



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK AND WHATSAPP AS SOURCES OF
NEWS AMONG YOUTH IN KATIMA MULILO, NAMIBIA**

BY

ARON MUSHAUUKWA

STUDENT NUMBER: 201003252

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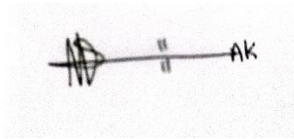
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DECLARATION

I, *Aron Mushaukwa*, hereby declare that the work contained in the thesis entitled: examining the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo, Namibia

, is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university or higher education institution for the award of a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AM', written over a horizontal line.

Signature:

Date: 9 July 2024

I, *Dr Hugh Ellis*, hereby declare that the work contained in the thesis entitled: Examining the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo, Namibia as under my supervision.

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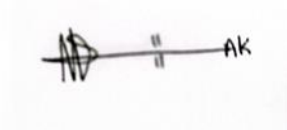
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I, Aron Mushaukwa, being a candidate for the degree of Master of Journalism and Media Technology accept the requirements of the Namibia University of Science and Technology relating to the retention and use of theses deposited in the Library and Information Services.

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ABSTRACT

The influence and impact of social media as sources of news can no longer be ignored. None should turn a blind eye to how it has captured the imagination of young people, who are the majority users of social media. It is crucial to understand that social media has transformed the landscape of information dissemination. Offering unprecedented access, speed, and interaction on a global scale. It has also democratised access to knowledge, empowering individuals to seek and share information instantly across borders and culture. This study explored the influence of Facebook & WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi Region of Namibia. The study found out that social media evokes the feelings of young people and opens their mind to wider understanding of things. Facebook in particular, allows them to participate in deliberations and discussions, and to share their opinions on various news issues. The data collected and analysed indicate that young people in Katima Mulilo see Facebook and WhatsApp as vital sources of news, connecting, networking and communication, and breaks barriers as it is faster and provides instant news regardless of where one is. The study recommends that media organisations should actively engage with young people on their social media pages, by proactively providing access to news at all times. The study further recommends to local news outlets to open WhatsApp channels in order to provide unhindered link to their Facebook pages and websites.

Key Words: Social Media; Facebook; WhatsApp; Sources of News; Young People; Katima Mulilo.

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Background the study

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the content of the study which was conducted. Firstly, it highlights and outlines the background of the study. The secondly it pounds and elaborates on the problem statement, which played a pivotal role in the need to conduct this study. Furthermore, it discusses the significance of the study and why it will be useful other academics and stakeholders.

1.1 Background

There is a widespread perception that most young prefer to get news from social media, but little research have been conducted in Namibia to assert this perception, perhaps because as traditional media are still considered by many as still powerful source of information. Ravasi, Etter, & Colleoni, (2019) . Therefore, more locally research based should be conducted to assert social media as the leading news source (Shen, 2021). There have been local studies conducted locally on the consumption of fake news among the youth (Hangula, 2021). However, this study went ‘the extra mile’ and investigated and examined how young people in Katima Mulilo actively use social media as source of news. Furthermore, the study explored how young people go about selecting sources of news on social media. The way how young people in Katima Mulilo use social media as a source of local news was solely investigated and interrogated. Kostovska, Raats, Donders, & Ballon, (2021) Outlines how interviewees’ news consumption through social networks has become very frequent. However, there is room for further research on the impact social media play particularly among the youth, as the main source of information (Park, Fisher, Flew, & Dulleck, 2020). Subsequently, the study interrogated how social media particularly Facebook and WhatsApp have indeed become the leading source of news among the youth in Katima Mulilo. Consequently, the study also investigated to what extent young people in the town of Katima Mulilo still use traditional media to access news. For instance, how frequently do they listen to radio, or how often do they buy newspapers to read news or sit in front of a television and watch news. Consequently, the study explored how young people see the future with Social Media being at the forefront of News Consumption.

1.2 Problem Statement

The use of social media gained momentum in the decade of the 2000s, and with the introduction of smart phones, the use of social media has even been made easier as social media users can access news at the tip of their fingers. Social media has brought a new dimension when it comes to news consumption, but it is also perceived that it has negatively affected traditional media such as newspapers, radio and

television. However, it appears there is lack of understanding, belief and recognition that Social Media is the way to go, many organisations still want to stick to doing things the way there were done in the past, they would rather print newspapers to sell in stores. Blevins & Ragozzin (2019) agrees with this thinking, arguing that the rise of social media is in fact consolidating and strengthening the impact of traditional media. Lastly, they advise scholars to be cautious when they approach the assumption that social media is introducing more vigorous dynamism in media industry. Nevertheless, while this researcher agrees that caution should be adopted while dealing with the assumption that the rise of social media is weakening traditional media. This study rather seeks to interrogate how the rise of social media as sources of news should not be ignored. Newman (2009), asserts that there is a need for mainstream media organisations to respond to the wave of participatory and social media, which is undeniably interrelated with a momentous historic change in control nearing singular customers. As a result, the influence of social media as sources of news among youth should not be underestimated. Its rise in the present world has prompted a lot of research to understand this phenomenon and the influence it has on its users. Nghitongo (2019), agrees that newspapers in the country are progressively embracing social media, by using various platforms that are aligned with the telecommunication infrastructure in Namibia. Further arguing that there is a need for media organization to create awareness on social media platforms they have adopted, in order to attract a wider audience. The researcher further argues that notwithstanding the springiness maneuver that social media has brought. Media practitioners are now faced with challenges of contending with citizen journalists, forcing them to be more innovative and creative in their writing. Internationally other scholars have been studying this phenomenon and its influence on its users (AL-Rawi, 2019; Cabañes, 2020; Nelson, 2021).

Many are turning a blind eye on this influence and how it has capture young people, who are the majority users of social media, their focus has been on how social media networks can be a provider of inaccurate information and bias this view point was supported by (Lee & Goh 2011). Other researchers also raised concerns on the use of social media, as a source of news (Granskogen & Gulla 2017; Tandoc, 2014), they indicated that social media has always been under fire for its effects on the calibre of news information, they also advised that social media users should pause and partake in activities that enhances their physical and mental well-being. This attribute further support that many people are either not aware of the influence social media has or that they tend to ignore the visible impact that social media has.

There is a need to bridge the gap between the older generation and the new generation when it comes to sources of news and consumption. While the older generation still prefer to get news from traditional media like TV, Radio and Newspapers. There is a great need to recognise that the digital age has arrived

and is here to stay, this was supported by (Berick, 2024) who's study has shown that a large percentage of people in the United State get news information from various social media platforms. Since social media is always available to us, staying informed is simple, however Berick's research focused on the problem of people relying on social media as a news source, he stressed on how reliable the news can be when everyone can post anything, ideas, opinions and facts and referred to them as snowballed around the web. Thus supporting that it would be wise for the media outlets to stick to the traditional ways of producing news. The global research gives birth to the carrying out of this research to evaluate how young people in Katima Mulilo select news sources on facebook and examining the influences of these medias as sources of News among the Youth.

Complementary, this study looked at how young people as consumers of news on social media, particularly Facebook are influenced when it comes to news consumption. The study also addressed the issue of citizen journalism and investigated to what extent young trust them. The study also interrogated young people to understand how they get their news and platforms are they actively using and available. The study focused on the youth in Katima Mulilo to understand the influence of social media as source of news.

1.3 Research Objectives

Objective

- The main objective is to examine the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo.

Sub objectives

- To evaluate how young people in Katima Mulilo select news sources on Facebook.
- To investigate how the youth in Katima Mulilo interpret news on Facebook.
- To describe how young people in Katima Mulilo assess the trustworthiness of news on Facebook and WhatsApp.
- To investigate how youth perceive the effects of social media on their attitudes and behaviours.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study makes a meaningful contribution to traditional media locally and international, to probe and visualise the potential presented by social media when it comes to news consumption. It also seeks to further inform media organization the relevance of using social media to share news in the digital era.

Furthermore, the study contributes immensely to the debate that young people are actively involved on social media. It also brings a closure and presents evidence that young people no longer have ample time to listen to news on radio or TV frequently. Facebook is one of the platforms where users receive immediate notifications about breaking news from all around the world, along with recurring prompts on our computers, phones, and tablets. Due to the increased visibility into concerns in distant countries and 24-hour news cycles, major events can quickly spread from one end of the world to the other. Never before has society been more aware of global issues, yet this unprecedented visibility could also overwhelm us as citizens of a world that is becoming more and more interconnected. Additionally, as people have grown more interested in using digital platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, to receive news and other information, the print business has suffered greatly over time. Consequently, the study informs other stake holders who would like to engage young people, why they should maximise the potential of social media. Additionally, this study adds a regional perspective on the use of social media as the main source of news in the country and the world at large. This study also hopes to advice news organisations, corporate institutions, government organisations and many other institutions to be informed about the positive impact of using social media to disseminate information.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The first chapter lays the foundation and discussed the background, the objective and the significance of the study. This chapter goes an extra mile to review various literatures on social media and its influence on its user's particularly young people, when it comes to news consumption. The chapter will discuss various definitions of social media, it will also discuss how social media particularly Facebook is used by young people as source of news. It will also minimally discuss how young people select news sources on Facebook. Consequently, the chapter will pillar on scholarly work written by other scholars on this peculiar phenomenon under investigation.

