

PRINT MEDIA INFORMATION ACCESS AND USAGE IN OKALONGO AND
ONGENGA SETTLEMENTS IN NAMIBIA

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SIMEON MARTIN

218218597

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. ENO AKPABIO (UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the accessibility and usage of print media information by rural communities in Okalongo and Ongenga settlements, located in northern Namibia. The research objectives were to evaluate how accessible print media information is, identify the channels through which communities access print media information, explore how communities use the information obtained, and investigate the challenges faced by rural communities in accessing print media information. To achieve the objectives, the study used mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 254 participants from the two settlements, with a 95% response rate. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions and interview guides for chief region officers, government officials and headmen. The findings showed that rural communities in Okalongo and Ongenga relied heavily on print media information, with newspapers, posters, books, leaflets and notes on notice boards being the most commonly used platforms. The study also identified government offices, shops, families and friends as the most accessed avenues for print media information. The challenges faced by rural communities in accessing print media information included inaccessibility, late delivery, unaffordability and language barriers. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the government of Namibia should improve its role in facilitating access to information to ensure that rural communities receive accurate and timely information. Future studies should expand the scope to cover all media platforms and larger populations.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATI	Access to Information
AIIIM	Association for Information Image Management
AU	African Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
CRAN	Communication Regulatory Authority of Namibia
CRO	Chief Regional Officer
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IPPR	Institute for Public Research
NBC	National Broadcasting Commission
NCRST	National Commission Research, Science and Technology
NGP	National Gender Policy
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
NRDP	National Rural Development Programme

NIDS	Namibia Institute for Democracy Studies
NIDS	Namibia Inter-censal Demographic Survey
NEPC	<i>New Era</i> Publication Corporation
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICT	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
MISA	Media Institute for Southern Africa
MSP	Media Subsidiary Plan
MRP	Media Recovery Plan
RST	Research, Science and Technology
STI	Science, Technology and Innovations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN	United Nations
UN	United Nations Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programmes
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific Child Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

Q3

Quarter three

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved parents, Hilaria Shaduka and Martin Nghiyalwa, who have been my unwavering pillars of support and inspiration throughout my academic journey. It is through their guidance and encouragement that I have become the first in my family to achieve this level of education.

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DECLARATION

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

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Date

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The gap between rural and urban areas has been a concern to governments and developmental organisations for decades in not only Namibia but Africa and the rest of the world (Cloete & Drinkwater, 2018; United Nations Development Programme Namibia [UNDP], 2015); Brookings Institution, 2018; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2013; Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations [FAO], 2018; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016). The gap between rural and urban development can have significant implications for access to and usage of information (National Rural Development Policy, 2012). These implications can result in a lack of information about important issues, such as public health and safety, as well as limited opportunities for professional development and economic advancement. Furthermore, the lack of access to information in rural areas can contribute to social and economic inequality, as individuals in these areas may have limited access to resources and opportunities that are more readily available in urban areas, further exacerbating the gap between rural and urban development, and perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage (Dasgupta et al, 2015).

In an increasingly globalised and information-driven world, information has become a necessity and valuable commodity to individuals, organisations and societies (Unagha, 2011). When people in rural areas have access to information, they are sensitised, reached and stabilised in specific situations, such as a political situation or

pandemic (Khadar & Ndiaye, 2009). Moreover, access to information allows members of the public to productively participate in the development process and enjoy the benefits (Chester & Neelameghan, 2006).

Scholars have concluded that development schemes or efforts have failed in the past because of a lack of information at the planning and execution stages (Iwe, 2003). This conclusion posits the necessity to identify the areas of need of rural communities and provide them with the needed information. Namibia, despite being a small and sparsely populated nation, has a fairly diverse and pluralistic media environment, at least in terms of the number of local media houses in print, radio and broadcasting (Remmert, 2019).

Although print media is still relevant in Namibia's media market, the readership is limited and concentrated (Remmert, 2019). This situation has the potential to affect access to print media in by rural communities, who could further lose out on opportunities to actively participate in socio-economic development. Print media allows information to reach large numbers of people and add to the quality of the extension events in different ways (Pour, 2011); hence, ensuring access is important. It against this background that, this study sought to explore the accessibility and usage of print media information by the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the importance of print media being useful in providing valuable information to communities, there are several obstacles that hinder its effective circulation and distribution in rural areas, including high cover prices, urban-centric content, non-localised approaches and complex language (Sambo (2015)). These obstacles result in limited access to news and print media by rural communities, leading to exclusion from the benefits of growth. This exclusion from information affects their ability to access educational content, public health information, as well as agricultural and business support services, which are essential for their development. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the challenges experienced by rural communities in accessing media information and how they use this information to address their needs. To ensure that the print media, reaches everyone timely and sufficiently, circulation and distribution must be executed effectively and efficiently (Sambo, 2015). Media calls attention to social problem and issues, thereby holding leaders and even members of the society accountable. Thus, media is not a passive transmitter of information to society but a source of information that comes with value judgments (Karicho, 2014).

Mokwatlo (2005) emphasises that because information is implicit in the existence of man and the fulfilment of everyday needs of the society; it is even more important in a rural developmental context. According to Adamu (2009), most print publications function as commercial enterprises, such as newspapers. Sambo (2015) observes that among other reasons, high cover prices, urban-centric content, non-localised approaches and appeals, as well as complex language are obstacles to print media patronage.

Agunga (1998) attributes these challenges to a historical legacy of top-down authoritarian development methods and the “land out syndrome” exhibited by rural residents who lack the skills, initiative and resources to adopt a self-reliant approach to their problems. For all Namibians, especially those living in small villages and remote settlements, access to educational content, public health information, as well as agricultural and business support services are essential (Ministry of ICT: Universal Access and Services Policy for ICTs, 2012).

In terms of news and print media in Namibia, the legacy of apartheid policies has distorted the process of providing information to the rural population, resulting in exclusion from the benefits of growth. Rural communities have limited access to public services compared to their urban counterparts, which affects their access to news and print media (National Rural Development Policy, 2012:2). Chaka (2003. p. 44) indicates that rural areas have the least access per capita to development resources, including information. He further reinstates that these disadvantaged people are under-resourced in many ways, which affect their ability to access information. These challenges deserve to be explored in order to establish the status of rural communities in terms of access and availability of information. This study focused on accessibility and usage of print media in the Okalongo and Ongenga settlements.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study were to:

- 1.3.1 assess the accessibility and availability of print media information in rural communities, with a focus on Okalongo and Ongenga settlements in Northern Namibia.
- 1.3.2 examine how rural communities access and utilise print media information, including the different avenues used and the purposes for which the information is acquired.
- 1.3.3 identify and evaluate the potential challenges faced by rural communities when accessing print media information, and make recommendations for addressing these challenges.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study has the potential to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge related to access to and utilisation of print media information, as well as the recently passed Access to Information Bill of 2022. By providing the researcher with an outsider's perspective on the access and usage of print media information in the Okalongo and Ongenga settlements, this study will not only shed light on the challenges faced in these areas but it will also enable a deeper investigation into the matter. The research will promote critical thinking, as well as social and participatory communication skills, which empower citizens to make informed decisions, thus contributing to problem-solving. Access to information has been identified as part of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. This goal promotes public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms. Access to and provision of information is key to a well-informed society and it results in sound decision, which, in

turn, enhances good governance (SDGs, 2015). These are critical roles of the media, which this study highlighted. The significance of this study stems from the fact that it appears that no study has been conducted on the essential subject matter in the Omusati and Ohangwena regions. The information obtained from this study could be utilised by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, other relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations and decision-makers to enhance their understanding of the state of information dissemination and accessibility to print media information in rural communities. On the other hand, the study may also be essential to government and media industries due to the fact that in most cases, they initiate projects but hardly monitor or evaluate the end results from the project undertaken. Thus far, the results of the study are supportive to the government and its media stakeholders to see it fit in promoting access to information by assisting similar projects in this arena for the upliftment of rural communities.

1.4.1 Government agencies responsible

Gathering information in terms of rural development objectives is the first and foremost step for effective results. These are improvement of economic capabilities, improvement of human capabilities, improvement of protective capabilities and improvement of political capabilities of all human beings. The components of rural development policy are environmental conditions, ecological settings, technology, infrastructure, self-reliance, law and order, education, training programs, distributive justice and medical and health care monitored by government agencies given the mandate.

1.4.1.1 Rural development

Poverty is considered as one of the major catastrophes experienced by rural individuals. The conditions of poverty are characterised by scarcity of resources, due to which, individuals experience problems even in fulfilling their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. The alleviation of conditions of poverty is given utmost consideration for the purpose of promoting effective living (Kapur, 2019). Hence, the study would be essential to rural setting to enable government redirect its dedications and resources, specifically to capacitate rural development initiatives.

Gupta (2021) highlighted that rural development means an overall development of rural regions in context of economic, cultural, political and social so that the people can lead a pleasant life. The goal of rural development is social and economic growth which emphasizes on equal distribution as well as creation of benefits. It is evident that any rural development initiative which does not impact the masses cannot be justified. FAO (2019) opined that small scale farmers in rural areas are disproportionately disadvantaged as well as facing problems of limited access to infrastructure, networks and technology. Moreover, Swamy (2020) reaffirmed that rural development is always slow due to economic and political process. Development of rural area should be the top priority of any country but it is not so. This is not an exception to Namibia and therefore, government projects and development policies should be tailored in a manner to which rural people and settlements are aimed towards realization the integral development of targeted population.

Kapur (2019) states the approaches and the strategies need to be designed to bring about improvements, primarily in the living conditions of the individuals, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. When improvements would take place in these areas, then rural individuals would be able to secure better livelihoods opportunities. This study further reveals various dimensions which contribute to the conditions pertaining rural development in a Namibian rural context as a multi-facet but a comprehensive concept, which takes into consideration a number of aspects. These includes, agriculture and allied activities, village and settlement, farming practices, system of education, training centres, health care and medical facilities, environmental conditions, housing accommodation, infrastructure, technology, skills development opportunities for the individuals, administration and management practices, employment opportunities and human resource development.

Furthermore, when approaches and strategies are formulated by the Government, organizations and other agencies, then it is vital to generate awareness among rural individuals and help them in acquiring benefits of these measures and approaches in an appropriate manner (Kapur, 2019).

When there are implementation of policies, practices, strategies and approaches aiming at rural development, then government agencies need to generate awareness in terms of under-provided areas and challenges, which the rural individuals are experiencing. Kapur (2019) echoed the same sentiment that many developing countries have been working effectively towards development of rural communities and have received significant outcomes.

1.4.1.2 Information, communication and education

This study has the potential to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge related to access to and utilisation of print media information, effective communication and productive education. Whenever rural communities are capacitated with relevant information which has been transferred into effective communication, platforms such as print media information, in such way knowledge and skills would be attained through education. Literacy skills enable the individuals to read manuals on agricultural techniques and equipment, thus leading to an increase in agricultural productivity and increase good yield. When the individuals possess the basic literacy skills, they can easily acquire information in terms of policies, measures and programs that have been put into operation, leading to their well-being (Kapur, 2019).

One of the major factor and driving thrust of rural development is communication. Communication incorporates Print Media, Electronic Media, Advertisement, New Media (IT), Traditional and Folk Media. Development means change in society for betterment which can be both economical. Therefore, development communication can be referred as use of communication to promote development (Gupta, 2021). However, Khan (2019) defined rural development as the process of improving the economic, social, and cultural conditions of rural communities. It includes activities such as increasing agricultural productivity, improving access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation, and promoting rural industry development.

Therefore, when rural communities are involved in the production processes, then they would be able to grasp and acquire adequate information in terms of marketing strategies and approaches, and able to maximise their productivity and profitability. In rural communities, the system of education is not in a well-developed state and major cause for this is inadequate financial resources. In order to make significant improvements in educational standards in rural communities, it is an obligatory to recruit skilled and qualified teachers, enhance teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, improve infrastructure and overall school environmental settings. Frequently, in rural areas when there are occurrence of natural calamities and disasters, then rural individuals are required to experience detrimental effects to a major extent. The cultivated land gets easily damaged from floods, erosion, earthquakes etc. (Kapur, 2019). The rural individuals, who are residing in the conditions of poverty, do not possess adequate resources to sustain their living conditions sufficiently. Despite the strategic role the print media played before and during the heat of the COVID-19 pandemic, the political economy of government's response to it was not encouraging to the industry as well rural communities such as settlements. Therefore, it is vital for them to be aware of the measures and strategies that are needed to preserve the health environmental conditions and their well-being. Therefore, this study is significant whereby strategies could be implemented and achieved through the use of print media information platforms to spread the message across the settlements by sharing information. From an agricultural perspective, farmers would be able to share knowledge and information on how to protect and preserve the land from all sorts of calamities. The protection of forests is not only effective in the mitigation of natural

disasters, such as, floods, but also protecting land from top-soil erosion and creating awareness in terms of financial management, hygiene and sanitation.

The rural individuals need to recognize the significance of education in a long run. It is vital for the rural community members to get enrolled in educational institutions and training centres and generates information in terms of various strategies and concepts. Kapur (2019), argued that acquisition of education in terms of various strategies and concepts, would help the individuals to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate, provide solutions to various problems, look for employment and income generation opportunities and sustain their living conditions in an appropriate manner.

Therefore, in order to eliminate illiteracy, there should be establishment of adult education and rural information centres in rural communities, to provide training as well as access to print media information to adults. This alone could enhance a broader understanding of information placed on print media platforms, boost communication among the communities battling with similar challenges or needs. These adults, who have either never been to school before, or have dropped out, before their educational skills are polished and be able to interpret information to benefit them as individual and a community as a whole. Therefore, the accessibility to print media information and usage by Okalongo and Ongenga settlements would be of significant in assisting with implementation of programs and measures, which aim at promoting welfare of the rural individuals and settlements in general.

1.4.1.3 Internal affairs

The mass media can be a powerful tool for the dissemination of information in rural areas. Print media can be used well if they are relevant to the targeted audience and provide the information they seek (Pathak & Patel, 2022). For instance, in an organisation could make use of print media information for its staff members to access the message and depending on the urgency of the information. Media plays a major role in protecting human rights in the world. It educates people to be aware of their human rights, suggests how they can solve their problems and thus empower them to protect their rights. In addition to just processing information, the media are political and moral agents, deciding to highlight a particular story, taking clear editorial positions, and calling for something to be done (Paul & Rai, 2021). Print media works well as a medium of information dissemination and its content packaging which includes words, pictures and diagrams to convey accurate and clear mass scale information. It is against this background that this study is significant for internal affairs and by using print media information it broadens the understanding of staff members and be able to transfer the message to its intended clients, effectively. Farmers' community can use printed material as a permanent reminder for long period of time and can use many times as a reference.

Print media can be used effectively if their shape and content are tailored to the need base and as per interests of the target audience, offer options and facilitate decision making, encourage technology adaptation to the local situation (Pathek & Patel, 2022). It is against this background that this study is significant in communicating internal

affairs of the affected settlement and be able to make informed decisions on matters affecting them.

1.4.2 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

This study is significant to all non-governmental organisations in order to all collaborations through sharing vital information pertaining development of rural communities or resources needed. Media gives publicity to the individuals and organizations, which are engaged in securing human rights. In the contemporary world, media plays an important role as a source of information about everything including human rights, as for most people television, radio, and newspapers are their only source of information. The organisations and agencies are required to work in collaboration and integration with each other to achieve the desired goals and objectives. Therefore, the use of print media information access and use should not be over-emphasised.

1.4.3 Namibian Research Centres

Namibia has a number of research centres with different interests or specialisations. However, these research institutes are different in a set up setting as well as ownership status, being privately and government owned.

1.4.3.1 Government owned research institutes

The National Commission Research, Science and Technology is mandated to implement the legal frameworks to monitor and safeguard the conduct of research in Namibia (NCRST, 2021).

This body is a state owned entity governing all research based activities governed by mandates as per instilled regulations. The registration of research institutes and monitoring of research activities is one of the NCRST's core mandates as stated under Section 20 and 21 of the (RST) Act No. 23 of 2004 and Part 3, of Section 9 of the RST Regulations of 2011 (NCRST, 2021).

The necessity of this study to this body is of a highest Research, Science and Technology magnitude, particularly it being the product of the University of Namibia and it is among the research institutes guided by the commission. Section 20 of the Research Science and Technology Act, 2004 (Act no 23 of 2004), provides for the registration of research institutes, monitoring of research and related activities and the collection of STI information (section 20, 21 and 22). The commission does not stop there but it avail room for assessment on the vital information and findings in order to address loopholes discovered and implement recommendations given. The National Commission on Research Science and Technology further highlighted that it also determines that the NCRST should make regular reviews on the state of research, science and technology (RST) in Namibia and identify shortcomings and priorities for RST (section. 18). This study will help the National Commission on Research Science

and Technology in a sense to have a data base of information collected and pay attention to the findings of the study. This study is significant to the National Commission on Research Science and Technology since it's the custodian of research coordinator in Namibia. The commission can also be considered a useful tool for democratization of decision-making and public accountability on STI policies. As well as, for promoting knowledge societies, enhancing the effectiveness of democracy and democratic institutions, for providing the public with opportunities for effective public deliberation, promoting transparency, accountability, responsiveness, engagement, inclusiveness, accessibility, participation, subsidiary and social cohesion (NRCST, 2023). The findings of the study will also assist the institution in benchmarking studies and comparing Namibia's research and innovation policies with other countries, which would review and formulate appropriate policies and legislative instruments to support researches in Namibia.

The NRCST has a component referred as Research and Innovation Programme and Project Module to strengthen its archive as research is concerned. According to the NRCST, this section on its own "is a complete inventory of research projects performed at the Higher Education, Government, Governmental and Non-Profit sectors will be listed and categorised to the field of sciences and socio-economics objectives" This module will also include list of innovation projects performed within the private sector as well as a list of cooperation programmes between the academics and private sectors.

This study will be beneficial to the NRCST mission in fulfilling its component of Curriculum Vitae Module. This is an envisioned standardised platform, similar to the

one used by Brazil and it organize each individual CV allowing to comprehensive information of many CVs and detect patterns and synchronize data for decision making purposes. In this way, the officers responsible of designing STI policies will have access to the complete spectrum of capacities available in the country and most important, information on the expertise vacancy. This module will simplify the accessibility of the entire research project by detecting the cooperation patterns amongst Namibian institutions and benchmark it with other countries. Hence, practice will answer the research objectives of the study as print media information access and use is concerned.

1.4.3.1 .1 STI Global Module

This module will provide user's access to international digital libraries of scientific journals; international databases of scientific production (Wos; Wok; SCOPUS; Medline); international databases on patents (USPTO; EPO; WIPO); access to repositories of scientific papers: international genetic databanks. Its worthy noting that module will broaden the accessibility and usage of this research to international researchers, based on the classification of themes or faculty.

1.4.3.1 .2 Student and Learner Portal

News media play a crucial role in enhancing literacy among the public, particularly in developing countries (Molyneux & Momoh, 2018). By providing access to information and knowledge, the media can help improve people's literacy skills, as well as their ability to make informed decisions and participate in civic activities (Kumar, 2017). The student and learner is an essential online getaway that brings together all of the

resources, information and activities that NCRST has available for students and learners (NCRST, 2021). Therefore, this study is significant to the Namibia research body by providing a platform of accessible and use among students and learners who are eager to acquaint themselves with different information pertaining print media information access and use.

1.4.4 Private research institutes

Privately owned research institute tends to operate differently in terms of data analysis and interpretation as well the research focal point. In addition to the activities with national human rights institutions, the media is engaged with non-governmental actors whose purpose is advocating the human rights of specific groups including women and children. In this instance, it is appropriate to note the collaboration of the media with Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

IPPR is an exemplary non-governmental organization working for behavioral change in Namibia. This study is significant to private research entities such as Survey Warehouse, which is an Afrobarometer national partner in Namibia. This entity is an independent Namibian owned market research company that provides integrated research services to corporate, governmental, non-governmental, private and academic entities. Therefore, it is recommendable if research entities such as Survey Warehouse would like to take a further step in researching print media information access and usage to an extensive length in collaboration with statisticians and sampling specialists of the Namibia Statistics Agency. By doing so and incorporating the national sampling frame which is

used for weighing of data, it would be a benefit that the findings can be linked to important national survey data such as interim census, census, as well as agricultural, labour, income and expenditure surveys.

1.4.5 International Organisations

Media are the carriers of information generated by human rights organisations like NGOs, national human rights commissions, etc.: they act as the most powerful gatekeepers between these organizations and the wider public. Therefore, this study is significant to international organisations by enhancing the importance of print media accessibility and usage of information. Governments and NGOs have a potential to use findings of this study to significantly improve the social well-being of affected communities and continue to collaborate with stakeholders, international partners in implementing strategies. Amongst these partners were Johns Hopkins University, USAID, the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the KAISER Foundation, amongst many others (Dralega & Nakapol, 2022). A cross-reference can be attested during the Covid-19 pandemic, in Namibia the World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Services teamed to provide information through different platforms of print media to create awareness about the virus. Food and Agriculture Organization affirmed that adoption of improved technologies by rural farm households remains low.

The rural farmers need adequate information exposure to the latest technologies, use the right methods to communicate relevant technologies to small-scale farmers (Jik & Go, 2022). Whether mounting a campaign on a particular issue or publishing a report about a

particular country or appealing for fund, organizations channel their information through the selective filter of the media. Research, theory and media partnerships derived from these collaborations were tested in national implementations (Dralega & Nakapol, 2022). Jik and Go (2022), further argued that rural farmers do not produce enough food, probably because of some obstacles that lead to a lack of access to timely and up-to-date information which would enable them to attain optimal yield from their farms. Hence, this study is significant to international organisations by making use of print media to disseminate information which would be useful for residents in settlements to make an informed decision.

1.4.6 Agencies of UNO, AU

The social responsibility that lies on media today is not just confined to the traditional idea of transmitting news and entertainment. It has tremendous power in going beyond these basic responsibilities and reaching out to society in achieving positive peace, which shall be one of the main goals of media. The media performed an important role of providing accurate information to citizens during health emergencies (UNESCO 2020). African Union was first proposed in 1990 by the late Libyan leader Muarmar Gaddafi as a more effective institution for increasing prosperity throughout the region. In general it is hoped that the new AU will have the authority and ability to achieve true economic and political integration among its member states by promoting democratic values, defending human rights and providing a forum for internal and regional conflict.

The media can disseminate human rights information, mobilize human rights NGOs, strengthen popular participation in civil society, promote tolerance, and shine a light on government activity (Paul & Rai, 2021). Most of the researches on media's role in conflict show that media played a negative role in the major conflicts around the world. Print media have tremendous power that could be harnessed by extension agencies and other relevant stakeholders for the benefit of rural farmers to increase food production (Jik & Go, 2022). Therefore, this study is significant to the agencies of UNO and AU respectively, since it help the mission of agencies to work in harmony with government.

1.4.7 Teachers and Researchers of Development Communication

Print media channels are used to disseminate messages to an audience in an attempt to influence them in a variety of ways. Many media are used to transfer technologies to farmers among them is the print media. Media methods are effective ways of reaching a very large number of people (Jik & Go, 2022). It has aided in raising awareness and changing attitudes about a variety of social issues such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, and child labor. The effectiveness of mass media in rural development, however, is also determined by its accessibility and affordability (Khan, 2019).

The first worthy analysis provision is article 20, which prescribes education as a human right. Article 20 did not describe what kind of education one is entitled to prima facie right (David, 2022). In the absence of a prescription that defines or even prohibits the promotion of media education, it cannot be stated that the constitution intended to

exclude poverty alleviation or any other necessary form of education at school based curricular or syllabus.

Sharing findings with the public can increase the impact of research, for example through strengthening community health-seeking and conveying findings to policy makers (Phumisa & Mhango, 2023). Researchers of development communication can facilitate future research through building public support for research, inspiring future scientists and helping communities to make informed decisions on research participation. For researchers, sharing findings publicly can enhance skills, elevate their profile, and inspire new funding opportunities and collaborations.

Many media scholars and experts in Namibia, Africa and indeed around the world would agree that the media have some form of impact, influence and/or effect on its audiences. In her own view Phumisa (2023) noted that, journalists often have more training than researchers in presenting information in a way that is understandable and appealing to the public. Gooding (2023) believes that the media have played a central role in the development of an important alternative channel for communicating information about health research, partly due to its extensive reach. In contrast, Phumisa (2023) claims, that in the African scenario, reflecting these advantages, the media is regarded as a key target for engagement by researchers in Africa and Asia. But Makwinja (2023) argues strongly that the media currently plays a limited role in communicating health research, particularly in low-income countries. Barriers to increased coverage lie, in both research and media institutes. Researchers may lack

skills or incentives for public communication, and may worry that the media will distort their findings.

