. The theoretical framework - James Grunig and Todd Hunt's two-way symmetrical public relations model is also discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Crime in Namibia

Crime in Namibia has been on the increase since independence. Nakuta and Cloete (2011) observed that the general impression that is gained from daily and weekly newspaper headline articles, commentaries, opinion pieces and editorials is that armed robberies on businesses countrywide, housebreaking, murder, violent farm attacks, rape, child molestation, corruption and other violent crimes have become the order of the day. In addition, Odendaal (2005) reports that crime and especially violent crime is increasing rapidly in Southern Africa and alarmingly so in Namibia. So much so that murder, rape, robbery, assault, child abuse and domestic violence have been subjects of extensive media coverage and academic research in recent years. In addition, the Namibia Safety report (2015) reported that crime is a serious concern in Windhoek and other regions in Namibia. According to the report, Namibia is a "critical" (par.1)

residential and non-residential crime threat location on a scale of low, medium, high and critical. Hence robberies, muggings and thefts occur frequently, especially in local shopping areas and locations where foreign visitors tend to congregate.

The Namibia Safety report also highlights that the vast majority of crime that now occurs in Windhoek is petty crime. The most common crime incidents are non-violent crimes of opportunity, committed by thieves who rely on stealth and surprise such as pickpocketing, purse-snatching, vehicle theft, ATM card skimming and vehicle break- ins.

On the consequences of crime, Odendaal, (2005) asserts that crime disrupts social order and that even though various forms of punishments have been used throughout time to protect society, including putting offenders behind bars, crime remains on the rise: "People commit crime because they no longer fear their law enforcement agencies and believe they will get away with committing crime," (Odendaal, 2005, par. 39).

Escalating crime rates require that resources which could be devoted to other social problems, be diverted to crime control, resulting in further entrenchment of ills such as poverty, lack of housing and inadequate medical care (Nuuyi, 2014). In addition, the author notes the result of a spike in crime rates would be that people become fearful of strangers, are afraid to walk in the streets after dark, homes become fortresses and families may move to new areas in search of a secure life.

In proffering solutions to the spiralling crime wave, former Namibian president Hifikepunye Pohamba called for collective action (Heita, 2014). This was also echoed by Dr Joab Mudzanapabwe, a clinical psychologist: "We should take collective responsibility for individual behaviour and go back to thinking as a community instead of individualising ourselves" (Heita, 2014, par. 28). The Inspector General of the Namibian Police Force,

Lieutenant-General Sebastian Ndeitunga, lamented that Namibians often ignore what is happening next door amongst other reasons for the upswing in crime (Ndimbira, 2014).

These sentiments are at the heart of community policing which require partnerships and problem solving techniques that nip crime in the bud (Community Oriented Policing Services, n.d.). The same document argues that community policing involves "collaborative partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in [the] police" (p. 3).

Meanwhile, Nakuta & Cloete (2011) note that if a statistical picture of crime is used properly it can serve as a powerful tool for creating social policy. Continuing, they posit that decision makers in many countries at all levels, including legislators, other elected officials and administrators throughout the criminal justice system, rely on crime data to analyse and evaluate existing programmes and to fashion and design crime control initiatives, new laws and legislation. And, "this certainly holds true for Namibia, which is currently experiencing an upsurge in crime and violent crime in particular" (Nakuta & Cloete, 2011, p. 5). They attribute the increase in crime in Namibia primarily to the level of poverty and to the significantly understaffed criminal justice system. Additionally, the latest NAMPOL strategic plan highlights that the functions of the police are to preserve the internal security of Namibia, maintain law and order, investigate any offence or alleged offence, prevent crime and protect lives and properties, (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011).

The NAMPOL strategic plan recognises community policing as playing a crucial part if the force is to achieve its mandate. "The prevention, investigation and detection of crime cannot be achieved without the cooperation and commitment of the community and other relevant institutions. This partnership will thus assist in apprehending offenders and ensuring a safe and secure environment in both urban and rural areas" (Namibian Police Force Strategic plan, 2011, p. 6). Furthermore, the document explains that community policing is premised on the principle

that the police and the community need to work together as equal partners in order to identify, prioritise and solve contemporary problems such as crime and social disorder, with the aim of ensuring the overall safety and security of all people "for a peaceful co - existence" (Namibian Police Force Strategic plan, 2011, p. 19). This same document also places strong emphasis on the usage of ICTs (information communication technologies) as a means of fighting crime, (Namibian Police Force Strategic plan 2011). The study was thus crucial because it established how the NAMPOL uses its Facebook page to encourage police-community relations in order to effectively fight crime and subsequently reduce it.

2.3 Social media

Social media is defined as web-based tools and services that allow users to create, share, rate and search for content and information without having to log in to any specific portal site or portal destination. Social media technologies such as the internet and the global system for mobile telephone (GSM) provide the basis for interaction. Social media differs from traditional media like newspapers, television and film in the sense that social media is relatively less expensive, more readily accessible and gives individuals and groups opportunity to receive, relay and or publish information, (Banjo, 2013).

Similarly, (Luoma-aho, 2010) defines social media as an umbrella term which refers to new arenas where users create content: writing and broadcasting carried out by the people formerly known as the audience. Categorising different social media is challenging as many services offer several functions such as networking, chat and photo sharing. Examples of such networks can be found on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace etc. (Banjo, 2013). An added distinguishing feature of social media is its power of immediacy. Unlike the traditional media that normally takes more time to develop and relay information, social media gets to millions of interested parties in an instant, making it an ideal tool for political activism especially in authoritarian regimes, (Banjo, 2013). Social media has major influences in today's age.

However, there is a need to be cautious in making broad claims about the impact of social media to effect changes and revolutions in various areas and spheres of life. Rather, they are seen as powerful mediums which if used optimally can change the modern communication sphere for the better, (Banjo, 2013). Mutula (2013) observes that social media is influencing the information landscape significantly with people of all persuasions irrespective of education, social status, age, profession, sex, religion, political orientation adopting and using it in both developed and developing countries. Continuing, Mutula (2013) is of the view that the major sectors of society including government, business, civil society and the general public are increasingly adopting social media in their operational milieu. Sharing similar sentiments, Nwakanma (2010) observes that social media and networks loom large in the Internet space and their utility is no longer questioned in many areas.

Various studies have been conducted on the impact of social/new media in a wide range of areas and disciplines such as in Africa, on education, journalism etc. (Capurro, 2013; Harper, 2010; Poell & Borra, 2011; Oladokun, 2013; Oyieke, Dick & Bothma, 2013).

While there are heaps of praises for the impact social media has on every facet of society the world over, social media critics maintain that the impact of social media should not be overestimated, particularly in Africa. Banjo (2013) argues that the huge impact of social media cannot be underestimated, but neither should it be overestimated. However, given the growing popularity of social media users, the more direct and indirect influence can only be expected in Africa in the near future as the involvement of these new communication platforms in engendering change is largely incidental and unpremeditated, (Banjo, 2013). Similarly, Sarrazin (2011) argued that Facebook and Twitter were not designed with political activism in mind, they just happen to provide astounding new opportunities for group communication.

2.3.1 Facebook

Namibia has a Facebook penetration rate of 10.7% with 231,340 (Facebook) users in the

country (Internet World Stats, 2015). Noyes (2015) notes that Facebook has 1.44 billion active users monthly and surprisingly, approximately 82.8% of the daily active users are outside the United States of America and Canada. He reported that, everyday 798 million Facebook users are accessing the site from their mobile phones. And the breakdown of this number shows that 29% of the users are between 25 and 34 years old. The next group represented are users aged from 16 to 24 years (25%).

Noyes (2015) reels out more statistics: 936 million people worldwide logged onto Facebook daily in March 2015, which represents a 17% increase over last year. The age range 25 to 34, are the most common age demographic (29.7%). The youth are the prime target for many businesses' marketing efforts and are often the target audience. The numbers furthermore indicate that five new Facebook profiles are created every second, meaning that potential audiences on Facebook are growing, (Noyes, 2015).

More statistics from Noyes (2015) show that there are more female Facebook users compared to males but the margin is not very huge - 53% and 47% respectively. Also, there are at least 83 million fake profiles. There are various reasons for this including professionals doing testing and research and people who want to segment their Facebook use by having more than one account. Furthermore, the average time spent per Facebook visit is 20 minutes. In addition, statistics show that 4.75 billion pieces of content is shared daily as of 2013 which is a 94% increase from August 2012. Furthermore, 50% of 18-24 year-olds log onto Facebook when they wake up and 42% of marketers report that Facebook is critical or important to their business, (Noyes, 2015).

Facebook was created at Harvard University for students there but developed a global reach within three years. Facebook users can choose to join the network, based on their city, company they work for, school or region. The principal connection is with friends that invite one another

and those whose profile pages are accessible. Facebook is much less customised in terms of look and feel than Bebo or MySpace and it does not allow users to have their own backgrounds, giving it a more consistent look and feel, (Brown, 2009).

The main features include the wall, an open space for messages, pictures and video s, photos, where users can upload pictures or whole albums and can tag photos linking to the individuals in the pictures and; status which allows users to update friends on what they are doing or what is on their mind, (Brown, 2009). Facebook hosts more photographs than any other site on the web including Photobucket and Flickr, which, unlike Facebook, apply limits to the number of photos that a user is allowed to upload (Brown, 2009).

"The News Feed that appears on a user's homepage highlights updates like events, new friendships and birthdays. Facebook allows software developers to create applications that interact with Facebook features, which has led to the creation of a huge a range of applications including chess and scrabble," (Brown, 2009, p.165-166).

2.3.2 The use of social media and Facebook in Namibia

With a Facebook penetration rate of 10.7% or 231,340 (Facebook) users in the country (Internet World Stats, 2015), there is no doubt that social media has and is changing the way people consume and use information all over the world as is seen by the plethora of literature on this subject. Grunig, (2009) asserts that information is widely available to everyone at little cost and effort. Tyson (2015) revealed that the use of social media in Namibia is on the rise thus correlating with international trends. Tyson found that Facebook remains the social media network of choice in both Rundu and Windhoek, with few respondents indicating a liking for Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp or Google +. In both communities, social media use was between two and five hours a day, although in Rundu one individual claimed to spend 10 hours a day on social networking sites (Tyson, 2015).