2.1 Literature review

2.1.1 Background information on the use of Social Media as source of news

The use of social media as the main source of information has undeniably risen in recent years, particularly from 2010 to date. Boczkowski, Mitchelstein & Matassie (2018) argue that news will always find people on social media. They further draw a conclusion that there is a strong bond between technology and content, as anywhere and anytime coordinates, derivate information routines, and increasingly mediate sociability. Researchers have also unravelled and outlined the now existing bond between technology and information consumption (Wada, 2018). Wagner & Boczkowski (2019) asserts that social media continues to grow and have become the leading platform for content sharing and news consumption particularly among the youth. Luo, & Harrison (2019) points out another aspect that as the use of social media increases, there has also been an upsurge of citizen journalists now make use of social media as a power weapon and try to compete with professional journalists to share news to share information. Numerous studies were carried out to determine how new media affect traditional media as a result of the emergence of online information and the ensuing growth of news sources that go well beyond the traditional media (Zhang, 2024; Onumah, 2019; Elegu & Ozad, 2018). Several studies predict that if audience participation became the norm, the culture of passive audiences, or sit back and be told, would quickly fade. On the other hand, others concede that the proliferation of social media platforms enabling amateurs or non-professionals to produce media content is seriously jeopardizing the survival and impact of traditional media (Guanah, Aizek & Ojo, 2019). Others view new media as a constructive way to add to the conversation since it benefits the traditional media production value chain by moving away from the industrial production of content and toward a more collaborative engagement of communities of participants. Meaning it is imperative for media organisation to shift from just sharing news and move towards active engagement with consumers. Therefore, social media can complement various kinds of

traditional media. News consumers can comment on stories posted on social media platforms like Facebook instantly, enabling them to take part in public discourse. As such it is imperative that media organisations monitor these comments to see how they can address various questions arising from stories, and if needed provide clarity to the audience. Since the younger generation is heavily involved in traditional media activities through social media, new media tends to expand the reach of traditional media to specialized audiences.

While Wada (2017) highlighted the difficulties in authenticating material included or allowed into conventional media programming from social media without compromising professional standards, Wang, Zhang & Zhang (2012), different scholars see the widespread use of new media as posing a threat to conventional media. From a number of perspectives, it is evidently insufficient to associate journalism with the dissemination of factual information and leaving matters of opinion and interpretation up to the discretion of others. First of all, the media participates in politics themselves. Second, since most public media outlets are privately owned, news coverage especially when it comes to political issues can and often is influenced by the corporate interests of owners and proprietors. Furthermore, since their legitimacy depended on their activity, which was directed toward encouraging society to subject the media to criticism of the government, they are compelled to disagree with authority on a number of issues, including the veracity of statements. itself to ongoing inspection.

As with trust, journalism can be linked to mistrust. This has occasionally taken the shape of what we now refer to as fake news. The concept of fake news is nuanced and sometimes contentious since there is a great deal of variance in how it is employed in public debate. It is infamously hard to describe since it encompasses mockery, imitation, manipulated content, hoaxes, and conspiracy theories. Researchers have endeavored to traverse this terrain by providing conceptual definitions. The deliberate deception of a mass audience by individual actors via a sensational communication that appears credible but is intended to mislead and is not revealed to be false is one of these definitions (Tandoc,2021). It has also occasionally included politically motivated propaganda, and advertising passed off as news, made-up or exaggerated tales, news satire, news parody, and image manipulation (Flew, Martin & Suzor, 2019). In other instances, specific types of advocacy journalism by both traditional media and citizen journalists may be used to hold institutions and public figures accountable on behalf of their weaker readerships and audiences (Kim, Tandoc, & Ling, 2022). There are two opposing forces at work on news consumers in the internet news environment. Those with an interest in current affairs discover that a range of news sources to pick from enhances their capacity to make wise decisions. Nonetheless, it presents a chance for

disengaged citizens to turn into information hermits, refusing to read news articles that are essential to the democratic public conversation. Although these indifferent individuals have always been exposed to news through incidental or passive exposure, the method used to choose stories differs according on the platform. News experts select the news stories that these disengaged citizens hear on traditional platforms like radio and television. On the other hand, exposure on social media is determined by algorithms and social networks, and users might be more conscious of the identity of the person who posted the news item than of the news brand. Considering that trust plays a The effect of social media use on brand recognition and trust is something that news organizations should take into consideration as part of their online business strategy, since it is a significant component of their brand equity that is leveraged via various platforms (Arrese & Kaufmann, 2016).

Social media publication may broaden the audience for your content, but it may also heighten public suspicion of the news in general. Because viewers that distrust mainstream media are less affected by it and are more likely to turn to alternative news sources, mistrust of the news has ramifications for news companies' bottom lines (Tsfati & Ariely, 2014).

Publishers are trying to get more interaction from news consumers in an effort to build trust and retain readers. An original study on the sense of trust among media managers feedback from readers indicates that media executives believe audience engagement to be a reliable indicator of trust. However, certain heritage news media's conventional brand values are challenged by an emphasis on audience numbers (Kalsnes & Krumsvik, 2019). Media firms must constantly adopt new audience engagement methods because social media is such an important tool for marketing, communication, content creation, and delivery. Vukanovic, (2018) argues that current research on news trust builds upon a long tradition of communication studies about credibility in the age of mass media. More adaptable categories are needed in the digital world. Tsfati and Cohen (2005) discovered three characteristics of news which correspond to online publishing and consumption that affect audiences' trust; the qualities of each individual news audience; the news source attributes (such as reporter, content, platform, and brand); and the news consumption social context. In their definition, the first two factors are related to the categories of media characteristics and audience attributes. While the second group refers to media content, format, workforce, and other attributes, the first category deals with the impact of an individual's background, attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, it can be asserted that confidence in media can be adversely connected with education and exposure to news on the Internet, while political involvement, interpersonal trust, and exposure to newspapers and television news are positively correlated. Attitudes like political interest, news interest, efficacy/engagement, internet use (using social media and online

platforms), news media preference (TV viewers versus social media users) are common. Compared to news audiences that predominantly use social media and internet news sources, conventional media users are often more trusting of news sources. Thus, there is a positive correlation between trust and news attention. There are a number of subcategories within the category of media content that have an impact on trust levels, which are generally equivalent to trust in journalism's editorial processes. Four important subcategories were recognized by Kohring and Matthes (2007): proof, journalistic trust, correctness in tales and the corresponding analysis in tales. The author, presenter, information source, and manner in which the information is presented all have an impact on how trustworthy news content is Ali, (2014). The individual delivering the news narrative frequently has an impact on the degree of trust (Usher, 2019). Trust levels are also influenced by the way information is elegantly written and presented (Pelau, Stanescu & Sanda, 2023). The least researched component of news trust is the third way that social environment affects trust. In the past, social context has been used to describe how people interact with one another and consume news in public places. Research conducted throughout the mass media era revealed a negative relationship between news media credibility and interpersonal communication (Moyo, 2019). Many people use heuristics and signals to assess information they find online. One such cue that has been proven to be significant in determining trust is the identity of the storyteller (Sterrett, Malato, Benz, Kantor, Thomson, Rosenstiel & Loker 2019).

2.1.2 Challenges posed by Social Media as News Sources

As information becomes more readily available, it becomes challenging to determine who has the authority and capacity to act as news verifiers, consumers or platforms, especially considering that readers may find it challenging to make an informed judgment about the reliability of digital news stories. People can learn to identify bias even in situations where it confirms their own opinions by being taught to critically evaluate news in the context of their own beliefs and what they know or think to be true. Actually, new media literacy can be raised by merely understanding that there's a chance a news piece is not real. The rapidity and volume of news releases make it challenging to scale manual fact-checking procedures, necessitating the use of automated content verification support. Artificial Intelligence content creation presents many prospects, but in order to take full advantage of its potential, a number of issues need to be addressed. Since artificial intelligence models frequently lack human judgment, one of the main issues is the problem of bias and factual accuracy. By repeating online content without fully comprehending the context or repercussions, models may inadvertently support damaging, unsubstantiated, or socially irresponsible beliefs. Making sure that various outputs are coherent,

consistent, and verisimilitude presents another difficulty. Responses from models on related but different issues may come out as conflicting or in character. Compared to human cognition, these limits show a lack of comprehensive understanding and planning. To prevent consumers from ignoring the algorithmic feedback entirely, one suggestion is to improve it by adding both pro and con arguments. This lends clear support to the idea that technology should complement human judgment rather than take its place. Moreover, the use of opaque technologies runs the risk of adding another degree of apparent bias and a breach of confidence. This is an intriguing challenge: how can we better explain to users how an algorithm operates in addition to its recommendations?