Reporting is also hindered by limited resources, networking between researchers and journalists. Given these challenges and low reporting of health research, the NCRST need to avail and introduce a journalist research programme aimed to improve rural development. The programme should involves training journalists, working in collaboration with media consultants to support production of stories, and coupling research groups and journalists to facilitate interaction. Hence, this study is significant to research entities locally and globally through collaborations, networking and sharing of available resources for mutual benefits.

1.4.8 Journalists

The definition of journalism in the concept of media, comes from the word journal, which means a daily record of daily events, or it can also mean a newspaper. Journalism activities are always synonymous with mass media such as print media or online media. The purpose of journalism is to provide information to the public regarding the latest news and what is currently being discussed (Djudjur, 2022). This study is significant to journalists as it could serve as an eye-opener in a sense that they have to keep up with the times, be updated with latest development in the community and remain active in providing information to the public.

Media have become one of the essential amenities of life. They function as custodians of the constitution of a nation. It has the duty to inform, entertain, and educate the people

on matters related to their lives (Paul & Rai, 2021). The media in this case is not only a platform of information or a way to achieve egocentricity, but grants it into numerous customs of society and provides a sense of belonging. The pattern of production and distribution of information has shifted in line with the application of information and communication technology-based communication tools (Djudjur, 2022). However, the media globally continue to face financial pressure to sustain their operations amid reduced revenue streams due to COVID-19 (Dralega & Nakapol, 2022). This study is significant to journalists as an eye-opener on how to deal with unexpected situation or crisis which can hinder the possibility of not having access or limited access to print media information and its use, particularly in rural communities. Equally, this study is significant to journalists whereby it helps and will forever remind journalists that the content can be affected by unforeseen circumstances such as diseases outbreak, natural disasters, war and socio-economics any time. Journalists may be unable to access information on health research, or lack the skills to critically appraise research papers and interpret findings. Health research stories are also seen as less attractive to the public than topics such as politics and sports, so may not receive support from editors (Phumisa, 2023).

Furthermore, the interesting aspect in publishing print media information is the cumulative varieties of content services that are custom-made to the characteristics of the needs of the audience segment of its readers. In other words, “specialisation” has been taken into considerations to penetrate the increasingly tight competition state of affairs. Furthermore, the presence of digital media cannot be dammed so that many print

media turn towards digital media, using various platforms. Even print media has been converted to digital media using e-paper which can be accessed via gadgets and serve as the voice of the voiceless with an effort of journalists. Therefore, this study is significant to journalists as it helps them to improvise to keep the spirit of access print media information and usage alive, despite of any situation.

1.4.9 Media Houses (owners)

The historical development of news media ownership depends on the particularities of the media systems in which ownership evolves (Helle & Jonas, 2019). The ownership structure of the media in Namibia is shared between the government and some private individuals most of whom have strong political affiliations or business ties with the elites holding higher positions within the government in power. Whereas concentration is a general trend in countries where private media ownership is a dominant form, the impact of ownership on news and journalism depends on how the relationship between media, state, and other industries has developed (Helle & Jonas, 2019). Media ownership influence has been a recurring issue in the political economy of the media and has been criticized because of its implication, both for media management and practice (Dralega & Nakapol, 2022).

Media coverage is uneven only be in favor of urban centers at the expense of the rural communities, this include settlements. The consequences of this uneven media coverage, include reduction in independent media sources, focus on the largest markets and their tastes, avoidance of risks, reduced investment in less profitable media tasks

(such as investigative journalism and documentary film making), and neglect of rural and poor potential audience (Dralega & Nakapol, 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional media were particularly under threat, with sales of newspapers and advertising revenue for the media houses significantly dropping due to effects of the extended lockdown. This forced some media houses to restructure their organizations or even close (Dralega & Nakapol, 2022). Hence, using the media economy theoretical analysis, this study investigates the key economic challenges on media houses in Namibia and explores the strategic responses media houses put in place in these settlements to mitigate the print media information access and use regarding with economic effects. This study is of significance to media house (owners) to grasp a few aspects originate from the ‘media economics theory’.

One of the advocates of the media economy theory, Dralega and Nakapol, defined it as “the study of how media corporations and industries function across different levels of activity (global, national, household, and individual) in tandem with other forces (globalisation, regulation, technology, and social aspects) through the use of theories, concepts, and principles drawn from macroeconomic and microeconomic perspectives” (Dralega & Nakapol 2022, p. 6).

In this infinite definition, the scholars attempts to explain how the media business could be affected by so many factors. (Dralega & Nakapol 2022, p. 5) described levels such as global (how their service reaches out to global communities), national (how the industries attempt to cover), households (how the media technologies and media content

are used in households), individuals (how much time and attention individuals allocate to the media) as possible factors that could have clear effect on the media businesses. They further argues that since individual media consumption is constantly evolving, which eventually has an influence on the advertisers who are constantly shifting their strategies centered on the market, the traditional media change with the times so as not to be left out of business (Dralega & Nakapol 2022, p. 5).

Dralega and Nakapol's idea clearly displays that it is the media strategy to fit in the contemporary political, economic, and technological situation. COVID-19 as a global pandemic could be seen to have a direct and indirect impact on media businesses. The restrictions on movement within and across state boundaries put in place by the government also affected the distribution of newspapers and magazines. Due to the fear of contracting COVID-19 disease, people refused to buy newspapers and vendors also declined to circulate them. They advises that in situations of crisis, media businesses should have strategies for how to use scarce resources to produce content and meet the needs of their consumers (Dralega & Nakapol 2022, p. 5).

Privately owned newspapers such as The Namibian, Confidante, and Namibian Sun have more support among business class, youths, and job seekers. Consequently, most reading and viewing public who are yearning for credible and unbiased news reportage also give preference to newspapers produced by privately owned media outlets. Therefore, this study is significant for the media house (owners) to discover who their audiences are and what could be the best strategy need to be installed to keep the momentum or improve for the best result. The study recommends that the Namibian

government in conjunction with various line ministries, traditional authorities and media houses should establish a media subsidiary plan (MSP) a similar practice of media recovery plan (MRP) has been done in countries such as Ireland, the United Kingdom, and France to boost the industry and shift it to realize its constitutional roles in national development.

1.4.10 Independent Media Monitoring and Regulatory Agencies

The information and views communicated through these media have great impact on the attitudes and problems of the people. Due to mass media, the range and amount of information available to the people has vastly increased, resulting in protecting their human rights if there is any violation. Furthermore, regulatory bodies set up by the government can be a source of media control. Where there are defects or loopholes in the decree that set up such regulatory bodies, these can be used for repressing freedom of expression. In Namibia for instance, majority of the media outlets (broadcast and print) are privately owned while some are owned and managed by the government and it applies some statutory regulatory authority through the Communication Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN). This study is significant to institutions such as Media Ombudsmen and Editors Forum Namibia by making sure that all codes of conduct are respected and adhered to and responsible bodies are held accountable.

It is thought that government may intentionally leave loopholes in laws and decrees so as to exploit such in silencing any opposition (Okuchukwu, 2014). However, uncontrolled and irresponsible usage of this media is a great danger to the society (Paul

& Rai, 2021). Media scholars believe that one pitfall in the decree that set up the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) is the power given to the commission to revoke the licenses of stations which do not operate in accordance with the code and in the public interest (Okuchukwu, 2014). A similar scenario whereby The Namibian newspaper was banned from advertising government-related positions as a result of running a story criticizing the Founding president, during his tenure as a sitting president of the Republic of Namibia.

1.4.11 Students (undergraduate and post-graduate) in communication, development and demographics

To succeed in socio-economic development, it is necessary to increase the level of education, because education is an important factor in shaping a person capable of self-fulfillment in a society (Butyrina, et al, 2022). The media actively influence the public opinion, and information and communication technologies are used to increase the impact on academic performance. Therefore, there is a need for a critical analysis of information reality in order to develop the competence in future generation among undergraduate and post-graduate students. Therefore, the educational process is a manifestation of innovative styles in the context of media education, which is implemented in the development of information and communication technologies.

In this manner, media education on print media information access and use by rural communities can cultivate future citizens that act rationally and reflexively towards their communities being marginalised or sidelined due to the geographical and political

location. Muiruri (2020) maintains that media provide education and information side by side. It provides education in different subjects to people of all levels. They try to educate people directly or indirectly using different forms of content. Distance education program, for example, is a direct approach. South, (2017) indicates that for an effective education to take place it starts with everyone such as its primary audiences; the teachers, those who are responsible for training the teachers, educational leaders, policy-makers, state and local leaders. Only a privileged minority enjoyed education during the apartheid minority in Namibia; hence the country adopted *Towards Education for All*, to achieve democracy, accessibility, equity and equality in education (New Era, 2020). In realising the goals of equity, accessibility, equality and democracy, education policy was committed to cultivating values and attitudes essential for citizens' self-actualisation and personal growth that enable them to participate responsibly and effectively in the adult life of the society (David, 2022).

South (2017), defined the two key terminologies equity and accessibility in details. Equity refers to equity in education means increasing all students' access to educational opportunities with a focus on closing achievement gaps and removing barriers that students face based on their race, ethnicity, or national origin; sex; sexual orientation or gender identity or expression; disability; English language ability; religion; socioeconomic status; or geographical location. The 21st century has become a challenge for society, because the achievements of mankind have achieved high results, which are far ahead of human demand (Bessarab et al., 2021a; 2021b).

Furthermore, South (2017) refers accessibility to the design of materials, and environments that support and enable access to content and educational activities for all learners. Education is an important phenomenon in public life, an advance in evolutionary and civilizational cultural progress, while being a consequence of civilizational achievements of man and at the same time. Arguably, responsible and effective participation in the adult life of the community, as encouraged for the Namibian education development plan and education policy, is what media literacy aims at in attaining accessibility of print media information and use by every citizenry, particularly in the rural settings. In addition to enabling students with disabilities to use content and participate in activities, the concepts also apply to accommodating the individual learning needs of students, such as English language learners, students in rural communities, or from economically disadvantaged homes (South, 2017).

Researchers consider information and communication technologies as one of the means to change the perception of education, including the transition to a virtual educational environment and the formation of a new media education style that combines media technology in the context of online learning and traditional approaches (Butyrina, et al, 2022).

It could also emphasize personally or societally relevant aspects of research findings (Elliott, 2022), which sometimes differ from those seen as scientifically relevant (Elliott & Resnik, 2019). Besançon et al. (2021) have similarly argued that high quality, critical journalism is essential for communicating and contextualizing research knowledge with public audiences.

Enacting media education with as a core course module-focusing on community development journalism offers an innovative way of evolving students' knowledge, skills, and understanding while inspiring them to learn through thought-provoking methods of unified topics at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Therefore, access to print media information use of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements is significant to both students at undergraduate and post-graduate levels to advance with their research topics and broaden the findings extensively on existing studies carried out.

1.5 Limitations of study

There were several limitations encountered during this study because the study was conducted during the election year and subsequently the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, as the study was conducted in rural areas, the researcher faced challenges with accessing respondents, who were sceptical about being roped into political affiliations of not their choices. This made it difficult to get respondents to participate in the study, this yield to have a small sample size. Secondly, COVID-19 restrictions, such as lockdowns, travel bans and social distancing measures made it difficult for the researcher to access respondents in remote areas. This led to delays in data collection; hence, the study took longer than anticipated and the results were affected by the operations of society during the time of data collection.

Additionally, the researcher also had to adhere to COVID-19 regulations during data collection, including using hand sanitisers, wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. This made it challenging to communicate with respondents, and it may have impacted the quality of the data collected. Lastly, the researcher contracted COVID-19

during the study, which further delayed the data collection and write-up process. This could have potentially affected the accuracy and completeness of the data collected.

Overall, the limitations due to the election year and COVID-19 pandemic impacted the study in terms of data collection, access to respondents and adherence to regulations, leading to potential limitations in the quality and accuracy of the data collected.

1.6 Delimitation of study

This study focused on only two settlements in two regions, namely Okalongo in Omusati, as well as Ongenga in Ohangwena; therefore, it may not be generalisable to other regions or settlements in Namibia. Moreover, the study did not cover the entire country and only focused on rural areas, which means urban areas were not included in the sample.

In addition, the sample size of the study was relatively small, and therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. Although the study sought to obtain a representative sample of rural communities, the size of the sample might have limited the ability to identify significant differences and relationships between variables. Finally, the study focused only on assessing the accessibility and usage of print media in providing information to rural communities. However, other sources of information, such as radio, television or social media were not included in the study. Therefore, print media information, objectives, research questions, theoretical framework and variable adopted as well as the population chosen are targets to this study.

1.7 Definitions of terms

Access to Information: UNDP (2003) defines as the promotion and protection use of information to voice one's view to participate in democratic processes that take place at all levels (community, national, regional and global) and to set priorities for action.

Usage refers to the result of information access; for example: decision-making, problem solving, innovation and learning. From the cognitive perspective, information use is the modification of the user's knowledge structure or the competency to access and use data and information (Paul & Rai, 2021).

Print media is printed form, such as newspapers, books, newsletters, leaflets, magazine, pamphlets and posters, through which information is transmitted to communicate a key-message intended for particular targeted audiences. It also helps in entertaining, educating and making people aware of the current happenings (Paul & Rai, 2021).

Information refers to the concept of knowledge; it is assumed that information provides knowledge that modifies the state of knowledge of those who receive it (Lombardi, 2004).

Rural areas refer generally to areas of open country and small settlements. Rural areas both policy-oriented and scholarly literature are terms often taken for granted or left undefined in a process of definition that is often fraught with difficulties (Dasgupta et al., 2015). In developing and developed countries, rural areas are defined as the inverse or the residual of the urban (Lerner & Eakin, 2010).

Settlements include the encampments of hunting groups just as much as megacities, isolated farmsteads as well as towns or villages, petrol stations as well as clusters of holiday homes; it may also refer to the occupation and use of space (Nuissl, 2018).

Communication entails the sending and receiving information, ideas, emotions and attitudes through verbal or non-verbal means between two or more than two participants (Ahmad, 2020).

Communities refer to the close-knit interactions between groups of people who share a common background (Durkheim, 2020).

1.8 Chapter outline

This research is presented in five chapters.

Chapter One (Introduction) consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem and the research objectives. The chapter further highlights the significance of the study research objectives as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter Two (Literature Review and Theoretical Framework) deals with the review of literature: that informed this study and further deliberates on the theoretical framework.

Chapter Three (Methodology) outlines the methodology used for the study, further highlighting the ethical considerations and data management.

Chapter Four (Data Presentation and, Analysis) highlights analysis of the data: as well presentation of results of the study.

Chapter Five (Conclusion) discusses the results from the findings, summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the variables of the study and further deliberates on the theoretical framework that the study was centred on. Literature was sourced from various sources, such as books and reports, in terms of the role of (print) media information in rural communities. The study sought to explore the correlation between access to and utilisation of print media information, as well as the potential impacts of dependency and knowledge gaps. Moreover, the chapter explains the possible methods of ensuring the information disseminated is simplified, summarised and is accessible to rural communities. The review of literature is in accordance with the research objectives and research questions that guided the study. The literature reviews the role of print media in Namibia, the structure of information provision services in rural communities, as well as the usage patterns of print media information by rural communities.

2.2 Print media

Print media, like any other mass media, plays a very important role in shaping the attitudes, perceptions and knowledge of their audience (Karicho, 2014). Media plays a key role in the communication of information about matters of public importance and, therefore, in the way people understand social issues.

During the Maurya period, an ancient era in India, that lasted from 322 BCE to 185 BCE. Kings used to circulate news to the people as proclamations, known as edicts, which were inscribed on pillars, rocks and caves throughout the empire and ZenaMewael. These edicts were written in different languages, including Prakrit and Greek, to disseminate the king's policies, laws and religious beliefs to the people. The term 'ZenaMewael' also refers to a daily news record written by a Tsahafi Te'ezaz (minister of the pen) or Afe Negus (mouth of the King) (Ambelu, 2021).

Ambelu (2021:199) stressed that in ancient Rome, Acta Diurna or government announcements were published regularly. "They were inscribed on metal or stone, which can be considered as the earliest form of newspapers. However, in other nations, such as China, the government produced news sheets, called 'tipao'". Thus, Oduwole and Okorie (2010, p. 11) argued that information plays a key role in agricultural development. Its effective communication helps to facilitate mutual understanding between farmers, agricultural scientists and agricultural extension workers. Scholars (Oduwole & Okorie, 2010) emphasise that information is a valuable resource for development in communities because communities need information for health, business, sanitation, agriculture and personal development.

2.3 The rural setting

Most information services in Africa are focused on urban areas, neglecting the rural areas, where the majority live (Mtega, 2012). Suitable mechanism of print media service delivery to rural communities can equip residents towards decision-making that can groom lives for betterment. The development of information service delivery in rural

areas can effectively promote rural economic growth. Often, the information is inappropriate to meet their needs – either in content (e.g., it does not reflect their reality) or in presentation (it is not in their local language) (UNDP, 2003). In most cases, rural populace suffers from an acute low productivity, as well as social and economic retrogression mainly due to ignorance, which also results from either inadequate or poor information services (Mtega & Ronard, 2013).

The Access to Information Bill (2021, p. 35) enforces information to be provided in official or other languages. “Information must be provided to a requester in English or in a language which the requester prefers or best understands. According the UNDP (2003, p. 4), many information systems exist to provide information to the poor that are not demand driven, overlook local knowledge, misunderstand the role intermediaries and do not monitor usage. However, the Access to Information Bill (2021) stipulates that if the information holder does not hold the information in the language the requester prefers, the information officer

(a) may cause the information to be translated, decoded, transformed or converted into the preferred language of the requester, and

(b) may recover the prescribed translation fees from the requester.

Mokwatlo (2005) argues that for information to have an impact, it must be conveyed through a medium that the receiver can understand. In an attempt to ensure the media is understood, some media organisations attempt to reach audiences who speak different languages (Fesmdia, 2011, p. 37); for instance, the *New Era* newspaper in Namibia provides coverage in five languages, while *The Namibian* newspaper publishes in two

languages. However, as Olaifa (2014) points out, many societies face challenges related to language loss, shift or even death, which may be linked to inadequate documentation of a large percentage of languages. These challenges can have significant implications for media and communication, especially for print media, which is often considered the core of many media systems in terms of fulfilling democratic functions in public spheres (Eilders, 2015). Therefore, it is important for media organisations to recognise the importance of language diversity and strive to document and represent a variety of languages to ensure effective communication and representation of diverse perspectives.

The various language versions on newspapers highlight the efforts of some media outlets in Namibia, catering different language groups (Fesmedia, 2011). The author also references Olaifa (2011) to point out the challenges that many societies face regarding language loss or death. Olaifa (2011) suggests that these issues may be linked to inadequate documentation of many languages. From a political communication standpoint, print media represents the core of most media systems because it is considered to fulfil the media functions in democratic public spheres (Eilders, 2015). According to Fesmedia (2011, p. 28) low levels of literacy limits citizens' access to print media. In addition, Eilders (2015) suggests that accessing information can be difficult for those who read languages not written in Latin script, such as Amharic or Hindi. Furthermore, information is disseminated without understanding the needs of the user, or the context in which they can access and use the information (UNDP, 2003).

Mazzoleni (2015, p. 1 247) argues that "Electronic media might reach larger audiences, and online news might be faster, but print media typically provides in-depth news and

analyses, space for the elaboration of opinions and a forum for public discourse”. These distinctive features defend why print media are reflected to play a vital role in knowledge creation and judgment establishment. African news media are sometimes forced to abandon stories that focus on marginalised and minority social groups in favour of those more likely to resonate with advertisers and dominant political interests (AMB, 2011-2021).

Participation of this study should imply involvement of rural communities in designing the development message, as well as the choice of language and medium to be used when disseminating messages. Mokwatlo (2005), stresses that, taking illiteracy into consideration, development messages should be appropriate to the lower socio-economic status groups. The tendency to encode messages in terms of symbols, which implies literacy, is a hindrance in the development process. The usage of technical languages in repackaging information, inadequacy of time to access information and geographical isolation also serve as barriers to accessing information services in rural areas (Sokey, 2015, p. 41)

Oduwole and Okorie (2010; 2011) argue that information plays a key role in agricultural development, an activity that is mainly predominant in rural communities, where effective communication may for instance help to facilitate mutual understanding between farmers, agricultural scientists and agricultural extension workers. In this instance, Oduwole and Okorie (2010) elaborate that methods that are used to communicate are crucial in providing farmers with, for instance, the necessary agricultural information for them to make informed decisions.

This highlights the significance of media in agricultural and rural development. Therefore, print media information is not only for the role in assisting farmers to access information, but also through the potentials they offer in supplying a forum for transmitting farmers' concerns to the political and social avenues where agricultural policy is formed.

Balaji and Craufurd (2011) concur that “the major themes within agricultural communications that are carried by the available media include agricultural extension and learning, climate change, marketing of agricultural products and gender equality”. What this means is that print media helps in the advancement of rural communities or farmers. In other words, print media can guarantee timely issuance of various types of weather forecasts and warnings to the local media outlets and affected representatives. The farmers need up-to-date information concerning latest techniques of farming, new methods of cultivation, new crops, seeds, pesticides, animal-human crisis, water managements, marketing techniques, government policies concerning agriculture import and export tariffs.

2.4 Information needs

People's use of information sources is dependent on their socio-economic and demographic characteristics. They use it satisfying their instant information needs, and to answer questions about their own health or the health of someone who is important to them (Petro & Clark, 1984). To grasp this more clearly, Gebremichael and Jackson (2006) observe that information poverty in the Sub-Saharan African region is part of a larger pattern of political, social and economic problems. National newspapers have

made efforts to improve their distribution to reach small outlying towns on the day of publication. However, rarely does distribution go beyond these urban nodes (Fesmedia, 2011, p. 32). Both authors continue to concur in agreement that because of the availability of print media information in urban areas, residents in such localities enjoy the fruits of access to and usage of print media information better as compared to those in rural areas.

Furthermore, Magadza (2016) argues that Namibia also has several daily and weekly newspapers that mostly publish in English, Oshiwambo, German and Afrikaans. However, although some of these publications have reporters or correspondents in some parts of the country, many of these print publications do not reach remote parts of the country. Fesmedia (2011) states that ‘Sister Namibia’, on the other hand, is distributed widely in rural areas through the distribution networks of non-governmental organisations working in these communities. But while this is commendable, this sort of distribution is not viable for publications that publish more frequently”.

Mwalukasa (2013) opines that print media information drives the rural community; it is good at transmitting information; however, it can be relatively expensive – and the timing of relevant information can present challenges (Mwalukasa, 2013, p. 269). Farmers access information from a variety of sources, such as newspapers, pamphlets, brochures and magazines (Choudhury, 2011; Ifukor, 2013). Furthermore, Mwalukasa (2013, p. 269) emphasises that “these sources of information are expensive and their effectiveness depends on the level of literacy as well as the methods of communication favoured in a particular community or communities.”

Media plays a key role in the communication of information about matters of public importance and, therefore, in the way people understand social issues, such as violence against women, children and men Karicho (2014, p. 7). Dasgupta (2015) emphasises that lack of access to information and knowledge of rural people can also interact with all the above-mentioned drivers to mediate vulnerability. “Access to public information: to ensure that our citizens have access to relevant government information, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT), which is a ministry of the Namibian government, will develop a plan for aligning the function of public relations and liaison officers to their core functions of information dissemination.” The above-mentioned officials are the backbone of transferring information to print media platforms.

According to Ouedraogo and Sagna (2020), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an opportunity for African countries to successfully implement them. The SDGs are a United Nations-sponsored effort to create a common set of development goals for all communities in every country, with a deadline for attainment by 2030. The idea is to get governments, aid organisations, foundations and NGOs on the same page about the global problems that most urgently need to be solved and how to measure progress and solutions. These goals were established in January 2013 by a high-level UN Open Working Group, and a draft of 17 goals was finalised. When the goals were adopted, countries started implementing the new frameworks. SDGs allow for a range of measures, including financial support and debt relief, the transfer of technologies and scientific know-how to developing nations, as well as favourable terms. They also aim

to establish an open, non-discriminatory and equitable trading system to help developing nations increase their exports. Goal 16 is essential to this study in that it relates to what is expected of the government to comply with, based on the United Nations agreement to ensure access to information, as well as ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making. This phenomenon broadens and strengthens the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance, as it develops effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

2.5 The role of print media in Namibia

Media plays a central role in informing the public about what happens in the world, particularly in those areas in which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience (Happer & Philo, 2013). The power of media is generally symbolic and persuasive in the sense that it primarily has the potential to control to some extent the minds of its audience, but not their actions (Doyle, 2019, p. 13). Media, in contemporary world, is the most important source of crucial information, including human rights. Indeed, besides economic or other social power by their active or passive access to various forms of public, media is useful in other influential or consequential discourse, such as those of mass media, scholarships or political and corporate decision-making (Doyle, 2019, p. 14). Media has been setting for the nation its social, political economic and even cultural agenda. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that media plays an important and ethical role at all levels and in all parts of the country and the world (Nwanko, 2011).

