



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## COPYRIGHT AND CITATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS THESIS/ DISSERTATION



- Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
- NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.
- ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

### How to cite this thesis

Surname, Initial(s). (2012). Title of the thesis or dissertation (Doctoral Thesis / Master's Dissertation). Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg. Available from: <http://hdl.handle.net/102000/0002> (Accessed: 22 August 2017).

# **The use of Facebook to co-create Brand Stories for a Business-to-Business Market among SMEs in Namibia**

by

**Auguste Kandalindishi Fabian**

**217092601**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**MA in Marketing Communication (RD)**

in the

**Department of Strategic Communications**

of the

**Faculty of Humanities**

at the

**University of Johannesburg**

**Supervisor: Dr Maritha Pritchard**

**Co-supervisor: Dr Abyshey Nhedzi**

**31 January 2020**

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr Maritha Pritchard, who has been there from the very start of my journey to the very end. You have been my source of motivation and I will be forever grateful for all the time, energy and expert advice that you have invested in me. Thank you so much.

I wish to extend my sincerest appreciation to my co-supervisor, Dr Ayshey Nhedzi, for the invaluable support, expert advice and for always availing yourself to assist me during my journey. I am eternally grateful. Thank you for your words of encouragement at all times.

To Patrick Healy, thank you for all your writing expertise and for helping me discover my academic voice of expression.

I would like to express my great appreciation to all the participants of this study. Thank you for your willingness to share your knowledge and experience in my study.

To my dearest Mama-Bear, Meme Saima Ndeshipanda ya Shimpanda, thank you so much for being the pillar of my strength and my cheerleader, “I am because you are”.

I wish to acknowledge the support and great love of my family and friends for the words of encouragement and emotional support during this journey. A special thanks to my friends, Rosalia, Salatiel and Fransina, for always giving me that nudge on the shoulder when I needed it most.

Above all, I would like to thank the lord almighty God for the opportunity of life and for protecting me throughout this journey. There were times when my only source of hope and strength was prayer!

**Psalm 91**

## Abstract

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are considered the backbone of a country's development and their contribution to job creation is undeniable. Mainly as a result of their contribution to the overall development, SMEs in developing countries such as Namibia have to fully explore the marketing opportunities available on the social media sphere. However, this has been a challenge due to the lack of locally produced and published research within the social media discourse. In order to determine how SMEs in Namibia use Facebook to co-create/collaborate brand stories for a business-to-business (B2B) market, a study was conducted in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia.

The research was conducted among employees responsible for social media management in SMEs across Namibia and a sequential mixed methods design was adopted from the philosophy of pragmatism. The research consisted of a purposive sample of ten participants for the qualitative phase employing semi-structured in-depth interviews. The quantitative phase consisted of 150 participants purposefully for the survey questionnaire.

The research was centred around three theoretical concepts: brand storytelling, B2B marketing, co-creation or collaboration. Research on this topic was relatively new, hence the exploratory nature. Research on brand stories co-creation has been mainly explored from the business-to-consumer (B2C) perspective and rarely explored from the B2B point of view.

The results implied that most SMEs in Namibia's B2B market strategically use Facebook to maximise business exposure and engage in cost-effective marketing. The findings also suggest a growing interest in collaboration activities on Facebook among SMEs in Namibia. Ten brand story elements were identified as part of a good brand story on Facebook.

The findings of this research will contribute to the scant body of knowledge in the B2B industry and may further be explored for future studies on similar topics.

## Table of Contents

<b>Affidavit .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of tables.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of figures.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Rationale of the research.....	1
1.3. Problem statement of this study.....	2
1.4. Research questions.....	3
1.5. Research aim and objectives.....	3
1.5.1. Sub-objectives.....	4
1.6. Research methodology and design for the study.....	4
1.7. Delimitations of the study.....	4
1.8. Definition of key terms.....	5
1.9. Outline of research report.....	6
1.10. Summary of the chapter.....	7
<b>CHAPTER 2. CO-CREATING BRAND STORIES FOR THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKET ON SOCIAL NETWORKS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. Introduction.....	8
2.2. An overview of Facebook as a social networking platform.....	8
2.2.1. Marketing your business on Facebook.....	10
2.2.2. Facebook marketing features and services.....	12
2.3. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs).....	13
2.3.1. Overview of SMEs in Namibia.....	13
2.4. Building business relationships on Facebook.....	14
2.4.1. The role of B2B social media marketing for SMEs on Facebook.....	15
2.5. Brand storytelling.....	16

2.5.1. Essence of stories .....	16
2.5.2. Storytelling for business brands .....	16
2.5.3. Elements of a brand story .....	17
2.5.3.1. The role of visuals in social media stories .....	19
2.5.4. Brand-storytelling for SMEs on Facebook.....	20
2.6. Co-creation process in business .....	21
2.6.1. The essence of co-creation .....	22
2.6.2. B2B collaboration on Social media platforms .....	24
2.7. Theoretical background .....	25
2.8. Summary of the chapter .....	27
<b>CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1. Introduction.....	28
3.2. Research philosophy .....	29
3.3. Research approach .....	29
3.4. Research design .....	31
3.5. Population and sampling.....	32
3.5.1. Sampling design .....	33
3.5.2. Sampling criteria .....	35
3.5.2.1. Qualitative sample.....	36
3.5.2.2. Quantitative sample.....	36
3.6. Data collection .....	37
3.6.1. Qualitative data collection.....	37
3.6.2. Quantitative data collection.....	39
3.7. Data analysis .....	40
3.7.1. Qualitative data analysis.....	40
3.7.2. Quantitative data analysis.....	44
3.8. Trustworthiness of qualitative study .....	44
3.8.1. Credibility.....	44
3.8.2. Confirmability .....	44
3.8.3. Dependability .....	45

3.9. Validity and reliability of quantitative study .....	45
3.9.1. Validity.....	45
3.9.2. Reliability.....	46
3.10. Research ethics .....	46
3.10.1. Informed consent for interviews .....	47
3.10.2. Confidentiality and anonymity.....	47
3.10.3. Permission granted and data management .....	48
3.11. Limitations of the study .....	48
3.12. Summary of the chapter.....	49