Another study on the effect of social media and video games on the academic performance of University of Namibia students found that Facebook (90%) was the most popular social network among students for communication and not for educational purposes (Tyson, 2015). This confirms Fox's (2012) findings that Facebook is the most favoured social networking site, although others mentioned were Skype, Twitter and blogging platforms. Fox (2012) also reported that the usage of internet is mainly urban-based and is likely to be higher in Windhoek compared to other parts of the country. Moderately well-off and more affluent young people in Windhoek have a Facebook account. But this was not always the case: "There proved to be surprising interest and even some participation in social networks by lower- income individuals. For example, a car guard had a Facebook account which he exclusively accessed on his cellphone," (Fox, 2012, p. 203).

Fox (2012) also found that many youth regarded 3 G cellphones as a desirable mea ns of accessing the Internet compared to a conventional computer, although the majority used both.

Fox's findings are not far-fetched going by Sarrazin's (2011) finding that "users increasingly opt for mobile devices rather than traditional PCs or laptops to access the World Wide Web," (Sarrazin, 2011, p.16). Fox (2012, p. 214) argues that "the internet is widely favoured by Windhoek youth over older media primarily because of its non-passive, strongly interactive social character."

2.4 Social Media, Public Relations and Community Policing

Literature on new/social media shows that these platforms are changing the way in which people communicate with each other. According to Coombs (2008), the rapid evolution of new media often results in the practice of public relations getting ahead of research. He argues that the new/digital media are the latest fad in public relations practice and they have the potential to make the profession more global, strategic, two-way and interactive, symmetrical or digital and socially responsible.

Grunig (2009), however, laments that many public relations practitioners are using the new media in the same ways they used the old-as a means of dumping messages on the general population rather than as a strategic means of interacting with publics and bringing information from the environment into organisational decision making. Similarly, findings by Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) which examined how top global organisations incorporated brand websites, Facebook and Twitter to cultivate relationships with stakeholders suggest that these online sites are used more for information dissemination rather than user engagement and more for one-way rather than two-way communication. Their findings also show that the types of products promoted can affect the way organisations use different online media to develop relationships (Shin, Pang and Kim, 2015).

A ten- year longitudinal analysis studying how 'social and other emerging media technologies are bringing out drastic changes to the practice of public relations found that PR executives strongly agree that social and other emerging media are changing the way public relations is practiced; so much so that this impact continues to be more pronounced for external than internal audiences (Wright and Hinson, 2015, p.1). Their major findings include Facebook narrowly leading Twitter as the most frequently accessed new medium for public relations activities. This is contrary to the same study in 2014, when Twitter narrowly replaced Facebook

as the medium of choice for public relations activities. Furthermore, the 2015 results indicate that the percentage of time public relations practitioners spend on blogs, social and other emerging media during their work days is levelling off.

As with the previous study, the 2015 study found that the traditional media are weakening in terms of their status as the preferred media. Furthermore, Wright and Hinson's results show that a clear majority of public relations practitioners believe that monitoring and managing social and emerging media communication in organisations should be the responsibility of communications and public relations. However, the emergence of digital/social media departments has lowered that percentage (Wright and Hinson, 2015). For public relations to fully use digital media, practitioners and scholars must re-institutionalise public relations as a behavioural paradigm rather than as a symbolic, interpretive paradigm, (Grunig, 2009). But, Shin, Pang and Kim (2015) argue that to strategically incorporate their use of online media, public relations practitioners should go beyond the one size-fits all approach.

The fact that the Namibian Police Force places so much emphasis on the usage of ICTs (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011) shows just how important the World Wide Web (WWW) is in contemporary Namibia. The NAMPOL strategic document also places emphasis on involving the community as partners in order to fight crime.

2.4.1 Control of social media

Grunig (2009) argues that although digital media now makes the control of communication largely impossible, the assumed control of messages and influence has always been an illusion rather than a reality of public relations practice. In the Namibian context, former Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Joel Kaapanda, had observed that social networks are very difficult to regulate (Muraranganda, 2015). This was in response to calls to

curb the abuse and misuse of social media for amongst others; tarnishing people's reputations, faking identities and posting gruesome pictures of deceased people on social networks even before their next of kin have been informed of their demise (Muraranganda, 2015, Menges, 2013, Kapitako, 2014, Immanuel, 2014). Muraranganda (2015) notes that Facebook crimes have been dealt with on a minimal basis although the police have recorded several cases where public figures were bullied on Facebook and other social media, it is only when the NAMPOL cybercrime sub-division is well equipped that it will be in a position to investigate Facebook crimes in full. He also reports that lawmakers are in the process of finalising a bill that would regulate social media in the country.

2.4.2 The usefulness of social media in police-community relations

Despite the abuse of social media by some, Grunig, (2009) believes that the internet society has empowered publics in a way that is truly revolutionary. People are now less constrained by the information that traditional media choose to make available to them since they can access information from millions of sources.

Meanwhile, (2011) argued that the more people participate in a platform, the more likely it is that among these people there will be users who uphold and subscribe to morals and values generally accepted by society at large. To highlight the power of social media in police-community relations and curbing crime, Goldsmith (2013, p. 264) asserted that social media is redefining how communication takes place inside and outside police agencies and that "social media is foreshadowing new relationships with the public and between the police themselves".

To demonstrate how social media fosters new relationships between the police and public,

Omanga (2015) documents how a chief used social media to create awareness on crime in his community. The chief used the Twitter platform to send out information on crime that is happening and the response in most cases was almost immediate. According to the chief, his almost 20 tweets per day reach all segments of society, including school heads, church leaders, the police and ordinary citizens and that this has helped to drastically reduce crime. Omanga, (2015, p.6) posits that it was "his crime-busting tweets that brought him the global limelight, even catching the attention of global media powerhouses, such as CNN, Associated Press, and the Daily Telegraph, among others ".

He (the chief) was so successful that even petty criminals and bootleggers took to following him on Twitter to avoid being caught off guard. This series of tweets which succeeded in foiling robberies, mobilising villagers for emergency rescue operations and uniting missing children with their parents gave Chief Kariuki the needed online influence that vastly expanded his network," (Omanga, 2015, p. 6). However, there were sentiments expressed amongst some people in the Kenyan village that there was a need to rethink the use of Twitter in community policing since the network was good for prevention of crime but not for apprehension of criminals (Omanga, 2015).

However, Chief Kariuki feels that such a "narrow definition of community policing evidenced by actual arrests of criminals is not helpful. The emphasis on arrests and conviction only leads to hardening the criminals once they are released from prison. The best form of security involves the community as their own policemen," (Omanga, 2015, p.7). Furthermore, Omanga (2015) reported that in several interviews with residents of the location, tweets exposing criminals helped in greatly expanding the chief's audience. However, a few of them felt that a steady stream of these kinds of messages had created an inaccurate impression that the location is insecure. Still, most residents, especially the older members and those gainfully employed as

businessmen and professionals, laud these efforts and are full of praise for the chief and his innovations. In fact, crime in Lanet Umoja is not common and resident opinions suggest that Twitter has helped to drastically reduce crime. But, (Crump, 2012) argues that because of its limited features, Twitter is only effective for the dissemination of information by the police and not necessarily to effect change, in as far in combating crime.

Crump (2012) found that most police forces in England and Wales use social media in their communications strategies and yet the Police force's use of Twitter has been largely non-transformational. Crump (2012) also argued that social media offers great visibility for both senior and neighbourhood officers and they are a means of advertising established media. On the whole, police forces have used social media most successfully as an extra channel for delivering messages, not as a means of enabling dialogue with the public (Crump, 2012).

2.4.2 Social media interaction and police-community relations

Grunig, (2009) asserts that in some ways, public relations practice has not been changed by the revolution in digital media. Many public relations practitioners have long had the illusion that they could choose their publics, control the messages received by their publics, control the cognitive interpretations publics form about organisations, and persuade publics to change their attitudes and behaviour. In reality, however, the public creates and control the messages to which they are exposed, (Grunig, 2009).

In addition, a survey by Accenture (2012) on people's perceptions of the use of new media to fight crime established that digital tools are a way to reach the technologically-savvy younger generation that may ignore traditional media channels such as television or newspaper and want information delivered and shared across mobile platforms. Digital tools enable police to communicate with often difficult-to-reach groups, such as anarchists or underground groups.

The survey also found that 88 percent of citizens believe they are important participants in

fighting crime; specifically citing that reporting crimes is a key role for citizens in police services. However, the majority (84 percent) of citizens' surveyed feel only minimally informed of local police activities.

The survey findings identified a communication gap between citizens and police. However, the research also found a strong citizen belief that digital channels, particularly social media, can bridge the communication gap and increase citizen involvement in local policing efforts. Three quarters of all respondents said they would like to see police forces using more digital channels to communicate with citizens, yet only 20 percent of respondents said their police forces are currently using digital channels to communicate.

So how are police reaching out? According to the survey, citizens say that police continue to rely heavily on traditional media channels including newspapers (69 percent) and radio or television news reports (45 percent) as their primary method of communicating with citizens. This is despite Crump's (2012) observation that most police forces in England and Wales use social media in their communications strategies. But this difference in findings can also be argued on the basis of different settings.

Furthermore, the Accenture (2012) study observed that the value of traditional communication channels, such as anonymous police call lines, cannot be overlooked, given the reluctance of some citizens to share their identities. A majority of the citizens surveyed (71 percent) say they are more likely to communicate with police if they have the option to remain anonymous, especially when reporting crimes and disturbances. In addition, the survey found that 81 percent of the respondents believe Facebook can assist in fighting crime, 50 percent believe websites and portals can also assist in fighting crime while 35 percent believe Twitter can assist in fighting crime. Given the perceptions in the surveyed countries regarding crime and digital media, the proposed study sought to determine if there exists a difference in the perceptions of community relations between those who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page and those

who have not 'liked' the page. The study thus aimed to take the concept of community policing beyond the traditional face-to- face approach to the emerging new/social media platform and specifically the NAMPOL Facebook page, to determine if this makes a difference in the Namibian context.

2.5 Theory

The study adopted James Grunig & Todd Hunt's two-way symmetrical public relations model that uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and its stakeholders. The original model referred to as the four models of public relations has the following components: Press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric.

Grunig & Hunt (1984) explained that the four models of public relations were constructed to help people understand the history of formal public relations and to understand how it is practiced. They also said that not everything that any single public relations person does will fit any of the models perfectly. However, the models are close enough that different public relations people can be fitted into one of the models, Grunig & Hunt (1984).