Media can inform and educate people of their rights and suggest ways and means by which they can solve their problems, thus empowering them to protect their rights. Since media plays the role of communication between the state and the public, it can also play an effective role of making authorities aware of their duties.

Its expectations from the public, is “easy access to information, provision of ICT structure and service to rural communities. The plan further emphasised its expectations from the media to provide” unhindered access to public information and be accurate and objective in their reporting (MICT, 2017). However, the provision of financial and technical assistance to community media can enable them to disseminate information at the grassroots level (MICT, 2017).

2.6 Structure of information service provision to rural communities

Beaver (2017) defines information as “a difference that makes a difference”. This means new information received is interpreted to form new processed meaning. Information is structured data, which adds more meaning to the data and gives greater context and significance, and it incorporates literacy (Logan, 2012). While Navoni (2010) defines information as “the result of data processing to make them significant for the “user”, Floridi (2010) stresses that it is a polysemantic concept associated with different phenomena, such as communication, knowledge, reference, meaning and truth.

Reitz (2010) defines information need as a gap in a person’s knowledge that is experienced at the conscious level and gives rise to a search for an answer. The advantage of this effective access and use of print media is to inspire the sharing of

information and ideas, and help to exhibit a communal attitude that has never been practised before in the traditional media. After the identification of information needs, the information user embarks on a search for information. Information is a raw material for development for both urban and rural dwellers (Mtega & Ronard, 2013). Syed and Bushra (2023) reaffirms that recent studies on the access to information needs of the poor has confirmed that news media outlets have the ability to shape public opinion and influence policy decisions by providing information and framing issues in a way that resonates with their audiences. The findings of this study could have significant implications for the role of news media in enhancing climate literacy, and for the strategies that journalists and media outlets can use to communicate effectively about climate change.

Regarding the connection between print media and information, UNDP (2009) highlights that, “there are a number of stakeholders in any access to information intervention. These include creators, users and intermediaries of information. ‘Information intermediaries’ or ‘informediaries’ synthesise, translate, simplify and direct information on behalf of others” (UNDP, 2009, p. 4).

This finding is supported by Article 19 of both UN Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which stipulates that the right to freedom of expression includes not only freedom to ‘impart information and ideas of all kinds’, but also freedom to ‘seek and ‘receive’ them ‘regardless of frontiers’ and in whatever medium (UNDP, 2009, p. 3).

Knowledge, hence information, is power (Apata & Ogunrewo, 2010) – and the lack thereof is regarded as an obstacle to development. The provision of information is part of human rights (Bokova, 2011) and the right of the public to know is fundamental in any society that is governed by the rule of law” (Abuya, 2011). Nation states are encouraged to cultivate a culture of information-sharing, as it promotes accountability by governments (Oltman, 2009). Acquisition of accurate information allows individuals to acquire knowledge that would enable them to participate effectively in the democratic process and to contribute towards society in a more positive way. It is evident that the types of information needed for every situation may vary according to individual’s information needs. Therefore, information is crucial for empowering communities (Mtega & Ronard, 2013): “prosperity, progress and development of any nation depend upon the nation’s ability to acquire, produce, access and use pertinent information” (p. 65).

In Africa, rural roads are often impassable during the rainy season, making it difficult for the timely delivery of print information resources needed for day-to-day decision-making (Mahwasane, 2011). Moreover, the timely delivery of print media information services is of limited value due to the high illiteracy levels. Kamba (2012) argues that rural communities in Africa have suffered from enjoying meaningful development, with the consequence of this neglect resulting in rural communities lacking access to basic needs, including information. In developing countries, such as Namibia, it appears that minimal research has been conducted on how information is accessed and used by rural communities, particularly in Northern Namibia.

In Namibia, politicians seem to be relying on print media information to communicate their messages effectively. Before information can be used in the process of development, value must be added because information in development is of a changeable nature that varies according to the needs of users and the circumstances in which people exist (Boon, 1992). Fesmedia (2011, p. 30) argues that “print media is not accessed by the vast majority of the population, but rather pockets of people who choose particular publications according to their particular interests”.

The information needs for social and economic development in rural areas can differ depending on the specific context of each area. Information needed by rural communities include information on health and rural development programmes, academic information, legal information, as well as agricultural extension and advisory services (Mtega & Ronard, 2013). Such information is needed to allow rural communities participating in day-to-day activities that enable them to transform their livelihood and allows greater sense of independence. However, Mtega and Ronard (2013, p. 66) contend that “the types of information needed by rural communities also include political information, marketing information, leisure information, business information, livestock husbandry information, news and religious information”. Pushparaj, (2012) maintains the view that the media should probe events and point out shortcomings of society; hence, information needs of rural communities tend to differ based on the nature of the problems communities encounter on a daily basis.

Information service provision in Namibia remains a challenge to many in rural areas. MICT (2012, p. 1) emphasised that “in the rural regions, where the majority of the

population lives, communities are highly dispersed, sometimes nomadic, often poverty-stricken, with limited access to the information and communications technology infrastructure, services and content so necessary for social development, cultural enrichment and economic growth". Therefore, Boon (1992) reaffirms the notion that "when looking at the relationship between information and development, one has to draw a clear distinction between information, data and knowledge, because what one person regards as information can be data to one and knowledge to another".

2.7 Usage patterns of print media information by rural communities

Article 21 of Chapter 21 (Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms) of the Namibian constitution states that "(1) All persons shall have the right to a) freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media (Namibian Constitution Book, p. 131)". However, this, alone, prompts for an in-depth definition of the different terms used in this study. In view of that, the smooth flow of information between the vulnerable groups, available resources, intermediate actors, activities and final outcomes enables effective decision-making by households and various institutions in the process of poverty reduction in multiple ways" (Wondmagegn, 2011, p. 8). This suggests that media content that highlights or ignores some kind of information or presents problems in particular ways may activate heuristics. Olayide (1990) observes that rural people lack amenities like roads, good water supply, schools, health centres and markets, further asserting that lack of indigenous capabilities for the acquisition and spread of information have been creating great hindrances in many developing countries.

Therefore, it is considerably important to expand access to and usage of print media information to rural communities, as this advancement enhances the overall economic, social and political transformation of the poor living in rural areas. Therefore, one of the targets (16.10) is to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements” (SDGs, 2015). However, “citizens need information to limit the consequences of climate change and provide feedback on how well government interventions are working (IPPR, 2017)”. Without citizen’s access to information, it will be impossible for any country to achieve the SDGs. It is evident that Namibia is not an exception for this situation, as it is important for consolidating democracy and stimulating development for the country (SDGs, 2015).

With reference to the Access to Information Bill (2021:30) – right of access to information – (1) a person has an enforceable right of access to information by either a public or private entity if the information may assist in the exercise or protection of any fundamental human right or freedom. (2) For the purposes of this Act, unless otherwise proven, any information provided to a requester in accordance with this Act by any information holder is presumed to be true and accurate in content and in form, and the requester may rely on and use the information on that basis. (3) nothing in this Act prevents a public entity from publishing information or giving access to information.

The Bill further revealed promotion of access to information as a key element as listed below.

- (1) The information commissioner has the mandate to promote public awareness of the right of access to information by educating and training the public on how to use this Act and by popularising the right.
- (2) In promoting the right of access to information, the information commissioner must –
- (3) Assess all the implementation plans required in terms of section 24 to ensure that the public entities have clear obligations and processes that support awareness raising and education interventions at community levels, including disadvantaged groups.

Print media is still regarded as the primary means whereby information is recorded, stored and transmitted in libraries and other information systems. Print media is also a common means of disseminating agricultural information in industrial and developing countries (Mokwatlo, 2005, p. 28).

One may ask why print media is an important medium for disseminating information to rural communities. The utilisation of documentation is a function of its usability and functionality. Functionality refers to the technical capabilities of the documentation. What readers can do with the documentation depends on the degree of its technical design, such as coverage of relevant topics and the presence of access structures (Chaka, 2003, p. 25). Morris (2001, p. 16) outlines the following qualities possessed by print media: portability, reviewability, credibility and precision of expression.

According to the Egyptian agricultural context, extension workers still widely use traditional extension methods of mass media – mainly print materials (EL-Gamal, 2015). The agricultural extension can use printed materials along with other communication channels to reinforce the learning process of farmers because of low cost, accessibility and use of distribution (Tian et al., 2014). Thus, different forms of print media, such as pamphlets, leaflets, magazines, factsheets, can mainly be useful for literate farmers, but their effectiveness could be limited if farmers do not have the ability to read or understand (Farooq et al., 2007).

2.7.1 Usage of print media information by rural communities

The general use of print media is to provide information, sensitise and mould the groupings participating in setting up programmes. A prior condition is the in-depth identification of all participant groupings – and not just populations (Khadar & Ndiaye, 2012). An UNDP study on the information needs for the poor has confirmed that poor men and women face a series of problems in locating and using knowledge and information for their benefit. Poor people have difficulty accessing the ‘right’ kind of information (UNDP, 2003, p. 4). Fesmedia (2011, p. 28) states that “most print media are distributed only in urban areas and often arrives a day or so late in farther – flung towns, which limits the accessibility. Often, the information is inappropriate to meet their needs – either in content (e.g., it does not reflect their reality) or in presentations (it is not in their local language).

Eilders (2015) further elaborates that “print media typically provides in depth news and analysis, space for the elaboration of opinions and forum for public discourse. These

unique characteristics explain why print media is considered to play a major role in knowledge-building and opinion formation. UNDP's (2003) study on Access to Information shows that information availability also means little if the costs of accessing it are unreasonable and if the information is not 'user-friendly'.

The choice of print media relevant for this area comprises press (including local language newspapers, posters, wrappers, folders, stickers, calendars and diaries (Khadar & Ndiaye, 2012). The production aspect of print media should be well-thought in terms of quantity and quality. The information needs of poor people and a consideration of how poor people access information is critical (UNDP, 2003). This information, alone, could help businesses to prosper and help people in rural areas to participate in various business sectors covered in the print media. Mokwatlo (2005) illustrates that the method is suitable for information users on how to distinguish data, information and knowledge effectively.

Mokwatlo (2015) explains division between data information and knowledge as follows:

Data are unorganised pieces of information carry no meaning on their own. They become information when a relationship has been established amongst them. Moreover, information is data that is collected, organised and processed to form meaning, knowledge is stored information in the mind; it is the sense of knowing (p. 25).

This division suggests that "data is converted to applicable information; information leads to knowledge and then to action, such as decision-making" (Mokwatlo, 2005:25).

The principles of active participation, transparency, responsiveness and accountability remain key players of socialisation. In this respect, they are inseparable and needs to be incorporated all the time. The information and communication circles recognise that for information to empower poor people, it must bring into focus the need to improve poor people's capacities to analyse and understand information and to act on that information through communicating views (UNDP, 2003). Based on the clarification by Mokwatlo (2005), such distinction is demonstrated by Boon's (1992) value adding model below.

ACTION

Evaluation, decision-making, development, innovation

KNOWLEDGE

Analysis and judging process
Interpreting, comparing, evaluating, synthesising, presenting options, advantages and disadvantages

INFORMATION

Organising process
Grouping, classifying, relating, formatting

DATA

Figure 1: Value Adding Model. *Source: Boon (1992).*

To develop a strong bond with people in rural areas and enable them to access, analyse and develop an in-depth understanding of information, various platforms need to be implemented to facilitate communication and the exchange of opinions. Arguably, participatory democracy aims to empower ordinary citizens, promote equality, encourage inclusion, stem out marginalisation, advance transformation and shape reformation. It can thus be concluded that participatory democracy is premised on the principles of direct participation and equality or egalitarianism (David, 2022). Committees, focus groups and citizen advisory groups, forums and roundtables, lobbying, mediation, negotiations, participatory planning, public hearings and public meetings are some of the relevant mechanisms through which active participation easily deals with socialisation. Poverty predominantly affects rural areas, with 84% of all poor people living in rural areas (UNDP, 2023).

UNDP (2003) maintains that information also holds a great potential as a powerful and reusable resource for development, because it is “an essential input, catalyst and a product of change”. Therefore, such platforms permit them to ground their strengths,

develop a voice and demands information of their concerns, and various plights such as education, health, shelter, drought, crisis and employment are some of the crucial ones. Mokwatlo (2005, p. 27) points out that information has been termed a formidable factor in determining whether development efforts in Africa are successful or not. Because information is implicit in the existence of man and the fulfilment of everyday needs of the society, it is even more important in a rural development context.

With reference to the status of information provision to the rural population of Namibia, the National Rural Development Policy (2012, p. 12) indicates that there is a need to mobilise additional resources from local and external sources to address rural development challenges. The policy further points out that rural areas faced with numerous challenges, including lack of alternatives to livelihood, lack of tools and farming equipment, high level of unemployment, lack of information on farming and other economic activities, lack of skills and lack of marketing centres for rural products (NRDP, 2012, p. 16). With reference to rural African situation and the lack of evidence about the effective information transfer methods (Rosenberg, 1993, p. 34) comments on how little research has been done in the East and Central African countries.

However, print media information could be effective on rural people with special focus on responsiveness and accountability. Responsiveness implies listening to people's views and concerns and acknowledging these in an impartial way in the design and implementation of policies and practices, while accountability refers to being answerable to people and government for policies and actions (UNDP, 2023). Participatory democracy is a democratic model framed within the principle of equality

(egalitarian) and direct participation in policy decisions (Parvin, 2020; Knappe, 2017). The principle of equality in this context means conferring the same political treatments and conditions to all persons irrespective of their differences and sameness (Parvin, 2020). Accesses to information entail an enabling environment that allows individuals to access, use and share information, and, further develop their capabilities to apply this information meaningfully in their everyday lives (DA2I, 2017). Participatory actions in this context connote the notion of the citizenry or direct participation of the local citizens live in settlements, in the decision-making process (including policy) meant to prioritises access to print information and use by rural communities. Considering the above discussions, the study concludes and emphasised that value adding model is a conceptual concession of the democratic models of deliberative and participatory democracy as far as print media information access and use of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements is concerned.

2.8 Challenges of access to information by rural communities

Even though there are a considerable number of sources of information available, severable factors limit the accessibility of information services in rural areas (Sokey, 2015, p. 41). If there is a low quantity of usable information in rural communities, the gap between community development and people's mobilisation and participation widens. To close the gap between development and people's participation, information provided for development must be relevant and accessible (Mokwatlo, 2005).

2.8.1 Social factors that may influence access to information

The right of access to information is a fundamental and universal right necessary for economic empowerment and the fulfilment of other rights. Yet, in many countries, full enjoyment of the right of access to information and its myriad potential benefits is limited in half the population (Neuman, 2016). In the Namibian context, “it is recognised that universal access and service with respect to information and communications technology infrastructure, services and content can best be realised through encouraging a wide range of contributions from facilitating agencies, such as licensees, the regulator and government entities, including schools, libraries, hospitals and clinics” (MICT, 2012). Furthermore, non-governmental organisations in different sectors, such as education, health, agricultural and services sectors “can foster universal access at the community level and universal service at the household and SME level by providing services that are in demand, including ICT literacy training and community services” (MICT, 2012, p. 14).

2.8.2 Political structure

The Colonial South Africa’s homeland Policy deliberately maintained rural poverty at levels that would foster the cheap Migrant Labour System. Many Namibians today are still essentially migrants, working in urban areas and suffering high cost associated with maintaining social and economic ties in far away from rural areas. Most information services in Africa are focused on urban areas, neglecting the rural areas where the majority live. Mtega and Kamba (2012) state that inadequate basic infrastructure, low literacy level, lack of suitable information services and technical competencies are

among the barriers to delivery of information services in rural areas. Mtega (2012) found that the private sector has exacerbated the information divide by delivering most information infrastructure in urban areas. In most of rural Africa, transparent forms of socioeconomic accounting, such as tax rolls, social security records, and land registry are absent, incomplete or out-dated. African governments themselves have often claimed that custom and tradition prevail where modernity is held at bay, and they have promoted the image of rural communities as existing in pre-modern state of social equality and political inertia (Bone, 2014).

2.8.3 Illiteracy

Although illiteracy has been cited as the major barrier to the use of printed information materials, they have been found to be useful tools in promoting suitable agriculture and facilitating networking. According to the Namibia Statistics Agency's Namibia Inter-censal Demographic Survey (NIDS) 2016 report, urban regions were growing at faster rates, compared to rural regions. The results also revealed that for urban regions, Khomas and Erongo regions had a growth rate of 3.9% and 3.8%, respectively, while Omusati and Kavango West had lower growth rates of 0.5% and 0.6% respectively. With reference to the population statistics of 2016, the Omusati region has a population of 249 885, while Ohangwena has 255 510 inhabitants. The level of literacy in Namibia for the population aged 15 years and above remained the same – at 88.7% - between 2011 and 2016, with a slight increase in rural areas, compared to urban areas, where a slight decline in literacy level was recorded (NIDS, 2016, p. 31).

Guillemette's (1989) guidelines for designing messages that are understandable to literate readers are relevant. The guidelines emphasise simplicity in language and layout, compatibility of technical information with the reader's background and knowledge, as well as self-contained information that minimises the reader's need for inferences or integration. These guidelines are also emphasised by Bembridge (1991), who adds that messages should be relevant to the audience's needs, problems, concerns and long-term interests. He recommends using simple illustrations and demonstrations, clearly defining concepts and presenting messages in the local languages of the intended audience. Overall, the guidelines provided by Guillemette and Bembridge can help overcome the challenges of literacy and diversity in media by creating messages that are understandable and relevant to the intended audience.

Mtega et al. (2013, p. 66) propose that individuals in rural areas, regardless of their literacy levels, should have access to information services to increase their productivity, fulfil their social and political obligations and become better-informed citizens. This access to information can enable them to stay updated with the latest information and make informed decisions related to their livelihoods. Conversely, studies suggest that rural communities with low literacy levels have difficulty understanding written information (Mugisi, 2015).

In Namibia, print media remains an important medium for disseminating information to rural areas (Mokwatlo, 2005). However, to effectively disseminate understandable information, one must assess the needs and circumstances of the target audience, choose the appropriate media and tailor the content to meet the group's needs (Mokwatlo, 2005,

p. 32). Furthermore, the lack of access to print media information in rural areas has contributed to high illiteracy rates, with UNESCO (2010) estimating 153 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa lack basic literacy and numeracy skills. This disparity in access to social services between urban and rural areas has significantly contributed to the problem (Mtega, 2012).

2.8.4 Access denied: Access to information in Namibia

In Namibia, access to information is a crucial component of a well-functioning democracy, as citizens need to be well-informed about government affairs. Despite regional and international commitments to implementing access to information, little concrete action has been taken. A report by IPPR (2017) on media ownership and diversity in Namibia highlights that the policy mostly provides for state-owned media, with limited recognition of independent media houses. Private media houses often fuel ethnic and social divisions, as there is weak control from higher authorities. Access to information in Namibia is still largely framed as a media concern, although the Access to Information (ATI) organisation has conducted various capacity-building and awareness-raising activities since its formation in 2012.

The Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP), launched in April 2016 by President Hage Geingob, recognises transparency as a core principle of development. In Chapter 3 (Effective Governance and Service Delivery), under "accountability and transparency", the plan highlights the importance of access to information and the need for meaningful and workable access to information laws and systems to be put in place in the near future.

2.8.5 A systematic appraisal of the Namibian media space

The Namibian media industry has experienced tremendous changes over the past 8 years. The impact resulted from global economic crisis, a massive transformation of advanced technology such as the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), all have contributed to changing habits of how people consume information and news. This is event according to media monitoring companies Africa Vision and IPPR's newly released Namibia's Media: Faces Digital Challenges.

This section, a systematic appraisal of the Namibian media space on various mass media such as electronic, print, digital and social media were analysed. Furthermore, the study seeks to demonstrate and illustrate print media breakdown ranging from magazine, brochures, leaflets, posters, books, catalogues as well as newspapers. The analysed print and mass media information access and usage of information were extracted from public (government) and privately owned print and mass media platforms in Namibia.

In Namibia, traditional print media platforms have been experiencing continuous declines in terms of circulation over the years. This resulted due unexpected inflations, as well the impact of Covid-19 pandemic which lasted for almost 3 years and it has caused devastation and changes in the media industry. This report will focus on the issue of sustainability within the Namibian media landscape. Arguably, this theme is an under-researched area in Namibia - especially when compared to other press freedom issues. For example, much attention over recent years has been centered on legal and practical aspects around access to information (IPPR, 2019). Nevertheless, over the same period Namibia-based media, specific print and broadcast media, have seen their

industries come under increasing economic and emergency pressures. The Villager newspapers, is amongst the hardly hit publications, even though it has managed to revive and implement new adjustments in order to survive by rendering an online news service. One of the unforgotten changes includes The Namibian newspapers, one of the most consumed newspapers established in 1985. The Namibian experienced a major decline in circulation, dropping from a once of more than 78 000 in 2016 to 17 000 during the Covid-19 disruptions, and to 28 000 in quarter three (Q3) of 2020. The Namibian's managing editor Tangeni Amupadhi confirmed that the financial constraints have also affected the paper's print operation and circulation quantities. "Printed newspaper copies have gone down from a peak of 78 000 in 2016, to 17 000 during lockdown and now we are at 28 000" Ngutjinazo.

As a result of economic downturns and the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, Namibia Media Holdings (NMH) is one the oldest media entity which incorporates Allgemeine Zeitung one of the oldest daily newspapers, in Namibia founded in 1916, Republikein, Namibian Sun was not spared from the unforeseen changes. The entity announced in May 2020, its plans to reduce employee's salaries by 20%, while its counterpart The Namibia opted to restructure mechanisms by incorporating early retirement retrenchments and renegotiating employee benefit packages. As a result, The Namibian newspapers, in June took a step to cut costs includes cutting its subscription to the Namibia Press Agency (Nampa). Hugo, from One Africa Television, shares Botha's view that the Namibian media market is suffering from an oversupply of media outlets without a corresponding supply of advertising revenue. Over recent times, he argues, the

media market has become “very fragmented” thereby splitting advertising revenues across a wide range of media outlets (IPPR, 2019).

Among the daily newspapers New Era newspaper which is a state owned publication and it has sister publication Kundana which mainly serves locals in Oshiwambo an indigenous language. New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC), managing editor Festus Nakatana indicated that their circulation and advertising targets were hit hard, noting that the pandemic also worsen the structural decline of print media in the country. The publication experienced significant losses in circulations over the past years which resulted in integrating Kundana newspaper as a supplement or one newspaper with New Era. Kundana newspaper lost a huge number of readerships, which also affected the revenue of the publication in general. Confidente is one of the newcomers in the publication industry, privately owned and only managed to stay afloat in a short duration. Its editor-in-chief Max Hamata testified the predicaments such as a drought, economic instabilities and the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic are among the factors impacted the operation of the media industry. “Instead of retrenchment, we took a decision to cut our salaries by 15% and reduce our overhead costs, including the closure of our offices at Ongwediva and Swakopmund (Ngutjinazo, 2020)”. Since 2016 the media industry has been suffering a decline and resulted in significant job losses. Similarly, despite Namibia’s small media industry population, others sectors were also affected and resulted for some publications such as Confidente to lose from the government which as its biggest advertiser. Trends show that media independence is weakening and the professional standards of journalism are being eroded by economic

forces on the one hand and lack of recognition by political actors on the other (IPPR, 2019).

An estimated 243,000 people read The Namibian on a daily basis in comparison to 107,000 for New Era and 63,000 the Republikein (IPPR). However, representative of the most-widely read newspaper in Namibia voices his concern about falling circulation numbers should be of grave concern to the country's newspaper businesses as a whole are the top three publications in the country based on readership. Moreover, in another development, Namibia Economist, an English online publication since 2016, while The Villager, has changed from daily newspaper to a weekly publication. A similar route undertaken by Informante but online publication, however, Windhoek Observer newspaper changed from printing daily and opted for a daily online publishing service.

A number of private print media such as Insight Namibia (English), Omutumwa (Oshiwambo), Omukwetu, a religion publication (Oshiwambo) still there with a minimal readership. It is worth noting that some print media such as Oshili24 and Namibia Today disappeared in thin air due to various economic reasons and could not be able to sustain its operation.

Magazine are not spared from the economic downturns as a result it circulation was drastically affected leading to a number of publications to close down while other alters to online publication. Despite the new changes occurred in the media industry, information is key whereby consumers access vital information from other platforms such as books, brochures, leaflets, posters and notice boards. In fact, globally, many

media houses have embraced digitalisation enthusiastically, seemingly envisioning the potential benefits that electronic information-disseminating mediums could bring to journalism (IPPR, 2019).