## **CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION... 50**

4.1. Introduction.....	50
4.2. Demographic profile of the research participants.....	50
4.3. An overview of the themes and sub-themes .....	52
4.4. Theme 1: Essential elements of an effective brand story .....	54
4.4.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Using a clear and strategic message .....	55
4.4.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Using pictures, videos and typography.....	56
4.4.3. Sub-theme 1.3: Combining structured indices to influence audience opinions and attitudes .....	56
4.4.4. Sub-theme 1.4: Seeking audience emotional reactions.....	57
4.4.5. Sub-theme 1.5: Developing a brand story with familiar local archetypes .....	57
4.4.6. Sub-theme 1.6: Using a storyline concept.....	58
4.4.7. Sub-theme 1.7: Use of current and informative news story content .....	58
4.4.8. Sub-theme 1.8: Using actors to attract attention to your brand.....	59
4.4.9. Sub-theme 1.9: Using original story narratives in SME stories.....	59
4.4.10. Sub-theme 1.10: Using stories that focus on the growth of an organisation.....	59
4.4.11. Interpretation of Theme 1.....	60
4.5. Theme 2: Facebook features and services .....	60
4.5.1. Sub-theme 2.1: Use of Facebook boosting/sponsoring feature.....	61
4.5.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Using tags and post re-sharing as referrals .....	62
4.5.3. Sub-theme 2.3: Use of 24-hour Facebook stories for ephemeral content marketing....	63
4.5.4. Sub-theme 2.4: Using Facebook exposure to attract and engage a larger B2B online audience.....	63

4.5.5. Sub-theme 2.5: Taking advantage of cost-effective engagement .....	64
4.5.6. Sub-theme 2.6: Using Facebook analytics to determine effective B2B market engagement.....	65
4.5.7. Sub-theme 2.7: Use of Facebook Live tool to market live events .....	65
4.5.8. Interpretation of Theme 2: Facebook features and services.....	66
4.6. Theme 3: B2B collaborations on events and general business activities .....	66
4.6.1. Sub-theme 3.1: Creating referral links between Facebook pages .....	67
4.6.2. Sub-theme 3.2: SMEs co-hosting events and collectively posting on Facebook.....	68
4.6.3. Sub-theme 3.3: Using B2B endorsement deals.....	68
4.6.4. Interpretation of Theme 3: B2B collaboration on events and general business activities .....	69
4.7. Theme 4: Use of B2B collaboration for advertising the products or services.....	70
4.7.1. Sub-theme 4.1: Creating B2B SME hubs on Facebook for easy product access and extended exposure .....	70
4.7.2. Sub-theme 4.2: Joint B2B advertising campaign.....	71
4.7.3. Interpretation of Theme 4: B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services	71
4.8. Theme 5: Challenges experienced by SMEs' use of Facebook for B2B.....	72
4.8.1. Sub-theme 5.1: Reputation harm associated with collaborating brands .....	73
4.8.2. Sub-theme 5.2: Challenges experienced in SME Facebook optimisation due to lack of limited technical skills.....	73
4.8.3. Sub-theme 5.3: The culture of competition amongst SMEs influences B2B collaboration.....	74
4.8.4. Interpretation of theme 5 .....	74
4.9. Theme 6: Recommendations for effective B2B storytelling and collaboration for SMEs on Facebook.....	75
4.9.1. Sub-theme 6.1: Implementing dedicated and knowledgeable social media functions for SMEs .....	76
4.9.2. Sub-theme 6.2: Using group effort to drive business.....	76
4.9.3. Sub-theme 6.3: B2B-focused familiarisation.....	77
4.9.4. Interpretation of Theme 6: recommendations for effective B2B storytelling and collaboration for SMEs on Facebook.....	77
4.10. Summary of the chapter.....	78



## **CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION 79**

5.1. Introduction.....	79
5.2. Demographic profile of the research respondents .....	79
5.2.1. Gender of respondents.....	79
5.2.2. Highest academic qualification .....	80
5.2.3. Race.....	80
5.2.4. Work experience in social media management roles for an organisation.....	80
5.2.5. Current job classification .....	81
5.2.6. Position currently served in the organisation .....	81
5.2.7. Length of time employed in this post.....	81
5.2.8. Length of time working for current organisation .....	82
5.2.9. Number of employees working in organisation .....	82
5.2.10.Length of time working in Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing for SMEs.....	82
5.2.11.Area in which SME is located.....	83
5.3. SME social media use.....	84
5.3.1. Social media platforms used by the organisations .....	84
5.4. Brand storytelling on Facebook.....	84
5.4.1. Brand storytelling on Facebook .....	85
5.5. SMEs' Facebook page features.....	89
5.6. Type of business to business marketing collaborations of SMEs using Facebook .....	90
5.7. Summary of the chapter.....	93

## **CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 94**

6.1. Introduction.....	94
6.2. Overview of the study.....	94
6.3. Conclusions based on the overall literature review and theoretical positioning.....	94
6.4. Conclusions on the sequential mixed methods design.....	95
6.5. Conclusion for research sub-objective 1 .....	95
6.6. Conclusion for research sub-objective 2.....	96
6.7. Conclusion for research sub-objective 3.....	97
6.8. Recommendations for further research.....	99
6.9. Recommendations for industry .....	100
6.10. Summary of the chapter.....	100

**References..... 101**  
**Appendices..... 118**



## List of tables

Table 2.1: Four-story themes and nine-story elements .....	17
Table 2.2: Elements of well-developed brand stories derived from storytelling literature.....	18
Table 2.3: Visual element classifications.....	20
Table 2.4: Five stage process model of social media-based co-creation moves from imperative instructions to infinitive purpose.....	23
Table 3.1: Social research philosophies: Positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism.....	29
Table 3.2: Exploratory sequential mixed design used in this study.....	32
Table 4.1: Demographical information of the interview participants for the qualitative phase of the research .....	51
Table 4.2: Overall themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis .....	52
Table 4.3: Theme 1 – Essential elements of an effective brand story and supporting sub-themes .....	54
Table 4.4: Theme 2 – Facebook features and services and supporting sub-themes .....	60
Table 4.5: Theme 3 – B2B collaborations on events and general business activities and supporting sub-themes .....	67
Table 4.6: Theme 4 – Use of B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services and supporting sub-themes .....	70
Table 4.7: Theme 5 – Challenges experienced by SMEs’ use of Facebook for B2B and supporting sub-themes .....	72
Table 4.8: Theme 6 – Recommendations for effective B2B storytelling for SMEs on Facebook and supporting sub-themes.....	76
Table 5.1: Mean score results for brand storytelling on facebook.....	86
Table 5.2: Mean scores results on Facebook page.....	89
Table 5.3. Percentage results on the type of collaborations on Facebook .....	91
Table 6.1: Brand story elements .....	97
Table 6.2: Co-created storytelling narratives.....	99

## List of figures

Figure 5.1: Age distribution of respondents.....	80
Figure 5.2: Results on the position of the respondent at the SME.....	81
Figure 5.3: Results on the number of employees at the SME.....	82
Figure 5.4: Results on the number of years in the B2B market.....	83
Figure 5.5: Results on social media platforms use.....	84
Figure 5.6: The most effective stories.....	85
Figure 5.7: The use of SMEs' Facebook page features .....	89
Figure 5.8: Results on the type of collaboratory partnerships of SMEs in Windhoek with other businesses.....	91



# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

## 1.1. Introduction

Social network sites (SNSs) have become a standard feature in the day-to-day lives for billions of people internationally. Not everyone uses the same sites, nor are sites functionally equivalent in the eyes of users. The various sites may provide different features that attract various audiences, yet users tend to favour a few leading social networking sites, such as Facebook, the world's reigning social network site (Essoungou, 2010; StatCounter, 2017; Shiau, Dwivedi & Lai, 2018; Statista, 2019). In fact, the use of SNSs now constitutes the most popular internet activity in many countries, including Namibia. The next section discusses the rationale of the study.