The models first differ in purpose- the function they provide for the organisation that sponsors them. Although public relations developed as a persuasive communication function, not all of these models of public relations are for that purpose. Furthermore, Grunig & Hunt (1984) explained that public relations serves as a propaganda function in the press agent/publicity model. Practitioners spread the faith of the organisation involved, often through incomplete, distorted, or half-true information. For the public-information model, the purpose is the dissemination of information, not necessarily with a persuasive intent. The public relations functions essentially as a journalist in residence, whose job it is to report objectively information about his organisation to the public.

Practitioners of two-way asymmetric public relations have a function more like that of the press/agent/publicist, although their purpose can best be described as scientific persuasion. They use what is known from social science theory and research about attitudes and behavior to persuade publics to accept the organisations's point of view and to behave in a way that supports the organization. The press agent/publicist's attempts at persuasion, in contrast, are more intuitive, seat-of-the-pants rather than scientific.

In the two-way symmetric model, public relations practitioners serve as mediators between organisations and their publics. Their goal is mutual understanding between organisations and their publics. These practitioners, too, may use social science theory and methods, but they usually use theories of communication rather than theories of persuasion for planning and evaluation of public relations, (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p.22-23).

2.5.1 The nature of communication

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984) the four models also demonstrate the nature of the communication that the public relations person manages between organisation and publics.

For the first two models, communication is always one-way, from the organisation to publics. Practitioners of these two models generally view communication as telling, not listening. The first two models differ, however, in that the press agent/publicist/ do not always feel obligated to present a complete of the organisation or product they represent, whereas public information specialists do, Grunig & Hunt (1984).

For the two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric practitioners, communication flows both to and from publics. But there is a big difference in the nature of that two-way asymmetric model is 'asymmetric' because the effects of the public relations are imbalanced in favour of the organisation. The organisation does not change as a result of public relations; it attempts to

change public attitudes and behavior. Two-way asymmetric practitioners carefully plan what they communicate to publics to achieve maximum change in attitude and behavior.

Communication from publics comes as 'feedback'. For many public relations practitioners today, feedback is communication. That was not its original meaning. In cybernetic theorists typically use the analogy of a thermostat to explain feedback. A thermostat monitors the effects of a furnace or air conditioner-the temperature of the air-to decide whether to turn the furnace or air conditioner on or off. The feedback enables the thermostat to manipulate the furnace or air conditioner. "Never does the furnace or air conditioner initiate the communication. It never gets to tell the thermostat to change the temperature setting because it is wasting fuel that such waste is socially irresponsible. Communication in that model is truly one sided, or asymmetric," (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p.23).

The two-way symmetric model, in contrast consists more of a dialogue than a monologue. If persuasion occurs, the public should be just as likely to persuade the organisation's management to change attitudes or behaviour and the organisation is likely to change the public's attitudes and behavior. Ideally, both management and publics will change somewhat after a public relations effort.

"Frequently, however, neither will change attitudes or behavior. The public relations staff brings the two groups together, and, as long as both communicate well enough to understand the position of the other, the public relations effort will have been successful," (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 23). According to Childers (1989), the roots of the two- way symmetrical model cannot be easily traced to the ideas of a single public relations practitioner. This model implies that open discourse and fair competition among independent groups (for example, an organisation and an activist group that is opposing it) result in practices and policies that most fairly reflect what is good for society.

As a consequence, symmetrical public relation is more ethical and socially responsible than asymmetrical public relations because it manages conflict rather than wages war, hence its effectiveness. Symmetrical communication programmes are also pragmatically more successful than asymmetrical programmes and contribute more to organisational effectiveness.

The two-way symmetrical model was selected for this research because the study aimed to study whether the NAMPOL Facebook page made for better interaction between the police and public on that digital platform. This study thus adopted the symmetrical model to assess the relationship between the NAMPOL and the public. By adopting this model, the study sought to examine if the NAMPOL views the public as an equal and important partner in combating crime.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed literature on new/digital media, public relations, as well as police and crime prevention. The vast range of literature, particularly on the emergence and the revolution that new media have engendered, shows that it is a subject of interest even in Namibia. It is established from the extant literature, as well as the vast range of information reviewed that Facebook remains a subject of interest in all sectors.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the research methodology. This chapter features explanations of what research methods where used and what prompted their choice of usage. The research population has also been indicated as well as the procedure undertaken during the research. The data analysis used is also described in this chapter. The validity and reliability test is also explained and the researcher also explained the ethical consideration.

3.2 Research design

This research employed quantitative and qualitative research methods. For the quantitative part of the research, survey, specifically, the descriptive variety which attempts to surface a situation or condition (Wimmer & Dominick (2006) was employed. The research also used focus group discussions (FGDs), which according to Gilbert (1997) have the advantage of drawing upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way that would not be feasible using other methods.

3.3 Population

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done. However, due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual

in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques. A research population is also known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics, (Explorable, n.d).

The population for this study consists of 325,858 Windhoek residents (Population and Housing Census, 2011) and regular Facebook users who have liked the NAMPOL Facebook page. For the online participants, 100 out of 16 421 (at the time of submitting final report) regular Facebook users who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page were surveyed. And, for focus group discussions 18 participants (out of 325,858 Windhoek residents) between the ages of 18-35 were selected to participate in the three FGDs.

The participants were selected based on convenience (availability) sampling method (Sage, 2011) which was based on their willingness to participate in the study provided they had not 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page.

The Facebook audience was chosen based on snowball sampling whereby the first set of survey respondents were implored to encourage their friends and relatives who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page to partake in the survey. This was due to a low response rate to the invitation posted on the NAMPOL Facebook page to invite participation in the survey. As a consequence, the use of the snowball sampling method was the best solution, as snowball sampling method is useful for hard-to-reach or hard-to-identify populations for which there is no sampling frame but the members of which are somewhat interconnected or at least some members of the population know each other. (Sage, 2011, p. 174).

3.4 Sample

The study employed available (convenient) and snowball sampling methods. Regular Facebook users who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page were requested via the platform's wall to participate in this study. The sample consisted of 100 participants out of the 16, 421 Internet users who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page. Participants who completed the survey questionnaire were implored to encourage their friends and family who have 'liked' the page to also participate in the survey.

Windhoek residents who have not 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook also took part in the study. The Windhoek participants were selected from a population of 325,858 (Namibia Housing and Population, 2011) based on availability and willingness to take part in the survey. The research established that not many people were aware of the NAMPOL Facebook page and this made it difficult for the researcher to find people who were aware of the NAMPOL

Facebook page and yet have not 'liked' it. Eighteen participants were thus selected to participate in three FGDs consisting of six participants each. However, one participant did not turn up; as a result one group had five participants.

3.5 Research instruments

A study questionnaire, consisting of items designed to test police-community relations from the purview of NAMPOL's Facebook page was used for Facebook users who took part in the study. The questionnaire was sent online (via email) to some participants. The questionnaire was also uploaded online (Facebook) with a link provided for potential participants to complete the survey questionnaire. Participants who could not complete the questionnaire were not left out, as arrangements were made to administer the questionnaire face-to- face. According to Explorable (n.d) questionnaires have some benefits in research which includes the fact that they are practical. In addition, large amounts of information can be collected from a large number

of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way, (Explorable, n.d). Additionally, the researcher used a FGD guide consisting of items designed to test police-community relations to the Windhoek residents (those who know about the NAMPOL Facebook page but have not 'liked' it).

3.6 Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the administrators of the NAMPOL Facebook page in the police's public relations division by providing them with a letter from the University of Namibia about intentions to carry out the study. The NAMPOL Facebook administrators allowed the researcher to post the purpose of the study and also to request for volunteers on the NAMPOL Facebook wall, to which the police endorsed and encouraged as many people as possible to partake in the survey. Interested participants responded by sending a private message to the researcher's inbox (private message). Others contacted the researcher on the contact number provided in the request post while others left their contact numbers on the wall of the NAMPOL Facebook page. The researcher subsequently responded by sending a copy of the questionnaire to the interested participants. The participants were also encouraged to complete the questionnaire online. NAMPOL made the request twice on June 16, 2015 and on July 9, 2015 as the response rate was rather slow. The researcher also implored participants who participated in the survey to encourage their friends and family who have 'liked' the page to also participate in the survey.

Similarly, not many people knew about the NAMPOL Facebook page and did not 'like' it and this also made it difficult for the researcher to identify people who were aware of the NAMPOL Facebook page and yet had not 'liked' it for the FGD component of the study. As a result, participants were selected based on their willingness and interests to take part (convenience

sampling method). The researcher also encouraged the survey participants who were recruited on Facebook to identify persons who knew about the NAMPOL Facebook and had not 'liked' it. However, only one participant knew of a friend (who agreed to participate) who knew about the page and did not like it. This prompted the researcher to go from door to door requesting potential participants who knew about the page and had not 'liked' it. In this case, the convenience (availability) sampling method was used and to some extent also snowball sampling for the one participant. As a result, 18 participants were selected to participate in three FGDs, consisting of six participants. As noted, one participant did not turn up for one of the FDGs, thus resulting in one group having five participants.

3.7 Data analysis

To analyse the study's data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the survey part of the study. The findings are presented in the form of tables and graphs using cross tabulation and descriptive statistics upon which the conclusions and recommendations of the study are based. The data from the FDGs was analysed by using themes.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

In order to determine if the items in the questionnaire were a reliable and accurate measure of the study's variables, Cronbach's Alpha was run on SPSS on the Likert scale items. The procedure output had an overall Alpha of .076 as indicated in the table below.

This measure is acceptable considering that 0.70 is the cut off for an accurate measure (Leech, Barett & Morgan, 2005).

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.076	.253	8

Table 3.1 Results of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test

3.9 Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained an ethical clearance letter from the University of Namibia before embarking on the field work. All participants signed consent forms which provided details about the NAMPOL Facebook page administrators in the (police) public relations division to request volunteers on their Facebook page to participate in an online survey pertaining to their Facebook page. For the FGDs, the researcher asked consent from participants to use their first names when compiling the final report. All participants were assured and reassured of confidentiality and that they were at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time. The study and their role in it. Participants were assured of confidentiality and their right to withdraw if they felt the need to do so. In addition, the researcher sought permission from the NAMPOL Facebook page administrators in the (police) public relations division to request volunteers on their Facebook page to participate in an online survey pertaining to their Facebook page. For the FGDs, the researcher asked consent from participants to use their first names when compiling the final report. All participants were assured and reassured of confidentiality and that they were at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time.