The relationship between news creators and consumers may be further reshaped by this necessary transparency and need to enlighten users. Particularly in liberal democracies – and Namibia defines itself as such in its Constitution - the news media and journalism as a profession are traditionally seen as having a significant relationship to truth and, consequently, trust. Thus, the intersection of two potentially opposing conceptions of truth gives rise to popular trust in democratic governance institutions: one that results from the ability of common people to gather information and use it to decide on forms of collective action, and another that results from the development of expert knowledge that can supply, candidly and transparently, the preliminary factual truths that they needed to make well-reasoned judgments. Citizens would use all of this information while forming their opinions and participating in public discussion among themselves, as well as in their ultimate votes (Rosenfeld, 2018). This means social media, in particular, is being used more and more in planning procedures that promote public involvement. Therefore, it can serve as an invaluable tool for online engagement between news producers and consumers, because of its interactive and multifaceted qualities. Which is also equipped with the capacity to satisfy a wide range of participation demands, from empowerment to communication.

There are daunting challenges associated with social media like fake news, which threatens to destabilize the harmony of information flow and content sharing. While social networks have gradually become popular platforms for sharing news, there is also undeniable evidence that they are emerging as fertile ground for the spread of fake news as stipulated in (Duff, Tandoc, & Ling, 2020). This has been evident particularly during the peak of Covid-19 (Rocha, De moura, Desiderio, De Oliveira, Lourenco, & De Figueiredo, 2021). Where there have been a lot of negative content being shared on social media regarding the pandemic (Demuyakor, Nyatuame & Obri, 2021) Fake information sharing about Covid-19 became very popular at the time when vaccines were introduced, where anti Covid-19 vaccines individuals used and continue to use social media to spread fake content . Regardless of all these threats and

challenges (Cabañes, 2020) affirms how challenges faced by social media can be faced head on by opening a door of possibilities, which leads to the expansion on an information-oriented approach to communication taken by many journalistic interventions against digital disinformation.

2.1.3 Social Media a threat to traditional media

This approach has the power to unwrap alternatives to the problematic strategy of challenging social media influence, by uniquely magnifying the existing objectivities and actualities (Kitchens, Johnson, & Gray, 2020). It should also be noted that social media also threatens news organization when it comes to revenue collection. Nelson, (2021) affirms how social media has greatly contributed to the struggle of news organisations when it comes to losses in revenue and relevance. Taking this in mind there is a need for further study on how media organisations can emerge and use social media to magnify their relevance and ensure that they do not miss revenue (Stefanone & Toh, 2019). News consumption has been in existence for ages, and the undeniable fact is that people still need to be informed (Ren, Dong, , Popovic, Sabnis, & Nickerson, 2022). Other scholars argue that news avoidance be considered as an increasing problem by the news industry_(Skovsgaard, & Andersern, 2020). However, it should be acknowledged that people will always need to be informed, particularly the youth, and their better understanding of algorithms, points to social media as the relevant platform to engage them purported (Swart, 2021). As such while it can be argued that some people may choose not to watch tv or listen to radio, when it comes to social media as long as they go online news will always find them. Scholars further argue that there are diverse solutions that can be applied to tackle news avoidance. They further assert that this includes engaging news avoiders and reforming news presentation (Cheruiyot, Wahutu, Mare, Ogola, & Mabweazara, 2021). As such, it should be realised that as the world evolves and in order not to malfunction in the digital age, there is a need for traditional media to digitalise (Olusola, Ibrahim, Priscilla, G, 2017). However, this should be done in such a way that opportunity structures provided in the media system must be more favourable towards inadvertent news exposure (Wagner, & Boczkowski, 2019).

It can therefore be asserted that the progression of social media is conveying and bringing to the public sphere a hybrid communicative environment as it reaches a wider audience (Fletcher, & Nielsen, 2018). Intrinsically this logic based dimension cannot be ignored as it has the supremacy to affect the entire informative process (Bergstrom, Jervelycke, Belfrage, 2018). Meaning the players in the informative process including media organisation specifically traditional media particularly radio, television and print have no choice but to find ways to perform to the maximum in this digital sphere (AL-Rawi, 2019). Even academics have used these online platforms to research about this phenomenon. As indicated earlier

Covid-19 pandemic brought out many changes, and one such was the assertion of the importance of social media (Nadeak, 2020). Given that people including journalists could no longer conduct face to face meetings, they had to switch to social media (Karl, Peluchette, & Aghakhani, 2022). Before Covid-19, some scholars had already emphasised on the power and role social media was playing, as interviews conducted online were becoming prevalent. All these aspects outlined in this literature review influenced and formed the basis of the study, as it will pursued to interrogate the influence social media when it comes to news consumption. Many scholars have used surveys to analyse the impact of social media as the leading source of information (Sterrett, Malato, Benz, Kantor, Tompson, Rosentiel, & Loker, 2019). It can be argued that these opportunities brought to light by researchers have already been maximised by political leaders to reach out to voters, particularly the youthful voters. Many political leaders now use social media to engage with their followers as well as reach out to potential followers (Bosch, Admire, & Nchube, 2020). Casero-Ripollés, (2018) outlines how key points of the revolutions brought by social media have spawned in the arena of political sphere.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Reception Theory

Hall, (1973) introduced the decoding and encoding model, a cornerstone of reception theory, by focusing on textual analysis. He identifies three types of audience readings of texts namely; the dominant, negotiation and opposition. Furthermore, he provides a theoretic method of how media communications can be created, disseminated, and understood. Subsequently, he assumes that consumers have the potential to actively interpret communications. The audience decodes the messages and values that the producer encodes in their medium. However, various viewers will interpret media differently and perhaps not in the way that the creator intended. Hall further argues that when viewers interpret the text, they take one of three stances: The way the creator wants the audience to interpret the media material is called dominant, or preferred eading. If the narrative is simple to understand, the themes it addresses are pertinent to the audience, and the audience members are of the same age and culture, then the audience will adopt this stance (Croteau & Hoynes, 2013) . When a reader rejects the recommended interpretation and interprets the text in their own way, it is known as oppositional reading. This may occur if an audience member finds contentious topics in the media that they disagree with. It can also occur when a complicated narrative structure in the media is potentially not addressing issues in contemporary society. If a member of the audience is of a different age group, culture, or has different ideas, oppositional reading

may also take place (Sender & Decherney, 2018). The theory highlights the idea that a work's meaning is dynamic and changes as the reader and the text interact. The theory acknowledges that readers approach reading with their own expectations and viewpoints, which might affect how they understand the material (Iser, 2022). Reception theory also emphasizes how vital it is for readers to actively engage in the reading process because they are integral to the completion of the work's meaning. Furthermore, the idea recognizes that readers' interpretations might fluctuate and alter over time, resulting in various interpretations of the same text. Overall, reception theory offers a fresh perspective on literary experiences and has become integral to our understanding of literature, art, and the world.

Mathieu, (2015) asserts that the reception continues to be relevant in the age of social media. Current study on social media bears a strong resemblance to earlier research on traditional media conducted before the development of reception analysis. Additionally, both have a gap that reception analysis previously filled and may again have the chance to fill. Facebook's definition of media has evolved from being profile-based to networked and, more recently, content aggregator, as seen in each user's news feed. This last feature, in particular, is what distinguishes Facebook as a potentially public information medium. Therefore, this study aims to create a balance how young people are influenced by Facebook when they get the news feeds, which aggregates one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communications in one location (Jensen, 2009). Only recently have academics started to investigate the functions, rewards, and consequences of news on social media. A large portion of the research that has already been done in this field looks at audience traits and identifies different personality and demographic traits associated with the consumption of social media news. Young individuals and women, for example, are more likely to utilize social media for news (Weeks, 2013). The relationship between news consumption on social media and civic engagement as well as online and offline political activity suggests that news consumption on social media may potentially encourage political action. The influence that social media and online discussion have on forming social and political narratives can no longer be glossed over or ignored in an era where reputable news sources routinely cover Facebook arguments. Social Media is elevated by the existence of the Internet. Its existence coincides with the advancement of digital technology and is a type of media communication technology (Dogruel, Joeckel, & Bowman, 2015). New media outperforms traditional media in terms of speed, quality, and performance. This is how they differ from one another. This study argue that the classification of new media includes the Internet, mobile devices, wireless networks, streaming technology, and the ability to share content. Thus, the introduction of media convergence gives rise to what is known as social media (Gourlay, Hamilton, & Lea, 2014).