## 1.2. Rationale of the research

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are fundamental for the economic growth of a country, especially that of a developing country such as Namibia. According to Ogbokor and Ngeendepi (2012:5), SMEs in Namibia provide employment and income to 160,000 people, representing approximately one-third of the country's workforce.

A study by Al-Sadani (2015) focused on the effectiveness of social media networking sites as the main marketing tool for SMEs without considering business-to-business (B2B) marketing. Consequently, the current study fills a gap in the literature as it has explored how SMEs in Namibia use Facebook to co-create or collaborate brand stories for a B2B market. The issue is further explored in relation to brand stories co-creation and SMEs in Namibia.

In recent times, social networks have proven to be a potentially essential tool for any organisation that is run in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Tan, Li, Correia, Medina, Romo & Contreras-Espinosa, 2014; Baruah, 2012) and therefore, SMEs are no exception. Social networks consist of a variety of components that can support organisations with co-creating business-to-business storytelling.

Despite the growing interest in Facebook use for both individual and business as observed by the current researcher, research on the said topic has not been documented at any research institution in Namibia to date. The existing documented research on social networks has not focused on the Marketing Communication discipline, but rather on the politics and education disciplines, for example the study on the effectiveness of social media in Namibia's 2009 elections: perspective on political parties by Nabulyato (2014), and the study on social media and police-community relations:

a case study of the Namibian police force's Facebook page by Kapitako (2016). Due to the paucity of academic research on this topic, the motivation arose to unearth new discoveries and knowledge on the topic.

Facebook pages for SMEs, such as Toria Boutique Windhoek (2019) which has over 12 000 followers and YouNique Medi Spa and IV Clinic (2019) which has over 5000 followers are some of Namibia's SME Facebook accounts that have been visible on Facebook and other social networking platforms. It is with reference to pages such as these that the researcher became interested on the phenomenon at hand. These SMEs use their Facebook account tools to interact with the public and to share stories, latest promotions, etc.

According to Shenck (2017), large corporations normally have large marketing teams consisting of the head of marketing and other management experts, such as social media marketing managers, in comparison to SMEs that often place the responsibility for overseeing all marketing activities (including social media) with top management, most likely the owner/s of the business.

### **1.3. Problem statement of this study**

The literature on how SMEs in Namibia can use social networks, particularly Facebook, as a B2B brand storytelling platform is scarce. This study explored how SMEs in Namibia can use Facebook to co-create brand stories for a B2B market.

The importance of B2B marketing on social network platforms for SMEs and other organisations is supported by Stelzner (2017) and Mershon (2012). Facebook has continuously been recognised as the most popular social network platform used by organisations globally, as supported by Hammett (2016), Statista (2019) and Stelzner (2016) and Stelzner (2017). Thus, because it is prevalent, it can be effective in brand storytelling and organisations can use Facebook as an effective brand storytelling platform. Additionally, Facebook is easy to navigate and it offers diverse engagement options such as videos, written status, stories, and go-live options.

Numerous researchers, such as Cawsey and Rowley (2016), and Dahnil, Marzuki, Langgat and Fabeil (2014), postulated that scholarly research on the effective use of B2B and social network marketing by organisations, in general, is scant and under-developed. This was further expanded on by Bernard (2016), who suggested that marketing managers using B2B strategies on social networks do not have a comprehensive understanding of its benefits.

Co-creation and storytelling are relatively new paradigms and emerging areas of research that need further exploration to contribute to scholarly literature. A significant contribution to the co-creation

phenomenon was explored by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004:6-7) using four building blocks: dialogue, access, transparency, and risk to analyse co-creation. The co-creation concept was further expanded by Sanders and Stappers (2008), Singh and Sonnenburg (2012), Bertilsson and Cassinger (2011), and Ind, Iglesias and Schultz (2013), among others. Literature by Serrat (2008), Hestad (2013), Spear and Roper (2013) as well as Slade-Brooking (2016) supports brand storytelling as an important tool that is practised to distinguish an organisation's unique brand identity from that of other organisations. Judging from the literature, the two concepts, co-creation and storytelling, have rarely been combined.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that there was a need to conduct research in order to fill the literature gap, particularly in the Namibian context. The results obtained from this study can be used to make recommendations that may guide SMEs in incorporating and utilising Facebook as a brand storytelling platform to co-create B2B markets. The results also established the benefits of brand storytelling, which are covered in the findings and interpretation chapter. Additionally, brand managers from different SMEs can use the study's findings to recognise familiar trends from other SMEs that they can incorporate into their own B2B marketing strategies.

The next section discusses the research questions.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

The following was the main research question for the study:

- How do SMEs use Facebook to co-create brand stories for the B2B market in Namibia?

The following were the sub-research questions for the study:

- How do SMEs use Facebook for a B2B market in Namibia?
- How do SMEs use Facebook to co-create brand stories in Namibia?
- What are the elements of SME brand stories that are co-created in Namibia's B2B market on Facebook?

#### **1.5. Research aim and objectives**

The research aim entails a statement indicating the main goal or general purpose of a research project (Thomas & Hodges, 2010:38). According to Wentz (2014), a research objective is a declarative statement, describing the desired outcome based on facts, theories and methods.

The aim for this research was to determine how SMEs in Namibia use Facebook to co-create brand stories for a B2B market. The main research objective for this research was to determine how SMEs in Namibia can use Facebook to co-create brand stories for a B2B market.

### **1.5.1. Sub-objectives**

**Sub-objective 1:** To determine how SMEs use Facebook for a B2B market in Namibia.

**Sub-objective 2:** To determine how SMEs use Facebook to co-create brand stories in Namibia.

**Sub-objective 3:** To determine the elements of SME brand stories that are co-created in Namibia's B2B market on Facebook.

The next section discusses the research methodology of the study.

## **1.6. Research methodology and design for the study**

The research adopted a sequential mixed methods design, combining both positivism and interpretivism and complementarily using both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches, as clearly discussed in Chapter 3.