3.9.1 Conclusion

This chapter looked into the research methodology used. The instruments used to gather data are mentioned and explained. The validity and reliability was also tested and result are presented in this chapter. The researcher also explained the procedure during the research process. The chapter also looked at why it was important to observe ethics and what ethical considerations the researcher adhered to.

Chapter 4

Presentation of results

4.1 Survey results

This chapter gives an overview of the gathered data mainly in the form of tables with brief explanations. The return rate for the survey questionnaire was 100 percent, as all the 100 people surveyed returned their completed questionnaire. However, some respondents did not answer to all the questions as will be seen in the presentation of data. Furthermore, the response rate for the FGDs was also good. Three FGDs were conducted with different participants of six people in a group. However, for one of the FGDs, one participant did not show-up. Below is a presentation of the results

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender	Male	47	47%
	Female	52	52%
	Missing	1	1%
	N=100		
Qualifications	Grade 7	1	1%
	Grade 10	6	6%
	Grade 12	39	39%
	Certificate	10	10%
	Diploma	13	13%
	Advanced diploma	9	9%
	Degree	16	16%
	Higher degree	6	6%

	N=100		
Age	18-24 years	54	54%
	25-34 years	36	36%
	35-44 years	7	7%
	45-54 years	3	3%
	N=100		
Employment status	Employed	45	45%
	Unemployed	17	17%
	Student	37	37%
	Others	1	1%
Marital status	Single, never married	82	82%
	Married	9	9%
	Co-habiting	4	4%
	Divorced	1	1%
	Separated	3	3%
	Others	1	1%
	N=100		

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Most respondents who participated in the research were young people between the ages of 18-35. More females than males took part in the study although the margin is not very wide. Most people who participated in the study have Grade 12 qualifications followed by those who have degrees and the majority were employed followed by students. Table 4.1 above gives a graphical overview of the respondents' demographic characteristics.

4.3 Respondents' attitude to NAMPOL Facebook page

Respondent's place of access to Facebook	At work	29	18.8%
	At school	33	21.4%
	At home	77	50.0%
	At internet café	2	1.3%
	Others	13	8.4%
	N=100		
Devices used to access Facebook	Smartphone	82	55.4%
	Tablet	15	10.1%
	Laptop/computers	51	34.5%
	N=100		
Logging onto Facebook	Often	65	65.0%
	Sometimes	30	30.0%
	Rarely	5	5.0%
	N=100		
How respondents learnt about the NAMPOL Facebook page	From a Facebook friend	31	31.3%
	From a friend	29	29.3%
	Invited by NAMPOL to like the page	8	8.1%
	Personal effort	27	27.3%
	Others	4	4.0%
	Missing	1	
	N=100		

Respondents' motivation to like the NAMPOL Facebook page	To learn more about NAMPOL	32	25.6%
	To constantly get updates on NAMPOL activities	56	44.8%
	To have the opportunity to interact with NAMPOL	17	13.6%
	To report criminal activities	5	4.0%
	Invited by NAMPOL to like the page	1	0.8%
	Just for fun	10	8.0%
	Others	4	3.2%
	N=100		
Frequency of visiting the NAMPOL Facebook page	Often	20	20%
	Sometimes	51	51%
	Rarely	21	21%
	Only the day I liked the NAMPOL Facebook page	5	5%
	Never	2	2%
	Missing	1	1%
	N=100		
Posting on the NAMPOL Facebook page	Often	6	6.2%
	Sometimes	21	21.6%
	Rarely	35	36.1%
	Only the day I liked the NAMPOL Facebook page	14	14.4%
	Never	21	21.6%

	Missing	3	
What respondent's like about the NAMPOL Facebook page	The updates from NAMPOL	62	60.2%
	The interactive features on the NAMPOL Facebook page	6	5.8%
	The comments from the members of the public	31	30.1%
	Others	4	3.9%
	N=100		
Respondent's level of agreement (strongly agree)	Facebook is useful for police to communicate with the public	45	38.1%
	The NAMPOL Facebook page is a good platform for interactions between the public and the police	27	22.9%
	The NAMPOL Facebook page assisted tremendously with fighting crime	14	11.9%
	The NAMPOL is making a difference with police-community relations	4	3.4%
	The NAMPOL Facebook page is dominated by the police with little input from the public	6	5.1%
	The NAMPOL Facebook page is dominated by the police with little input from the police	6	5.1%

	There are always lots of activities on the NAMPOL Facebook page	11	9.3%
	There are very little activities on the NAMPOL Facebook page	5	4.2%
	N=100		

Table 4.2 Respondents' attitude to NAMPOL Facebook page

Fifty percent of the respondents' reported that they access Facebook at home and over 50 percent of the respondents reported that they access Facebook using smartphones. Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that they log onto Facebook often while nearly 51 percent of the respondents said they occasionally visit the NAMPOL Facebook page. While nearly 45 percent of the respondents said they liked the NAMPOL Facebook page in order to constantly get updates on their activities, 35 percent of respondents rarely post on the NAMPOL Facebook page. Only 3.4% of respondents strongly agreed that NAMPOL Facebook page is making a difference with police-community relations. Table 4.2 above reports on the figures.

4.4 Demographic characteristics and attitude to NAMPOL Facebook page

Rating of the NAMPOL Facebook page from police/community relations	Very useful	37	37%
	Somewhat useful	39	39%
	Unsure	20	20%
	Useless	3	3%
	Completely useless	1	1%
	N=100		

Table 4.3.1 Rating of the NAMPOL Facebook page from police/community

Age range of respondents	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Unsure	Useless	Completely useless	Total
18-24 years	22	21	9	2	0	54
25-34 years	13	13	8	1	1	36
35-44 years	2	3	2	0	0	7
45-54 years	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total	37	39	20	3	1	100

4.3.2 Rating of the NAMPOL page by Age range of respondents

Qualification	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Unsure	Useless	Completely useless	Total
Grade 7	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grade 10	4	1	1	0	0	6
Grade 12	15	18	5	1	0	39
Certificate	3	2	3	2	0	10
Diploma	5	4	4	0	0	13
Advanced Diploma	3	2	4	0	0	9
Degree	3	9	3	0	1	16
Higher degree	4	2	0	0	0	6
Total	37	39	20	3	1	100

4.3.3 Rating of the NAMPOL Facebook page by qualification

Employment status	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Unsure	Useless	Completely useless	Total
Employed	11	20	11	2	1	45
Unemployed	12	1	4	0	0	17
Student	14	17	5	1	0	37

Others	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	37	39	20	3	1	100

4.3.4 Rating of the NAMPOL Facebook page by employment status of respondents

Gender		Very useful	Somewhat useful	Unsure	Useless	Completely useless	Total
Male		21	17	9	0	0	47
Female		16	22	10	3	1	52
Missing	1						
Total		37	39	19	3	1	99

Table 4.3.5 Rating of the NAMPOL Facebook page by gender of respondents

The tables below show a cross tabulation presentation of demographic information of respondents as well as their overall rating of the NAMPOL Facebook page from the standpoint of police-community relations. The 18-24 age group found the NAMPOL Facebook page 'very useful' compared to the other age groups. Thirteen of the 25-43 age group category reported that the NAMPOL Facebook page is 'very useful' the same number of respondents reported that the page is somewhat useful. Twenty out of 100 respondents of those who are employed found the page 'somewhat useful' while 17 out of 100 respondents who were students found the 'somewhat useful'. Meanwhile, 18 out of the 100 surveyed respondents with Grade 12 qualifications found the NAMPOL Facebook page 'somewhat useful' while 15 of the 100 surveyed respondents with the same qualifications found it 'very useful'. Nine respondents who are degree holders found the page 'somewhat useful'. Furthermore, more males (21 male respondents) than females (16 female respondents) found the NAMPOL Facebook page very useful.

4.5 Focus Group Discussion Findings

Introduction

To determine if there is a difference in the perception of police-community relations between people who have "liked" the NAMPOL Facebook page and those who have not, Windhoek residents were interviewed during focus group discussions (FGDs) to establish their views on NAMPOL's Facebook page.

The participants who took part in the discussions had knowledge of the existence of the NAMPOL Facebook page, however, they had not "liked" it. Some participants reported that they knew of the existence of their page either from their friends online and offline. Some said the NAMPOL Facebook page appeared on their Facebook newsfeed.

Other participants indicated that they learnt about the NAMPOL Facebook page through neighbourhood watches (community policing) Facebook pages and one participant said she got to know the NAMPOL Facebook page through her Twitter account and some said through the NAMPOL website. The participants who took part in the three focus group discussions are in their prime years. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 35 years. The questions to the full interview are part of the Appendices. The discussions were recorded with the participants' permission. The researcher also took hand written notes mainly for follow-up questions and demographic information. In addition, the researcher transcribed the discussions and the most common themes were drawn and presented below in themes in the form of a report.

Respondents' Views on Social Media Police-Community Interactions

Most of the participants reported that social media is a good platform for the police and community to interact. But the participants also admitted that there are prerequisites for social media to really be effective when the police and public meet on these platforms to interact in the name of combating crime.

Victor, a Polytechnic of Namibia student who was part of FGD one explained that social media is good for police-community communication because there are times when the police will need the public's assistance on crime related matters. Victor, who appeared shy, added that the majority of young people in Namibia are on social media.

"The community needs to communicate with the police on reporting of crime. Some people don't have phones to call the police on a certain crime but we the youth are all on Facebook and other social media. It will be a great communication platform because we get to express things happening around us. Sometimes there is that somebody who knows what's going on but the police does not really have a relationship with that person, so social media would be good for that," said Victor.

Supporting Victor, participant Nelao who was also part of FGD one, which comprised only of Polytechnic of Namibia students, said *"I don't think there is a problem for the police to communicate with the public on social media"*. Nelao added that the police perform national services and they need to be visible everywhere including on the digital platforms.

Information Technology student, Kleophas said *"I think the platform of the police engaging the public on social media is very crucial in society so that crimes in Namibia are reduced and the public as well can work together with the police to inform them of certain clues, for example, fugitives are hiding. Such things can reduce the crime rate in Namibia"*.