The immense transformation and embracing of digital technology made everything interesting in media landscape. The use of social media in a digitalisation world cannot be ignored. IPPR (2019) Namibia, despite being a small and sparsely populated nation, has a fairly diverse and pluralistic media environment, at least in terms of the number of local media houses in print, radio and broadcasting. Both print and digital media platforms are affected by the use of social media to transmit information to a bigger audience.

In comparison, IPPR is of the opinion that Namibia's large print media houses, such as The Namibian and the NMH newspapers, are better placed to meet challenges emanating from digital growth, primarily due to their larger size, appeal to a wider audience and having readerships that include sizeable numbers of people who have limited or no access to the internet. The change is evident whereby print media and are incorporating all information on social media for easy accessibility and usage. Social media platforms, as mentioned previously in this study, are very much at the international forefront of disrupting traditional media businesses, particularly newspapers.

A study conducted by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the Namibian chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA Namibia) in 2015 listed 30 radio stations

including 10 NBC language service stations. The study also list 10 commercial and 10 community radio stations, the latter of which included an online station operated by the state-owned Namibian College of Open Learning, a distance education institute. Other learning institutions with online stations are University of Namibia (UNAM) and Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

2.8.6 Tables of newspapers in Namibia

Ownership	Government	Target Readers	Frequency	Location of publication	Price Cover	Format
Media Platform	New Era	Adults, Children Youth, Locals, Farmers, Sportsmen, Businesspeople , Students, Education, Graduates, Cosmopolitans, Health Sector	Daily	Urban	N\$ 5	Print/Hybrid
	Kundana	Adults, Children Youth, Locals, Farmers Sportsmen, Businesspeople , Students, Education, Graduates Cosmopolitans, Health Sector	Daily	Urban	N\$ 5	Print/Hybrid

Table 1. Government owned newspapers

Ownership	Private	Target Readers	Frequency	Location of publication	Price Cover	Format
Media Platform	The Namibian	Adults, Children, Youth, Locals, Farmers,	Daily	Urban	N\$ 5	Hybrid
	Namibian Sun	Sportsmen, Businesspeople,	Daily	Urban	N\$ 5	Hybrid
	Republikein	Students, Education, Graduates, Cosmopolitans, Health Sector	Daily	Urban	N\$ 5	Hybrid
	Confidante		Weekly	Urban		
	Windhoek Observer	Adults, Children, Youth, Locals, Farmers	Weekly	Urban	N\$ 5	Hybrid
	The Villager	Political, Economics, Entertainment	3 times a week (evening)	Urban	N\$ 0	Online
	Informante	Sportsmen, Businesspeople, Political, Economics, Entertainment	Weekly	Urban	N\$ 0	Online

Table 2. Private owned newspapers

2.9 Theoretical framework

This study was informed by the Media Dependency Theory, which was developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer (1998). This theory was rooted in the understanding that in order to unleash their potential and reach their goals, the public depend on media information. The theory also highlights the role of media as central to fulfilling the information needs of the public. Such roles include entertainment, monitoring of government activities, education, social cohesion and stability. This theory was relevant to this study, which aims to establish the pivotal role of the media in providing information to the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements. Due to its relevance in enlightening the access and usage of print media information by rural communities, as the main focus of this study, the researcher used this theory to illustrate how the use of print media impacted on the rural communities as a result of its accessible and usage as a tool empowering them.

Given the breakdown between links in pre-modern society, the populace at large has become dependent upon the mass media to fill this need for information. As the world becomes less stable, the public will look for news that is more meaningful to their life (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Therefore, this framework is considered primary, as it is taken for granted by the users; its usefulness does not depend on another framework. This study indicates that stages of transition have a significant impact on an individual's information requirements, speaking the same language. Similarly, for an individual's consumption of media to make sense, "this dependence by the public at large relates to the idea of solving the ambiguity of life, especially in moments of events" (Defleur &

Ball-Rokeach p. 321). Similarly, for an individual's consumption of media to make sense, "this dependence by the public at large relates to the idea of solving the ambiguity of life, especially in moments of events" (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach p. 321).

This theory was useful during this study, since the researcher can use it as a tool to analyse various articles about access to and usage of print media by rural communities in the northern Namibia. Ball- Rokeach and DeFleur (1989) argues that "There is an internal link between media, audience and large social system". The theorists' highlights "the audience learning from the real life is limited, so they can use media to get more information to fulfil their needs. An extensive use of media generates dependent relation in audience. Also, media can be able to create dependence relationship with target audience to achieve their goals by using its media power".

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) suggest that "media attracts individuals by offering the content that is able to fulfil the audience' needs for understanding, entertainment and information. "The media system's power lies in its control over scarce information resources that individuals, groups, organisations, social systems and societies depend upon to attain their goals" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur p. 304). The chief way the Media Dependency Theory is referenced in many texts is by relating it to emergency situations.

In Namibia, the northern Namibia was very badly hit by floods in 2011 – and infrastructure, such roads, were affected, which further hindered access to print media to a number of rural residents. Baran (2006, p. 429) confirms that "when a country is in some kind of crises, people turn to mass media to offer a solution to their goal of

obtaining information”. Information needs to rural communities increase during a crisis (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach); hence, the role of media during such times is to fill the gap of the ambiguity of problematic knowledge, as the public may lack the ability to solve these situations by themselves.

2.9.1 Media Dependency Theory

The theory that explains this study is the Media Dependency Theory, which is relevant because its expectations are central to understanding the research problem under study. Equally important is that this study is on access and usage of print media information by rural communities, making the dependency theory apt to this study. This study is further informed by Dependence Theory of Mass Communication, which is advanced by Ball-Rockeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. According to this theory, audience turn to media to get information to fulfil their needs because learning from their real life is limited. The theory suggests that the extent to which people will depend on media messages will also depend on the utility of these messages for individuals and the community. Advocators of this theory came to the conclusion that when media messages are not linked to audience dependencies, they will have little or no effect.

The Media Dependency Theory is employed to realise every aspect of print media information. The dependency arises from a social and personal goal for people to appreciate the realm around them. The notion of the dependency has been presented as an ecological concept, with the dependency operating as a multifaceted – not a simple structure. Print media, ordered by conglomerates and government entities, has set itself

to impact people in all modus of techniques, but no one group standardises the structure as a whole.

Based on this theory, rural communities are likely to only access and use print media information if it is accessible, affordable and convenient. This entails that print media information that carry vital information for rural communities will make great efforts to publish contents with development packaged for the rural audience. Hence, the rural communities' dependence on print media will grow, provided they can sense themselves not accessing vital information on time and remains not updated with current and economic news.

The other aspect relates to specific on “the absence of Access to Information legislation in Namibia, which hinders the media's ability to receive and consume information, as well as its ability to report accurately, and in turn negatively affect its ability to provide quality information to the public” (ATI, 2016).

This will increase consumer's desires for their information demand from the media on what they ought to do to tackle challenges experienced. By accessing print media information, the rural communities will be updated, educated, informed and entertained; in the process, they will use the acquired knowledge and skills, as well as other vital information being published in print media. The main concern of this study is on the second aspect, which has a number of potentials for opening and closing cracks, and it is possible the media do close some and subsequently open others. In other words, the

study on their access and usage of print media information on rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements ought to belong to this second aspect.

Yule stipulates that “information needs may exist when there is a gap between the state of the present knowledge possessed by somebody and that which they need to deal with or solve some problems or handle a present situation.” (Yule, 2019:50). The MICT Strategic Plan 2017-2022 on information service provision in Namibia example shows how this relationship could be a strong bond in the present society. When access to print media information is at grass-roots level, trust is built, and ensuring goals and strategies will become transparent, as it creates a change throughout the whole media dependency structure. Nor (2017, p. 4) suggests that “the connection between mass media in providing information to the public is undeniably important to be examined. By knowing such inter-media building, awareness can be generated among the public at large to be more careful in believing information they receive from the mass media”.

The incorporation of access to and usage of print media information brings together the Dependency Theory. Thus, the combination of the above-mentioned theory brings the about dependency by narrowing it down or widening it. ATI (2016, p. 3) claims that “providing access to information in real time should mean that citizens are able to consume and interact with information through a number of different platforms, ensuring greater accountability and transparency in public life. This has decreased the distance between the distributor and consumers of information, which has meant that an increasing number of previously marginalised communities can access information.”

According to AIIM (2002), information access is the findability of information, regardless of format, channel or location.

Access to and usage of print by rural communities Print Media Information

Government officials, Headmen, Community Libraries, Stores, Friends & Family, Rural Communities, Schools, Constituency Office, Journalists, health Facilities/Clinics, Farmers, Churches, Media Houses, Distributors, Rural Information Centres, Tertiary Institutions, Prospective Students, Employers.

** Having unmet needs, read and acquire knowledge resulting in enquires relevant of information.*

** Access to information and make informed decisions.*

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework. Source: Field Source

Access to print media information is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the Namibian constitution. Policy Actions for Universal Access and Service plays a vital role in achieving general principles through effective implementation of universal access and service policy for information in Namibia. This requires an appropriate legal framework and the establishment of specific and enforceable parameters reinforcing accountability, coordination and governance, respectively. MICT is responsible for the formulation of this policy, as well as for ensuring that its goals and objectives are achieved. The purpose of this policy demand is to set out national policy specific to universal access and service to the full range of information and communication technology infrastructure, services and content – from fixed and mobile voice, telephony

through radio and television broadcasting, data and the internet to the full range of broadband enabled services (MICT, 2012).

However, from a governance perspective, this policy needs a clear and well-articulated level of professional ethics, proper outlined conduct and transparent governance in all engagements between government, regulatory agencies, the media houses and stakeholders. Universal access and services is a dynamic component of an emerging broadband-enabled economy and society, and a key to promoting Namibia's social development and economic growth enabling infrastructure, content and services to reach all Namibians (MICT, 2012).

2.10 Conclusion

The review of literature suggests minimal studies deliberated on the issue of access to and of usage print media information by the rural communities living in developed countries, such as Namibia. Furthermore, some studies discussed access to and usage of print media information among farmers; however, no methodical and expounded study has been conducted that weighed the magnitude of access to and usage of print media information by rural communities among inhabitants, particularly in the Okalongo and Ongenga settlements. It is against this background that this study focused on access to and usage of print media by rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements as a case study.

This may be attributed to avenues of local information centres, language barriers, affordability, accessible avenues and timely distribution of print media, especially in the developing countries such as Namibia. Moreover, this study pursued to seal the crack

that exists in the literature. According to Kari (2010), information utilisation starts with interaction with every kind of information (information practice); information search and retrieval; information processing and analysing; knowledge construction; information production; applying information and changes brought by information (effects of information).

Lack of access to information leads to communities having unmet needs and not acquiring knowledge that could be useful to make informed decisions. Therefore, it is acknowledged that each of these sectors can make a valuable contribution to universal access and service. It means all should be encouraged to make such contributions within their unique way of operation without being biased. Co-ordination is vital to information accessibility, as it serves to support and strengthen other policies for socio-economic development, including rural development, education, health, national poverty reduction and economic growth strategies. The achievement of Namibia's Millennium Development Goals and SDGs are also some of the driving forces.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A research methodology is a systemic way to solve a problem, and it is a science of studying how research is to be carried out (Yule, 2019). The main focus of this chapter is to discuss the methods that were used to collect and analyse data. These methods include aspects such as research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection and procedures as well as ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

Akhtar (2016) defines a research design as the arrangement of conditions for the collection and data analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure. A research design can be referred as the structure of the study's "bond", which embraces all the foundations in a research project together. According to Maree (2016, p. 35), a research design is a tool used to describe the procedures of conducting a study, and its purpose is to help find appropriate answers to research questions. Shehu (2019) elaborates that a research design comprises the framework of data collection, as well as the analysis and interpretation. It helps in answering research questions and achieving study objectives through evidence and/or data collected.

This study used the mixed-methods approach in the form of a case study. Priya (2014) suggests that case studies may use sociological and anthropological field methods, such

as observations, interviews and narrative reports – and while they are predominantly qualitative, they may also involve quantitative techniques. The goal of a case study is to explain the process and outcome of a phenomenon through observation, reconstruction and analysis of cases under investigation (Zainal, 2007). The Okalongo and Ongenga rural communities were studied to assess how they access print media information and for what purposes.

3.3 Research methods

This study used the mixed method approach. According to Goundar (2012) research methods are the various procedures, schemes and algorithms used in research; they are methods researcher use in performing research operations or all those methods used by the researcher during the course of studying a research problem. The research methods aim at finding solutions to research problems. Almalki (2016) defines research methods as the instruments and/or tools that researchers employ whilst they administer any form of inquiry or investigation (Walliman, 2011; Baley, 1994). Hence, the research method is found in accordance with the research approach developed by research problem along with the logic behind with the support of previous studies carried out.

3.3.1 Case study approach

Priya (2014) defines a case study as an intensive and detailed analysis of a single social unit (an organisation, group, event and institution), which stands out as a typical example or quintessence of a class of phenomenon. However, Yin (2009) defines case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and

within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Creswell (2007, p. 73) describes a case study as “a bounded system(s)”, where the researcher makes clear statements in the research objectives about the focus and extent of the study. In responding to the questions of how, why and who in case study research, the essential tactic and a characteristic of case study research is to use several different sources of data within each case or cases (Yin, 2009). Creswell (2008) and Stake (1994) outline three types of cases:

- a) **Intrinsic cases** – selected because they are unusual and have merit in themselves or where the study is undertaken because the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case.
- b) **Instrumental cases** – selected because they serve the purpose of illuminating a particular issue, or where a particular case is studied to give insight into an issue or to refine a theory, and
- c) **Multiple/collective cases** – selected to provide insight into an issue or issues or where the instrumental case study is extended to cover several cases to learn more about the phenomenon.

However, Guba and Lincoln (1981) classify case studies into a number of types case studies. Maree (2016) further details other types of case studies:

- a) **Explanatory case studies** – explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies.
- b) **Exploratory case studies** – explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.
- c) **Descriptive case studies** - describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred.

The researcher used multiple cases, as it provides insight to explore and provide in-depth understanding on issues being researched.

3.2.2 Mixed methods approach

Mixed methods refer to an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration or “mixing” of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained programme of enquiry (Creswell, 2013). “The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and systematic utilisation of data than does separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2013).

A mixed methodological approach, combining a quantitative approach and qualitative of detailed interviews were used. The quantitative method was used to cover a larger number of the population while qualitative method meant for the interviews and focus group discussion were used to get a richer picture of the participants’ experiences. This mixed methodology was ideal for this study as it encourages the use of multiple

paradigms and has helped explore the topic in both ways because of the need to explain why certain trends are occurring. This study found this research method appropriate on exploring the plight of access and usage of print media information as a concern for the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements since the Namibia attained her independence up to date.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were vital in attempting to answer the research problem on access to and usage of print media information by rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements in the northern Namibia. It is possible to use both research methods, as complement to get a complete view of the research area and situation (Hakansson, 2013, p. 4). In relation to this study, such tools were vital and applicable to analysis and examine the uniqueness of rural community's experience, local and regional leaderships to formulate each participant's individual reality.

3.3.3 Quantitative research methods

Quantitative research, as described by Kothari (2008), is used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data or data can be transformed into usable statistics. Quantitative research refers to the extent or size of correlation between two or more variables (Kothari, 2008, p. 28). Therefore, quantitative focuses on questionnaire-based approach expressed in terms of numbers or value or quantity. According to Hakansson (2013), case study and experimental research, are the most frequently used research strategies under quantitative research. Hence, this research employed the quantitative methods by incorporating descriptive and exploratory case studies approach. Other

theorists such as Rahman, emphasised that “quantitative research is to be based positivist paradigm of measuring variables”.

Shehu (2019) opines that quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generating it across groups of subjects to explain a particular phenomenon. The main characteristics of quantitative research were briefly as shown below (Alversia, 2011; Hodis & Hanock, 2016):

- The data is usually gathered using structured research instruments
- The results are based on large sample sizes that are representative of the population
- The research study can usually be replicated or repeated, given its high reliability
- The researcher has a clearly defined research question to which objective answers are sought
- All aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected
- Data is in the form of numbers and statistics, often arranged in tables, charts, figures or other non-textual forms
- The project can be used to generate concepts more widely, predict future results, or investigate casual relationships
- The researcher uses tools, such as questionnaires or computer software, to collect, store and process numerical data

3.3.4 Qualitative research methods

Qualitative research concerns understanding meanings, opinions and behaviours to reach tentative hypotheses and theories or develop computer systems, artefacts and inventions. According to Maxwell (2012) the value of a qualitative study may depend on its lack of generalisability in the sense of being representative of a larger population; it may provide an account of setting or population that is illuminating as an extreme case.

Hakansson (2013) noted that qualitative research would give an in-depth or quality to the research. Moreover, Denzin (1989) reinstated that “qualitative research approach produces the thick (detailed) description of participants’ feelings, opinions and experiences; and interpreted the meaning of their actions.”

In this study, the researcher focused on discovering the experiences from the participant’s point of view. The qualitative research admits the researchers to discover the participants’ inner experience and to figure out how meanings are shaped through and in culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

However, results were attained whereby the researcher was actively involved in order for the study to yield intended outcome. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to be flexible and allowing the respondents to elaborate on the point of interest (Denscombe, 2010). Since the main aim of employing qualitative approach in this study was to assess and ascertain the accessibility and usage of print media information by the rural communities. Therefore, it was vital for the study to incorporate

a qualitative method in order to transcribe accessibility and usage of print media information by the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements.

3.3 Population

Creswell (2013) defines population as a total number of individuals with common characteristics, and are of particular interest to the researcher. The population of this study only residents of Okalongo in the Omusati and Ongenga settlements in Ohangwena regions. Okalongo and Ongenga settlements have 3000 and 1000 inhabitants respectively (Kandowa & Phillipus, 2018). Therefore, the population target was selected as it has the target audiences who were affected with access and usage of print media information in rural areas, settlements to be specific. Access to and usage of print media is a human rights and these residents need to enjoy this rights too.

The plight of access and usage of print media information by the rural communities residing in settlements are the primary influencers of this study. Entities which are the custodian of providing print media information to the communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements in order for the communities to access and make use of the information seems to be side-lining the rural sector and it rarely talked about.

3.4 Sample

Sampling is defined as a group of people, objects, or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement. The sample should be representative of the population to ensure that researchers can generalise the findings from the research sample to the population as a whole (Bineham, 2006). According to Kothari (2008), sampling refers to

the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample.

Purposive sampling was used in this study because of the nature of the research method employed. In purposive sampling the sample is approached having a prior purpose in mind. The criteria of the elements which, are to include in the study, are predefined. So the study does not include everyone who is available to us rather those available are included who meet the defined criteria (Alvi, 2016, p. 30).

However, Creswell (2008) maintains that purposive sampling is advantageous as it saves time and money while Bird (2009) notes, “it is advisable to increase the sample size to reduce the effect of over-relying on accessible participants and thereby ensuring a reasonably representative sample”.

The initial sample pool included 253 members of the public in the two settlements, who were administered a questionnaire and this was followed by interview of a cohort of government officials in the form of two Chief Regional Officers, two Councillors, two Headmen, two government officials totalling 8 participants. Bird (2009, p. 1311) advantages for open-ended questioning include freedom and spontaneity of answers, opportunity to probe and usefulness for testing hypotheses about ideas or awareness.

The researcher employed a sample of 253 residents, 156 from Okalongo Settlements and 97 residents from Ongenga settlement. The total number of participants was 253 whereby they were picked randomly. The participants were informed of the main reason for the study and permissions were sought from the relevant guardians before accepting

the questionnaires that were collected after two days or more. The whole process was made user friendly to comply with the rule and no force was used, the entire process was voluntarily.

Bird (2009) further maintains that open questions allow time and space for free-form responses which invite participants to share their understandings, experiences, opinions and interpretations of, as well as their reactions to, social processes and situations.

Furthermore, there are four (4) officials from Okalongo and Ongenga settlements chosen for the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and interviews. The main purpose was to collect more detailed information pertaining access to and usage of print media information by the rural communities for Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements. Hence, the Focus Group Discussions was carried out at Okalongo, Outapi (with the Chief Regional Officer for Omusati Region, representing Okalongo Settlement), Ongenga and Eenhana (with the Chief Regional Officer for Ohangwena Region, representing Ongenga Settlement) respectively. The FGD was conducted on different slot agreed by the participant's availability in order not to disrupt their other equally official responsibilities. Moreover, the Focus Group Discussion activities were administered by the researcher, while participants were supplied with a similar copy with questions read by the researcher, while chairing the discussions.

The sample for the study was 253 participants whereby the Yaro Tamor formula for infinite population was used to determine the number of participants (Uzoagulu, 2011).

To determine the size of the population, Kothari (2014) noted that sample size between 10 per cent and 30 per cent will be good representation of the entire population of study.

However, since the entire population was relatively small, due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. Hambrick, (2007) recommends carrying out a census where the population in the survey is small. The researcher conducted a tally where the entire populations of 253 participants were targeted in the study to bring multiplicity and comprehensive range of judgment.

The following research objectives help to understand the necessity of access to print media information and usage with responses from the respondents.

- To assess which print media information platforms was accessed;
- Assess the avenues through which they accessed this information;
- To examine for what purpose the acquired information, is used for;
- Investigate the possible challenges faced in accessing print media information, and
- The come up with the best solution to address these challenges.

Data provided by Namibian Statistics Agency indicates that only 30 % of rural communities have access to print media information and use. An interview contacted reveals that only 13% of the population in Ohangwena have received literacy while in Omusati has 17% literacy rate. A research study conducted indicates only 5% of the rural communities in Namibia has access to print media information.

Rural population (% of total population) in Namibia was reported at 46.04 % in 2022, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators. Factors such as reduced circulation of print media information, closure of distribution channels, late delivery of print media information, inaccessibility, high price tag, language barrier, reduced print media platforms due to Covid-19 lockdowns, and increased online media consumption.

The impact of Covid-19 affected the target population sample to actively participate in a large number, with fear to contract the virus through exchanging the questionnaires to be completed by the participants (adhering to Covid-19 restrictions and social distance). Print media organisations reduced the production of print media information since circulation has been badly affected by restrictions of movements. Policymakers influenced the notion of social distance as well as emphasising on reducing the number of people gathering to be enforced. If the researcher had time and more resources, the study would have involved all the print media platforms as well as a higher sample size of participants; this is because with the current sample size some enabled participants could have been left out of the study henceforth may not depict the diverse perspectives on the ground. However, the researcher did a sampling that gives due representation of respondents that reflect the accessibility and usage of the print media information in Okalongo and Ongenga settlements.

3.5 Research instruments

This study used semi-structured questionnaires, focus group discussion and interviews respectively. The first group comprises of members of the public in the two settlements, whereby questionnaires were employed. Meanwhile, the second pool of participants constituting government officials and the third pool reserved as Focus Group Discussion (FGD) team consist of councillors, chief regional officers and headmen, whereby interview guides were used. The researcher arranged all interview. In the process, data collection from respondents and all data was recorded on audio by using a voice recorder on set.

A semi-structured interview encourages two-way communication. Those being interviewed can ask questions to the interviewer. In this way it can also function as an extension tool. When individuals are interviewed they more easily discuss sensitive issues (Conradin, & Keller, 2019). Conradin, & Keller, (2019) further argue that semi-structured interviews help field staff become acquainted with community members. Outsiders may be better at interviewing because they are perceived as more objective, and that is the scenario in this study.

Therefore, the vital role of the researcher in this study was to obtain information from the focal designated informers for the duration of interview segments. For each participant's interview slot, voice or dialogue was recorded and then transliterated to reference the main arguments for individuality conception and access and usage of print media information impact. This study employed both questionnaires and interview guides. Because of the Therefore, it is vital for the researcher to have audio recordings

for validity and accurate information from the interviews and their answers to simplify the whole process of captured data. This will amplify the process of data analysis and all necessary details collected from the interviews will be transcribed and kept for references.

3.6 Data collection and procedures

The researcher sought permission from the University of Namibia. Questionnaires were randomly handed out to respondents until saturation was reached. Permission was sought from participants who formed part of the interviews and FGD. The researcher contacted the target participants and make appointments for the interviews and FGD. Phone calls, emails and face-to-face contacts were made to the relevant offices in order for the researcher brief and clarify the main idea of the study. Letters were written the offices of the Chief Regional Officers, Constituency Councillors, Control Administrator Officers for the Settlements (Okalongo and Ongenga), Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture for the schools with the settlements (Okalongo- Haudano Senior Secondary School while Ongenga – Shifeta Junior Primary School and Ongenga Junior Secondary Schools).