Briandana & Azmawati, (2020) asserts that the premise of the reception analysis is that the media texts get the meaning at the reception time, and that audiences actively produce meaning from the media when they accept and interpret the texts according to their social and cultural positions. Consequently, the theory was used to understand how young people in Katima Mulilo decode, and engage with news they consume on Facebook and WhatsApp, and how this influences them to find a position they align themselves among the three positions stated above. Social media news sharing is a means for people to interact with one another, uphold their social standing, and obtain knowledge, according to analyses of the satisfactions gained from using social media particularly Facebook. Aligwe, Nwafor & Alegu, (2018) argue that the theory's drawbacks, include the following: it is typically predicated on the subjective interpretation of audience reports; it is unable to address the presence or absence of effects; it employs qualitative research methods, thereby precluding flimsy explanations; and it has been overly focused on the micro level (though it is making an effort to become more macroscopic). Consequently, audience members are free to choose how to interpret media texts, academics contend that audience reports, which form the basis of the theory, are typically subjective rather than objective. They claim that because audience members interpret media texts subjectively depending on a variety of factors, including their social and cultural backgrounds, the model addresses the presence or absence of impacts. However, this study adopts that the theory conveys to the audience member that they have the power to not only choose what they expose themselves to, but also to interpret and interpret media texts differently based on their personal social, political, and cultural contexts. Since audience members are not viewed as homogeneous under the model, they are allowed to interpret media text according to their background and orientation. Thus, it is imperative that the audience should take advantage of Hall's Encoding and Decoding offers and recode various messages in order to express different meanings which will in turn empower them as consumers.

2.2.2 Framing Theory

Goffman, (1959) proposed that people use their primary framework to comprehend what is happening in the world. The user considers this framework to be basic as they rely on it. Its applicability as a framework is independent of other frameworks. According to Goffman, there are two differences between basic frameworks: social and natural, and both have the function of assisting people in understanding data, in order for their experiences to be comprehended within a larger social framework. There is a functional distinction between the two. Events are recognized by natural frameworks as physical phenomena, accepting the natural quotation literally and not attaching any social causes to their cause. According to

social frameworks, events are driven by the whims, objectives, and manipulations of other social participants, or people. Natural frameworks serve as the foundation for social frameworks. Güran & Özarlan, (2022) agree that these frameworks have a significant impact on how data is processed, transmitted, and understood because of the frames they generate in our interactions. The fundamental premise of Goffman's theory is that people are competent consumers of these frameworks on a daily basis. Whether or not they are conscious of them. Subsequently, news frames tend to exert a moderately significant influence on the citizens' beliefs and attitudes (Kühne & Schemer, 2015) . Hence, it may not be surprising that they seem to be associated with other substantial processes in news consumption and processing (Tewksbury, & Scheufele, 2019). Frames are tools or devices, which brings coherent between concepts, and cement the link between stories and associations (Suddaby, Israelsen, Bastien, Saylor, & Coraiola, 2023). Furthermore, an interaction among people is driven by the social integrative need (D'Angelo, 2019). Therefore, this study determined that framing theory and frame analysis are useful and appropriate for studying intricate social media interactions as well as how social media interacts with traditional mainstream media. In order to provide a concise summary of the theoretical and practical potentials of frame analysis as well as the particularities and issues that arose in light of the dynamic nature of social media. The study reviewed literature on framing analysis in relation to social media, virtual communities, and social movements. Therefore, the study concluded that frame analysis offers even more prospects for studying dynamic communication processes on the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo. Osanloo and Grant (2016) asserts that utilising a theoretical framework in research is one of the most important aspects as it lays the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed in a research study.

2.2.3 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the literature on the influence of social media. The literature also presented how young people are influenced by social media particularly Facebook and WhatsApp which was the core focus of this research. The section also discussed thoroughly how social media merging is conveying and bringing to the public sphere a hybrid communicative environment, as it reaches a wider audience and in turn it has had a great influence of the youth. Consequently, two theories which lay the foundation of this study were discussed namely the reception theory and the framing theory. The reception theory's view that readers approach reading with their own expectations and viewpoints, which might affect how they understand the material, speaks to the main objective of the research on how young people are influenced by Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news in Katima Mulilo. It also speaks to the sub

objectives on how select news sources and interpret news on Facebook. The section also discussed the framing theory and how news frames tend to exert a moderately significant influence on the citizens' beliefs and attitudes. This speaks to the sub objectives of the research on how young people in Katima Mulilo perceive the effects of social media on their attitude and behaviors, and how they assess the trustworthiness of news on Facebook and WhatsApp. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the research methods, which were used in the study of examining the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo, Namibia. This Explanatory sequential mixed method study pounded on the reasons for both quantitative and qualitative in the focus area. The study examined the aspects of research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations. Furthermore, it also highlighted on data analysis strategies, ethical considerations and methods in order to guarantee validity, transparency and trustworthiness.

3.1 Research Design

This particular study embraced the mixed method approach, which is an inquiry, which involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2021),The approach dates back to the mid-1980s, and consequently seeks for the integration of the two methods by using qualitative data to gathers open-ended data, and quantitative to gather Open-ended data (ibid). Consequently, under this method the study inclined towards the Explanatory sequential mixed method. Whereby a quantitative research was conducted first and analyzed. By adopting a mixed method approach it gave the researcher an advantage to get results through questionnaires, understand the results through in depth analysis. Later on conduct face to face interviews and have a more understanding of the responses from the questionnaires. This served as a building block for the entire study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Researchers while reflecting on beliefs or actions, regarding the nature of knowledge and reality, mostly use the word paradigm (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The study made use of the pragmatism worldview which regards reality as both solitary and multiple and is not committed to any one philosophical perspective (Creswell, 2013). Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021) asserts that pragmatism employs a variety of techniques, but the challenges raised by research should always serve as a guide when selecting a method. Additionally, to achieve research goals, it values both subjective and objective knowledge. This study took a pragmatic stance in order to freely select the approaches that best addressed the research objectives. Consequently, the study begun with survey in order to generalize the results to a population and then, in

a second phase of the approach researcher examined the aspects of the research problem by using a qualitative approach.

3.3 Research Approach: Mixed Method Approach

This study was steered by a mixed-method approach. In a solo study, a mixed method research is defined as an investigation whereby the researcher gathers and analyses data, incorporates the findings, and marks interpretations by employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Doyle, Brady, Bryne, 2009). Bryman, (2006), points out that when adopting a mixed method approach the advantage is that it brings wholeness to the study. Meaning combining the two approaches gives the researcher an opportunity to the researcher to have a wider pool of detailed data (Ivankova, Natalia, Creswell & Stick, 2006). The quantitative and qualitative phases made up the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design of this study. In this approach, the quantitative data was initially gathered and examined by the researcher. The qualitative data was gathered and examined later in the process, and they supplemented the quantitative findings from the initial stage. The first, quantitative phase was built upon by the second, qualitative phase, and the two phases are linked in the study's intermediate stage. This strategy is justified by the fact that a general grasp of the study problem is provided by the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis. By delving further into the opinions of participants, the qualitative data and their analysis clarified and enhanced the quantitative findings. This approach was considered best for this study as it allowed the researcher to collect more information from the participants in a short period of time. This method was also necessary as it gave this researcher an insight of how young people in Katima Mulilo use Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news. The quantitative data was very useful as it served as a building block for the qualitative study. It was also easier for the researcher to understand the perceptions and experiences of face to face interview participants as active users of social media as sources of news.

3.4 Population

Population can be defined as the research's direct population to investigate or to study, and population is usually related with the number of persons or individuals residing in a particular area (Majid, 2018; Taherdoost, & Group, 2017). Population in this study refers to the youth aged 18-35 residing in Katima Mulilo. The research study was conducted in the Zambezi region the focus being in the youth found in Katima Mulilo. The population consisted of young people in Katima Mulilo aged 18-35, which according

to the Namibia Statistic Agency, (2024) this number stood at 13852. Consequently, all the youth who reside in Katima Mulilo qualified to be involved in this study.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The sample of the study consisted of 110 participants from Katima Mulilo, of whom 100 were for quantitative, non-probability sampling and 10 for qualitative part. 100 participants were chosen for non-probability depending on the availability of participants at the time of the research. Due to the difficulties and costs involved in conducting a large scale sample, selecting just 100 participants for non-probability sampling proved to be a cost effective approach that saved expenditure while preserving the quality of the data. This research also employed interview which collected responses from 10 participants who were identified as active users of WhatsApp and Facebook, a criterion method was used, the criterion method was necessary as the researcher believed that individuals who are active on social media have had a chance to be exposed to news on their smartphones and use the mentioned platforms to access news. The researcher used this sampling method to access a particular subset of people as all participants of the study were selected because they fit a particular profile. In order to obtain a high response rate from various participants within a given time, the study also used a questionnaire including both closed and open ended questions, allowing respondents to give clarity to their responses. Questionnaires also allowed for the relatively quick collection of data. The gathered data was carefully examined before being subjected to a thematic analysis. As a result, the data could be meaningfully categorised by the researcher, enabling the data to be grouped into ideas and ultimately, themes with commonalities between cases could be found. This was the best way to examine the information gathered because study participants shared their experience and their stories, which served as the research data. To assist the researcher in classifying the data and identifying themes and patterns, the data underwent a thorough examination.

3.6 Data Collection instruments

Closed ended questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data in the first phase. In the second phase, face-to-face interviews were conducted to supplement results from the first phase. The respondents included students from institutions of higher learning, government employees and residents of Katima Mulilo who form part of the targeted population. The researcher formulated questionnaires that were aligned to the objectives of the study and distributed them to the participants accordingly. (Creswell, 2021), affirms that a questionnaire is a printed or written form used to gather information on particular

subjects, comprising of a set of questions to be given to individuals who are invited to take part in the research.