By adopting a sequential mixed methods design, data was collected from individuals responsible for the social media management function in SMEs. The qualitative phase consisted of a purposive sample of ten participants and incorporated semi-structured in-depth interviews and the quantitative phase consisted of 150 participants purposefully selected for the survey questionnaire. The qualitative data was analysed using Atlas ti software for windows and quantitative data was analysed used SPSS (IBM) version 26 software. The participants being referred to in this study are employees responsible for social media management at their respective SMEs. The study covered SMEs currently operating from Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia.

The next section discusses the delimitations of the study

### **1.7. Delimitations of the study**

The research focused on the use of Facebook to co-create brand stories for a B2B market among SMEs in Namibia. However, after the literature exploration, and guidance from the supervisor, it was decided that the terms collaboration and co-creation would be used simultaneously instead of just "co-creation". The reason for the change is further justified in the literature review (Chapter 2), under Section 2.6.1, the essence of co-creation. Furthermore, the findings are based on Facebook social media platforms only. Additionally, the B2B collaboration being referred to in the study is between



SMEs and other businesses whereby businesses were the clients and not customers, hence this study should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, SME operations that were not online were not considered in this study as the study focused on brand story telling within online Facebook and not on other social networking sites.

The next section defines the key terms of the study.

## 1.8. Definition of key terms

**Social networking sites** – web-based services that provide entities with the prospect of developing and publishing their profiles, as well as building connections with other users, (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2016; Hu & Wang, 2009).

**Facebook** – a website platform whereby a user can create an account, by providing basic information particulars such as name, date of birth, gender, among others, and choosing a password to secure account access which enables the user to start a profile, allowing them to network with other user profiles on the same platform (Caers, De Feyter, De Couck, Du Bois, Stough & Vigna, 2013:983-984).

**Co-creation** – the process whereby the exchange value is jointly created between organisations and consumers (Kent & Millspaugh, 2016; Bertilsson & Cassinger, 2011).

**Collaboration** – a process of creating and sharing experiences between two or more entities, which may involve a business and other businesses or individuals, (Drummond, McGrath & O'Toole, 2018:72)

**Business-to-business marketing** – all marketing and sales processes that are directed at businesses or other types of organisations (Kleinaltenkamp, Plinke, Wilkinson & Geiger, 2015; Guttman, 2018).

**Small and medium enterprises** – a small enterprise is a company that employs 11-30 employees and attains an annual turnover of up to R3 000 000. A medium enterprise is an entity that employs 31 to 100 employees and generates an annual turnover of up to R10 000 000 (MITSMED, 2015:7).

**Social media marketing** – all marketing and sales activities conducted by businesses on social media platforms to grow their customer base and boost brand exposure (Cant, 2016:79).

The next section outlines the research report framework.

## **1.9. Outline of research report**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction, Rationale and Problem Statement**

The first chapter has aimed at presenting the background to the research and why the topic chosen was of interest, what purpose the researcher aimed to achieve and the research questions constructed to achieve the purpose. Furthermore, the chapter has outlined the limitations of the study.

### **Chapter 2: Co-Creating Brand Stories for the Business-To-Business Market on Social Networks**

The second chapter focuses on the literature review. The researcher reviewed theoretical concepts which are discussed in this chapter with the aim of providing the reader with relevant sources on the research topic which guided the reader in gaining understanding of existing literature and debates surrounding the research topic.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The third chapter outlines the chosen methodological approaches. The chapter discusses in detail how the research was conducted, the type of research strategy the researcher pursued, and how the study was designed. The chapter also presents other components that contributed towards enhanced reliability and validity of the study.

### **Chapter 4: Discussion of Qualitative Findings and Interpretation**

The fourth chapter presents and interprets the empirical findings from the semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with participants (employees responsible for social media management in SMEs in the Namibian capital) in B2B marketing on Facebook. The chapter summarises participant profiles and discusses the results from the semi-structured in-depth interviews in line with research questions. Furthermore, the researcher interprets and evaluates the qualitative data in comparison to the literature reviewed.

### **Chapter 5: Discussion of Quantitative Findings and Interpretation**

The fifth chapter presents and interprets the empirical findings from the questionnaire hardcopies distributed to respondents (employees responsible for social media management in SMEs in the Namibian capital). The chapter summarises participant profiles and discusses the results from the

hard copy questionnaires in line with research questions. Furthermore, the researcher interprets and evaluates the quantitative data in comparison to the literature reviewed.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The sixth chapter presents the conclusions of the study and areas for future research. The chapter presents the answers in accordance with the research sub-objectives.

The list of references used in this master's dissertation are presented after this chapter. Appendices, including the research interview guide, questionnaire, pages from the research diary, permission from UJ's ethics committee, and Cronbach Alpha test results are also presented after Chapter 6.

### **1.10. Summary of the chapter**

This chapter introduced the research topic and discussed the rationale and problem statement that govern the research, based on the approved research proposal. This chapter further introduced the reader to the three theoretical concepts of the study, namely brand storytelling, B2B marketing, and co-creation, later referred to as collaboration.

It is worth noting that the nature of this study was exploratory and although the researcher explored sufficient literature on theoretical concepts (provided in Chapter 2) to inform the research, a resolution for this study, not to adapt a specific theoretical framework, was implemented. Instead, the research explored three theoretical concepts, namely brand storytelling, B2B marketing, and co-creation, later referred to as collaboration. The researcher's decision to explore theoretical concepts was motivated by the uniqueness of this research. The research topic presents an under-explored territory of scholarly research in Namibia. Hence, the chapter also highlighted the need for further exploration on the research topic. Furthermore, the chapter briefly outlined the scope and context of this research report.

The next chapter reviews and discusses the relevant literature of the research.

## **CHAPTER 2. CO-CREATING BRAND STORIES FOR THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKET ON SOCIAL NETWORKS**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on unpacking the literature relevant to understanding the three main theoretical concepts: brand storytelling, B2B marketing and co-creation or collaboration. It provides a detailed scholarly overview of the three concepts' relation to social networking sites (SNSs) or social media and specifically the use of Facebook by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for business purposes. In the same vein, the chapter also highlights the importance of Facebook to SMEs as well as reviews the role that SMEs play in Namibia. The chapter also discuss literature on the theoretical concepts of co-creation, brand storytelling, and B2B marketing. This chapter thus deals with the literature review of the study

### **2.2. An overview of Facebook as a social networking platform**

Facebook is an SNS, also referred to as social media, which was established in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his co-founders, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Savenin, and only had one million active users by 1 December 2004 (Britannica, 2019). Initially, Facebook was only open to educational institutions (Choudhury, 2018:79). Today, Facebook has transcended education institutional use and plays a significant role in the overall communication industry and has been adopted by the majority of the internet users (Alalwan, Algharabat, Rana & Tarhini 2016:79).