The ministry of Health and Social Services also requested a letter from the Regional Health Director of Omusati Region permitting nurses to complete the questionnaires. Permission and information for traditional authorities under which Headmen fall, were passed on by their Constituency councillors. However, the researcher also made an effort to contact the headmen telephonically seeking for permission and their

availability. Therefore, all contacted offices provided responses at different times, ranging from a week to two weeks respectively.

The office of the Chief Regional Officer for the Ohangwena region referred the researcher to contact the intended interview with the Deputy Director of planning on behalf of the Chief Regional Officer. The reason for this referral was because of the outbreak of Covid-19 direct conduct within some officials in the council. All the applications for permits sent to target offices seeking permission were accompanied by an Ethical Clearance Certificate issued or granted by the University of Namibia to ensure participant assurance.

Therefore, all procedures were duly followed; the research questions were furnished both as hard and soft copies where is applicable. This was done in accompaniment of the research proposal, student card and a permission letter from the University of Namibia. The main reason was to proof and provide an in-depth understating on the study to be undertaken. By doing so, it enhances develops a trust from the participants that the study is legitimate before participating. Once all the offices were satisfied, permissions were granted and the researcher set with the relevant participants to draw up a schedule to clarify the main aim of the study before commencement.

On each occasion-interview slot, the researcher debriefed all participants the main aim of the study and emphasised all respondents of their role and discretion.

The questionnaires were handed to key leaders and the researcher at different venues for distribution and completed on spare time and collected within a space of one to three days.

However, Focus Group Discussions were carried out at different time slots given by the key leaders as per agreement with all participants and the researcher. Some were conducted in the morning while others were in the afternoons but without interrupting the usual services of their day-to-day client service delivery. Equally, on a normal basis, interview sessions Chief Regional Officers, Constituency Councillors, Control Administrative Officers and Headmen lasted from 15 minutes to 45 minutes. Upon concluding with data collection, the researcher set to transcribes, all data collected on a soft copy and connect on internet to all auto back up of data on cloud storages (One Drive) and secured them safely.

3.7 Data analysis, validity and reliability

Data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques (Cooper & Schindler 2006). This study used both quantitative and qualitative data, which were summarised to give accurate and modest sense to the finding. The researcher used the thematic analysis to analyse and interpret data collected from interviews while statistical analyses were employed to analyse quantitative data. Graphs, pie charts and tables, were used to clarify research finding from questionnaires. According to Gravetter and Forzano (2009), p. 157) validity of a research study “is the degree to which the study accurately answers the question it was intended to answer”. To assess the validity of the study, the researcher selected a sample population randomly, made up of six percent that represented the whole population from the two settlements. Therefore, the researcher employed exceptional individuals to assess each questionnaire and generate feedback.

All necessary stages and procedures of the study were outlined thoroughly to the participants with ample time of engagement and consultations on the study. Koonin (2014) suggests that to determine the validity of the study the researcher should answer the following questions “do the findings reflect what is happening in a given situation?” The reliability on research findings, are reliable since the data was verified and weighed versus the literature furnished in correspondences being distinct. These findings were verified and weighed via a process of generating quantifiable values established for assessment on which access to print media information by rural communities can be assessed. Dawadi (et al, 2021) opined that combining two sets of strengths while compensating at the same time for the weakness of each methods. Thus triangulation leads to a well-validated conclusion and also promotes the creditability of inferences obtained from one approach. Therefore, such details can assist the study to establish to avenues, accessibility, usage and challenges on accessing print media information by rural communities and enhance the importance of accessing information at the right time. Similarly, liability is ensuring the reliability of the data in the study, both questionnaires and interview guides consisted of simplified questions to ensure that the participants understood the questions, which result in them giving clear answers, which is believed to minimise errors (Shaambeni, 2019).

3.8 Research ethics

The researcher sought permission from the University of Namibia (UNAM), Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and respondents to conduct the study.

Additional permissions were also sought from the two regional education directors, principals, teachers, parents and learners respectively.

Furthermore, the researcher acquired an ethical clearance from the University of Namibia and obeyed to ethical guidelines as stipulated by the University of Namibia. Both respondents and participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their participation in the study was voluntary. All participants signed a written consent form prior to the commencement of the study, and were assured that the data collected were used merely for the purpose of the study. All participants were independent in providing information and were not aided in any manners by the researcher during this study.

The researcher assured them that the data collected be kept confidential and that it be used only for academic purposes and kept for five years and thereafter destroyed in accordance with the University of Namibia's regulations. All data collected is saved on an external hard drive, google drive, dropbox and wetransfer as back up in eventuality of loss and technical malfunction of the voice recorder -subsequently.

3.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the methods, research design, population, procedures, research instrument, data analyses that were used to carry out the study. The chapter broadened clarifications on research sample, as well as the validity and reliability and what influenced the selection of research tools used. The researcher further explained the data collection procedures, detailed the importance of ethics and more importantly ethical

considerations the researcher adhered to during the research procedure. In the next chapter will highlight and discusses data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the discussion of the research findings on access to and usage of print media information by rural communities; a case study of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in Northern Namibia. This study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methods (mixed methods), and semi-structured interviews were employed for data collection. The main objective of this chapter is to present the outcome of this research. First of all, it is vital to indicate the media platforms to which respondents had access, the purpose for which the respondents used the acquired information, and the challenges faced in accessing information.

This chapter presents the analytical version of the research that assessed the accessibility to print media information by rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements. Besides, the study assessed the avenues through which they access this information (such as family and friends, government offices, headmen, shops, and so forth) and examined for what purpose the acquired information is used by these communities. Lastly, the study investigated the possible challenges faced by rural communities in accessing print media information.

The findings of the study are presented and reviewed in accordance with the research objectives discussed earlier in chapter one. Therefore, this study does not solely review research findings, but it equally furnishes an analysis of the data that were collected by

employing purposive sampling. The researcher employed purposive sampling because of the nature of the research method used. The initial sample of 95.8% from the overall population made up of 253 respondents with age groups ranging from 15-<65 years, also purposive sampling for government officials from the two regions where these settlements (Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements) are located.

This chapter presents the findings displayed by an in-depth thematic analysis and interpretation of data collected, with statistical analysis to analyse quantitative data, aided by illustrations consisting of bar graphs, charts, and tables providing clarity and desired answers to the main research questions. During the analysis, collected data from the questionnaires is coded and analysed, but compiled into quantitative rapid reports with the aid of application software, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.0. As far as the critical analytical aspect is concerned, all findings were treated in harmony with the theoretical framework, in conjunction with immense analytical approaches for validation. This was supported by the reliability of processed results to yield satisfactory results. However, the findings are fully incorporated into the theoretical framework that was discussed towards the end of chapter three and employs critical analyses method to yield epic but critically and thoroughly, immense findings. The findings employed by the researcher were leading to the required answers pertaining to the research questions in collaboration with the research objectives (as outlined in chapter 1). The four research objectives are listed below:

- a) To assess the accessibility to print media information by rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements.
- b) To assess the avenues through which they

access this information. c) To examine for what purpose the acquired information is used by these communities. d) To investigate the possible challenges faced by rural communities in accessing print media information.

4.2 Results

Cooper and Schindler (2020) defines data analysis as a process that involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying techniques. According Jessica, Lester, Yojoo, Cho, Chad and Lochmiller (2020), the value of structuring data analysis in phases is that it creates a transparent process for both the researcher and (ultimately) the reader of a given report. The researcher aims to produce broad descriptive statements that reflect their overall understanding of the data and in response to their research questions. Meanwhile, these phases include preparing and organising the data, transcribing the data, becoming familiar with the data corpus, memoing the data, coding the data, producing categories and themes from underlying coded passages, and making the analysis process transparent (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). This study analysed by employing descriptive statistics with an aid of SPSS software. Descriptive statistics sum up data from a given sample using a standard deviation to be produced in as frequencies and percentages (Mbala, 2021).

4.2.1 Response rate

According to Sarantakos (2005, p. 432), the response rate refers to the rate of people responding to a survey. In the same vein, Fincham (2008), elaborates that response rates

are calculated by dividing the number of usable responses returned by the total number eligible in the sample chosen. Mitchell argues, with documentation from others, that the survey response rate should be calculated as the number of returned questionnaires divided by the total sample who were sent the survey initially. In this study, the researcher distributed 260 self-administered questionnaires and received 253 completed questionnaires, amounting 253 respondents which yielded a 95.8% response rate from the targeted participants in both qualitative and quantitative data collections. There was 95% response rate for quantitative respondents amounting to 253. Out of this 156 were from Okalongo settlement and the remaining figure was from Ongenga settlement. The 153 females composed the majority respondents in this study resulting to 59% while on the other hand, males who were 100 resulted a score of 40.4%. There was a 100% response rate yielded from qualitative respondents for qualitative data collection, whereby the study employed face to face interview with two traditional leaders from a village perspective. One interviewee who served a senior traditional councillor from Onandjaba a village shared boundaries with Okalongo settlement in the Omusati region. It's for this reason that Okalongo was proclaimed as a Village council effective from August 2022, hence, the transition from a settlement to a village council referred as Onandjaba Village Council.

“With decentralisation, the services are brought closer to the people, and communities are more empowered to participate in the decisions that are affects them. “Decentralisation also comes with increases of responsibilities for regional councils and local councils to ensure effective and efficient service delivery (Haimbodi/nbc, 29 August 2022).”

Similarly, a face-to-face interview was conducted with the headman from Onangama, a village that shared boundaries with Ongenga settlement, respectively. Furthermore, the study involved focus group discussions with government officials, namely, the Chief Regional Officer from each region where such targeted settlements fall under their leadership. For Okalongo settlement, the Chief Regional Officer of Omusati region (CRO) took part in the focus group discussion while for Ongenga settlement, the Chief Regional Officer of Ohangwena was represented by the Director for Planning. The reason why the Chief Regional Officer for Ohangwena could not participate is that he was in isolation due to exposure to Covid-19. Such regulations need to be adhered to as per the World Health Organisation's health protocol in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Services in the Republic of Namibia. The study also involved constituency councillors and control administrative officers at a settlement perspective. Each represented the targeted settlement highlighted in the study.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic data includes the respondents' occupation, gender, employment, age and economic background (Sarantakos, 2005). Demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed according to their age, education level, gender, socio-economic status.

4.3.1 Demographic data of settlements

Initially, two chief regional officers from each region, two constituency councillors

from the constituency in which each settlements located, two control administrative officers from the settlements, headman from villages bordering with settlements and residents are part and parcel of the research respondents employed through Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and interviews to cement community members responses, for the reason that they are in contact and engage with the community's needs every day. It is for this reason that, purposive sampling was employed due to the nature of the research method used and the population of the rural communities as well as the selected community members represented the population of the two settlements. However, a convenient sampling was employed for the chief regional officers, constituency councillors, control administrative officers and headmen due to their commitments with the community as well as their availability.

The community members were picked randomly to ensure that the results obtained from the sample display a holistic representation of the entire population from the two settlements. For the Ongenga settlement with a population of +/-1000 inhabitants, all 100 inhabitants targeted and agreed to partake in the study but only 97 community members returned the questionnaires which were distributed. While for Okalongo settlement, with a population of 3000 inhabitants, all 160 community members targeted and agreed to participate in the study, with only 156 community members returned the questionnaires distributed.

Even though six government officials were targeted for Focus Group Discussions, which comprises of chief regional officers, constituency councillors and civil servants (control administrative officers from the settlement offices), only for Ongenga settlement did not

have blessings of the chief regional officer for Ohangwena region interviewed due to the fact that he was in isolation camp as a result of covid-19 health regulations. However, he was represented by the director of development of Ohangwena regional council. Both two headmen targeted for the interviews availed themselves to participate in the study representing each settlement. Moreover, due to the fact that simplicity was reinforced to cater for the interview guide, all participants did not encounter any challenges in responding to questions. Hence, this phenomenon of simplicity and the importance of the research topic backed by the research objectives breakthrough a massive response rate encountered in the study.

4.3.1.1 Demographic of all respondents

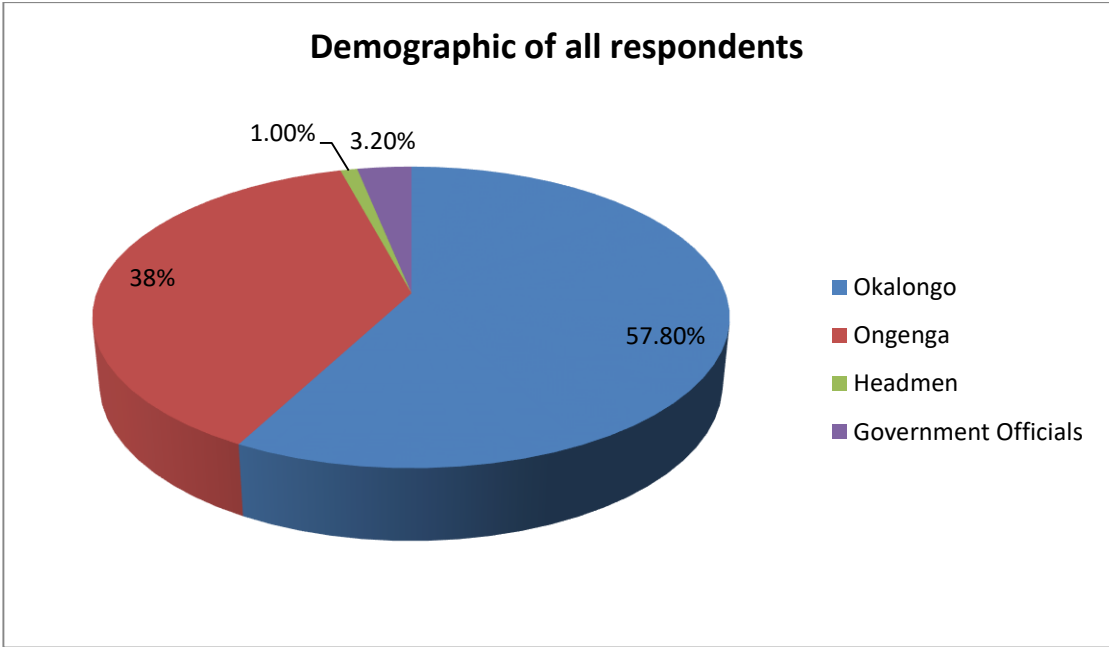


Figure 3: Demographic of respondents. *Source: Field data*

Figure 3, Demographic data of shows that Okalongo settlement has the biggest respondent rate of 156 (58%) compared to Ongenga settlement made up of 97 (38%).

4.3.2 Demographic data of focus group discussion participants

Two focus group discussions were held in Okalongo and Ongenga settlements for this study. The total number of 6 respondents took part in the focus group discussions, of which 4 were males and 2 were female. Not all respondents who agreed to partake in the focus groups showed up on the intended day of discussions, due to Covid-19 restrictions in place by that time, hence the total number of 6 participants instead of 8. All respondents were between the age of 40 and 60 years old.

4.3.3 Gender distribution of the respondents

The first part of the questionnaire recorded the respondents' demographic information (gender, age, marital status, employment status, education, and nationality). Gender structure of the respondents is vital in order to understand the access to and usage of print media information by rural communities in determining the accessibility and usage of print media information in settlements. Thus, the results of gender are shown in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: Gender distribution of the respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	100	40.4%
Female	153	59.6%
Total	253	100%

Table 3: Gender distribution of the respondents *Source: Field data.*

Table 3 above, show that most of the respondents (59.6%), who were available and willing to partake in the study, were females. The study findings revealed that majority of the information seekers are females represented by 59% of respondents and that of males composed at 40.4% of respondents. The accessibility of print media information and the avenues where such media platforms with information accessed plays a key role in influencing the readership of the target audience. Although readership can be done through scanning and skimming while executing a particular task, for men effective concentration and eye to detail may require uninterrupted attention from the reader. From a woman's perspective, the majority respondents here spend ample of their time searching for information over after completing different chores or normal work, thus illustrates why there is a high level of participation in the study. Equally, this phenomenon attributed to inadequate time for men to access and use print media information disseminated could be beneficial to all gender, which if awareness can be raised effectively will yield to better results on access to information. Based on observations, the researcher discovered that in most homes, the male figure was not

around most of the time. The observations also revealed that this was for this reason that most men usually travelled outside the settlements for work and some work in remote areas. Therefore, leading participants were from the Okalongo settlement in the Omusati region, the return rate was 97.3%.

4.3.4 Respondents' age range

The research sought to scrutinise the age of the respondents of which may have attribution and influence on readership towards access to and usage of print media information. The study targeted male and female respondents ranging between the ages of 15 and above. According to the research findings as revealed in Figure 4 below indicates that out of 253 respondents, the majority (48%), were young ones aged between 15 and 25 years old, followed by (29.8%) who were between 26 and 35 years old, respondents who were between 36 and 45 years scored 13.1%. However, the study further revealed that respondents very few were 45 and 55 recorded 6% while respondents 56 and 65 and above years old scored 2.4 and 0.4 %, respectively.

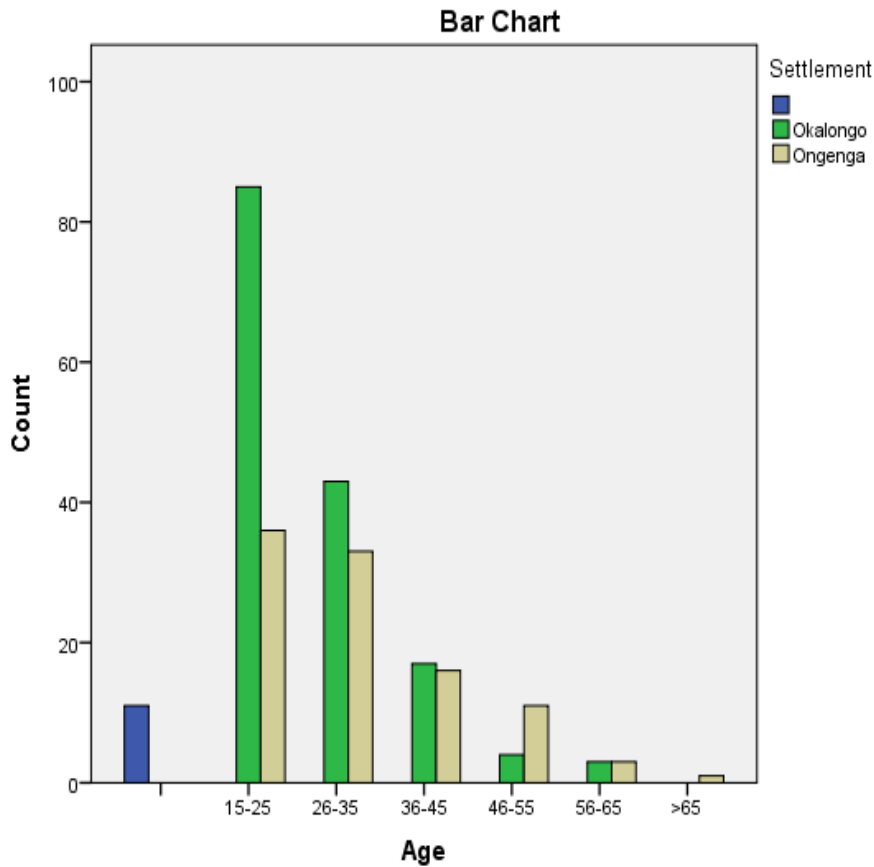


Figure 4: The age range of respondents. *Source: Field data*

The researcher observed that most of the respondents particularly the youth 25 years and below focused in education and employment opportunities, thus resulting in active and avid user of print media information. The study findings reveals that there is a potential of rural communities in the Okalongo and Ongenga settlements to adjust their norms towards accessing and use of print media information particularly in embracing the desire to keep updated and informed all the time. A total of 253 of rural community members participated in the survey, presented results as displayed in Figure 4 above indicates there were younger – between the age of 15 and 25 years old (85%) than

respondents who were between the age of 56 and 65 years old with 3%, as shown in Figure 4 above. An age believed to transform conditionally once they are equipped with abundant self-reliant information on why they ought to embark the transition of behavioural change.

4.3.5 Respondents' economic background

Economic background of respondents of the research area could have an impact on the usage patterns of information be it on accessibility and usage of such print media information. It is against this background; the researcher deems it fit to discover the occupational of the respondents taking part in the study. The study findings revealed that respondents in the study occupy positions in various occupations. The fourth part of the questionnaire asked about the economic status of the respondents. The responses are displayed in table 2 below.

Table 4: Economic status of respondents

Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Employed	124	48%
Self-Employed	15	6%
Pensioner	0	0
Students	95	38%
Unemployed	19	8%
Others	0	0
Total	253	100%

Table 4: Economic status of respondents: *Source: Field data*

The details in the table above shows that the majority (48%) of the respondents were full time employed, followed by the student's respondents (38.8%) as well as (6%) indicated that they were self-employed. 8% were unemployed, while the least number of respondents were pensioners the other 0% had other revealed unspecified economic backgrounds.

Majority of respondents regarded as a working class is an indication that this is the main source of information for the unemployed population in the settlement. To the accessibility and usage of print media information of this residents there is a need for them to be provided a resourceful information centre, with all essential information available at the most needed right time.

Research Objective (a): To assess the accessibility to print media information by rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements

This part assesses the source of information as far as accessibility is concerned by the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements, how frequently, which media platforms and how accessible such information in their areas. This objective was achieved by asking questions aligned on the objectives of access to print media information, which media platforms were accessible and where such print media information were accessible in the communities.

4.3.5 Respondents' educational levels

Education enables finding an occupation relatively straightforward and leads to higher prestige within Namibia's society. Namibian's associated with the lower class do not contemplate on education because their struggles deal with "how to survive" (Jellenz, et al, 2020). Mwangangi (2015) emphasised that education level is key in cognitive and uptake of agricultural information disseminated through different media. Therefore, this study sought to highlight the level of education the residents of Okalongo and Ongenga settlement in Northern Namibia. As Figure 5 (i) displays below, the study findings revealed that majority of respondents had certificates.

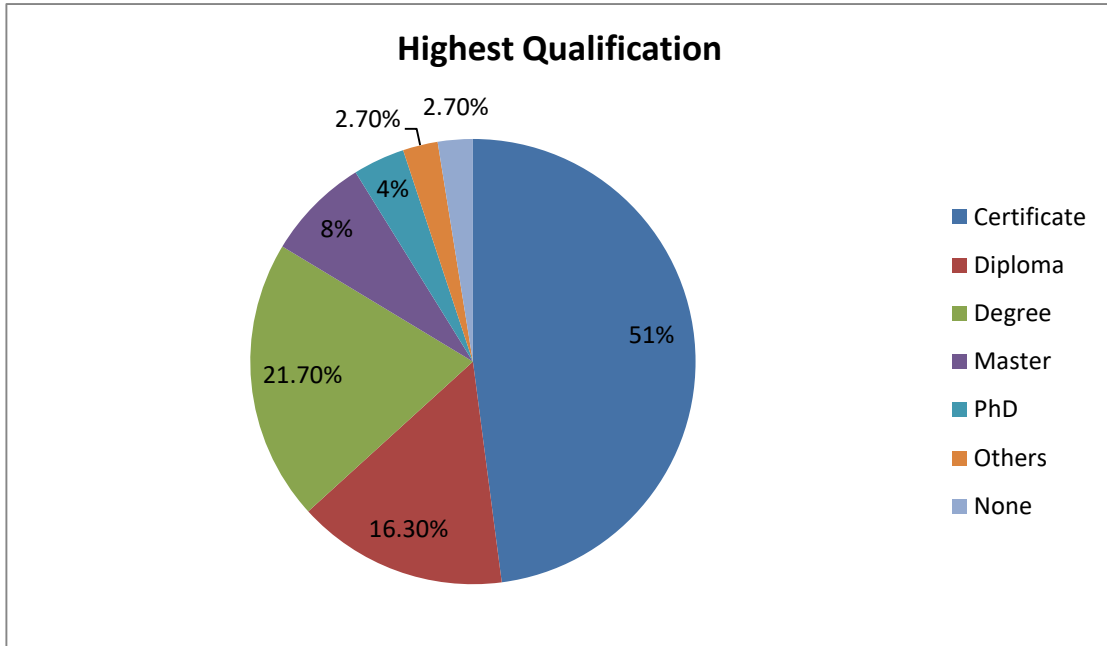


Figure 5: Level of Education (i). *Source: Field data*

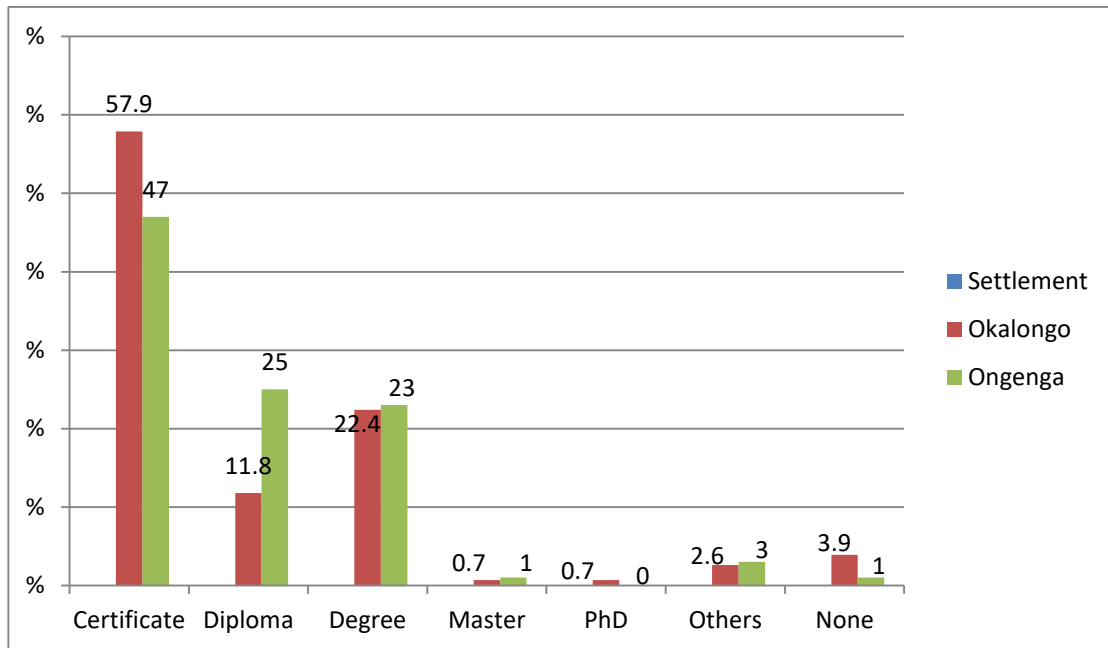


Figure 6: Levels of Education (ii). *Source: Field data*

Namibia's constitution states that all citizens should have the right and access to general education. Higher education has received considerable attention over the last 10 years and represents a critical element of research, development, and innovation (Jellenz et al., 2020). This study aimed to determine the participants' education levels and their ability to respond adequately to the study's questions. In terms of education levels, Okalongo settlement has the highest percentage of respondents with certificates at 57.9%, followed by a degree at 22.4% and a diploma at 11.8%. Ongenga settlement has the highest percentage of respondents with certificates at 47%, followed by a diploma at 25% and a degree at 23%. Other education levels had lower response rates. While both settlements had respondents with Master's degrees, Okalongo had one respondent with a PhD, while Ongenga had none.