Participant Abigail added that the police and public should work together in order to reduce crime in Windhoek and the country at large. "*So the police have to engage the community on social media so that we can fight against societal evils. Maybe it will be reduced,*" commented Abigail. Another participant Eino also agreed that it is good that the police are using social media. "*Nowadays youngsters depend on the internet and they are evolving and so when the police are engaging in social media its better, because the youth can actually take part,*" explained Eino. Ruben too concurred that social media is a godsend in this world that is constantly evolving.

"*You can even use phones for social media anywhere you go, as long as you have internet and everything so it's a good thing because the police have a way of connecting with people all over the world on social media. That is also good because young people are up to those things like Facebook, Twitter and so they will get time to check it out because there is news in the updates that the police shares and people will read and they talk about it,*" participant Ruben said.

Asked about the disadvantages of social media, as a follow up question, to the responses of participants who agreed that social media is a good communication platform for the police to interact with the public, participant Abigail said "*somehow there are disadvantages because if they (police) are looking for someone who stole something they (criminals) will obviously go on their page and find out what's the new thing and what are they looking for exactly so they will be on alert and they will be able to get away quickly so they will be able to plan ahead of them. That's one bad thing, but I think the police can strategise on that*". Kleophas remarked that the only disadvantage is the fact that people are not aware of the police's presence on social networks.

"*So people will not know even if they have clues where certain criminals are hiding because

they are not on Facebook to see what the police have posted about criminals. So, I think the police or the government needs to enforce awareness to the public about the platform of social media or the police being on Facebook," added Kleophas. Eino in support of Kleophas said "*the only disadvantage I can think of is that not everybody has connections to social media and Internet so sometimes they can post something but nobody can see it*".

Participant Didi, who was part of FDG two, also responded to the same question, saying it will depend on whether the public will engage the police or whether the police will give results. Didi said stressed that timeliness plays a crucial role in police-community interactions to be successful. "It might work or it might not work depending on those factors," added Didi.

Participant Chris, who also responded to the same question, commented: "*Yes, I think it's useful. It's an easy way to reach the police if you have any complicated issues that you cannot solve*". But participant Cessy said it depends on people's knowledge of the po lice being on social media. "*To a certain extent yes to some people and to others not,*" she remarked.

Participant Kimi said "*Yes, because most of the people use social media, especially the youth*". However, Rosalia who came across as vocal, did not fully agree that social media is a good platform for the police and public to communicate. "*It is good but it also has its disadvantages because not everybody is on social media. And, people don't really go on social media to look for news so if there are notices they might miss out. People are so used to the traditional way of doing things, such as radio so I just feel people go on social media more for entertainment or when they are bored,*" said Rosalia. But participant Fanuel interjected by saying social media is a good platform, as people are free to talk about anything on these platforms.

Supporting Fanuel, participant Otniel said social media is a "*very*" effective platform in terms of spreading out the messages because many people do not have easy access to the traditional

media such as newspapers. "*With our mobile phones we have access to Facebook. We are well informed. I can be anywhere in Namibia and just by going onto that page I might stumble upon important information that is given out and inform the relevant authorities if they require public assistance. But still it has disadvantages because in as fast as the message can reach the targeted audience it also reaches the people who are in the position to inform the wanted person as soon as they stumble upon this important message,*" said Otniel.

Participant Priscilla said she hardly uses social media and there are other people like her and thus she is not convinced that social media is indeed effective for the police and community to fight against crime. But participants Ester and Madgalena disagreed with Priscilla's opinion by maintaining that most people use social networks. "*That (social networks) will be the most effective way for the police and public to communicate,*" added Ester while Magdalena supported "*Not everyone knows how to get information but they are on social media*". It is worth reporting that some participants nodded in agreement and just said social media is a great platform for the police and public to communicate without expanding on their views.

Attitude towards the NAMPOL Facebook Page

Participants were also asked whether NAMPOL's presence on Facebook can contribute towards combatting crime. The majority agreed that many people use Facebook in their daily lives and that the police's effective presence on this social networking site will depend to a larger extent on whether the police and public actively interact on this platform.

Participant Victor, a social media enthusiast, said the Namibian police's presence on Facebook will certainly help in combating crime and it will also enhance communication between the police and the public because the police "*get to communicate with active Facebook users who might have solutions to their problems*".

Participant Didi remarked that Facebook is a popular social media tool with a lot of people on the social networking site, hence, "it could be an effective platform" for the police and public to engage. "And if the police truly engage then they will be able to get hold of a lot of people (apprehend criminals/learn about criminal activities). Stressing on the importance of engagement between the police and public on social media, Didi said the social networking site could contribute towards combating crime or not have any effect depending on the relationship between the police and public on that platform.

"*I think it could or it could not depending on whether people will engage with the police, whether they will be reporting the crimes on the social network or whether the police will be responding quickly or slowly or whether they will be having ways in which they can actually help immediately once crimes are put on the social media. But, regardless of all the little things I think it would be helpful,*" said participant Didi. Participant Chris commented that

Facebook can be effective, especially if people are online at the time when crime is being reported. "*I don't use Facebook all the time. I use it only sometimes. But if people are online and they use their phones it can be effective,*" said Chris. He added that social media can help in combatting crime because many criminal activities are "socially oriented". "*In combating certain crimes like drug or drug use you can actually find criminals the easy way on social media because it is not always easy to trace them in public,*" added participant Chris.

In as much as Facebook can be good for the police to use in its operations, participant Albi said that the police's presence on this site can alert criminals. "*But then it also tips off criminals because they might also be active on Facebook,*" said Albi. Participant Cessy commented that despite everybody using Facebook to "*post things*" the NAMPOL Facebook page may not be effective unless it is well marketed to the general public. "*If somebody has a complaint and posts a specific problem they can have it solved. The (NAMPOL Facebook) page can help to combat crime in the society if it's active,*" she said. Participant Kimi agreed with Cessy,

remarking that people mostly use Facebook to express what they feel and what they are going through. "*So, it is effective for the police to use Facebook, that way people can get advice (from the police),*" commented participant Kimi. But then, she maintained that the platform will only be effective for police and community interaction and not necessarily to actively combat crime.

"*People don't take Facebook that serious. They think using Facebook is a joke*," Kimi added. In agreement with other participants, Dayo remarked "social media is everywhere. These days even a five- year- old knows how to use a computer and a phone". Participant Debby said "*the community needs to know what is happening around them and what concerns their safety and the police have to communicate through Facebook*". Participant Rosalia opined that if the police use the platform (NAMPOL Facebook page) to warn people about criminal activities happening in certain areas, the page will be effective. "*Most people spend most of their time on Facebook so they might just bump into those messages (from the police), but people don't really go onto Facebook to look for news*".

Participant Fanuel said that Facebook is not entirely safe as people's details are exposed. Hence, responding to the police on sensitive matters on Facebook is not a great idea. "*People don't want to be exposed when they give information (to the police) about anything in particular. The police's presence on Facebook will help but not in all instances compared to other social media which are not Facebook and do not require personal details to be given. You cannot comment anything on Facebook whereby your name is not exposed,*" said Fanuel.

Participant Priscilla said she is not sure how police-community interactions on Facebook will combat crime. "*What are the police doing on Facebook? Crime is out there not on Facebook,*" said Priscilla. People who are not on Facebook will be left out in terms of information that the police are conveying on Facebook, argued participant Ruben, who did not necessarily have a problem with the police using Facebook as part of its functions. "*I think it's a good thing for the police to be on Facebook because each and every one is on Facebook. Okay, there are some*

(people) who are not on Facebook but the majority are on Facebook like Facebook is dominating...everyone wants to be on the Internet so for the police having that page is very nice because if there is someone missing they can just post the picture of the missing person and everyone will see it and help in searching for that missing person so I think Facebook is a good platform," said the vocal Abigail.

Participant Kleophas added that if people would want to report a crime and if a person responds with a comment, Facebook does not protect their identity. *"Facebook does not protect the identity of that person unless for instance the police tells the people that maybe they should try to inbox so that their identity is hidden and only the police will know, because sometimes it will endanger the lives of those who are reporting crimes,"* said Kleophas. Ruben argued that the police's presence on Facebook may not mean much to people in remote areas of Namibia and where internet access is not easily available. But, participant Abigail interjected and said *"I think those (people) who can afford to be on Facebook can use it and those who cannot afford can still go to their nearest police station to find out information about crime"*. Participant Eino said the presence of the police on Facebook *"makes everything much better. I think it's the best way to combat crime in Namibia because we Namibians like talking and texting but we don't act so it's actually like giving a voice to the voiceless"*.

In agreement with Eino, Abigail said NAMPOL's presence on Facebook is not only good for Namibia. *"…It (Facebook) is good for people from other countries to see what's going on in Namibia and how we are tackling crime. The world needs to stand together as one and we need to know what's going on in other countries so that we can learn from each other. You cannot call people who are far away; you have to go through internet so I think Facebook is best"*. But Ruben countered Abigail's reasoning by stressing that the gap between the rich and poor in Namibia is so big that only the rich have access to technology and consequently Facebook. *"The poor ones (poor people) won't really get any information because they don't have*

smartphones, they don't have Wi-Fi, laptops or anything that can go on the interne t so it's not really a good platform," maintained participant Ruben. "*So the police should not use Facebook at all just because some people cannot afford to be on Facebook?"* queried Abigail. "*I don't think it's really effective because not everybody can afford to be on Facebook,"* Ruben responded. Kleophas, who supported Abigail's comment, said the police's presence on Facebook should be encouraged and supported.

"*I personally think that they (police) should use Facebook. I think it's very effective; Facebook nowadays is a faster way of communicating, because people can't go a day without logging on to Facebook. Facebook is definitely a good platform. My emphasis is just that the police should ensure that people are aware of their page on Facebook so that people can know that there is a page on Facebook that posts on crimes that are being committed in the country, because otherwise the page can be there and nobody will 'like' it and then nobody will know anything about it. So, the emphasis should be put on the awareness of the page on Facebook,"*Kleophas said.

Participant Nelao had this to say: "*Let me say those people who sell drugs can post an advertisement on their timeline advertising the drugs and the police can actually find out about that advertisement and can easily catch them. Since we have smart phones and all those gadgets people take unnecessary videos of even an accident that's the problem, you cannot post a video of an accident on Facebook without permission. The police can catch you and ask you why you did that"*.