Facebook is a website platform whereby a user can create an account, after providing basic personal information (name, date of birth, gender, email address) and choosing a password to secure account access which enables a user to start a profile, allowing them to network with other user profiles on the same platform (Caers, et al., 2013:983-984). In the Web 2.0 discourse, reference to SNSs is often made interchangeably with social media (Stockdale, Ahmed & Scheepers, 2012). According to El Quirdi, El Quirdi, Henderickx and Segers (2014:123), social media is a set of mobile and web-based platforms built on Web 2.0 technologies, that allow users at the all levels of society to share and add geographical identifications to user-generated content, which is used to collaborate, and to build networks and communities. Similarly, Osborne-Gowey (2014) defined social media as an assemblage of websites and applications used for building and developing online communities for information sharing and networking.

SNSs, on the other hand, have been defined by Boyd and Ellison (2008:211) as web-based services that allow entities to create profiles within a confined system, communicate with other users within

their connections, as well as view and extend their list of connections with those established by others within the system. Similarly, Karpinska-Krakowiak (2016:204) defined SNSs as web-based services that provide entities with the prospect of developing and publishing their profiles, as well as building connections with additional audiences such as friends, fans, or followers. Correspondingly, Hu and Wang (2009:2) maintained that SNSs provide an online private space for entities and tools to interact with each other on the Internet.

According to Faulds and Mangold (2009:358), social media incorporates a wide range of online word-of-mouth forums such as blogs, company-sponsored discussion boards and chatrooms, consumer-to-consumer emails, consumer product and service rating sites and social networking sites, which can all be used to benefit businesses. Similarly, research by Haenlein and Kaplan (2010:60) identified and classified social media platforms into six categories, namely: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds.

The similarities in the definitions and characteristics of SNSs and social media are therefore evident in work by Osborne-Gowey (2014), Boyd and Ellison (2008), Karpinska-Krakowiak (2016) as well as Hu and Wang (2009), and the two concepts have often been used interchangeably when referring to the same meaning. Diverging slightly from this consensus, Haenlein and Kaplan (2010:60) defined SNS as a subset of social media. For the purposes of this study, the researcher adopted the term social media platform when referring to Facebook.

Businesses are forming social media departments and hiring qualified social media managers or analysts, separate from those of the traditional marketing and advertising departments (Fowdar & Ramsaran-Fowdar 2013:73). This study therefore also explored the expertise of the parties who are responsible for social media management in different SMEs, especially in terms of content creation and storytelling.

Research by Shiau et al. (2018:52) as well as Statista (2019) also noted that Facebook is regarded as the most common social media platform worldwide. In 2017, Facebook recorded 2.05 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2019). As of 31 March 2019, Facebook monthly active users had increased to 2.38 billion averaging 1.56 daily active users (Facebook, 2019).

In Africa, Facebook has been the most popular social media platform for some time, as initially established in a study by Essoungou (2010:3). In 2017, Facebook was still the most used social media platform in Africa with 66% of internet users signed up, followed by YouTube with 25.35%, (StatCounter, 2017).

Although, Facebook has an impressive track record of holding the highest number of active users and subscribers across the globe and in Africa at large, according to the Internet World Stats website (2018), only 520 000 of all these Facebook subscribers are from Namibia. This number may be considered relatively small in comparison to Facebook subscribers in the neighbouring South Africa which has a population of 55.6 million (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2016) and a total number of 16.9 million subscribers (Statista, 2019). This is largely due to the fact that the Namibian population is relatively small with only 2 368 747 people and 797, 027 internet users (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014:11). It is fair to say the two countries are not on the same level in terms of Facebook adoption.

After reviewing the literature by El Quirdi et al. (2014) and Stockdale et al. (2012), it is evident that Web 2.0 has paved a way for the emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, which offer a wide range of benefits and practices for different business entities. Furthermore, research by Essoungou (2010:3), StatCounter (2017), Shiau et al. (2018:52) and Statista (2019) has confirmed Facebook to be the most dominant social media platform across the globe, establishing a presence that has become an integral part of society and motivating further research, especially in the African business context. It is for this reason that the researcher explored the literature on marketing tools and opportunities available to businesses on Facebook.

### **2.2.1. Marketing your business on Facebook**

Most businesses are creating online identities on social media platforms such as Facebook in order to interact and build relationships with their target market (Rizomyliotis, Konstantoulaki & Kostopoulos, 2017:82). This has led to businesses engaging in social media marketing (SMM), which is defined by Cant (2016:79) as “marketing whereby a company uses established social media tools with the aim to increase its customer base and enhance brand exposure”. When compared to traditional marketing forms, social media offers consumers more interaction and has the power to influence a larger number of consumers within different user channels such as smartphones, laptops and iPads (Stueber & Wurth, 2017). Hence, traditional marketing is now being substituted with the more cost-effective and result-oriented form of marketing which is digital marketing (Heggde & Shainesh, 2018:12; Rugova & Prenaj, 2016:92). According to a report published by Statista (2019:25), some of the benefits of SMM experienced by businesses include increased exposure, increased traffic, generated leads, improved sales, increased loyal fans (followers) and receiving marketplace insights. Correspondingly, Rugova and Prenaj (2016:93-94) also highlighted increased brand exposure, increased traffic, generated leads, market insights, customer interaction and marketing effectiveness as some of the benefits of social media marketing for SME businesses.

Furthermore, Faulds and Mangold (2009) encouraged organisations to implement new integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies that incorporate social media as a hybrid component of the promotional mix, allowing marketing managers to have control over the content, timing and rate at which information is being transmitted.

Research by Heggde and Shainesh (2018:13) argued that SMM makes marketing affordable, thus it enables small organisations such as SMEs to upgrade their marketing strategies as well as offer their products and services globally. However, although social media platforms provide benefits for small organisations such as SMEs, there are also some challenges associated with social media management. This is usually due to the lack of human capital resources such as skilled social media managers to manage social media presence on a daily basis (Rugova & Prenaj 2016:95). Research by Cole, DeNardin and Clow (2017:210) indicated that SMEs often try to adopt the SMM strategies used by larger brands, but may lack the skills and expertise required to make it achievable. Correspondingly, Vuori and Jussila (2016:35) argued that most business-focused managers have not yet expanded their understanding on the use of social media and still lack the knowledge of how and why social media tools could be utilised for business growth.

Furthermore, Shehu (2018:164) suggested that SMM provides Namibian SMEs with the opportunity to reach a larger audience at a relatively low cost compared to traditional media. However, when not used efficiently, SMM in SMEs may also potentially lead to reputational damage (Rugova & Prenaj, 2016:95).

Based on the reviewed literature (Heggde & Shainesh 2018:12-13; Cant, 2016:79), SMM is instrumental for business success. Although there are some challenges associated with SMM, as identified by Shehu (2018:164), Rugova and Prenaj (2016:95), as well as Vuori and Jussila (2016:35), most B2B companies embrace the free marketing opportunities and free tools offered on social media platforms (Batum & Ersoy, 2016:145).