The study's results, as shown in Figure 6, indicate that young respondents have higher literacy levels than older respondents, with 73% of those who are literate being under 35 years old. Jellenz et al. (2020) emphasised the importance of education, especially tertiary education, in accessing basic science, self-developed, and imported technologies, and establishing key institutions such as government, law, and financial systems. Therefore, the number of individuals with higher education could have increased drastically over the past 10 years, especially since the introduction of literacy programmes in the region. As a result, Okalongo has sought to transition from a settlement to a village council. Throughout the study, from the proposal stage to the actual fieldwork, there were no changes that could have influenced the research's outcome.

As a result of Namibia's vast land area and small population, educational institutions are mostly located in larger cities, such as the capital city of Windhoek, creating a barrier to educational accessibility for citizens in rural and remote areas (Jellenz et al., 2020). The majority of respondents in the study (ranging from 47% to 57.9%) had certificates to diplomas, and 50% of study participants with certificates who were employed came from Okalongo settlement. Therefore, the researcher focused on the educational level of teachers, nurses, and other civil servants, as well as learners, participants, and parents in the settlements, as their inputs were highly required to support the findings on the usage and access to print media information by the rural community of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements. The overall group of respondents forms an integral backbone of the rural community's plight addressed.

However, 57% of respondents' certificate level of education indicate low literacy level and have a correlation with the adoption of effective access to and usage of print media information. The use of English as the official language in print media platform to communicate information will not imply an effect among users frequently accessing the media platform for their perusal. This is supported by Orao, (2009) who stated that in most part of the African continent, the "officially ignored" indigenous languages are spoken by the majority of those with lower level of education at all. Mwangangi (2015) argue that to create agricultural impact on this kind of audience then requires utilisation of a medium that uses a language that they can understand and obviously this language is their mother tongue.

4.4 Language preference for print media information by rural communities

Regarding language preference for accessing print media information by rural communities, the study aimed to establish which language participants preferred and how many supported their language of choice, as well as other preferred languages. Based on the responses, 70% of respondents preferred English as their language preference, and Oshiwambo was the second most preferred language, with 50% of participants indicating their preference for this language. However, only a few rural community members opted for Afrikaans as their language preference. Furthermore, a small fraction of respondents from both settlements indicated having access to print media information in other languages such as Portuguese, Rukwangali, and Otjiherero.

Non-native and non-Namibian residents working or residing in these settlements influenced the language preference, specifically opting for the English language.

Khadar and Ndiaye (2012) reinstates that in the choice of print media, there are some essential elements to be taken into consideration as listed below:

- The choice of languages and language style;
- The importance of local languages and of the links between communication strategies and programmes for functional literacy;
- Analysis of the specific needs of the various categories of recipients (taking gender into account).

Relevance of the information communicated is key, not only from the sources but the consumer matters the most. *Relevance*: In order for the information to be accepted by the audience, it should address the needs and concerns of the intended population. If information does not consider the needs and concerns of the target group, it will not be taken seriously by them (Mokwatlo, 2005 cited in Pour, 2011).

Pour (2011) argues that, while there are quite a number of merits of the printed information, illiteracy is said to be the major concern barrier to its use by the target audience.

However, other scholars such as Mokwatlo (2005) concur with the following guidelines to design messages that would be understood, specifically by low literate readers.

- Simplicity of layout and language
- Compatibility of the technical message or information with the user/ reader's knowledge and background.
- Consistency (predictability) in both layout and language used.

In reference to above mentioned guidelines, Bembridge (1991) also emphasised by stating that;

- The message should be relevant to the audience's needs, problems, concerns and long-terms interests.
- Ideas should be reduced to the simplest possible terms, using simple illustrations such as visual aids and demonstrations;
- Concepts should be clearly and;
- Messages should be organised into logical stages and be presented in the local language of the intended audience.

It is against this background that print media information will not yield productive results unless the needs and circumstances of the target audience are not assessed and the information incorporated with the language preference. This will help to communicate the intended message effectively.

4.5 Frequency of print media information access

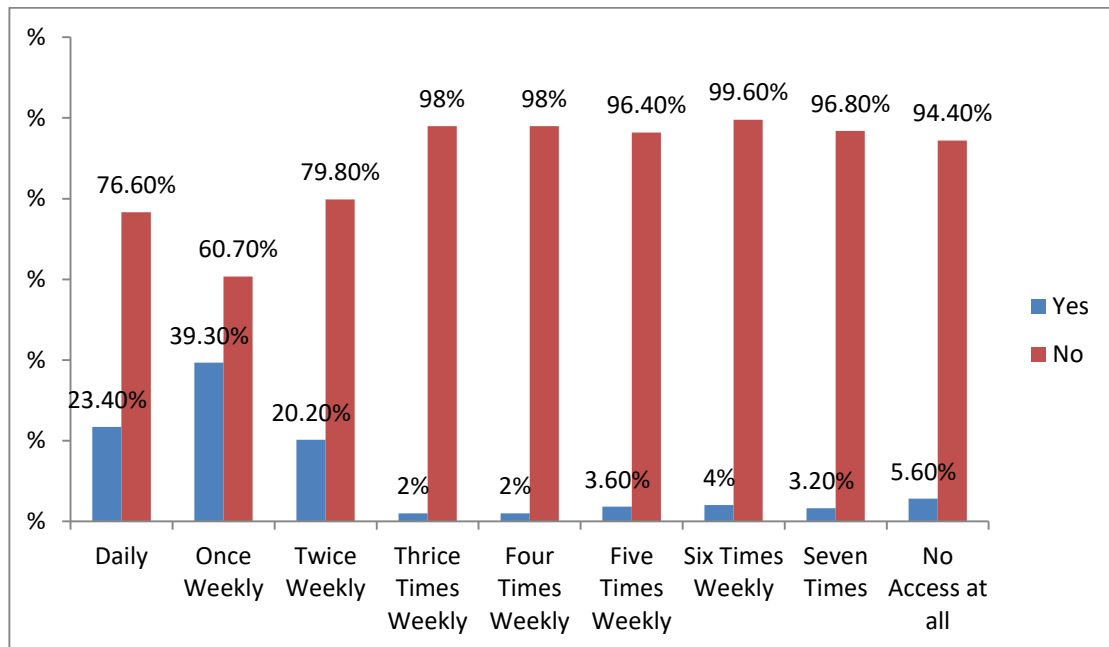


Figure 7: Print media access frequency. Source: Field data

The participants were requested to indicate how frequent they receive print media information ranging on a daily basis, weekly and not accessing information at all. The figure above indicates the swift of findings corresponding with how often print media was accessed. Approximately 99 frequencies, (39.3%) of the rural communities did not access print media information once on a weekly basis and 51 frequencies, were the responses of the respondents who accessed print media twice weekly and thus shows 20.2% response rate. Furthermore, a high number of 251 (99.4%) frequency on a sixth weekly and 238 frequencies with a total of 94.4% response rate of rural communities indicated that they do not have access to print media information at all. Participants who participated in the focus group discussions and interviews were too asked to indicate how often they accessed print media information.

Hence, their responses were sorted as follow; Respondents R indicated how often she accessed print media, she said “Every day, whether I bought or print them.”

Research Objective (b): To assess the avenues through which the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements access print media information

This objective was achieved by asking questions centred on the objectives about where do they accessed to print media information in their communities.

4.6 Avenues for accessing print media information

Avenues as a source of rural community’s information centres are key to establish and assess through which the rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlement access print media information from. The study found that the different avenues form various sources of information to rural communities as simplified in Figure 8. The researcher asked all respondents the avenues where they frequently had access to print media information from. Based on the information in the figure above, it indicates that 71.4% of rural communities have access to print media information from local shops, 15.1% of these communities accessed their print media information from government offices. Respondents of 5.6% indicated to have accessed their print media information from community halls while 8% agreed that they had access to print media information from the headmen. A few participants (7.1%) reported accessing print media information through other outlets. The researcher was informed by participants during the focused group discussion (FGD) that, information could be accessed on notice boards at designated points but poses a threat of being removed by an unknown passer-by. This,

very often deprive other rural community members to have access to such information timely and make informed decisions.

Interviewee 2, who is the Constituency Councillor for Ongenga constituency by then said that” *In the Ongenga constituency we access print media at local outlets in Ongenga, some we place them on a notice board, but some of the print media can be accessed from Nampost.*”

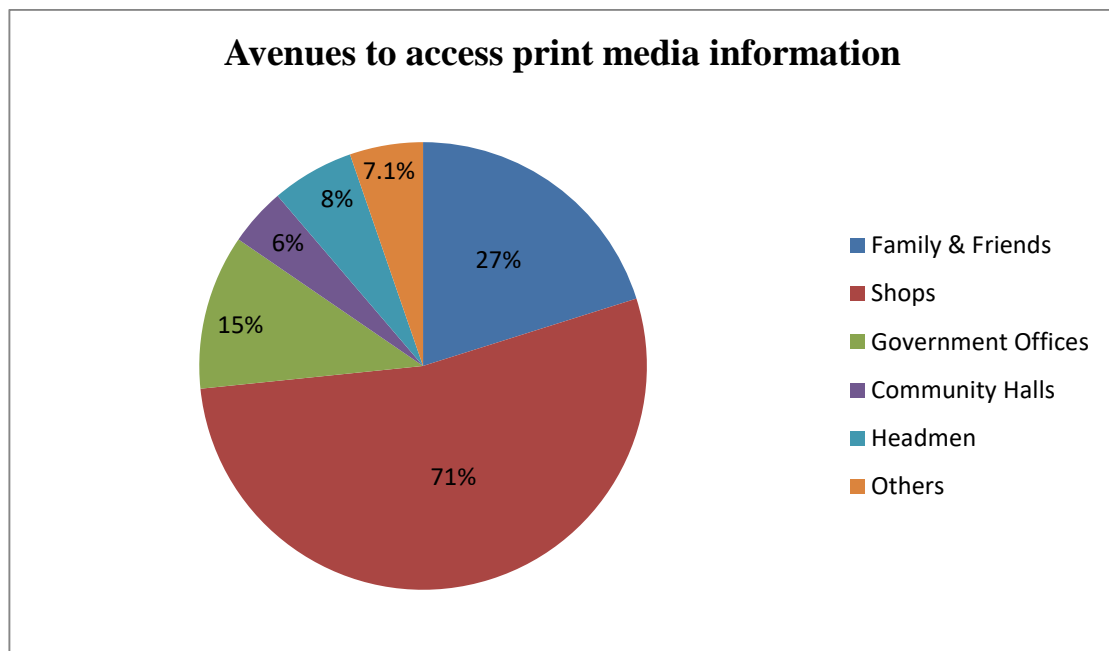


Figure 8: Places of print media information access. Source: Field data

4.7 Language often used in print media

The sought to establish language preferred to be used in print media information for effective communication on various information indented for rural communities. As evidenced in Figure 9, the findings dictate, in relation to the choices of respondents as shown below;

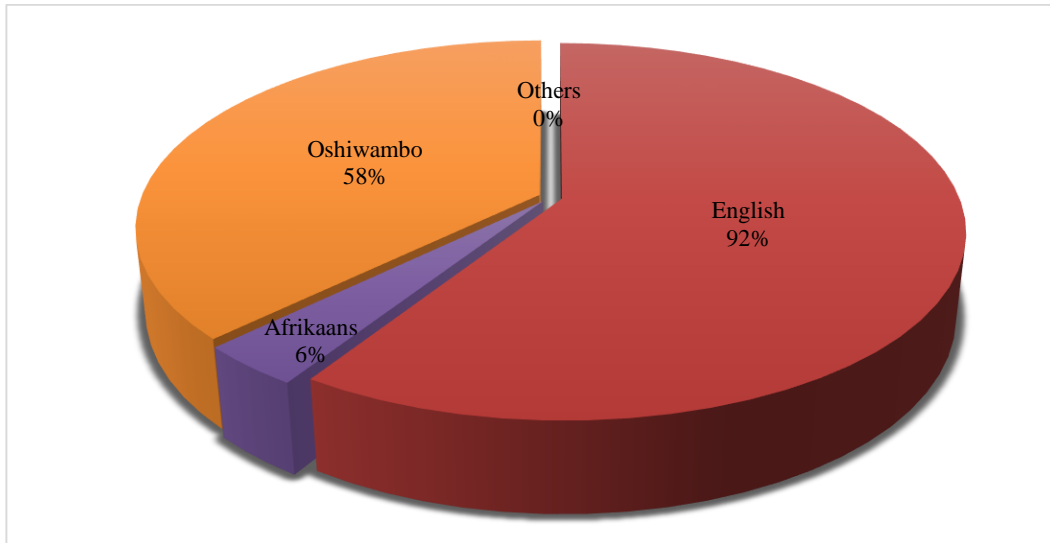


Figure 9: language often used in print media. *Source: Field data*

The figure above displays that a total of three languages were used to convey various messages in print media information. Focus Group Discussions (FGD), interviews with key informants, open-ended responses from the questionnaires authenticated the responses from respondents about the hierarchy of languages used by the print media. Different respondents were not that the use of Oshiwambo was neglected by the print media information producers. For an example, in one of the focus group discussions and interview sessions, two of the respondents (FGD interviewee 3, and interviewee 4) are of the opinion that print media only catered for an educated class. Interviewee 4, a pensioner and a senior councillor in the traditional authority, shared his sentiment with the researcher how he would love grasp more information in the print media information, that he would share with his friends, family and fellow villagers. However, due to his Bantu education system by then, he did not understand English in depth, therefore he felt left out, and not updated.

Therefore, its overall objective was to make information easily understood by the rural communities in order to make informed decision about the information received through print media information. The official language is English has been associated with success, power, prestige, progress and achievement because it is characterised by institutional usage, written usage, functional use, economical advantage and national communication. However, females and persons with post graduate qualifications had a different on the use of languages.

FGD interviewee 5 said: “Since majority of the community are fluent in Oshiwambo, the use of Oshiwambo could be beneficial to many and only a few people that are fluent in English and other languages. For instance, *New Era* newspaper use to have a sister publication Kundana with enough content for Oshiwambo, we have people who use to enjoy the newspaper especially the Friday’s publication. However, for now they changed to *New Era* which is dominated with English.”

Another respondent, FGD interviewee 6, said, “*In terms of languages, we don’t have a problem whether it is in English or Oshiwambo. We were taught both languages at the university.*”

Hence, print media which used English in their print media information shows 92% and Oshiwambo stood at 58% response rate. However, a total of 6% was recorded being used for the Afrikaans language in the print media information.

4.8 The use of acquired information

This segment of the research assigned with the print media usage on the purposes for print media usage amongst rural communities and responded with various responses ranging from: get detailed information, updated information, educational purpose, general information and knowledge, information sharing, reading skills/vocabulary, archive for future use, academic research purposes, advertisement, exposure to local and global news and none. This study also includes of respondents about their use of the acquired information and overall about their information needs.

Research Objective (c): To examine for what purpose the acquired information were used for by these communities

This objective was achieved by asking questions aligned on the objectives based on what purpose the acquired print media information used for, which type of the acquired information classified as useful, how does the acquired information meet their needs and how often do they make use of the acquired information in daily life. Respondents were asked the following question and the outcome presents the summary of their responses.

For what purpose do you use the print media information?

The use or utilisation of information by an individual farmer may lead to its storage / preservation for future use and thereby creating an information cycle (Kari, 2010). The majority of the respondents show that they use information for be exposed to local and global news updates, general information and knowledge. Only a few respondents

indicated they use acquired information for sharing, academic research purposes as well as advertisement which include employment opportunities.

On the other hand, a few respondents indicated that their print media usage are solely for their print media information sources can still be preserved or archived for future use. This study sought to reveal and get to the details of investigating the types of information shared by Namibian rural communities.

Only a few respondents pointed out and expressed enthusiast about why it is crucial to use print media information. FGD interviewee 1, from the Omusati Regional Council responded;

“Well, the first one in this case when it come with work, that is where we use advertise our positions, that is where advertise our bids for projects implementation. It is also where we will share other public information like announcements, public announcement of good or bad news. Normally we use print media for that purpose and for marketing purposes.”

However, FGD interviewee 1, further indicated that he uses the print media information for personal use, he states that;

“Sometimes we can use it as source of information in terms of research. Because there are pertinent or current news articles that may answering some of the issue of interest. May be on housing, on road accidents, on census, may be on elections all those things. Sometimes we can use them to complete school works

for the kids because some of the information you find it related to a certain grade, school activities and so on.”

FGD interviewee 4, who is a Senior Traditional Councillor of the Ombadja Traditional Authority said that” *Information varies, whereby some are more of educational, awareness of a certain situation for instance in this case of Covid-19 pandemic, how it can spread and prevented. All sorts of information are accessible in the print media platforms.*” However, less than 6% from the respondents with no access to print media information had not indicated their grounds regarding with the purposes on print media usage. FGD interviewee 7, indicated that “*First of all the acquired information I use to share with the community, by giving out the relevant information for the community use.*” Similarly, FGD interviewee 8, reaffirm on the use of acquired information that “*It provides an insight of what in a long run for educational on a daily basis.*”

In support with what described above, Sava and Devi as cited in Yule (2019) echoed the same sentiments that the uses to which people put information depend on the factors as their knowledge, their affective state (i.e., mood and motivation), their intellectual abilities, and their existing skills (e.g. literacy) or physical abilities. However, Interviewee 9, from the Okalongo Settlement office shared his views in response the above question and he said:

“Once you acquire the information, it always puts one in a position to analyse and evaluate, and it even helps you to redirect your performance or focus. Because the main purpose of each civil servant is to provide a satisfactory

service to the community. What you have acquired is the feelings or the input of the community that you are serving and it helps you to make a correct decision or could be certain government policies that were put in place but it is not satisfactory to the community. Such complains will come through print media information, then it will put one in a position to call for a policy review or the amendments”.

Nevertheless, print media information is a vital source of information, but it is costly. The constituency and traditional authority offices strongly revealed during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews that they are in support of establishment of information centres at a constituency level for free information dissemination purposes among the rural communities.

FGD interviewee 10, of Onangama village, in the Ongenga constituency indicated that the acquired information can be used for various reasons. He states that” I use the acquired print media information for general knowledge or keep updated so that no one can mislead me with misinformation or rumours because I am always updated”.

Pour (2011) argues that purpose behind using print media is to reach out to large numbers of people and add to the quality of the extension events in different ways. He further emphasised on the awareness, that print media items produced for widespread distribution and can create knowledge of new ideas, actions or problems with farmers needs to take action right away.

4.9 Accessibility and usage of print media information by rural communities

Print media has been in use and continue as a fast-growing industry which helps to reach a vast number of the audience, serving them for enhancement of their information needs. It is against this background that main purpose of this study print media information was incorporated as it is the key component influences rural communities on access and usage of print media information. Therefore, in this research print media refers to different types: books, bulletins, brochures, circular letters, calendars, banners, newspapers, wall newspapers, magazine, leaflets, and newsletters. Because of different factors such as the type, availability, usage and accessible of the print media, a number of rural communities make use of the print media based on their ages and information needs. Close to 80% have exposure to print media and well understood the meaning of the terminology print media. This was shown by the communities as they listed various examples of print media such as newspapers including *The Namibian*, *New Era*, and *Namibian Sun* as well *Kundana*.

Pour (2011) affirms that newspapers are the most popular means of information dissemination. Information published in the newspaper consists of news, views, advertisements etc. and is disseminated at regular periods, namely daily and weekly. It is worth mentioning that the purpose of newspaper is to 1. Serve as a platform for extension practices in the area. 2. Deliver information which would be of some use to the leaders in the community and 3. To enlighten the public about programme/project, progress etc.

Pour, emphasised that wall newspaper is used to provide timely information to the rural population on a regular basis. As its name connotes, a wall newspaper is printed on only one side and it is displayed on wall. Information printed on this tool is usually decorated with drawings and photographs to become more attractive.

4.9.1 The importance of print media information

The study sought to assess the importance of accessing print media information which may influence the accessibility and usage of print media from various print media platforms. This segment of the study highlighted the importance of the print media information by the rural communities, supported by the responses ranging from very important, important and not important. The respondents rate of 68% showed the importance of the print media information, 30% of respondents scooped the second position while only 2% of respondents with not important responses came out to be the least in regards with how the importance of the print media information among the rural communities.

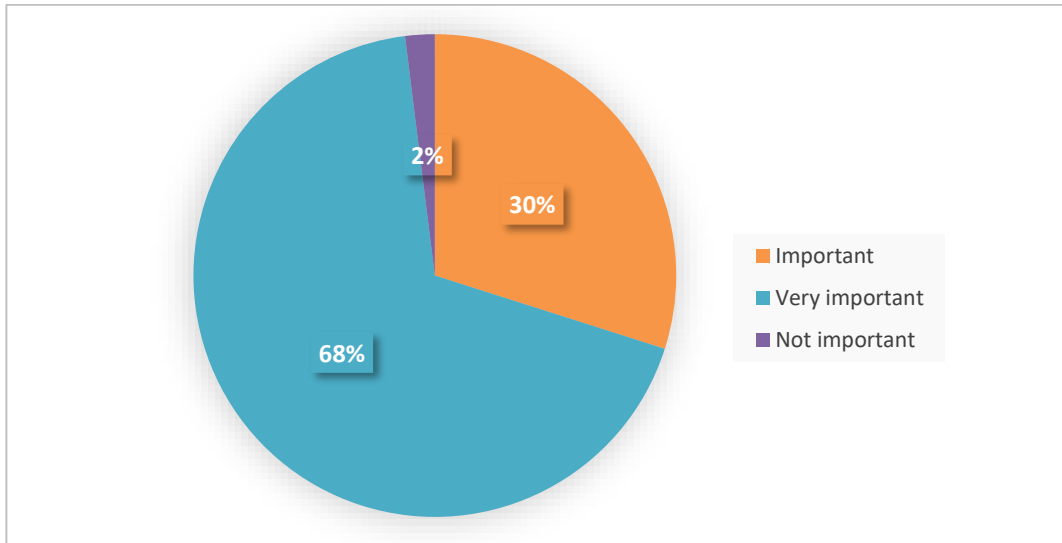


Figure 10: Importance of the print media information. Source: Field data

4.9.2 Most useful print media platform on information needs

The study sought to establish the most useful print media platform to address information needs for rural communities which is vital in determining whether or not such print media platform has an impact on information needs. According to the study findings, respondent indicated the preferred media platform as indicated in Figure 10. This segment of the study focused on the most useful print media platform to cater information needs in the rural communities, thus responses ranging from the most useful print media platform to the least useful. The Namibian newspaper topped the list 92%, whereby respondents indicated it to be most useful in catering their information needs, followed by *New Era* with 41% and Namibian Sun scooped the third position with 38% response rate while The Patriots stood out as the least useful print media platform amongst rural communities as far as their information needs is concerned. Figure 10 simplifies this information.