The benefits of using questionnaires in collecting data include the opportunity to collect large volumes of data in a short period of time at a minimum charge (Williamson, 2013). Questionnaires can also be easily and swiftly being quantified by the investigator by means of using software packages. The shortcomings of questionnaires are that each question may be perceived differently as such responses may be based on perceptions. Additionally, the other disadvantage is that some may choose not to return the questionnaires, thus reducing the sum of respondents.

Consequently, the investigator handed over questionnaires to the study participants and then collected them for analysis. Interviews were done face to face with participants who actively use Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news. When one wants to obtain comprehensive data on people's views, opinions, beliefs, experiences, and feelings is necessary, the use of interviews is a very effective strategy (Doody, & Noonan, 2013). Furthermore, interviews also allow the researcher to probe further and ask for more detailed explanations, making it very good option to use. One of the disadvantages is that people some people may be afraid to plainly express their thoughts, and they may end up withholding valuable information.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Validity and reliability

Validity refers to good measurement of an issue at hand. Leedy, & Ormrod, (2015) explained that, the use of validity ensures and adds accuracy, meaning and credibility to the research. Profoundly, this will allow one to extract justifiable and meaningful conclusions from the collected data. The study used quantitative data analysis for the first phase, with the profoundly aim of seeking to explain, describe and locate the existing patterns in the data which was conducted. The study thus implored validity and reliability. The main idea was to ensure that the data which was collected was comprehensive and replicable, which in turn guaranteed accurate results.

3.7.2 Thematic content analysis

In the second phase, the study used thematic content analysis to analyse the collected data. Meaning, the face to face interviews were later reviewed. During the reviewing process data with similar explanations of answers, and allows for combinations of ideas were united throughout the study and eventually transformed into themes.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research was steered by ethical considerations and the ethical clearance certificate was issued by NUST. Informed consent was also pursued from all the participants who took part in the study. This was done as it is a norm in a social research that aspects like informed consent, confidentiality and privacy concerns are addressed at the beginning of the research. Consequently, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Furthermore, participants were also informed that the data which was collected would be treated as private information and that it will not be used for any other purpose other than for study purpose. Given that some of the participants of the study were students from Katima Mulilo UNAM campus, which has the large number of the targeted audience. The researcher obtained a permission letter from Campus Director.

3.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter argued that mixes-method is a valid research design for this study because the strengths of one type of data mitigated the weaknesses of the other. Meaning the quantitative approach only would have struggled to incorporate the lived experiences of the participants. Therefore, adding qualitative data deepened and enriched the quantitative results. Furthermore, a qualitative study alone could have been too general, and would have only reflected the experiences of the participants. Meaning combining the two approaches validated the findings. The chapter also profoundly dealt with aspects of methodology, processes and methods used during data collection process, while also explaining how the results were analysed. Furthermore, it also gave evidence and justification why such methods for data collection were utilised. Further justification in terms of the selected research design, and paradigm under which the study is anchored were also presented. The chapter similarly gratified on data analysis approaches which were adopted to analyse the data. The next chapter will give a detailed data analysis and interpretations.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives and outlines the results and findings of this research, which focused on recording, documenting and examining the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo, Namibia. Consequently, this study was inspired by the rise of social media as a driving platform of news consumption among young people. The study was conducted through questionnaires which were given to young people in Katima Mulilo between the ages of 18-35, which took them about five to 10 minutes to complete. This was followed up with face to face interviews which lasted between 10 to 15 minutes. In the first phase 100 young people between the ages of 18-35 who reside in Katima Mulilo, were given questionnaires to fill in. In the second phase 10 young people who are actively using Facebook and WhatsApp were identified and interviewed. Results from the questionnaires will be presented first followed by the results from face to face interviews.

4.2 Response rate

The participants in the study were given 100 questionnaires which were all returned to the researcher for analysis. The questionnaire consisted of 9 closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The structured question was included to get a deeper understanding of the responses of the participants. As such quotations from the questionnaires will be referred to as Questionnaire Participant 1,2,3... (QP1,2,3...). Interview participants will not be identified by name in this study but will be referred to as Interview Participants One to Interview Participants 10 (IP1-IP10).

4.3 Questionnaires interviews on young people's use of Facebook and WhatsApp as a source of news

4.3.1 Facebook as source of news

Most of the young people who filled in questionnaires responded that they use Facebook often to access news. Results also indicate that they use these platforms to access all types of news, be it local, national or international news. The results also reveal that Facebook offers diverse sources, meaning by exploring content outside the conventional news sources, user can promote a more variate information environment. Leading to easy sharing, making it simple and quick to share news on social media.

4.3.2 WhatsApp as sources of news

Results indicate that over 90% of young people who filled in questionnaires use WhatsApp a source of news very often. They indicated that this is because WhatsApp is easy to access as all the smartphones have WhatsApp and they use it to communicate on a daily basis. They also belong to various WhatsApp groups where stories are always shared; other stories are shared on their WhatsApp status.

4.3.3 How do young people choose their sources on Facebook?

The research found out that most youth in Katima Mulilo choose their sources of news by following traditional media houses on Facebook. It was evident during the research that social media has become an important source of news among youth in Katima Mulilo. The research also observed that out of five completed questionnaires four or all of them actively use Facebook as a source of News. This indicates that young people have embraced social media as the main source of news on a daily basis.

4.3.4 How do young people ensure that they do not consume fake news?

The research revealed that young people are aware of fake news and to ensure that they do not consume fake news, young people in Katima Mulilo follow accredited media organisations. As stated above the research found out that the youth in Katima Mulilo are alert when it comes to fake news. All those who filled in questionnaires indicated that when they receive something they are not sure if it is true or not, they go to the pages of traditional media to confirm it.

4.3.5 How often do young people share the news they get from Facebook and WhatsApp?

Although most young people interviewed revealed that they use WhatsApp and Facebook as sources of news, they don't look for news on these platforms but rather news finds them on these platforms. The research also revealed that over 85 % young people who completed the questionnaires in Katima Mulilo consider Facebook and WhatsApp to be the most flexible platforms to get news. It also became evident that some young people read news shared by other users. The research also revealed that youth in Katima Mulilo are likely to share the news they get from social media with other users.

4.3.6 How the presence of digital media and use of social media has made news consumption easier?

The questionnaire had one open ended question, which aimed at getting a glimpse of what a hundred youth in Katima Mulilo think of digital media. Results of the research indicate that young people have embraced the presence of digital media. They say the presence of social media has made news consumption very much easier. The study further reveal that young in Katima Mulilo are of the opinion that social media promotes user involvement in news discussions and sharing, as well as give suggestions to reporters in the comment section.

“It has contributed positively to the development of communication, information can be accessed easier and at any time, (QP1).

“These platforms have made news consumption easier by offering instant and constant access to a variety of news sources. Users can easily share and recommend article to their networks, increasing the dissemination of information,” (QP3).

“users can now access news from anywhere at any time through their smartphones or computers. Additionally, social media platforms provide a space for users to share and discuss news, facilitating a more interactive and engaging news experience,” (QP16).

The results also indicate that young people in Katima Mulilo believe that Facebook have the ability to raise the visibility of marginalised voice and highlight significant worldwide concerns that otherwise go unreported by using hashtags and viral campaigns. Additionally, some participants indicated that Facebook raises people’s knowledge of and support for social issues which are vital in their lives. Conveniently, respondents emphasized that this is done without them having to leave their homes or go to a shop and buy a physical newspaper.

“I believe social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp has made news consumption easier in such a way that even those who do not watch news on television can easily be informed through social media. Most of the youth spend more time on their phones than on TV and reading newspapers, so social media is way faster and interesting,” (QP2).

“In context of student life, Facebook and WhatsApp make it more easier for students/people to access the news at any time, when they are free and it has also reduced costs such as subscription fees to watch news, news is offered freely on Facebook and WhatsApp,” (QP14).

“Digital media and social media platforms have revolutionalised news consumption by providing instant access to wide range of sources and perspective. Facebook and WhatsApp in particular have made news consumption easier, by allowing users to quickly share articles, videos and updates with friends and family,” (QP21)

Other participants further amplified that Facebook’s capacity to remove geographic restrictions from receiving global news is one of its amazing features. Previously it used to be pivotal to rely on radio or television broadcasts or to subscribe to foreign newspapers in order to be informed about events happening across the world. However, the arise of social media platforms like Facebook has enabled real time access to news from all over the world for everyone who as internet connectivity. The research further reveal that this accessibility promotes intercultural communication and enables people to get a deeper grasp of global challenges. Facebook and WhatsApp have developed into platforms where individuals may interact and share thoughts about a range of global news issues. Furthermore, participants also indicated that they feel empowered to become citizen journalists by using Facebook as a source of news. As it allows them to share their personal narratives which in turn enhances the diversity of news landscape.