Facebook is considered by marketers all over the world to be the preferred platform for business marketing (Stelzner, 2016:5; Guttman, 2018). Considering the focus of this research to determine how SMEs in Namibia use the Facebook social media platform, it is evident that social media marketing plays an integral part in literature. The next section therefore explores Facebook marketing features and services adopted by businesses.

### **2.2.2. Facebook marketing features and services**

In order to ensure effective SMM on Facebook, a business has to fully understand the type of features and services offered by Facebook. Facebook offers a variety of tools through which marketing objectives can be achieved, such as Facebook profile, Facebook groups, business pages, sharing events, social ads & polls and Facebook messages, (Fowdar & Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2013:75). For a business to make use of social marketing tools, they have to start with creating a Facebook page, which Kelsey (2017:33) defined as a central hub for a business or non-profit organisation created for the sole purpose of establishing a social media presence on Facebook. Typically, a Facebook page for a business will consist of various components, such as profile picture, cover picture, an about section (brief bio about the company), contact information, posts to page, liked by this page (brand pages that your brand page follows), a settings page, wall and pinned posts (Zimmerman & Ng, 2015:338-349). Another component of a business page is tabs which are typically comprised of polls, quizzes, photo albums and videos as well as other apps that page followers may click to engage with a particular brand (Zimmerman & Ng, 2015:349). According to Cho, Park and Kim (2015:859), page followers may click the like or share button to show support of or interest in particular content uploaded on a business Facebook page.

Additionally, research conducted by Aryal (2012:44) indicates that Facebook is an effective marketing channel that can be utilised by many organisations as it offers wide-ranging features. Due to its many features, such as live video streaming, Facebook is also recommended as the most suitable platform for storytelling in B2B marketing (Hammett, 2016). Facebook launched a Facebook Live video streaming feature in 2016 (Mowat, 2018:77), a feature that allows individuals to publicly broadcast live video streams while also utilising shared chat rooms for communication with other users (Wang, 2019). According to Hunter (2019), live streaming also provides the user with the ability to create a sense of proximity to a particular event. The proximity being referred to basically means the followers sharing the live stream start to feel like they are present at the actual event.

Apart from the live streaming, Facebook has other features, such as 24-hour stories and Facebook boosting. The Facebook 24-hour stories are a form of ephemeral content that was introduced by Facebook in 2017 (Facebook, 2019). Ephemeral social media is social media that automatically deletes content after a prescribed time, (Bennett & Wakefield, 2017:147). Although Bayer, Ellison, Schoenebeck and Falk (2016:956) suggested that the use of ephemeral social media platforms that display shared content for a selected period of time is an essential element for every business in the social media sphere, this has not been investigated in the Namibian context. Therefore, such an assumption might not be applicable to SMEs in a developing country such as Namibia.



Facebook boosting, on the other hand, is a feature that allows users to enhance the potential of a post's reach and likes through selecting and managing an advertising budget option suitable for the results desired (Marshall, Krance & Meloche, 2017). The use of Facebook features is found to contribute to user impression formulations (Walther, Van der Heide, Hamel & Shulman, 2009) promoting both paid and organic social media content.

Paid social media content refers to when an advertiser pays for content created on a social media platform whilst organic social media content refers to brand communications that are not paid for by the advertisers when created on a social media platform (Fulgoni, 2015). According to Ng and Zimmerman (2015:366), Facebook insights also assist businesses in determining the number of organic likes versus the paid likes on the posted content. Organic likes are achieved via audiences that land on a business page on their own and paid likes are achieved through audiences brought in by paid advertising (Ng & Zimmerman, 2015:366). Both paid content posts and organic post content on Facebook aim to market the brand business and all form components of SMM. The next section explores the nature of B2B relationships amongst SMEs.

### **2.3. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)**

Considering that the theoretical concepts of co-creation, storytelling and B2B marketing are relatively new in a developing country such as Namibia, it is not surprising that there is limited scholarly research covering the use of Facebook in relation to the theoretical concepts being discussed. Research on Namibian SMEs by Jauch (2010), Ogbokor and Ngeendepi (2012), Kambwale and Chisoro (2015), Chakraborty, Mutingi and Vashishth (2019) and Baporikar, Nambira and Gomxos (2016) focused on investigating the role of SMEs in the country's development agenda, examining challenges experienced as well as quality management practices. The only notable scholarly research conducted that covered a few aspects on SMEs and the use of social media was that of Shehu (2018), which focused on formalising SMM strategies for Namibian SMEs. This is a distinct research question from what this study aimed to investigate. Owing to the above discussion, it was therefore imperative to first explore the overall state of SME's in Namibia, which is presented in the next section.

#### **2.3.1. Overview of SMEs in Namibia**

The national policy on micro, small and medium enterprises in Namibia describes a small enterprise as a company that employs 11-30 employees and attains an annual turnover of up to R3 000 000, whereas a medium enterprise is an entity that employs 31 to 100 employees and generates an annual

turnover of up to R10 000 000 (MITSMED, 2015:7). The definition of Namibian SMEs is based on the number of employees and annual sales turnover as the measuring criteria for size classification.

In 2014, 17,564 SMEs were registered in Namibia, of which 8, 596 were recorded in the Khomas region alone (MITSMED, 2014:1). During 2015, the number of new SMEs in the Khomas region increased with 2150 entries (MITSMED, 2015). The number was further augmented in 2016 with 2374 new registered SMEs (MITSMED, 2016) for this region alone.

Besides their critical and positive contributions to the developing economies in Africa, Muriithi (2017:36) argued that SMEs still face numerous challenges ranging from lack of capital, poor management skills and competencies, power shortages, inadequate information and corruption. Similarly, Beck (2007:1) suggested financial constraints as one the main challenges experienced by SMEs in developing countries. Another notable dynamic is that most SMEs in Africa are owned by men (Irene, 2016:1122). The gender dynamics in the Namibian SME industry have not yet been established; however, data from the research may depict gender-related data.

Since literature suggests that Facebook is the preferred social network platform for storytelling in B2B marketing (Hammett, 2016; Statista, 2019; and Stelzner, 2016:5), it is necessary to discuss the benefits thereof with SME brands in Namibia. The adaptation of social media and the use of social media in SMEs within the African context, specifically Facebook, is under-explored compared to the developed world, (Europe, Asia and America). Hence, there is a gap in the literature as studies on SMEs in the developed world cannot be generalised to those in Africa, or Namibia to be more specific.