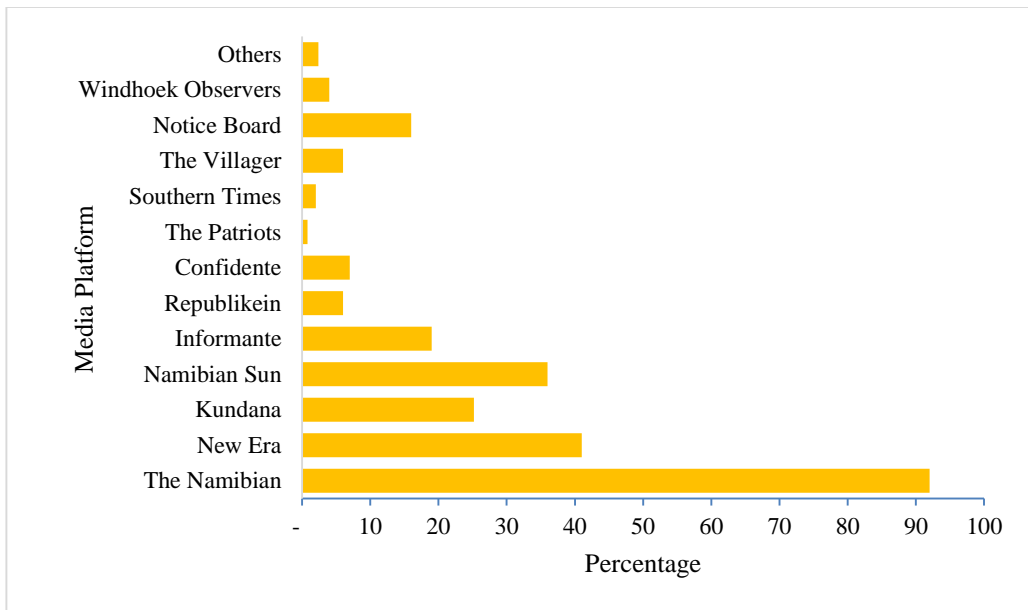


Figure 11: Most useful print media platforms on information needs. Source: Field data

4.10 Challenges on accessing and usage of print media information by rural communities

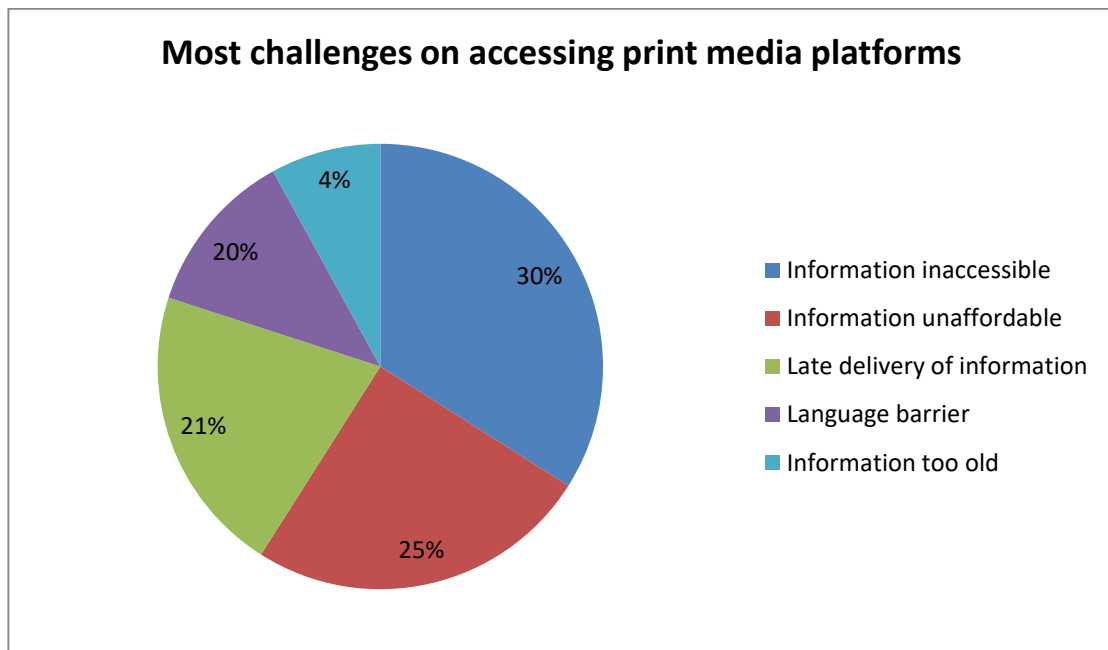


Figure 12: Challenges on accessing print media platforms. Source: Field data

The participants were asked what were challenges did they faced in accessing print media information. Figure 11 indicates that 30% information inaccessible, followed by 25% information unaffordable, 21% late delivery of information but only 20% responded to have encountered with language barrier, while 4% of the participants responded that information is too old were the least challenges.

Research Objective (d): Investigate the possible challenges faced by rural communities Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in accessing print media information

This objective was achieved by asking questions aligned on the objectives on challenges in accessing print media information, what should be done to improve access to print information and what could be the best solution in dealing with challenges pertaining access to print media information in the communities.

During the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the government officials, (chief regional officers and constituency councillors) and headmen, the plight focused on challenges in accessing print media platforms was excessively exhausted. Majority of the participants had a first-hand experience with various challenges on accessing print media platforms at the grass-root level. Interviewee 2, from the Okalongo Settlement office narrates that;

“Sometimes you can hardly access or just do not have access to it. Let say, I want The Namibian newspaper of yesterday (Friday) today, I cannot access it, I have to travel from here to Outapi or Oshikuku, sometimes in Okalongo like at shops like Shoprite and Woermann Brock but sometimes it is a bit distant. However, the counter challenge to access the information is inaccessible and you feel left out.”

FGD interviewee 4 further alluded that there are many challenges in accessing print media in Okalongo. He states that,

“Since Okalongo still at a settlement level, the growth of the settlement contributes to extend that you can hardly access today’s newspaper or maybe

there is nothing at all (newspapers are finished) it is a challenge. The other issue, is the distance to access the outlets, if you don't have a transport to the outlets then you are missing out. Availability is also a concern.”

Language barrier remain a concern especially to the old age as a result of low literacy. One of the respondent during the interview session, interviewee 10, of Onangama village, in the Ongenga constituency which borders with Ongenga settlement state that,

“With us there is a little bit of a struggle but with the history of our Bantu education system, we managed to grasp something like reading skill was acquired. That means if the print information is written in English, there is a little bit of understanding the language but some are written in our vernacular.”

He further emphasised that print media come a bit late. FGD interviewee 10, conquered the same sentiment on language barrier by indicating that;

“Well, I should emphasise on the language barrier, whereby most of the newspapers are written using the official language (English). Therefore, a number of people are not fluent in the used language and it discouraging the readers to follow attentively. Despite that there are few pages written in Oshiwambo, justice could be served if they publishers make it 50/50 (50 percent in English and 50 in Oshiwambo). This will increase their sale as well enhance the readership among the communities.”

Through these interactions, participants were freely to express different scenarios they have encountered and also register their burning desires of accessing information needs for various purposes on a daily basis.

4.11 Solutions for access and usage of print media information by rural communities

The research sought to address challenges encountered by rural communities upon accessing and usage of print media information depending on print media as their key source of information in order to make informed decisions. This question was crucial to this study since it was part and parcel of the research questions. The Focus Group Discussion and interviews contacted with the government officials and traditional leaders, these respondents were all asked a similar question on how these challenges on accessing and usage of print media information can be addressed? The study findings showed that the challenges vary from respondents ranging from inaccessible, received late, unaffordable or overstocked and language barrier.

An interviewee 2, from the Okalongo Settlement office narrated that; “When I came in Okalongo in 2011, there was nothing like accessing to newspapers. So, I once have arranged with a person who normally to drive from Oshakati coming to work in Okalongo on a daily basis. Then I communicated with The Namibian and *New Era* offices, at least to give some newspaper to that person and drop some here whereby it can be accessed by the local people, including myself. We buy whatever we can and he can take back the left-overs then he takes it back. That is how we have started, until such a time even these people (print media companies) realised that there is a need in

Okalongo”. Based on the challenges he had experienced, interviewee 2, is of the opinion that such challenges can be addressed effectively. He states that “A number of people are not a position to acquire information at the right time. Therefore, I am actually still encouraging the youth to see to it that MICT take a lead in ensuring that relevant information has reached the majority of the people at the right time in order to help each and every one to make a timely and informed decision”. According to interviewee 5, “there is no accessibility of newspapers in the settlement at all and this is the major challenge.” Interviewee 5, further added that “we need business people to start selling newspapers in the settlement.”

Despite the fact that the respondents were from different settlements, it is a fact that they tend to share the same challenges. Based on the challenges he had experienced, FGD interviewee 10, of Onangama village, in the Ongenga constituency narrates that such challenges can be addressed effectively. He states that;

Some of the print media platforms are inaccessible as result of distance and understanding from a personal perspective. Some of the print media have no markets that make it difficult for business people to bring such print media here, it is a loss. Therefore, my suggestion is that we need a timely access to print media, especially daily newspapers such as The Namibian while weekly newspapers should do the same.

A number of resolutions were recommended. From a respondent in the Okalongo settlement, FGD interviewee 4, is of the notion that” by increasing (increase the supply

the number of printed media information will solve need of insufficient print media platforms in the settlement, there also some avenues deep in the villages and can accommodate the newspapers as outlets apart from the well-known outlets”. Reduce price for the print media information e.g. an affordable price for print media information will increase the number of media platforms needed with various information needs. Free media information should be available for vulnerable communities. This can cater the information needs to those who cannot afford to purchase the print media information on a set fee. Simple language must be used in order to increase readership and enhance broader understanding on the information being disseminated in a simplified language that is easy to understand by someone with low literacy character. Other resolutions advised include proposing the increase of print media outlets in the settlements e.g. more outlets will cater for everyone who need to access and use print media and there will be no shortage. Constituencies have community information centres whereby free information should be made available for the rural communities in remote areas. Little is known about the existence of these centres and what type of information platforms is accessible, therefore promotion of print media awareness such service is vital.

4.12 Discussions of the findings

This subsection highlights the findings of the study and compares them with the literature as reviewed in chapter 2. The purpose of this study was to establish the access to and usage of print media information by rural communities in Northern Namibia. Hence, the literature review starts with a discussion of the findings on access to and

usage of print media information by rural communities on the literature used during the study, followed by the themes extracted from the research objectives of this study as well those which formulated through content analysis as highlighted earlier this chapter.

These are:

- Literature review
- Conceptual framework
- Print media
- The rural setting
- Information needs
- The role of print media in Namibia
- The structure of information service provision to rural communities
- The usage patterns of print media information by rural communities
- Usage of print media information by rural communities
- Challenges of access to information by rural communities

4.12.1 Discussion on the literature used during the study

A literature review allows a researcher to develop a clear understanding of the research topic (Shaambeni, 2019). It also enables a researcher to establish what has already been researched on the issue as well as identifying the gaps and how the current research can fill those gaps (Catillo, 2009). According to Arshed & Dansen (2015), the purpose of a literature review relies on educating the researcher in the topic area and understanding previous formulated research before having the chance to introduce a new argument or

justification in the field study. In developing countries like Namibia, little research has been carried out on access to and usage of print media information by rural communities in Northern Namibia.

IPPR (2017) found out that in Namibia access to information remain significantly framed as largely a media concern. This is similar to the finding of (IPPR, 2017) in reference with (ATI, 2012) reports that “it is hoped that by demonstrating that access to information in Namibia is often a case of ‘Access Denied’. This report will act as a spur to policy-makers, decision makers and civil society activists to work together to ensure Namibia has meaningful and workable access to information law and system in place in the near future”.

The study used the Media Dependency and Agenda Setting theories in the research as its core. These two theories sought out the vital role print media plays in disseminating the readers and its effect on social change. The finding of the study reveals that this theory illustrated how the use of print media impacted on the rural communities as a result of its accessible and usage as a tool empowering them. This is similar to the findings of Gianpietro et al (2015) who found out that research on the agenda setting theory shows that the issues most frequently covered in the media are issues that people judge as the most important. Furthermore, findings from other researchers such as Littlejohn and Foss (2009), argues that “the connection in term of relationship between the emphasis that the mass media put as an issue and the media audience or the public’s reaction or attributes to such issue. Nor (2017), believes that the connection between mass media in providing information to the public is undeniably important to be examined. By

knowing the inter-media building, awareness can be generated among the public at large to be more careful in believing the information that they receive from the mass media. (The media dependency theory (MDT) asserts that in times of crisis, or uncertainty, media dependency is dramatically increased because there exists a strong need for information and advice among members of social system (Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Loveless, 2008). According to Yule (2019), it's often believed that information need may exist when there is a gap between the state of the present knowledge possessed by somebody and that which they need to deal with or solve some problems or handle a present situation. At this juncture, the finding of this study found out that rural communities in northern Namibia do have access to print media information thus they depend on media for updates. Furthermore, according to the data collected from the respondents, focus group discussion and all the headmen interviewed from all the two settlements indicated that there is a need for access to and usage of print media information by rural communities. This finding is similar to the findings of Loveless (2008) who found out that “the literature on media dependency suggests that citizens are more likely to turn to mass media as a source of reassurance and information during periods of political instability and in doing so, are more likely to be influenced by mass media.” This finding is similar to the findings of researchers such as Becker and Whitney as cited in Loveless (2008) suggests that individuals can become dependent on a particular medium for their information and that people depend on different media tend to have different pictures of the world. Numerous literatures on access to and usage of print media found out that majority of rural communities do not have access to and usage of print media.

Furthermore, Loveless opined that other research suggested that a comparative examination of consumption choice between television, newspaper and even radio provides insight into the variation of influence. The advantage of media dependency theory in relation to this study is that when media emphasises on a particular issue in the current time and it will not go away without some permanent way of addressing it. Similar findings of Loveless (2008) found out that “individual level expectations about the media use in non-Western media environments are widely acknowledged as being regionally specific. Loveless (2008), argued that at an individual level, the theory media dependency only weakly defines our expectation of ‘reliance’ on mass media.

4.12.2 Discussion on the role of print media in Namibia and its importance

Print media like any other mass media plays a very important role in shaping the attitudes, perceptions and knowledge of their audience (Karicho, 2014). This finding is similar to the findings of researchers such as Khadar and Ndiaye (2012) who found that, the general use of print media in development is to provide information, to sensitise, reach and stabilise groups of rural people. Compare to other media, print media has the advantage of being relatively cheap, as well as better to memorise because of the fact that written words or pictures stick better in mind. Additionally, it also educates and helps in transmission of culture.

Furthermore, according to the data collected from the respondents, focus group discussion and all the headmen interviewed from all the two settlements in regards with how the importance of the print media information among the rural communities of which the majority indicated that print media information is “very important”. The

findings of the study highlighted the importance of the print media information by the rural communities, supported by the responses ranging from *very important*, *important* and *not important*. This findings of the study further, indicates that many of the participants regarded print media information as “important” and only a few fraction of the participant confirmed information as not “important”.

This finding is also similar to the findings of Premanand (2012) state regarding ‘to inform’ that journalists are not just ‘reporters’. They have become news analysts who discuss the implications of important news stories. In addition to dissemination of information news media provide us information and also helps understand the new events, ideas, and policy changes. Ngutjinazo (2020) who found similar findings states that during the COVID-19 pandemic print media circulations were limited due to a lockdown to and hinders the process of information dissemination. Supporting this finding as response from the participant regarding the role of print media information and its aim to inform who stated that” information varies, whereby some are more of educational, awareness of a certain situation for instance in this case of Covid-19 pandemic, how it can spread and prevented. All sorts of information are accessible in the print media platforms”. Similar to the findings of Premanand (2012) found out that that the most common function of mass communication is entertainment. Even newspapers provide entertainment through comics, cartoons, features, cross puzzles, word jumbles etc. Furthermore, according to the data collected from the respondents, focus group discussion and all the headmen interviewed from all the two settlements indicated that the most accessed media platform were newspapers whereby The Namibian newspaper

tops with 98% of respondents pointing it as a platform achieved when accessing print media information. Similar to the finding of Premanand (2012) found out that newspapers are the most popular forms of print media. The advertiser in this case can choose from a daily newspaper to a weekly tabloid. Different types of newspapers cater to various audiences and one can select the particular category accordingly. Similar to the finding of Khadar and Ndiaye (2012) found out that “the choice of relevant print media comprises press (general and specialised), illustrated brochures, policy briefs, printed versions of web-pages and reporting on activities (overall reports, summaries, or extracts with comments”.

Despite its importance, factors such as delayed delivery, difficult language to understand, unimpressive writing and high cost affect the effectiveness of print media like magazines, while low access and lack of information about agriculture are the main factors affecting the effectiveness of newspapers (Adejo et al, 2015). Similar finding of Pour (2011) argues that, while there are quite a number of merits of the printed information, illiteracy is said to be the major concern barrier to its use by the target audience. Furthermore, according to the data collected from the respondents, focus group discussion and all the headmen interviewed from all the two settlements indicated that “language preference” plays a vital role on the choice of print media. Similar to the findings of Khadar and Ndiaye (2012), found out that the choice of print media relevant for this areas comprises press (including local language newspapers), posters, wrappers, folders, stickers, calendars, dairies and others. Similar finding of Mokwatlo (2005), found out that “in order to develop printed materials that disseminate understandable

information, one should first assess the needs and circumstances of the target audience. This findings is similar to the response from this study regarding on the language preference, respondent indicates that “since majority of the community are fluent in Oshiwambo, the use of Oshiwambo could be beneficial to many and only a few people that are fluent in English and other languages. Furthermore, in support with the above sentiment, the responded reveals that “*New Era* newspaper use to have a sister publication Kundana with enough content for Oshiwambo, we have people who use to enjoy the newspaper especially the Friday’s publication. For now there is only *New Era* which is dominated with English”.

Finding of similar attribution has been outlined by other researchers as highlighted in the literature review of this study. Khadar and Ndiaye (2012) found out that in the choice of print media, there are some essential elements that have to be taken into consideration:

- The choice of languages and language style depends on the recipients of the information
- The importance of local languages and of the links between communication strategies and programmes for functional literacy.
- Analysis of the specific needs of the various categories of recipients (taking gender into account)

4.12.3 Discussion regarding the structural information provision services in rural communities

Dasgupta et al (2014) found out that in accordance with proportion of rural population found in developing countries, literature on these countries prominence, but issues of impact, vulnerability, and adaptation are also assessed. Supporting this sentiments Dasgupta et al (2014) posits that “rural areas in developing countries are characterised by a dependence on agriculture and natural resources; high prevalence of poverty, isolation and marginality, neglect by policymakers; and lower human development.” This finding is similar to the due to Namibia’s colossal landmass and its small population, most educational institutional are located in larger cities, e.g., the capital city of Windhoek. Educational accessibility contains a barrier to citizens of rural and remote areas (Jellenz et al., 2020). This similar to finding of Kashuupulwa (2018) found that the electorate requires knowledge on how the government functions, information on decisions being made in its name, and education in order to take full advantage of the facilities and services provided. Universal access and services is a dynamic component of an emerging broadband-enabled economy and society, and a key to promoting Namibia’s social development and economic growth enabling infrastructure, content and services to reach all Namibians (MICT, 2012). According to UNESCO (2010), posits that lack of access to print media information has immensely contributed to high illiterate number of people living in rural areas. Mtega (2012) argued that if UNSECO (2010) shows that Sub-Saharan Africa had 153 million people who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills needed in everyday life. This alone could be the result of high disparities in accessibility of social services allotted to people who live in urban and

rural areas. This is similar to the findings of Olayide (1990) observes that rural people lack amenities like roads, good water supply, schools, health centres and markets. He further asserts that lack of indigenous capabilities for the acquisition and spreading of information have been creating great hindrances in many developing countries.

4.12.4 Exploring the relationship between access to and usage of print media information by rural communities

Data collected from the participants is in relation on access to and usage of print media information by rural communities reveals the findings in support with the main research objective of this study. This finding of the study found that approximately 99 frequencies, (39.3%) of the rural communities did not accessed print media information once on a weekly basis and 51 frequencies, were the responses of the respondents who accessed print media twice weekly and thus shows 20.2% response rate. This finding is similar to Kari (2010), who found out that “information utilisation starts with interaction with every kind of information (information practice); information search and retrieval; information processing and analysing; knowledge construction; information production; applying information and changes brought by information (effects of information)”. Similar finding during this study indicates that The Namibian newspaper topped the list 92 %, whereby respondents indicated it to be most useful in catering their information needs, followed by *New Era* which is the only state print media entity with 41% and Namibian Sun scooped the third position with 38% response rate. Furthermore, the finding revealed The Patriots stood out as the least useful print media platform amongst rural communities as far as their information needs is concerned. Similar findings of

Loveless (2008), indicates that information-seeking is positively correlated with all forms of media use. This provides strong evidence for the first hypothesis namely, that individual's media consumption is driven to some degree by the search of information and is an important contribution to our understanding of how individuals make sense of politics during the transition period. This is similar to the findings of Pour (2011) who found that newspaper is the most popular means of information dissemination these days. Information published in the newspaper consists of news, views, advertisements etc. and is disseminated at regular periods, namely daily and weekly. Pour, further highlighted that the purpose of newspaper is to deliver information which would be of some use to the leaders in the community and to enlighten the public about programme/project, progress. This is similar to findings of UNDP (2003) study on Access to Information shows that information availability also means little if the costs of accessing it are unreasonable and if the information is not 'user-friendly'. Moreover, data collected from most respondents also confirmed that "some print media information like newspapers you cannot be accessed the same day" or get finished from the outlets due to a high demand and the content.

4.12.5 Understanding the notion of print media as a medium tool for disseminating information

While there has not been enough research on access to and usage of print media information as by Namibian rural communities, as medium for disseminating information, this study forces us to challenge our understanding of media use in communities where to access to information is lacking. This finding is however

consistent with the findings by (Eilders, 2015) who posits that print media represents the core of most media systems because it is considered to fulfil the media functions in democratic public spheres particularly well. It is also consistent with findings by Loveless (2008) stated that newspapers have been suggested to provide higher levels of confidence. An essential difference may be based format differences, that is, informational quality and intellectuality. This finding is similar to Premanand (2012) who found out that “most of the media are used as vehicles of promotion and persuasion. Good services, ideas, persons, places, events-the range of things that are advertised through mass media is endless”. An Evidence from Loveless, on the question ‘*on which the print media platform accessed?*’ Indicates, that, “individual media’s choices are also associated with individually held characteristics. Social and economic variables provide strong clues as to an individual’s position in the social structure (education, income, and residence) and individual’s traits that may shape their own media habits.” This is similar to the findings of Premanand (2012) who found out that advertisers and advertising agencies analyse these features and depending upon the nature of the message and the target audience, choose where (in which media) and how (with what frequency) the message should be placed. In relation to this “communities need to access print media platform to access such information advertised”. This is similar to findings of Khadar and Ndiaye (2012) who found that “print media can be integrated with different media. The content of print media can be used for radio broadcasts (the idea behind “Spore”/audio). A few of the participants responded by indicating the following responses “access to internet could be a substitute to print media information”. This finding is similar to Ngutjinazo (2020) who found out that

Windhoek Observer will continue with online publication since it remain with the print media audience. In regarding to this Khadar and Ndiaye (2012) emphasised that there are some exceptional opportunities provided by ICTs (for posting printed materials on the web, sending printed material by e-mail, scanning and distributing documents)”.

According to Adejo et al (2015), print media widen the scope of communication, it is cheap and people can afford to buy and read them at their conveniences, it is a permanent medium in that messages are imprinted permanently with high storage value, which makes them suitable for reference and research. This is similar to the finding of Shaambeni (2019) who states that it is evident that the preference of a certain format is determined by the experience with that particular format. This means that, if the users have a positive encounter with print resources, they will use it more frequently.