“These technologies have made news more accessible, convenient, and personalised for users. People can now access news instantly through social media feeds, without having to wait for traditional media outlets. Social media exposes users to a wider range of news sources, including alternative and citizen journalism, offering more diverse range of perspective,” (QP4).

“These platforms allow users to receive news personalised to their interests and preference. Sharing and conveying news through these platforms has reached a wider audience in real time. Users also participate in discussions and debate regarding news through comments and feedback,” (QP5).

“Digital media and the presence of social media like Facebook and WhatsApp have significant streamline news consumption by proving instant access to a wide range of information. These

platforms offer convenience, allowing users to stay updated on current events without need to wait for traditional news broadcasts or newspaper,” (QP13)

Results of reveal that young people appreciate Facebook as a source of news as it gives them an opportunity to be involved in a dialogue with their favourite news outlets. This indicate that young people yearn to have interactions with journalists and media organisations through comments and replies. Moreover, the study also found out that Facebook is seen as platform that offers insightful; information about the actions of its users. As such journalists can use this data to customise their coverage and remain current in the digital sphere.

“The presence of these social media platforms has really made the consumption of news very easy, as it takes only a few seconds to receive or send significant news or information on social media platforms. It serves a lot of time and resources,” (QP6).

“Accessibility to news is now available 24/7, allowing people to stay updated on current events anytime and anywhere. Social media aggregate news from various sources, providing users with a diverse range of perspectives and viewpoints on a given topic,” (QP7)

“These platforms provide instant access to news from around the world. Users can easily follow news organisations, journalists and influencers to receive real time updates on current events. This eliminates the need to wait for traditional news sources like newspapers or television,” (QP15).

It is also evident from the results that young people in Katima Mulilo feel that social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp facilitate a more elaborative narrative by incorporating multimedia components like photos, infographics and videos. Outside the limitations of a typical story, the results indicate that media organisations can give their viewers and readers a more engaging experience. Furthermore, a wide range of audience can swiftly learn about stories that take off on Facebook. While this increases awareness it also gives an opportunity to journalists to still double-check their reporting to avoid inaccurate and misleading information.

“It made everything to be easy, even if you are far away from television or radio, you can still get some information through WhatsApp and Facebook. So long as you have a smartphone. A smartphone is easy to be carried and the possibility of getting information through WhatsApp and

Facebook is high. In case some people they don't have TV or radio, they use smartphones to get the information through the platforms called WhatsApp and Facebook" (QP8).

"People are able to share information and teach each other about what is happening locally, basically helps us to communicate with one another from long distances and also helps students to make more research on different media platforms," (QP18).

"It has made news consumption very easier, because nowadays news travels very fast on these platforms, unlike the old days where people used to travel a long distance in order to pass information to others," (QP9)

However, some pointed out that there are some challenges that comes with digital media like misinformation. The study though discovered that participants view these challenges less dangerous to disregards the role that social media plays when it comes to news consumption. Additionally, this calls for media organizations to be ensure that they proactively connect and engage with their audiences in order to continue trusting in them as reliable sources of news. This will in turn guarantee that news consumers on social media even when they are free to participate in discussions with other people to discover other people, they will always remember to cross-reference information from others sources be sharing with others. This will address the concern of misinformation which was raised by some respondents.

"It is important to acknowledge that while social media platforms have made news consumption easier, in many aspects, they also pose challenges such as the spread of misinformation echo chambers, and algorithm biases," (QP10).

"It has made news to get to different people at a much faster rate. Though not everyone has access to these platforms, but it is easier for those who have them," (QP11).

"Digital media has made news consumption easier as it allows more people to share the news. The only thing is data to get engaged on these platforms. It is easier as a lot of news gets on your screen often," (QP12).

Responses from the questionnaires were useful and insightful, as it provided the researcher with an understanding of what a hundred youth in Katima Mulilo thought of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news. The analysis of these responses also served as a good link to the face to face interviews, as similar responses were observed in the interactions with participants in the second phase of the research as the data in the next section will assert.

4.4. Face to Face Interviews on young people in Katima Mulilo's use of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news

4.4.1 The importance of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news

The first interview question aimed at probing participants to discuss the importance of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news. Building from the survey results the interviews revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp are considered very important sources of News. Participants emphasized that Facebook enables them to connect with friends and families by sharing content. Likewise, Facebook is seen as having a great impact on news, information sharing and personal connections. Given that the participants who were interviewed were identified as active users of Facebook, the results indicate that the platform has a great influence on them when it comes to news consumption. The way participants who were interviewed obtain information and news on Facebook appeared to have evolved. Additionally, the participants specified that sharing of stories on Facebook allows them to not only influences the news is shared, but it also how they consume news. More importantly participants stated that Facebook makes it easier for them to find news, regardless of where they find themselves.

"It is very important because basically, that is where I get my news. I don't normally read hard printed newspapers. Facebook is my go to if I want to find out what happened. On WhatsApp people will be sending on WhatsApp status. I will be checking there, and when I see something I go to Facebook and look it. It is a very vital news source for me" (IP1).

"It is important in the sense that everyone has a smartphone these days, and they are always hooked up with their phones. People go there, and they scrawl down on your spare time. Even when you busy you can multitask, and news is there on Facebook and WhatsApp," (IP2).

Subsequently, participants emphasized that on Facebook news can be discussed, shared and reposted in their virtual networks. When it comes to reposting some participants revealed that they normally repost stories on their WhatsApp status. While others follow-up stories on Facebook after seeing them in WhatsApp groups of status. This normally happens when it comes to breaking stories, whereby users after seeing notifications on their phones would go on Facebook pages of news outlets they follow to learn for. Significantly, one participants mentioned that the fact that smartphones normally come with some the social media platforms like Facebook already installed makes connection easier. As users they get connected immediately, and start engaging in content sharing and news consumption.

“I think it is very important, because everyone is now connected to social media. Even when you buy a cellphone it already has those apps application, so we are connected to it,” (IP3).

“It is one of the most convenient source someone would use to get the news, the quickest and fasten way to get the news on the go. The vital part of it is that it doesn’t take long for you to check and search the news,” (IP4).

“I think they are both important because they have advantage of being easy to access and re-access as well. If I am unable to read a story sent to me I can always easily come back to it when I have the time. Also instead of not buying a physical newspaper that I have to throw away,” (IP6).

It became evident during the interviews that the convenience which these platforms offers is what drives young people to remain connected on a daily basis, so that they are informed at all times. The study also found that young people in Katima Mulilo are always using these platforms to access news, as such they are always connected. The research found out that most youth in Katima Mulilo choose their sources of news by following traditional media houses on Facebook, this includes local media houses like the Namibian newspaper, New Era newspaper, Namibian Sun newspaper and the Namibian Broadcasting Cooperation.

“I follow reputable and verified news outlets like the Namibian, New Era, Informante and NBC News,” (IP6).

“Sometimes I get them through Facebook friends when they share. The moment I login I find everything there,” (IP3).

“How I select my news on Facebook is based on the credibility of the page. It can be New Era, Namibian, or the government. I make sure it is the correct page, then I will know that the news I get from there is credible,” (IP1).

4.4.2 How do young people in Katima Mulilo ensure that they don't fall prey to fake news?

All those who were interviewed indicated that when they receive something they are not sure if it is true or not, they go to the pages of traditional media to confirm it. The research thus revealed that young people are alert when it comes to fake news and they always make sure that they verify the source. All the participants who were interviewed admitted that they were aware that fake news is rife on social media particularly on Facebook. They further detailed that to ensure that they don't fall prey to fake news they always take into account the dependability of sources, whether it is a personal account or a respectable news source. Additionally, they always compare and contrast data from various sources, as well as verify elsewhere if it is exclusively available on one platform.

“I always have to check the sources. I compare with NBC, I compare with CNBC the American one, I check with Al Jazeera. Just to see if they are giving the same info, then if they are giving the same info I will definitely say this is not fake news. This is breaking news and it is legit and original,” (IP4).

“Most of the news come with a link, the moment I follow the link if a friend shared it on Facebook, it will take me to the official page of the source,” (IP3).

“If the news is under New Era or the Namibian, I quickly go on their page to search just to confirm if the news is fake or not,” (IP2).

“I make sure I get it from a verifiable source. If you hear or see something on someone's status. You need to go back to the source to see if it is real or not real,” (IP1).

The research found out that young people always cross check the news they are not sure of with other sources. The study also observed that young people in Katima Mulilo are wary of fake news and they are always alert. Moreover, other participants also stated that they also consult fact checking websites like Fact Check, especially when it comes to international news. The nuance emanating from the interviews is

that young in Katima Mulilo are no longer vulnerable to fake news. As such finding about how young people interpret genuine from fake news show that they go beyond what they see or receive on social media. They accomplish this by using additional research to validate the news. The other noteworthy finding is that conventional media is still thought to be a vital source for news consumption. This is evident through their responses that they constantly double check information with conventional media when faced with ambiguity. This further suggest that even though they use social media as sources of news, they prefer following pages of traditional media. Making it even more important that traditional media actively engage with their followers on these platforms.