Most participants considered that the older generation may not be technologically savvy and therefore it is difficult for them to embrace new media. As a result, social media are mainly appealing to young people and not the entire population. Therefore, participants who agreed that police should use Facebook as part of its operations in achieving their functions said it should be used in conjunction with other media in order for it to be effective.

"I checked the NAMPOL Facebook page, its fine. It is useful. The way they are communicating information is fine. But I don't think Namibians go onto that page to get that information. Maybe there are a few who go on that page. The page is fine. If they have an announcement on radio or television they should let people know they have a Facebook page," said Rosalia.

Respondents' Attitude towards traditional media

During the three FGDs, at least seventy percent of the participants mentioned that old media and in particular radio can be the most effective medium for the police and public to use in their engagements, primarily because of its accessibility. Despite the vast majority of the FGDs participants indicating that they access information through online news publications and social networking sites, the vast majority of the participants felt strongly that radio could be an effective medium for police-community engagements and accessing NAMPOL related information. Some of the reasons given were that radio accommodates people even in remote areas where internet connections remain a luxury.

"Radio accommodates everyone, whether it's young people or older people. Young people are more active on social media and older people are more active in listening to radio so I think that's the best medium to use," said Cessy. *"A lot of people listen to the radio. Facebook has so many things and you might miss it (news from the police). People won't miss it (information) if it's on radio. Or maybe they could just try to advertise their page on radio or somewhere. Advertise that page more so that people are aware of that page because I don't think a lot of people are aware of the page. It's not well marketed or advertised,"* stressed participant Rosalia. It also emerged from a number of participants that toll- free numbers are a great way of communication, in addition to multi-media messaging such as text messages or WhatsApp.

Furthermore, participants were asked how they access crime related information as well as information pertaining to the NAMPOL; most participants indicated that they access the information through online news publications, as well as hard copies of the newspapers.

"*I buy newspapers every day,*" said Eino. Abigail also said she accesses information on NAMPOL and crime in general through newspapers. Other participants indicated that they access crime related information online. "*In most cases I get it from the newspapers,*" said participant Otniel who was part of FGD three. Otniel added: "*Those are the only platforms I depend on. In terms of newspapers and television, that is where you get the background of the story and how it all started. On social media those are just hints and basic information, such as who is wanted and for what. However, you will not really know how dangerous the person is and for what crimes are they wanted on social media. I've tried their website, but usually I just listen to the radio or I read the newspapers or I call in if I have specific questions and I need to speak to specific people*".

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the data gathered and respondents' attitude towards the NAMPOL Facebook page. This chapter sought to answer the research objectives which were to establish if the persons who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page found the page useful from the purview of police-community relations, to determine if there exists a difference in the perception of police-community relations between those who have "liked" the page and those who have not liked the page, to determine if demographic variables impacted respondents' views on interactivity and engagement of NAMPOL's Facebook page. One highlight in this chapter is the fact that more young people participated in the study and they generally have a positive attitude towards social media and Facebook in particular compared to their older

counterparts. Although the NAMPOL Facebook page is not very popular with most respondents it emerged from the gathered data that the NAMPOL Facebook page has potential to combat crime.

Chapter 5

Discussion of results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study based on the research objectives. The discussion is presented in themes. Literature to support/dispute the findings are also been presented.

5.2 Interactivity of the NAMPOL Facebook Page

This chapter is a discussion of the main findings of the study 'Social media and police-community relations-a case study of the NAMPOL Facebook page'. Although 65 percent of the study's respondents regularly (often) log onto Facebook and 51 percent of the study's respondents occasionally (sometimes) visit the NAMPOL Facebook, the study found that the (NAMPOL Facebook) page is not very interactive and engaging on both the part of the police and public. Of the 100 respondents surveyed, 21 percent (respondents) reported that they rarely visit the NAMPOL Facebook page.

Twenty percent of the surveyed respondents said they often visit the page, five percent of the respondents reported that they only visited the page on the day that they 'liked' it and two percent admitted that they never visited the page, one respondent did not answer this question. Furthermore, 35 percent of the respondents reported that they rarely post on the NAMPOL Facebook page, 21 percent of the respondents reported that they never posted on the page and another 21 percent of the respondents said they sometimes post on the page.

In addition, 14 percent of the respondents reported that they only posted on the NAMPOL

Facebook page on the day that they 'liked' the page and only six percent of the respondents said that they regularly post on the page. Three respondents did not answer this question. Asked what motivated them to 'like' the NAMPOL Facebook page, 44.8 percent of the respondents said they wanted "to constantly get updates on NAMPOL activities" while 25.6 percent of respondents reported that they 'liked' the page because "they wanted to learn more about the police (NAMPOL).

Less than 15 percent (13.6 percent) of the respondents said they wanted to "have the opportunity to interact with NAMPOL" while eight percent of the respondents said they liked the NAMPOL Facebook page just for fun. In addition, 3.2 percent of the respondents said they 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page for 'other' reasons while 0.8 percent were "invited by NAMPOL to like the page". Furthermore, on the question 'What do you like most about the NAMPOL Facebook page?' The majority of respondents (60.2 percent) said they liked the updates from NAMPOL. In addition, 5.8 percent said they liked the 'interactive features of the page', 30.1 percent of the respondents reported that they liked the 'comments from members of the public'; while 3.9 percent of respondents reported they liked it for 'other' reasons. This study confirms (Grunig, 2009)'s findings that public relations practitioners use digital media the same way as they used old media (radio, television, newspapers) by dumping messages on the general population, rather than as a strategic means of interacting with the public.

 Grunig (2009)'s findings are not far-fetched from Coombs (2008)'s study that new (digital) media are the latest fad in public relations practice and they have the potential to make the profession more global, strategic, two-way and interactive, symmetrical or digital and socially responsible. However, this is not surprising as (Shin *et al*, 2015) in their study on how top global organisations incorporated brand websites, Facebook and Twitter to cultivate relationships with stakeholders, found that those particular media are used more for one way-communication rather than two-way communication. Similarly, Crump (2012) argued that

Twitter was only effective for the dissemination of information by the police and not necessarily to effect change in combating crime.

This is contrary to James Grunig and Todd Hunt's two-way symmetrical public relations model that uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and its stakeholders. Further expanding on the model, Childers (1989) explained that symmetrical (two-way) public relations is more ethical and socially responsible than asymmetrical public relations because it manages conflict rather than wages war hence its effectiveness.

This study's data established that the NAMPOL public relations division does not appreciate the importance of two-communication as a means of strengthening the relationship between the police and community, as emphasised strongly in the NAMPOL strategic document, (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011). The same document also emphasises strongly on the use of ICT's in police operations as a means of improving its function of preserving internal security, maintaining law and order, investigating offences or alleged offence as well as to prevent crime and protect lives and properties. In fact, by the time of writing this final report (mid-November, 2015), the researcher observed that the last time that NAMPOL Facebook page administrators posted on that platform was 9 July 2015.

However, in as much as the NAMPOL Facebook page is not as interactive as expected of new media as has been cited in literature, the study also established a negative attitude on the part of respondents regarding the page. Similar to (Grunig, 2009)'s findings that public relations practitioners dump messages on their publics on digital (new media) platforms, this study established that the public (those who 'liked') the NAMPOL Facebook page are also not making use of the interactive features of social media and in this case, the NAMPOL Facebook

page to actively engage the police, as only 13.6 percent of the respondents indicated that they 'liked' the page because they wanted to "have the opportunity to interact with NAMPOL".

In addition, eight percent of the respondents said they 'liked' the page "just for fun".

Although, the Facebook penetration rate in Namibia is a mere 10.5 percent or 231,340 (Facebook users), (Internet World Statistics, 2015), the country has seen a rapid rise of Facebook usage, (Tyson, 2015).

Similarly, (Fox, 2012) found that Facebook is the social media of choice and that even individuals with lower incomes had a Facebook account which they accessed on their cellphones. Similar to (Fox, 2012) this study found that 55.4 percent of respondents accessed Facebook using their cellphones. Presenting similar findings, (Sarrazin, 2011) also reported that users increasingly opt for mobile devices rather than computers or laptops. It is therefore also not surprising that only 34.5 percent of respondents in this study indicated that they access Facebook using laptops and computers.

This usage of cellphones to access social media is also associated with the rise in social media usage (Sarrazin, 2012) and the rise of social media also means easy access to information compared to past decades, (Grunig, 2009; Banjo, 2013). Consequently, this phenomenon explains why so many young people are on social media and in particular Facebook, as will be seen later in this chapter.

In addition, statistics on Facebook (Noyes, 2015) indicate that many people who use Facebook are aged 25-34, this is not far- fetched from this study's findings that the majority of those who use Facebook are between the ages of 18-34. This according to Noyes (2015) makes them prime targets for marketing efforts, an opportunity that NAMPOL Facebook page could capitalise on.

5.3 Usefulness of NAMPOL Facebook Page

Although this study found that 38.1 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that 'Facebook is useful for the police to communicate with the public', the study established that respondents did not find the NAMPOL Facebook page useful in harnessing the relationship between the police and public, as only 22.9 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the 'NAMPOL Facebook page makes for good and useful interaction between the police and citizens'. Furthermore, only 22 percent of the youth between the ages of 18-24 found the page "very useful" in terms of police-community relations.

In addition, 13 youth out of 100 respondents between the ages of 25-34 found the page "very useful" while only two of respondents in the 35-44 age group found the page "very useful".

Likewise, the study established that 20 respondents were unsure of the usefulness of the NAMPOL Facebook page from the purview of police-community relations. Moreover, only 11.9 percent (less than 15 percent) of the respondents strongly agreed that the 'NAMPO L Facebook page has assisted tremendously in fighting crime'.

These findings contradict Omanga's (2015) findings on the usage of Twitter was associated with reducing crime in a Kenyan village. Omanga (2015) studied a Kenyan chief who actively used Twitter to communicate with his subjects and vice-versa suggests that Twitter has helped to reduce crime in the Chief's area of jurisdiction. Omanga's (2015) study can be viewed from the perspective of James Grunig and Todd Hunt's public relations model, which suggests that symmetrical (two-way) communication programmes are pragmatically more successful than asymmetrical programmes and hence contribute more to organisational effectiveness, (Childers, 1989), something which this study found to be lacking on the part of the NAMPOL Facebook page and the stakeholders, namely those who have 'liked' the (NAMPOL Facebook) page.