4.12.6 Ascertaining the challenges encountered by rural communities on accessing print media information.

Data collected from participants relating the challenges that the rural communities experienced in accessing and using print media information in their settlements in order to fulfil their information needs. Majority of the respondents strongly responded by stating that “late delivery information”. Some of the responses that emerged strongly are as follows: “language barrier” while some indicates that print media information was “unaffordable”. This is similar to findings of Dasgupta et al, (2014) found out that in developing countries adaption can be linked to other development initiatives aiming for poverty reduction or improvement of rural areas, and “low regrets” measures to respond to current variability can shift the trajectories from disaster-focused to longer term

vulnerability reduction. This is similar to the findings of an interviewee; found out that “with us there is a little bit of a struggle but with the history of our Bantu education system, thus, we managed to grasp something like reading skill was acquired”. In support to the above findings, print media need to consider the language choice and preferences of its target audience. This finding is similar to the response of an interviewee who responded that a number of people are not fluent in the used language and it discouraging the readers to follow attentively. Despite that there are few pages written in Oshiwambo, justice could be served if they publishers make it 50/50 (50 percent in English and 50 in Oshiwambo). An interviewee further stated that such kind of challenges limits rural communities from accessing services they need the most in order to make informed decision. When the focus group discussions were queried on challenges faced by their communities, regarding with accessibility of print media majority refer it a concerned. All members from both groups responded by reaffirming that “there is no accessibility of newspapers in the settlement at all and this is the major challenge.” Another respondent further suggested that “we need business people to start selling newspapers in the settlement.” These findings are similar to the findings of Karichu (2018) who found out that rural communities don’t have access to services as their counterparts in urban areas. The finding of the study revealed during focus group discussion where a participant reaffirms that “information could be accessed on notice boards at designated points but poses a threat of being removed by an unknown passer-by. This, very often deprive other rural community members to have access to such information timely and make informed decisions”. Similar findings from the focus group discussion indicates since Okalongo still at a settlement level, the growth of the

settlement contributes to extend that you can hardly access today's newspaper or maybe there is nothing at all (newspapers are finished) it is a challenge. The participant further strongly reaffirm that other issue, is the distance to access the outlets, if you don't have a transport to the outlets then you are missing out. Availability is also a concern. Similarly to these, IPPR (2009) also found that accessibility of print media in rural communities is affected by remoteness or literacy level and high unemployment rate.

Data collected from participant in regarding the accessibility to print media established that all the government officials and civil servants asked during the focus group discussion had access to print media information. This finding is similar to the findings of Remmert (2019) who stated that "it can also be argued that newspapers primarily represent the views of higher income groups and elites since these segments of society make up the majority of the readership." This finding is however, consistent with the finding by Mwalukasa (2013) who posits that print media are good at transmitting information, however, they can be relatively expensive and the timing of relevant information can present challenges. Meanwhile, in contradiction to the above finding, the study reveal that majority of rural community members had challenges in accessing information. Majority of the respondents responded that print media information found at outlets is "inaccessible". This finding is consistent to finding by Sambo (2015) who states that the circulation and distribution must be prompt and adequate whatsoever. This is similar to findings Mutambo (2014) found out that despite the establishment of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) in Namibia to harmonise government information management under one umbrella, communication

remains painstakingly uncoordinated and fragmented across government institutions, offices, Ministries and Agencies in Namibia. Similar finding of Kashuupulwa (2019) found that the former Minister of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) Tjekero Tweya indicated that his ministry is working towards an access to information legislation that would ensure that government divulge to the media and the public. However, the MICT argued that it is doing its best in addressing access to information, through an Access to Information Bill that was passed lately in 2022. This will enable its staff to promote access to information Act and make it popular to all citizens.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented the outcomes of the study, described data in terms of charts and graphs variables of the sample of the instruments used in the study. Moreover, it reviewed literature on various ranges of print media information platforms, their accessibility and usage by rural communities. The literature further outlined that print media information has a vital impact on the dependency of access to and usage of print media information by rural communities' livelihood. Therefore, this review assessed the access and usage of print media information by rural communities for decision-making and to improve social life. Hence, from a media platform perspective – the assessment examined *The Namibian*, *New Era*, *Namibian Sun* and *Kundana Newspapers* as the utmost leading media platforms to expose to current news, acquire general knowledge, improves quality of life and to feed their information needs from a rural perspective. It further revealed from the previous literature on print media information assessed that the study commissioned print longevity, as a source of information and it was relevant to

the study. Therefore, in the language of media dependency theory, rural communities do turn to print media to access to satisfy their information needs. In the event of free access to print media information by rural communities, this could be achieved by realising the dream of establishing rural information centres in each local constituency.

The findings indicate that even though it's a constitutional right for every citizen to have right to access to information, majority of the rural communities are limited on access to and usage of print media information in Namibia. Despite the availability of different avenues to access media platforms in the settlements, most of the rural communities hardly accesses print media information as their counterparts in urban areas. Reason for relying on print as source of information were highlighted such as for updates, general knowledge, job opportunities, tertiary information, sharing of information and updates on local and international news as well as on current affairs. The study further, discovered that respondents encountered numerous challenges such as no access to information at all, unaffordable information, late delivery of information, and language barrier. Furthermore, respondents also indicated that in most cases print media information received while out-dated and not adequate for all customers. The next chapter highlights the summary of findings, the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study investigated the access to and usage of print media information by rural communities: A case study of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in Northern Namibia. The chapter produces a summary of findings of the study, and in conclusion gives possible recommendations for further research on similar topics. These recommendations are not necessary only for the two abovementioned settlements but for the whole country that stand a great chance of benefiting from the access to and usage of print media information by rural communities. This chapter of the study summarises the research finding which responds to the research questions which are:

- Do you have access print media information in your area?
- Where do you access print media information in your area?
- For what purpose do you use the print media information?
- What challenges do you face in accessing print media information?

5.2 Summary of the study

As aforementioned, this study investigated the access to and usage of print media information by rural communities. This study could be regarded as still progress, for the reason that being in progress in a sense that Okalongo and Ongenga settlements are simple small settlements in the assessment of access to and usage of print media

information by rural communities; hence, it is a tip of an iceberg the actual state of affairs among Namibian rural communities.

From the research questions perspective, the study found out that there is indeed a need of access to and usage of print media information among rural communities of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements. However, the limitation varies from having access to and definite usage of print media information. The print media platforms that were common among these rural communities were newspapers and notice board information.

The print media information has a great opportunity not only to embrace the culture of reading and acquire knowledge but also to promote the habit of sharing of information amongst communities. Similarly, from the interactions with some of the respondents, the study found out that even though most of the communities can access print information, they have different types of information needs. Majority would like to access as many media platforms as they could but such information arrives late, this lead to access out-dated information or when due dates for certain application already passed. Those who could access and make use of the print media easily are the working class, beyond this, they could pass the print media information to those could not afford or might not able to access the print media due to overstock or could not access it at all.

All the research questions were developed in conjunction with research objectives. Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and questionnaires were the instruments used during data collection processes. The study used mixed method approach:

Quantitative data collected in this research were coded and then analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and descriptive statistics were yielded. The researcher saturated themes that came out from the analysis, such themes became a foundation for discussion. Qualitative data were extensively analysed from a qualitative perspective and crucial information was extracted from what the participants discussed. The content analysis is highlighted in a simple way that can precisely be interpreted by any reader anticipating to grasp into the discussion. The standard of analysis targeted at compiling evidence relevant to make appropriate conclusions for this research. Information was integrated into demographic characteristics such as age, sex, educational background, economic status, print media information accessibilities, use of print media, frequencies of accessing print media information, media platforms accessible, avenues to access print media information, challenges in accessing print media information and possible way of addressing such challenges. Discussed below, are conclusions and summary from the study findings.

5.3 Conclusion of the study

In the conclusion section, the researcher should briefly summarise the main findings of the study and indicate how the objectives of the study were met (Thomas, 2013). In support of the above findings, it was evident that access to and usage of print media information played a major role to the livelihood of rural communities. Therefore, the conclusion section of this research is organised according to the research objectives: The following sub-questions help to understand the necessity of access to print media information and usage with responses from the respondents.

- To assess which print media information platforms was accessed;
- Assess the avenues through which they accessed this information;
- To examine for what purpose the acquired information, is used for;
- Investigate the possible challenges faced in accessing print media information, and
- The come up with the best solution to address these challenges.

The findings show that there is a need for the Namibian government to be part of the solutions in the promotion of access to and usage of print media information by rural communities. However, timely accessible and usage of print media information is a major concern to these communities, the findings show that rural communities access various media platforms from different avenues and for different purposes. Several factors that are influenced the choice and purpose of print media uses, determined by the individual information needs, age, and socioeconomic status. The results of this study show that both learners/students and teachers or those in the academia sphere use print media information for academic and non-academic reasons. Print media information has become part and parcel of rural communities' daily lives, and for daily updates most of the communities indicated that they need to access to print media information for current affairs, local and international updates. They depend on print media information for a number of reasons such as job opportunities, business information, health, social life, education, entertainment and for farming related information. Since all of these aspects are interlinked with each other, hence, Fes (2011-2021) "it may therefore be

necessary for the media's roles to extend beyond their usual responsibilities in democratic or democratising societies". Moreover, the access to and usage of print media information limited accessibility had a negative impact on rural communities daily lives. For instance, some rural community members use to get the print media information very late or out-dated information. This could result in missing out the due dates for submitting their employment applications or admission to tertiary institutions. If the due date has been missed, its opportunity denied. After reading various print media information, a number of rural community members tend to "share key information with their friends and families". Media is not immune to spreading fake news and sometimes they manufacture, it. The finding also shows the intersections between social media and traditional media (Fes, 2011-2021). This study reveals that respondents continue to be equipped with factual information and avoid from "receiving misinformation or rumours" about a certain situation or subject matter. Constituency councillors and headmen also alluded that "misinformation is common in their communities, and spreading false information can easily reach masses of those who have no access to print media information at their disposal."

Concurring with the above-mentioned is Fes (2011-2021) posits that "for instance, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown how quickly the media's sustainability can be threatened during a crisis... likewise, how easily legislation to restrict the media's operation and access to information by audiences can be deployed during the crisis". The plea to the above quote is that Namibian rural communities need assisted in terms of provision to access and usage of print media information to make informed decisions.

The results further indicate that projects envisioned at raising awareness on Access to Information exist and hopefully will take off the ground spearheaded by the Information Commissioner throughout the country as stipulated in the Access to Information Bill of 2022. Minimal distribution of some print media information throughout the country, exist in the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology but moving at snail pace due to budget constraints. It is worth noting that the government assist initiative of Access to Information for rural the communities, should be addressed to enable residents accessing and use print media information to be well informed, keep updated, acquire knowledge and skills, receive relevant information in order to make informed decisions.

5.4 Recommendations

Recommendations are arguably the most important part of the analysis phase. It provides specific interventions or strategies for best action of the situation and constraints identified in the research paper. Hence, the populations of this study were rural communities, government officials, civil servants, constituency councillors, and headman. Recommendations extracted from this research can be used by offices, line ministries, agencies and print media companies. To put this into considerations, the following recommendations are deem fit to above-mentioned stakeholders:

5.4.1 Recommendations to government

- a) Ministry of Information and Communication Technology should establish information centres and introduce access to and usage of print media information

for rural communities to easily access and utilise the information that is vital at constituency level.

- b) Ministry of Information and Communication Technology should sensitise the importance of information amongst rural communities and set up framework that will enhance the adoption the culture of reading amongst rural communities in Namibian settlements.
- c) Ministry of Urban and Rural Development should establish a joint venture with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology employ staff responsible for information disseminations at the grass-root level, specifically in rural areas.
- d) Rural communities need to be trained on best way to access information with efficiency to reduce time consuming on searching information and go to a specific information corner at their information centres.
- e) Information officers stationed at the information centres should monitor and assist rural communities to access and use print media information accordingly. For example, information about health should be located on a Health Information Corner at all centres but not mixed up Education Information Corner or Business.
- f) Ministry of Information and Communication Technology should make print media information machineries real affordable by partnering with print media companies to subsidise the cost involved.

- g) Both Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and Ministry of Urban and Rural Development should make print media information accessible to rural communities, especially to unemployed youth and pensioners.
- h) Information Officers and Media Officers through all line ministries should promote public awareness of the right to access to and usage of print media information by educating and training the public on Access to Information Act and make it well-known. This can be achieved through workshops and information sharing and regional engagements.
- i) The government of the Republic of Namibia should come up with drastic measures to address the existing challenges facing rural communities in accessing print media information.

5.4.2 Recommendations to media organisations

- a) Media organisations should develop materials for promotion of access to information in local languages for a better understanding by residents.
- b) They should make such print media machineries accessible at settlements' level.
- c) The media organisations should develop an economical strategy between line ministries, agencies, offices and companies that will facilitate the process of disseminating information on slots. Once implemented, rural communities can access and use print media information during those slots without any delay.
- d) Media organisations should develop materials for promotion of access to information incorporated cultural oriented programmes as part of access to print media information for a better understanding by residents.

5.4.3 Recommendations to traditional authorities

- Rural communities are advised to make use of the Information Centres in search of vital information for updates, such as farming information, business and funding opportunities, job opportunities, tertiary information, health information as well as local and international news updates

5.5 Suggestion for further research

- While the research distinguishes that access to and usages of print media information have influences on other socio-class at rural setting and for this research limited itself solely to settlements. Constantly, a similar study can be conducted on an advanced level.
- Further study can be conducted in settlements if there is any that studied or researched the access to and usage of print media by rural communities for comparison of benefits or fruitful results to settlements that did not undertake the study on access to and usage of print media information.
- Hence, the study solely focused only on the two settlements Okalongo in the Omusati region and Ongenga settlement in the Ohangwena region, as opposite to other similar settlements in other regions or geographical zones. Studies of a similar nature can still be carried out in settlements inside and outside of Omusati and Ohangwena regions.
- More research is on access to information vulnerability, to identify the most vulnerable areas, social classes, populations and it should incorporate research

methodological questions like conceptualisation of assessment tools, policy contextualisation, vulnerability, and development trajectories.

5.6 Final conclusion

This case study of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements on access to and usage of print media information by rural communities in Northern Namibia admits that access to and usage of print media by rural communities is lacking. Equally, most of the respondents still accessed and used print media information at a slow (frequency). Moreover, the study has explored the importance of having a broader understanding on access to and usage of print media information among rural communities in order to make informed decision based on the information acquired from different media platforms. Hence, various strong points and challenges raised by the participants assisted the researcher to draft different recommendations, which might be used to remedy the situation regarding with access to and usage of print media information. Lastly, despite this study has joined the list of existing research conducted by other researchers, there are still room for other plight to be investigated on a subject matter of access to and usage of print media from a rural setting and other settlements in other parts of Namibia. Therefore, such plights were indicated in the suggestions for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FHSS /495/2019 Date: 30 September, 2019

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

Title of Project: Access To And Usage Of Print Media Information By Rural Communities: A Case Study Of Okalongo And Ongenga Settlements In Northern Namibia

Student: SIMEON MARTIN

Student Number: 218218597

Supervisor(s): *Dr F. Mwilima*

Take note of the following:

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

HREC wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. E. de Villiers: HREC Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "E. de Villiers", written over a horizontal line.

Ms. P. Claassen: HREC Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. Claassen", written over a horizontal line.

Appendix: 2 Research permission letter – Omusati Regional Council (Okalongo Settlement)



PERMISSION LETTER TO CHIEF REGIONAL OFFICER

19 November 2019

The Chief Regional Officer
Omusati Regional Council
Private Bag 12024
Outapi

Dear Chief Regional Officer

Re: Application for a Permission to conduct a research on Rural Communities in the Omusati Region.

My name is Simeon Martin a student (Student No. 218218597) pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Media Studies at the University of Namibia. I am planning to conduct research on rural communities in the Omusati Region with the approved title "*Access to and Usage of Print Media Information by Rural Communities: A Case Study of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in northern Namibia*".

For the purpose of this study, the study will focus on rural communities in the Omusati Region. Residents at the different places will be requested to complete a questionnaire anonymously. The completion of the questionnaires by rural communities, focused group discussions with the government officials, interviews Headmen and should be

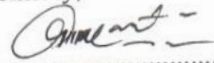
done in their spare time, thus the normal work duties will not be interrupted. The completion of the questionnaires will also be on a voluntary basis. It will thus remain the choice of the rural communities whether he/she will complete the questionnaire.

Since this study will involve Settlements, I need to ask the Regional's permission to distribute the questionnaires to rural communities as well as interviews with government officials and headmen in the mentioned region. As part of the requirements for Master's students at UNAM, I will be required to complete a research project and prepare a report. The data will also be used to publish a scientific article in an academic journal.

I attach a copy of my research proposal to this letter. I am also available, should you have any questions contact me at 0812001816 / 0811563728. I would highly appreciate it if I could get your feedback on email: smartin@live.co.za or Dr. Fred Mwilima (Research Supervisor): fmwilima@unam.na or on 081 1271961.

I want to thank you in advance for your input in my research work and hope sincerely that you will grant me permission to continue with the research.

Kindly,



.....
Mr. Simeon Martin (Student: University of Namibia)

Appendix 3: Research permission letter – Ohangwena regional council (Ongenga Settlement)



PERMISSION LETTER TO CHIEF REGIONAL OFFICER

06 March 2020

The Chief Regional Officer
Ohangwena Regional Council
Private Bag 88011
Eenhana

Dear Chief Regional Officer

Re: Application for a Permission to conduct a research on Access and Usage of Print Media Information by Rural Communities in the Omusati and Ohangwena Regions.

My name is Simeon Martin a student (Student No. 218218597) pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Media Studies at the University of Namibia. I am planning to conduct research on rural communities in the Omusati Region with the approved title "*Access to and Usage of Print Media Information by Rural Communities: A Case Study of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in northern Namibia*".

For the purpose of this study, the study will focus on rural communities in the Omusati Region. Residents at the different places will be requested to complete a questionnaire anonymously. The completion of the questionnaires by rural communities, focused group discussions with the government officials, interviews Headmen and should be done in their spare time, thus the normal work duties will not be interrupted.

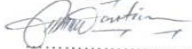
The completion of the questionnaires will also be on a voluntary basis. It will thus remain the choice of the rural communities whether he/she will complete the questionnaire.

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I attach a copy of my research proposal to this letter. I am also available, should you have any questions contact me at 0812001816 / 0811563728. I would highly appreciate it if I could get your feedback on email: smartin@live.co.za or Dr. Fred Mwilima (Research Supervisor): fmwilima@unam.na or on 081 1271961.

I want to thank you in advance for your input in my research work and hope sincerely that you will grant me permission to continue with the research.

Kindly,



.....
Mr. Simeon Martin (Student: University of Namibia)

Appendix 4: Research permission letter from Ohangwena Regional Council



Appendix 5: Informed consent form

Dear Participant,

My name is Simeon Martin a student (Student No. 218218597) pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Media Studies at the University of Namibia. I am currently conducting research on rural communities in the Omusati Region with the approved title "*Access to and Usage of Print Media Information by Rural Communities: A Case Study of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in northern Namibia*".

It would really be appreciated if you could participate in this study; no names will be used, all information shared in this study will only be used for academic purposes. You will in no way be prejudiced or negatively affected if you decide not to participate or withdraw from this study.

Kindly sign below as an indication that you are willingly participating and were in no way coerced into participation. Please assist in submitting a truthful reflection of your thoughts, experiences and feelings.

Thank you for your participation and please submit completed questionnaire to the secretary. If you have any further questions or queries feel free to contact Mr Simeon Martin (0812001816, 0811563728) or Dr. F. Mwilima (Researcher Supervisor) at fmwilima@unam.na (061-2063638).

.....
Participant's signature:

Appendix 6: Permission letter to the chief regional officer – Omusati region



PERMISSION LETTER TO CHIEF REGIONAL OFFICER

19 November 2019

The Chief Regional Officer
Omusati Regional Council
Private Bag 12024

Outapi

Dear Chief Regional Officer

Re: Application for a Permission to conduct a research on Rural Communities in the Omusati Region.

My name is Simeon Martin a student (Student No. 218218597) pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Media Studies at the University of Namibia. I am planning to conduct research on rural communities in the Omusati Region with the approved title "*Access to and Usage of Print Media Information by Rural Communities: A Case Study of Okalongo and Ongenga Settlements in northern Namibia*".

For the purpose of this study, the study will focus on rural communities in the Omusati Region. Residents at the different places will be requested to complete a questionnaire anonymously. The completion of the questionnaires by rural communities, focused group discussions with the government officials, interviews Headmen and should be

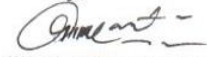
done in their spare time, thus the normal work duties will not be interrupted. The completion of the questionnaires will also be on a voluntary basis. It will thus remain the choice of the rural communities whether he/she will complete the questionnaire.

Since this study will involve Settlements, I need to ask the Regional's permission to distribute the questionnaires to rural communities as well as interviews with government officials and headmen in the mentioned region. As part of the requirements for Master's students at UNAM, I will be required to complete a research project and prepare a report. The data will also be used to publish a scientific article in an academic journal.

I attach a copy of my research proposal to this letter. I am also available, should you have any questions contact me at 0812001816 / 0811563728. I would highly appreciate it if I could get your feedback on email: smartin@live.co.za or Dr. Fred Mwilima (Research Supervisor): fmwilima@unam.na or on 081 1271961.

I want to thank you in advance for your input in my research work and hope sincerely that you will grant me permission to continue with the research.

Kindly,


.....

Mr. Simeon Martin (Student: University of Namibia)

Appendix 7: Questionnaire for the public

Section A: Demographic information

Sex

- Male
- Female

Age

- 15-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 60 and above

Marital status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

Employment status

- Unemployed
- Employed
- Self Employed

- Pensioner
- Student
- Others specify -----

Highest qualification

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Degree
- MA
- PhD
- Others specify -----

Nationality

- Namibian
- Non- Namibian

Section B: Access to Information (Tick the appropriate answer)

Do you access print media information?

- Yes
- No

Which media platform do you have access to?

- The Namibian
- New Era*

- Kundana
- Namibian Sun
- Informante
- Republikein
- Confidante
- The Patriot
- Southern Times
- The Villager
- Notice Board
- Windhoek Observer
- Other (Specify) -----

Where do you access print media information in your area?

- Community Hall
- Government Offices
- Shops
- Families and friends
- Headmen
- Others, specify -----

What language is used by the print media?

- Oshiwambo
- Afrikaans
- English

- Others (specify) -----

What is your language preference?

- Oshiwambo
- Afrikaans
- English
- Others (specify) -----

How frequent do you access these media platforms?

- No access at all
- Daily
- Once weekly
- Twice weekly
- Thrice weekly
- Four time weekly
- Five times weekly
- Six times weekly
- Seven times weekly

How important is it for you to access print media information?

- Not important
- Important
- Very important

Section C: The use of acquired information

For what purpose do you use the print media information?

Does it meet your information needs?

- Yes
- No

Does the information acquired improve your quality of life?

- Yes
- No

Specify how it improves your quality of life?

Is the information acquired important to you?

- Not important

- Important
- Very important
- Others (specify) -----

Section D: The challenges in accessing information

What challenges do you face in accessing print media information?

- Information is inaccessible
- Unaffordable
- Language barrier
- Information is old
- Late delivery of information
- Others (specify) -----

What do you think should be done to improve access to information?

How does lack of access to information affect your daily life?

Appendix 7: Interview guide for the headmen

Research Title: Access to and usage of print media information by rural communities:
A Case Study of Okalongo and Ongenga settlements in northern Namibia

Section A: Access to information

1. Where do you access print media information in your area?
2. Which print media information do you have access to in your area?
3. What is your language preference for accessing print media information?
4. How frequent do you access these media platforms?
5. Why is it important for you to access print media information?

Section B: The use of acquired information

1. For what purpose do you use the acquired print media information?
2. Does it meet your information needs?
3. Which type of information is useful to you?
4. Does the acquired information improve your quality of life?
5. How often do you make use of the acquired information in your daily life?

Section C: The challenges in accessing information

1. What challenges do you face in accessing print media information?
2. What do you think should be done to improve access to information?
3. How frequent do you experience these challenges in your area?
4. What could be the best solution to address these challenges?
5. Any other challenges related to access and usage of print media information in your areas?

Appendix 8: Focus group discussion (FGD) for government officials (Chief regional officers, councillors and civil servants)

Section A: Access to information

1. Do you have access to print media information?
2. How frequent do you access print media information?
3. What type of print media platforms do you have access to?
4. Why is it important for you to access print media information?

Section B: The use of acquired information

1. What do you use print media information for?
2. Does it meet your information needs?
3. What value does print media information add to your life and official duties

Section C: The challenges in accessing information

1. What challenges do you face in accessing print media information?
2. How do you deal with the challenges?
3. How frequently do you face these challenges?
4. What do you think are the solutions to mitigate these challenges?