#### **2.4. Building business relationships on Facebook**

Building and maintaining business relationships is imperative to both small and large organisations. Organisations utilise a variety of social media platforms for business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing purposes. B2B marketing was defined by Kleinaltenkamp et al. (2015:129) as all marketing and sales processes that aim at businesses or other types of organisations, including government institutions. Similarly, Guttman (2018) also defined B2B marketing as “commercial transactions between business organizations e.g. manufacturers and suppliers, manufacturers and retailers, or employing third-party service providers”. B2C marketing, on the other hand, was defined by Hom (2013) as a commerce transaction in which businesses (manufacturers or retailers) sell products or services to consumers.

The definitions for B2B and B2C discussed above were also supported by Kumar and Raheja (2012:447) who noted that B2B marketing refers to organisations that focus on marketing their

products or services solely to other organisations, whilst B2C referred to organisations that focus on marketing their products and services directly to consumers. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on B2B marketing with an emphasis on how SME brands co-create brand stories with other brands for the market.

As supported by Mershon (2012), using social media for B2B marketing is highly beneficial for SMEs to attract new business opportunities, and established B2B markets will often acquire new business partnerships through social networks. Similarly, Stelzner (2017:14-15) suggested that increased business exposure, developing loyal followers and improved sales are some of the benefits of B2B marketing on social media. The metrics available through Facebook allow SMEs to estimate the amount of traffic, interest and sales produced through their social media marketing efforts (Cole et al., 2017:210). The next section discusses the nature of B2B social media marketing for SMEs on Facebook.

#### **2.4.1. The role of B2B social media marketing for SMEs on Facebook**

The rise of online B2B marketing has been strongly influenced by consumer trends in marketing, such as easy internet accessibility as well as the increased use of smartphones, which also have an influence on the amount of time spent online by a particular target audience (Rizomyliotis et al., 2017:80-81). According to Brennan and Croft (2013), SMEs in the B2B industry capitalise on these trends, using Facebook to attract new clients, cultivate relationships, increase awareness and communicate their brand content online.

Findings from research conducted by Barlow and McCann (2015:282) clearly emphasise the importance of social media for SMEs as it enables them to build relationships with customers and increases brand awareness, whilst showcasing expertise and gaining new contacts. The findings from Barlow and McCann's (2015) research are similarly aligned to those highlighted by Bhagwat and Goutam (2013), and Weston (2008).

Apart from the benefits, Fowdar and Ramsaran-Fowdar (2013:78) also highlighted negative outcomes that are associated with using Facebook marketing, which include Facebook users opting to ignore Facebook marketing due to excessive advertisements on their walls, privacy violations and abuse of information by third parties that are associated with Facebook marketing.

According to Van Belleghem (2011), a social media user follows a brand on a social media platform each and every second. Through this, the power of the impact of social media on branding is

demonstrated. With all that said, it is evident that social media plays a role in overall brand storytelling and there is need to explore brand storytelling in the B2B sphere.

## **2.5. Brand storytelling**

The main focus of this study was to determine how SMEs co-create their brand stories for the B2B market on Facebook. Brand stories are derived from the concept of storytelling, which formed one of the essential theoretical concepts for this study. In order to understand brand storytelling, it is necessary to unpack the essence of a story.

### **2.5.1. Essence of stories**

People have been telling stories since the beginning of time. A story is defined as “series of events in a specific order, with a beginning, middle and an end” (Bennet & Royle, as cited in Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016: 117). Correspondingly, Aaker and Aaker (2016:50) also defined a story as a narrative that consists of a beginning, middle and end although not always portrayed in that exact order. According to Sibierska (2017:48), stories are formed from conceptual arrangements of events. Therefore, sharing stories of our experiences makes it easier to understand and explain the conflicts of our daily lives (Fog, Budtz, Munch & Blanchette, 2010:18). The process of storytelling will be discussed below

### **2.5.2. Storytelling for business brands**

Storytelling is defined as a process of composing narratives via a given medium (Sibierska, 2017:48). Storytelling has the power to strengthen a brand both internally and externally (Fog et al., 2010:23), and it allows organisations to transmit messages to their consumers in a storyline format on branded content (Dessart & Pitardi, 2019:6). According to Mancuso and Stuth (2014), the process of storytelling entails the transmission of messages and distributing accumulated information insights to help navigate and elucidate the world around us. The main goal of storytelling in an organisation is to serve an entertainment purpose or to communicate valuable information (Perkins, 2015:275).

Organisations may use storytelling to communicate subjective and objective information, regarding values and culture as well as strengths and problems with brands (Granitz & Forman, 2015:40-41). Stories communicated by the organisation are part of the storytelling process for that particular brand. Forming brand stories gradually become synonymous with how individuals and products become symbols that we use to tell the story of the organisation (Fog et al., 2010:22).

According to Karpinska-Krakiwiak (2016:204), social media platforms such as Facebook are mainly used by businesses to facilitate many relationships with their different followers. Most of these

relationships are formed through the process of storytelling. By incorporating storytelling in their brand strategies, Bates (2016) suggested that SMEs can further enhance revenue and brand loyalty. Correspondingly, Fog et al. (2010:54-55) suggested that in order to adopt effective storytelling, businesses need to implement a holistic approach inclusive of storytelling as both a branding concept and a communication tool. Furthermore, Adamson, Kroupa, Pine and Van Steenhoven (2006) recommend the use of storytelling in the formulation of a business strategy, as stories capture the imagination and evoke feelings for both employees and customers. The next section discusses brand story elements adopted by organisations when engaging in the storytelling process.

### 2.5.3. Elements of a brand story

Research by Moore and Reid (2008) suggests that brands and branding have existed since the ancient world for over 4000 years. A brand is defined by Slade-Brooking (2016:12) as the attachment of a name and reputation to something or someone, primarily to distinguish it from the competition. Branding refers to “the process of bringing attention to a product, company, concept, person or cause” (Schroeder, 2015:2).

According to Thier (2018:33), strong brands are built on their product or service quality and influenced by stories that are told about them through a range of media such as via word of mouth and social media platforms. The brand story notion developed as a key marketing construct used by consumers in interpreting their experiences with a particular brand via narrative processing (Granitz & Forman, 2015:38). In recent years, the brand story concept has broadened its spectrum from the main focus on consumer interpretations to the organisation’s narrative. Hence, a brand story may be a story that the company decides to communicate, or it can be shaped by the people on the street or public at large (Hestad, 2013:18).

Spear and Roper (2013) identified four brand story themes and nine elements for brand storytelling, as indicated in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Four-story themes and nine-story elements**

<b>Brand story theme</b>	<b>Story elements</b>
<b>Activities</b>	1. Activities 2. Accomplishments
<b>Benefits</b>	3. Internal benefits 4. External benefits
<b>Emotional</b>	5. Emotion 6. Conflict
<b>Strategy</b>	7. Vision

	8. Mission 9. Values
--	-------------------------

Source: Adopted from Spear and Roper (2013:493).