“If I see something I will cross reference with other sources, that are trusted and maybe try to ensure from people who are working in the news industry,” (IP5).

“If a story has more than one source, then it is credible. In the news industry if one paper has a story you could crosscheck with another, because sometimes they have the same story, then you know that this obviously factual,” (IP10).

4.4.3 Facebook and WhatsApp’s influence on behavior and attitudes of young people in Katima Mulilo

The interview question sought to probe young on whether the use of social media particularly Facebook and WhatsApp has had an influence on their behavior and attitudes. Most of the respondents indicated that social media has not really affected or influence their behavior. However, the indicated that it evokes their feelings and opens their mind to wider understanding of things. For instance, on Facebook it allows they to engage in debates and discussions, and to share their views on various news topics. Additionally, the research also found out that the social media particularly Facebook being an open platform there is no limitation on what is shared, some content may bring sadness to sensitive viewers.

“In another way it does because it is going to change the way you think. The more you read you are not going to be the same. You will know a lot of things happening in the whole world or Namibia,” (IP2).

“It has affected me positively. Because I can now share information. I can now share my social life that I freely wish to share with people around me. Especially with Facebook and WhatsApp, I am in

contact with other people in other countries. I can communicate, I can call them. Video chat, messenger, whatever. You name it,” (IP7)

“When it comes to reading, it has encouraged me to read more. I actually go on WhatsApp and Facebook I read what is happening. It gives you knowledge when you read and your able to share with others what you read, ‘oh, that news was fake,’ so you are able to tell others,” (IP9).

However, the research also found out that other researcher’s attitudes and behavior has changed it terms of what they post online. The presence of misinformation has indeed lead to some to set boundaries by having specific time to be on Facebook. Some participants indicated that the use of Facebook has made them more careful, and ensure that they follow positive content. Therefore, the findings show that as users continue to social media as sources of news it cultivates good behavior and encourages users be cautious of what they consume on these platforms.

“Particularly for Facebook, it has made me wearier of the personal information I post online. For safety purposes, I try not to share my location on posts until I have left the place, especially when it is a place I am unfamiliar with. I also realized that other users could easily download my pictures and create a fake profile with them and the information on my profile. Overall I think the way they have influenced my behavior is in being more careful of what I post and share,” (IP6).

“I am a person who filters. When the news comes, whether it is from Facebook or WhatsApp. I filter the information and from there I take it as it is. That this is news it has nothing to do with my attitude or behavior,” (IP4).

4.4.4 The role Facebook and WhatsApp play when it comes to news consumption

All the participants interviewed appreciated the role that Facebook and WhatsApp plays when it comes to News consumption. Underscoring that it has made news consumption so easier, as they get the news instantly. Consequently, the research also found out that young people in Katima Mulilo find it convenient to use social media access news as most of them have smartphones. In this study all the participants interviewed had smartphones, so they are always updated at all times.

“It does play a very big role, because most of the youth are always on their phones. Most of the news they get to know is from Facebook and WhatsApp. That is their way of networking and communicating instead of hard print,” (IP1).

“WhatsApp has definitely made the news more accessible as I am not a person who sees the value of buying a newspaper that I have to throw away at the end of the day. It is just easier because these platforms have brought the news right into my hands with just a smartphone. These platforms also make sharing the news faster and easier as I can just click share and the news clip will have reached someone in another country or even another continent,” (IP6).

4.4.5 The use of digital media and its future potential

The research found out that young people in Katima Mulilo have embraced digital media. Profoundly, the research also discovered young people in Katima Mulilo have news apps, meaning they are able to watch news without having to own a television. Additionally, the research also found out that young people in Katima Mulilo see digital media as the future. All of those interviewed indicated that they have accepted digital media as the way to go. The study further found out that they see the use of digital media enhancing and becoming more appropriate for the young or contemporary generation. It is also seen as playing a pivotal role in hastening the sharing of information or news to spread faster. Consequently, it became clear that all the participants regard digital media as possessing great potential as evidently it has already transformed the landscape of information dissemination. Offering unprecedented access, speed, and interaction on a global scale. It has also democratised access to knowledge, empowering individuals to seek and share information instantly across borders and cultures.

“Digital Media will be a vital source of connecting, networking, communication, basically everything. Even now, for just to find out something or to promote something or to get news out there it is through digital media. It is through technology that people from all over the country or international get to know things that are happening,” (IP1).

“I think it is the way to go to reach the largest part of the population as most adults and even younger people have a smartphone. The future potential of digital media is endless as it truly opens the media people to the whole world. There is nowhere your news will not reach as long as there is a smartphone and an internet connection,” (IP6).

“News is going to get faster and better over time. With the introduction of Artificial Intelligence, I think news is going to get faster and the demand for advertisers to advertise their staff through news, is going to cause media houses to up their game by providing more serious stories, more stories that demand the audience’s attention, because they want to sell their papers or sell news to advertisers and get paid by the advertisers,” (IP10).

However, some participants did warn that digital media may still face hurdles on the way when it comes to accessibility particularly in remote areas without internet connectivity. They are of the opinion that more still needs to be done to ensure that those who live in remote areas are connected.

“Digital media will also encounter challenges in rural areas where most of the population depends on radio as there might not be internet access or they cannot afford it. Or perhaps the growth of digital media will encourage the country’s leadership to bring more technological development to rural areas,” (IP6).

“When we talk of the digital world you need gadgets. Some people cannot afford the gadgets they can only afford a simple phone. At least on the simple phones they have introduced the use of radios. You can listen to the radio using a simple phone,” (IP7).

One participant also warned that digital media might open room for more sensationalised stories, in order to pull the attention of the wider audience.

“There is going to be more sensationalism, there is going to be more hyped stories. There is going to be a coverage of stories that only pull the attention of the audiences, and I think this becomes a problem when we neglect stories that have to do with the grassroots level, and focus on stories that make the news,” (IP10).

4.5 Chapter Summary

This study demonstrated that young people in Katima Mulilo have embraced the use of social media particularly Facebook as sources of news. Facebook in particular was a popular platform among participants where they get their news. The study also found out although young do appreciate traditional media like listening to radio, or watching news on television or reading a printed newspaper, it is

convenient for them to read things online. As it is faster, and it provides them instant news. The study also looked at the concept of fake news, and it became evident that young people in Katima Mulilo are away of fake news, and they always make sure to verify their sources. When It comes to behaviour and attitude the research found out that it has not really changed the way they behave, rather it has encouraged them to learn more as well them expose them to other people and cultures worldwide. Furthermore, the study also looked at digital media in broad and results indicate that young people in Katima Mulilo appreciate digital media and its future potential. However, some participants did bring out a few challenges associated with digital media. Among others connectivity was one of them, as some people in rural areas not have access to internet connection. The next chapter will provide a summary of the whole study, it will also discuss the key findings and give recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The below chapter, gives a summary which provides some brief highlights of the current research, looking at some problems that the researcher had encountered during the course of the research and also ways on how some of these challenges were minimized. Herein conclusions made by the current study will be revealed by giving a review of the research's main findings and providing answers to the research questions as well as the main research problem. Lastly recommendations will be provided for the way forward. Studies and literature have mostly compared the choices made by editors regarding what news to publish with those made by consumers. Studies on the impact of social media as sources of news are scarcer; instead most studies classify social media as a medium that distorts the truth in any news that is disseminated. Because young people are thought to make up the majority of social media users, it was crucial to look into the impact of social media as sources of news this would attempt to narrow the gaps found in literature. The current study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed method approach the aim was to explore intensely the experiences and perspective of young people on the use of social media as sources of news.

The research study was conducted in the Zambezi region the focus being in the youth found in Katima Mulilo. The population consisted of young people in Katima Mulilo aged 18-35, which according to the Namibia Statistic Agency this number was at 13852. Consequently, in this study non-probability sampling techniques, was utilised, whereby purposive and convenience samplings were used to recruit participants. Convenience sampling was utilised whereby members of the targeted population who met the practical criteria such as availability at a given time and their willingness to participate were included in the study (Taherdoost & Group, 2017). Shakouri, (2014) describes purposive sampling as a thoughtful or deliberate choice of a participants based on the qualities the participant possess. The advantage of purposive sampling is that it lessens error margin, as data is collected directly from the reliable source. In this case participants were chosen based on their qualities of being active users of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news. Consequently, 100 participants who were available were given questionnaires in the first phase. Subsequently, by utilising purpose sampling 10 participants were selected in the face to face interviews based on the researcher's knowledge and professional judgment, bringing the total of participants in the study to 110.