5.4 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents and Attitude to the NAMPOL Facebook Page

The study further established that demographic variables, such as age, gender and employment status impacted on respondents' views on interactivity and engagement of the

NAMPOL Facebook page. More young people compared to older people participated in this research. Out of the 100 surveyed respondents 54 percent were in the 18-22 age range, 36 percent were in the 25-36 age group, seven percent were in the 35-44 age group while the 45-54 age group reported three percent.

In addition, more respondents compared to older respondents reported high scores for the question on their "overall impression of the NAMPOL Facebook page from the purview of police-community relations". As a result, 22 of the 100 surveyed respondents in the 18-24 age group reported that the NAMPOL Facebook page is 'very useful' while 21 out of 100 respondents surveyed of the same age group said the page is 'somewhat useful'.

Furthermore, 13 of 100 surveyed respondents in the 25-34 age group said the NAMPOL Facebook page is 'very useful' while 13 out of 100 respondents surveyed from the same age group said that the page is 'somewhat useful'. The majority, which was 20 respondents out of the 100 surveyed respondents were employed and found the page 'somewhat useful' while 17 out the 100 surveyed respondents were students and found the page 'somewhat useful'.

Likewise, 18 of the respondents with Grade 12 qualifications found the page 'somewhat useful', while 15 of respondents with Grade 12 said they found the page 'very useful'. Furthermore, nine respondents with degrees found the page 'somewhat useful'. Even though there were more female (52 percent) respondents, compared to males (47 percent), as in the case of recent Facebook statistics (Noyes, 2015) that there are more females (53 percent) than males (47 percent) on Facebook worldwide, more males (21) compared to females (16) found the NAMPOL Facebook page 'very useful'. It was therefore not surprising that 22 females

compared to 17 males found the page 'somewhat useful'. This was out of the 100 surveyed respondents.

5.5 Difference in Perceptions

This study determined that the majority of people on social networks, especially Facebook, are the youth. In both survey and FGDs, the majority who participated in the survey were young people. This again confirms previously mentioned studies that the majority of youth are on social networks and Facebook in particular, (Fox, 2012; Tyson, 2015; Noyes, 2015). There is a general agreement both with online participants as well as Windhoek residents (FGDs) that Facebook can be effective for police-community engagements.

"*I think it's a good thing for the police to be on Facebook because each and every one is on Facebook. Okay, there are some (people) who are not on Facebook but the majority are on Facebook. So it is nice for the police to have that page because if someone is missing they can just post the picture of the missing person and everyone will see it and help in searching for the missing person so I think Facebook is a good platform for it,*" said Abigail. Abigail and other participants explained that the World Wide Web is so powerful that it is easily accessible to many people, especially the youth. "*The community needs to communicate with the police on reporting of crime. Some people don't have phones to call the police in order to report on a certain crime. We the youth are all on Facebook and other social media. It will be a great communication platform because we get to express things happening around us. Sometimes there is that somebody who knows what's going on but the police does not really have a relationship with that person so social media would be good for that,*" explained Victor.

Furthermore, Kleophas said "*I think the platform of the police engaging the public on social media is very crucial in society so that crimes in Namibia are reduced and the public as well can work together with the police to inform them of certain clues where, for example, fugitives are hiding. Such things can reduce the crime rate in Namibia*". This is similar to what the survey part of this research found that 65 percent of the study's respondents regularly (often) log onto Facebook and 51 percent of the study's respondents occasionally (sometimes) visit the NAMPOL Facebook.

However, not everybody agreed that Facebook can be used effectively for active engagement between the police and public. For example, some participants in the FGDs raised concerns of identity security, as a deterrent for the community to not actively engage the police.This perhaps explains why 44.8 percent of respondents who participated in the online part of this research indicated that they "liked" the NAMPOL Facebook page to get updates and information on the activities of NAMPOL. Also, 25.6 percent of respondents reported that they 'liked' the page because "they wanted to learn more about the police (NAMPOL)" while 13.6 percent of the participants said they wanted to "have the opportunity to interact with NAMPOL".

Although it was impressive to see that 60.2 percent of respondents liked the updates from NAMPOL, a mere 5.8 percent reported that they liked the interactive features of the page and 30.1 percent of the respondents said they liked the comments from the members of public.

As has been noted in the previous chapter, participants in the discussions also mentioned that Facebook is good for the police to keep updating the public and not necessarily for the public to engage on the platform. This to some extent explains why 60.2 percent of surveyed respondents said they liked the updates from NAMPOL. Participants also mentioned that they

believe the NAMPOL Facebook page is not as engaging and visible as expected of new media platforms and that many people do not know about their existence.

Others added that it is pointless if NAMPOL is on Facebook and does not engage with the public. Some participants did not see the point for the police to be on Facebook as "crime is out there and not on Facebook". Others said it is not active and engaging. That is perhaps the reason why not many online participants are keen on engaging on that platform.

Old media and in particular radio was preferred throughout the FGDs as the most effective medium of police community relations for most people. Many participants felt that radio is easily accessible to most people while social networks are mainly popular among the youth and new generation.

Furthermore, Accenture (2012) argued that the value of traditional communication channels, such as anonymous police call lines, cannot be overlooked, given the reluctance of some citizens to share their identities especially on social media. A majority of the citizens surveyed (71 percent) said they are more likely to communicate with police if they have the option to remain anonymous, especially when reporting crimes and disturbances. The study found that similar sentiments as the above were expressed during focus group discussions (FGDs).

This study was limited to online participants who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page, as well as Windhoek residents who have not 'liked' the page. The objective of this research was to establish if the page is engaging, active and whether it is useful from the purview of police-community relations. The research concentrated on the views of the public regarding the NAMPOL Facebook page; hence the opinions of the public relations division of the police (NAMPOL) were not considered. Other researchers may wish to do similar studies where police views are considered in order to confirm or reject these findings.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the study based on the research objectives. The results of the focus group discussion is presented in themes. Literature is presented to support the research findings

Chapter 6

6.1 Introduction

Following the discussion of results in the previous chapter, recommendations and conclusions are provided for in this chapter.

6.2 Recommendations

If the police (NAMPOL) are serious about effectively carrying out their functions of the preservation of internal security of Namibia, maintenance of law and order, investigation of alleged offences, prevention of crime and protection of lives, (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011) which will subsequently reduce the high crime rate, (Shinana, 2015), (Nakuta and Cloete, 2011), their public relations division in conjunction with the NAMPOL Facebook page administrators will have to devote serious attention to their social media communication strategies.

As indicated in the latest (by the time of writing this report) NAMPOL strategic document, (Plan, 2011) they will have to take serious, the fact that ICT's should be incorporated in their operations. And, as has been presented in the literature, social media has the power to change the communication sphere, (Banjo, 2013; Mutula, 2013) and the practice of public relations, (Coombs, 2008; Grunig, 2009; Wright and Hinson, 2015) has embraced social media and in particular Facebook.

This study thus recommends that the NAMPOL public relations division should consider in its communication strategies the importance of two-way (symmetrical) communication, especially when engaging its important partners, the community, (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011). Childers, (1989) who explained James Grunig and Todd Hunt's symmetrical model,

observed that communication programmes are pragmatically more successful than asymmetrical programmes and contribute more to organisational effectiveness. New (digital) media platforms, including the NAMPOL Facebook page, as has been seen in the literature offer the opportunity for two way communication, primarily because they are easily accessible, are real time platforms and offer the opportunity of immediate real-time engagement, (Banjo, 2013; Luoma-aho, 2010). Hence, being active on Facebook on the part of the police can only be an advantage for them as they get to interact with youth audiences who are also prime targets of marketing strategies, (Noyes, 2015).

6.3 Conclusion

There is no doubt that people, especially the youth, have embraced social media in Namibia, (Fox, 2012; Tyson, 2015). Their findings correlate to some extent with the findings of this study that indeed the youth are active on social media and Facebook in particular. Recent years have also seen the profession of public relations embracing the new media, (Coombs, 2008; Grunig, 2009; Wright and Hinson, 2015; Banjo, 2013).

However, similar to the findings of (Grunig, 2009; Shin *et al*, 2015) most public relations practitioners are using new media the same ways as they do with traditional media, this study established that the public relations division of NAMPOL is not making use of the power of social media by actively engaging the community as equal partners on Facebook, despite placing special emphasis on the use of ICTs and involving the community as equal partners in its functions which include maintaining law and order, (Namibian Police Force Strategic Plan, 2011). The NAMPOL public relations division is not fully exploiting the benefits of having a Facebook page that has the potential to improve police-community engagements.

In fact, by the time of writing this final report (mid-November, 2015), the researcher observed

that the last time that the NAMPOL Facebook page administrators posted information on their wall was on the page was on, 9 July 2015. This partly explains why respondents reported that the NAMPOL Facebook page does not really make for better engagement between the police and public. Equally, the study determined that the public and in particular the youth who are in the majority on social media, (Noyes, 2015) are also not fully exploiting the power of social media which are seen as powerful mediums, which if used optimally can change the modern communication sphere for the better, (Banjo, 2013; Mutula, 2013), to their advantage.

The platform is one which they use to receive information and not necessarily engage the police to their advantage. They are rather passive recipients of information/updates from NAMPOL, as very few reported they wanted to interact with the police on this platform. This trend among the Facebook users who have "liked" the NAMPOL Facebook page can partly be attributed to the inactivity of the page, the study has established. The study further established that demographic variables, such as age, gender and employment status, impacted on respondents' views on interactivity and engagement of the NAMPOL Facebook page.

In addition, there is not much of a difference in perception between those who 'liked' the

NAMPOL Facebook page and the public, as both believe that if Facebook is used optimally, it can effect change for the better. However, the lack of active engagement on the part of the police has to some degree inhibited the potential impact that Facebook can contribute to contribute towards the combating crime which is so high in Namibia, (Shinana, 2015; Nakuta & Cloete, 2011), the study has established.

This study was limited to online participants who have 'liked' the NAMPOL Facebook page, as well as Windhoek residents who have not 'liked' the page. The objective of this research was to establish if the page is engaging, active and whether it is useful from the purview of police-community relations. The research concentrated on the views of the public regarding the NAMPOL Facebook page hence the views of the public relations division of the police (NAMPOL) were not considered.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A

Instrument title: Questionnaire

<u>Questionnaire for NAMPOL Facebook Audience</u>

My name is Alvine Kapitako, a Master of Arts media studies' student at the University of

Namibia. I am conducting a study titled "Social media and police-community relations: A case study of the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) Facebook page" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree.