5.2 Summary of the findings

5.2.1 The influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo.

The main objective of the study was to examine the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news among youth in Katima Mulilo. The study revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp has had a positive influence among young people in Katima Mulilo. Findings from the quantitative analysis revealed that most of the youth in Katima Mulilo use WhatsApp and Facebook as sources of news. Consequently, qualitative content analysis ratified that youth in Katima Mulilo view Facebook and WhatsApp as valuable sources of news. Furthermore, the findings thus reveal that the use of Facebook has positively influenced young people in Katima Mulilo when it comes to news consumption, interactions and how they behave in their social lives. Based on their responses it is evident that Facebook fosters their human connections by facilitating communication, experience of sharing news and information, and building relationships. Moreover, the study also discovered that their emotions and thoughts have been conditioned by the frequent use of social media particularly Facebook. The conclusive findings on this objective is that Facebook and WhatsApp has impacted how young people in Katima Mulilo communicate and this has lead them to be critical thinkers, when they engage discussions.

5.2.2 How young people in Katima Mulilo select news sources on Facebook

The study also evaluated how young people in Katima Mulilo select their sources of news on Facebook. The findings reveal that young people in Katima Mulilo follow traditional media organisations and these form as the majority of their sources. Furthermore, the study found out that young people share news among themselves be it on their Facebook pages or WhatsApp status and groups. It is evident from the results that young in Katima Mulilo get their news from a wider range of sources including random sources. The literature discussed that there is a positive correlation between trust and news attention. The results indicate that young people trust the traditional media and their experiences and exposure to internet news makes them to be very cautious when selecting sources. They believe that a story is probably factual if it is reported in the majority of mainstream media. Therefore, this suggest that young people who use Facebook and WhatsApp as sources are capable of explaining how they interact with online information, demonstrating a high level of digital literacy. This means that people absorb, decode, and interpret information according to their social media experience, which enables them to critically analyse and understand information.

5.2.3 How the youth in Katima Mulilo interpret news on Facebook

Furthermore, the study had also looked how young people interpret news they get on Facebook. The results reveal that young in Katima Mulilo filters the news that they receive or get on Facebook. Additionally, the results indicate that young in Katima Mulilo engage into discussions to have deeper understanding of the news they get on Facebook. Most of those interviewed stated that if they do not understand something they go in the comment section and read comments and equally comment. The research found out that the significance of audience definitions of news lies in their ability to shed light on people's normative presumptions and expectations regarding specific categories of information. The definitions of news by audiences are significant because they provide insight into the normative presumptions and expectations of the public toward specific categories of information. Users handle news in different ways. For instance, it is typically linked to high degrees of dependability and trustworthiness. It is conclusive that young people in Katima Mulilo view credibility of news organizations based on their capacity to provide reliable, trustworthy, and authoritative information that aids in the sense-making and decision-making of the public. It also depends on their ability to create a shared forum for public discourse by conveying current events.

5.2.4 How young people in Katima Mulilo assess trustworthiness of news on Facebook and WhatsApp

Additionally, the study also looked at how young people in Katima Mulilo assess trustworthiness of news on Facebook and WhatsApp. The findings indicate that All those who were interviewed indicated that when they receive something they are not sure if it is accurate or not, they go to the pages of traditional media to confirm it. The findings also reveal that young people in Katima Mulilo are always alert and do not easily fall prey to misleading or fake news. The results show that they always assess the sources and compare with other sources to see if they are giving the same information. One crucial finding is that young people are aware that a legitimate story should have a link and the moment they follow the link if a friend shared it on Facebook, it will lead them to the official page of the original source. The results also indicate that young people in Katima Mulilo value a story with multiple sources, and they believe that most of the time news outlets always have same stories making it easier for them to verify if the story is factual. Furthermore, compared to older news consumers or media experts, young people interpret news values differently. According to research findings on how young people interpret news on Facebook,

majority of them indicated that they check the veracity of content they come across on social media before accepting it. They accomplish this by using additional research to validate this information. The other noteworthy finding is that traditional media is still thought to be a vital source for news consumption. Young people's advice to constantly double check information with traditional media when faced with ambiguity can attest to this. This suggests that young people continue to trust traditional media as sources of news despite the advancements in technology and the influence of social media. As such this calls for traditional media to be active on social media to ensure that they always attend to their audience who are using social media.

5.2.5 How the youth in Katima Mulilo perceive the effects of social media on their attitudes and behaviours

In addition, the study provided answers on how the youth in Katima Mulilo perceive the effects of social media on their attitude and behaviours. The findings of the research show that he indicated that social media evokes their feelings and opens their mind to wider understanding of things. For instance, on Facebook it allows them to participate in deliberations and discussions, and to share their opinions on various news issues. Furthermore, the research also found out that the social media particularly Facebook being an open platform there is no limitation on what is shared, some content may bring sadness to sensitive viewers. The findings also show that young people feel social media has the power to change the way one thinks. On the other hand, it opens one's mind to know a lot of things happening locally, internationally and globally. One interesting thing which the research found out is that you people see social media a space where they can share their social life that they freely wish to share with people around them. However, the results also reveal that Facebook has made them to be more careful of the personal information they post online when they engage in discussions. Additionally, they react differently to news, and it is generally linked to elevated degrees of dependability and credibility, for example. The authority, dependability, and accuracy of the information that news organisations provide to the public to aid in their sense-making and decision-making, as well as their ability to provide a shared forum for public discourse by conveying current events, are what give them credibility.

5.4 Conclusion

In light of the findings of this study the researcher concludes that Facebook and WhatsApp are important sources of News among youth in Katima Mulilo. By adopting the mixed method approach results from the

quantitative and qualitative analysis have proven beyond reasonable doubt that young people in Katima Mulilo appreciate the use of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news. Through thoroughly analysis of the data which was collected one can easily conclude that young people in Katima Mulilo see digital media as the future and way to go and it has already become a vital source of news, connecting, networking and communication. The study has proven that social media has had a positive influence on young people as they see it as a solution if they want to find out something or to promote something or to get news out there it is through digital media. Conclusively, the study has amplified through the findings the notion that digital media and social media in particular has transformed the landscape of information dissemination. Offering unprecedented access, speed, and interaction on a global scale. It has also democratised access to knowledge, empowering individuals to seek and share information instantly across borders and cultures.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Facebook and WhatsApp powerful sources of news

In light of these research findings, the study recommends that media organisations should actively engage with young people on the pages. The research found that young people follow most local media organisations of Facebook, as such the study recommends media organisations should always post more content on their pages attract more people. Furthermore, the study also informs other stakeholders who would like to engage young people, that they should maximise the potential of social media. As revealed in the study young people see social media as a very flexible platform to get information as it is readily available and easily accessible regardless of where they are. When it comes to WhatsApp the study found out that some young people follow some media organisations on their WhatsApp channels. However, this researcher observed that local media organisations do not have WhatsApp channels where they can post their stories with links that leads to their websites. This something they can explore as they seek attract a wider audience and reach out to their youthful viewers.

5.5.2 Areas of further research

Studies on the influence and impact of social media as sources of news are scarcer; instead most studies focus on the dangers of when it comes to the distortion of information. The study revealed that young people regard themselves as the majority users of social media, and rightly so as the results indicated that most of them have smartphones and thus have access to social media platforms like Facebook &

WhatsApp. This explanatory sequential mixed method study aimed at intensely exploring the experiences and perspective of young people on the use of social media as sources of news in the town of Katima Mulilo. Thus the findings of the study are based on the perceptions of young people in the urban area, results from the rural areas maybe different, where many still face network difficulties. Additionally, the study focused at young people aged 18-35, further studies can look at how the use of Facebook and WhatsApp as sources of news has influenced the older generation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Field Sheet for Data Collection

Questionnaire questions

1. How often do you get news from Facebook?

Very often	Often	Sometimes	Not all the time
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2. How often do you get news on WhatsApp?

Very often	Often	Sometimes	Not all the time
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3. What type of news do you get on Facebook or WhatsApp?

Local News	National News	International News	All types of News
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4. How do you choose your sources on Facebook?

I go to pages of traditional media organisations	I read news from random sources	I read news shared by other users	I don't care who the source is
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5. How do you ensure that the news you consume is not fake?

I follow accredited media organisations	I ask from other people	I don't confirm whether it is fake or not	I believe everything I read
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6. How important is Facebook as your source of news?

Very Important	Important	Least Important	Not Important
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7. How often do you share the news you get from Facebook or WhatsApp with others?

All the time	Often	Sometimes	I don't share
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8. Would you recommend others to get their news on WhatsApp or Facebook?

Most Definitely	Definitely	Maybe	Not at all
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9. Which platform would you consider flexible to get your news?

Facebook/WhatsApp	Print Newspaper	Television	Radio
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10. In your own view how has digital media and the presences social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp made news consumption easier?

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Questions for face to face interviews

1. How would you describe the importance of Facebook and WhatsApp as your source of News?
2. How do you select your sources of news on Facebook?
3. How do you ensure that you don't fall prey to fake news?
4. How has the use of Facebook and WhatsApp changed your attitude and behaviour, has it influenced you to behave in different way?
5. What role has Facebook and WhatsApp played when it comes to news consumption, compared to the traditional way of reading printed newspapers, or listening to radio or watching news on TV?
6. What are your views on use of digital media and it is future potential?