Kindly assist in answering the questions below by ticking the option that best corresponds to your views or situation. You are not required to supply your name or any other means of identification. The information that you will provide will be used solely for this study.

Section 1

Demographic information

    1. Indicate your age range

    a. 18-24 years old _____
    b. 25-34 years old _____
    c. 35-44 years old _____
    d. 45-54 years old _____
    e. 55-64 years old _____
    f. 65-74 years old _____
    g. 75 years or older _____

    2. Indicate your marital status

    a. Single, never married _____
    b. Married _____
    c. Co-habiting _____
    d. Widowed _____
    e. Divorced _____
    f. Separated _____
    g. Others, please specify_____

    3. Indicate your employment status

    a. Employed_____

b. Unemployed_____
c. Pensioner_____
d. Student_____
e. Home maker (Housewife, househusband)_____
f. Others, please specify_____

4. Please indicate your highest qualification
   a. Grade 7_____
   b. Grade 10_____
   c. Grade 12_____
   d. Certificate_____
   e. Diploma_____
   f. Advanced diploma_____
   g. Degree_____
   h. Higher degree_____

5. Indicate your gender

a. Male _____
b. Female_____

Section 2

NAMPOL Facebook Page and Police-Community Relations

6. Where do you access Facebook? (please tick all that apply/applies)

a. At work_____

b. At school_____

c. At home_____

d. At an Internet cafe_____

e. Others, please specify_____

7. What device do you use to access Facebook? (please tick all that apply/applies)

a. Smartphone_____

b. Tablet_____

c. Desktop/Laptop Computer

d. Others, please specify_____

8. How often do you log onto Facebook?

a. Often_____
b. Sometimes_____
c. Rarely_____

9. How did you learn about the Nampol Facebook page? (Please tick the most appropriate response)

a. From a Facebook friend
b. From a friend
c. Invited by Nampol to like the page
d. Personal Effort
e. Others, please specify_____

10. What motivated you to like the Nampol Facebook page (please tick all that apply/applies)

a. To learn more about Nampol_____
b. To constantly get updates on Nampol activities_____
c. To have the opportunity to interact with Nampol_____
d. Invited by Nampol to like the page_____
e. Just for fun_____
f. Others, please specify_____

11. How often do you visit the Nampol Facebook page

a. Often_____
b. Sometimes_____
c. Rarely_____
d. Only the day I liked the Facebook page (once) _____
e. Never_____

12. How often do you post on the Nampol Facebook page

a. Often_____
b. Sometimes_____
c. Rarely_____
d. Only the day I liked the Facebook page (once) _____
e. Never_____

13. What do you like most about the Nampol Facebook page?

a. The Information/Updates from Nampol
b. The interactive features of the page
c. The comments from members of the public
d. Others, please specify_____

14. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement

Statement	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly

	Agree				disagree
Facebook a useful tool for the police to use in communicating with the public					
The Nampol Facebook page makes for good and useful interaction between the police and citizens					
The Nampol Facebook page has assisted tremendously in the fight against crime					
The Nampol Facebook page has not made any difference in terms of improving police-community relations					
The Nampol Facebook page is dominated by the police and fails to get the public involved					
The Nampol Facebook page has been taken over by citizens with little or no inputs from the Police					
There are always lots of activities on The Nampol Facebook page					
There is very little activity on the Nampol Facebook Page					

15. What is your overall rating of the Nampol Facebook Page from the standpoint of Police-Community Relations?

        a. Very Useful
        b. Somewhat Useful
        c. Unsure
        d. Useless
        e. Completely Useless

Thank you very much for taking time to fill out this questionnaire.

8.2 Appendix B

Instrument title: Focus Group Discussion guide

Introduction by facilitator (Miss Alvine Kapitako)

Hi, my name is Alvine Kapitako, a Master of Arts media studies' student at the University of Namibia. As you know by now, I am conducting a study titled "Social media and police-community relations: A case study of the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) Facebook page" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree. The topics for discussion will hence be centred on the above mentioned title. I would like to urge you to participate freely. Everything discussed here will be recorded. Please note that there are no wrong answers therefore do not hesitate to share whatever you have in mind which is related to this topic.

Demographic information

Age, marital status, employment status, highest qualification and gender. (Participants' details will be taken). They will also be asked to sign consent forms.

Open ended questions

Is social media a good platform for the police and public to communicate?

Is Facebook an effective platform for the police to use when communicating with the public?

Will the police being on Social media such as Facebook help in combating crime?

What in your view is the best form of communication for the police to use when communicating with the public?

How do you access information related to the Namibian Police Force?

In your view are the current communication methods that NAMPOL uses to communicate with the public useful?

What is the most effective way for the police to communicate with the public?

Generally speaking, do you find the Namibian police Facebook page useful in fighting crime and giving tips in fighting crime in your community?

Thank you very much for you participation, please stay a few minutes to enjoy refreshments with fellow participants.

8.3 Appendix C

Consent form

Social media and police-community relations: A case study of the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) Facebook page

Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of Facebook in Police-Community Relations. You will be asked questions about the NAMPOL Facebook page and your demographic attributes

Your response will be recorded to ensure that the study's findings adequately reflect your views. Participation is voluntary and no discomfort, stress or risks are anticipated.

I agree to participate in the study titled "Social media and police-community relations:

A case study of the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) Facebook page" conducted by Ms. Alvine Kapitako of the Department of Information and Communication Studies, University of Namibia. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of this participation, to the extent that they can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research record or destroyed.

_____   _____

Researcher   Participant

Signature and Date   Signature and Date

Research at the University of Namibia that involves human participation is overseen by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Questions and queries as regards your rights as a participant should be addressed to UNAM Research Director, **Prof. Isaac Mapaure** [Tel: +264 (0) 61 206 3133 - E- mail: imapaure@unam.na]

8.4 Appendix D

Letter from the Information and Communication studies' department

UC11vers1ty of Nam1b1a, Pr vate Bag 13301 Windnoek, Narn1b1a

UNAM

340 Mandume   de mutayo Averue. P1oneerspark

264 61 206 31 1 1. URL   http//www unam •edu na
U N I VER SI TY O f N AM I BIA

June 1,2015

To Whom It May Concern:
Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCING MS. ALVINE KAPITAKO

I write to introduce Ms. Alvine Kapitako, a M A Media Studies' student who is undertaking fieldwork to gather data for her dissertation titled "Social Media and Police - Community Relations: A Case Study of the Namibian Police's Facebook page".

Kindly assist her in every way possible.

Should you have questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Dr Fred Mwilima

HOD, Information and
Communication Studies Tel.
061 2063638

E- mail: fmwilima@unam.na

8.5 Appendix E

NAMPOL's endorsement of participants to take part in research

Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL)
June 16 · 🌐

Kindly, your attention is drawn to the below posting by Alvine Faith Kapitako.

Alvine Faith Kapitako
Today at 8:34am.

Good day. I am doing research as part of completing my academic studies at the University of Namibia (Unam). As part of the data collection for my dissertation titled "social media and police-community relations: a case study of the Namibian police's Facebook page I am required to survey participants who have liked the NAMPOL Facebook page. The purpose of my study is to explore the role of Facebook in police-community relations. If you are interested in taking part in the survey please inbox me for more information. But, I should also state that participation is voluntary and no discomfort or risks are anticipated. The findings will be used solely for academic purposes. For further information please also feel free to contact the Unam research director prof Isaac Mapaure at 061-206 3133 or the Head of Department of Information and Communication studies at Unam, Dr Fred Mwilima at 061 2063638.

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➦ Share

Sebastiana Komeheke, Matjiua Marius Kapitako, Peter Elago and 29 others like this.   Top Comments ▾

14 shares

Write a comment...   📷 ☺

Henok D Petrus 0817663534
Like · Reply · June 22 at 5:37pm

Honourable H Shigwedha Me 2 i wnt
Like · Reply · 👍 1 · June 17 at 9:53am

Joseph Gabes 0817959153
Like · Reply · June 17 at 2:29am

Dwight Subzero Degreeze I would like to participate!
Like · Reply · June 17 at 6:28pm

Megameno Kefas me 0816399523
Like · Reply · June 17 at 10:11pm

Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL)
July 9 · @

Once more again, your attention is drawn to the post below,

Alvine Faith Kapitako
10 July 2015

Good day. I am doing research as part of completing my academic studies at the University of Namibia (Unam). As part of the data collection for my dissertation titled "social media and police-community relations: a case study of the Namibian police's Facebook page I am required to survey participants who have liked the NAMPOL Facebook page. The purpose of my study is to explore the role of Facebook in police-community relations. If you are interested in taking part in the survey please inbox me for more information. But, I should also state that participation is voluntary and no discomfort or risks are anticipated. The findings will be used solely for academic purposes. For further information please also feel free to contact the Unam research director prof Isaac Mapaure at 061-206 3133 or the Head of Department of Information and Communication studies at Unam, Dr Fred Mwilima at 061 2063638

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➤ Share

Mervin Tjivikara Kamenje, Anya Blossom Links and 23 others like this.   Top Comments ▾

4 shares

Write a comment...   📷 ☺

Steven Kaveto Kasera Yep inbox
Like · Reply · July 10 at 11:59pm

Pokello Given Angolo bravoooo
See Translation
Like · Reply · September 8 at 1:28pm

Ellyce Tshalongo hapo what,s wrong wth maginalised people this year?any info pls
Like · Reply · July 11 at 12:18pm

Write a comment...

8.6 Appendix F

Screenshot of the NAMPOL Facebook page

Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL)
July 9 ·

MISSING PERSON FOUND

The Namibian Police Force announces that, Mr. Febian Heleinge Naame-Oweni Munghole (23) who was reported missing as from Monday 6th July 2015 in Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region, has been found.

Munghole was found today (Thursday, 9th July 2015), almost 62 Kilometers outside Otjiwarongo, footing to Owamboland.

Thus, the Namibian Police Force would like to extend our appreciation to all those who made an effort, and contact the Police and the family.

Here below is the picture taken today (Thursday, 9th July 2015) at Otjiwarongo Police Station shortly after Febian Heleinge Naame-Oweni Munghole was reunited with his family.

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➡ Share

Mervin Tjivikara Kamenje, Lynnot C Gonteb and 63 others like this.   Top Comments ▾

1 share

Write a comment...

Steven Herman Thanks Nampol, but he must be taken for counselling before