The emotional element in storytelling was also expanded on by Carnevale, Yucel-Aybat and Karchersky (2017:84) claiming that stories that generate emotions such as happiness are more persuasive and create a connection between the business and its consumers. In addition to the story elements identified by Spear and Roper (2013), Smith and Wintrob (2013:37) also identified four types of brand story constructs and their characteristics as follows: (i) heritage story construct focuses on details of how the brand came into existence and invigorates brand foundation, (ii) contemporary story construct focuses on bringing equity to life by informing on overall processes and execution of brand's ability, (iii) folklore story construct focuses on stories about the brand created and spread through consumer accounts and perspectives, and lastly, (iv) vision story constructs which are focused on the vision strategy of the brand. Furthermore, Fog et al. (2010:33) identified four elements of storytelling, namely message, plot, conflict and characters.

The themes/constructs identified by Spear and Roper (2013), Smith and Wintrob (2013), and Fog et al. (2010) are not as mutually inclusive or exhaustive of possible characteristics and elements for effective brand stories as the elements explored by Fakiha (2018), illustrated in Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2: Elements of well-developed brand stories derived from storytelling literature**

<b>Elements of a brand story</b>	<b>Description</b>
Structured indices	Character(s), location(s), action(s), problem(s) and attitude(s) that cohere in the story.
Plot	Frames the temporal sequence of the events
Characters	Entities who have roles in the plot
Outcome	The end of the plot
Main message	A visibly focused message that can be summarised in a few words
Authenticity	The quality of genuineness, reality and truth as assessed by the story audience
Conciseness	Covering essential points in a few words
Reversal	Presenting a climax and turning point. The actions or emotions in the story take either a surprising twist or reach an unexpected intensity
Humour	Using puns, jokes, understatement or other methods to raise smiles or laughter among story audience

Archetypes	Forms/images of a collective nature that represent a typical human experience and define the personality of a brand, and give it a voice to express its story to the consumer (e.g. the hero or the creator)
------------	--

Source: Identified by Fakiha (2018:25).

In addition to Fakiha (2018), research by Perkins (2015:275) and Aaker and Aaker (2016:49) noted the importance of authenticity as an essential component in brand storytelling. It is imperative for organisations to ensure that a brand story is genuine and authentic to the brand regardless of whether it is based on fact or fiction (Aaker & Aaker, 2016:50). Similarly, Dessart and Pitardi (2019:32) argued that using relatable characters in brand stories enhances the degree of believability of the story. Furthermore, in addition to Fakiha (2018), the use of archetypes as an element of storytelling has been strongly recommended in research by English and Weiner (2006:32).

Humour is another brand story element explored by Fakiha (2018), Barry and Gironda (2018) and Burgess and Rousselet (2015). Research by Barry and Gironda (2018:117) also suggests that inspirational and motivational storytelling encompassing humour, visionary insights and engagement generates more influence on social media. The use of suspense, humour and surprise in brand storytelling contributes to the making of a good story (Burgess & Rousselet, 2015:23). Researchers, such as Fog et al. (2010:34) further cautioned storytellers to ensure that each story has one central message and that running more than one message runs the risk of becoming unclear. Conciseness is therefore important in business storytelling writing (Chiu, Hsieh & Kuo, 2012:264). According to Garud, Schildt and Lant (2014:1489), the growth element in SME brand stories also plays a significant role in gaining validity from the audience. In social media storytelling, images and videos have become central elements, hence the next section discusses the role of visual constructs in brand storytelling.

### ***2.5.3.1. The role of visuals in social media stories***

The use of photos, videos and other visual content on social media cannot be ignored. Hence, the power of visually compelling content on social media is undeniable (Gretzel, 2017:1). Online photo sharing services on social media platforms have grown in popularity over the recent years, offering audiences the opportunity to share experiences using photos (Malik, Amandeep & Nieminen, 2015:1). According to Coker, Flight Baima (2017:75), in 2016 alone, more than eight billion videos were viewed on Facebook per day. The process of creating short, personal narratives comprising text, images and sound on a medium of expression may also be referred to as digital storytelling (Anderson & Chua, 2010:32).

According to Manic (2015:89), visuals are classified into three categories as listed in Table 2.3 below.

**Table 2.3: Visual element classifications**

Visual type	Characteristics
Illustrations	A static visual composition in the form of drawings, photo/picture and memes
Comics	Collections of images and text in the form of infographics (information in a graphical structure)
Videos	Moving images in the form of clips, short films as well as vines and gifs

Source: Proposed by Manic (2015:89)

The rise of visual content in brand storytelling and the overall SMM practice can be attributed to the following factors identified by Diamond (2013:40):

1. Audiences find visuals are easy to understand.
2. Visuals are shorter, an attribute which is highly embraced by B2B clients who prefer short.
3. Audiences remember 80% of what they see and only 20% of what they read.
4. Visual content is more likely to be shared by audiences across different media platforms compared to text.
5. Creation of visual content has become easier and more affordable for marketers.

Taking into consideration the brand story elements discussed in the previous section and the visual literature discussed by Diamond (2013), Manic (2015), Malik et al. (2015) and Coker et al. (2017), this research hopes to determine the types of story elements that are used by SMEs for their brand stories on Facebook. Discoveries from the findings were also examined in comparison to the story elements discussed in the overall literature. The next section discusses the brand storytelling context for SMEs on Facebook.

#### **2.5.4. Brand-storytelling for SMEs on Facebook**

According to Hajli, Shanmugam, Papagiannidis, Zahay and Richard (2016:136), social media platforms enable and reinforce various interactions within online communities by enabling customers to share brand experiences with other customers or followers. Social media stories can be shared among friends and colleagues, saved, and re-shared in a face-to-face conversation for as long as they are relevant (Gitner, 2016:122).

Facebook as a social media platform provides access for its users to engage in conversations surrounding brands and share their stories based on particular brand experiences, which shape the



narrative of their brand stories. When storytelling is used by SMEs, it can be referred to as corporate storytelling (Spear & Roper, 2013:493). Storytelling as a participatory practice is considered beneficial as it enables story listeners to become storytellers by retelling a valuable activity (Heinemeyer & Reason, 2016:571). In this instance, SMEs tell their brand stories on Facebook, and their audience re-tells those stories using Facebook tools such as sharing the post. According to De Fina (2016:477), story narratives communicated on Facebook usually concentrate on recent events and are not long or explained, which means that they are not made up of canonical structures, comprise and frequently focus on trivial everyday events.

Today, storytelling is widely used on social media for B2C marketing and not sufficiently explored in the B2B literature. This is because most studies, such as Hajli et al. (2016), focus on Facebook as a storytelling platform in B2C marketing, leaving a gap for further knowledge expansion of the literature on B2B marketing. Further exploration will lead to the development of suitable paradigm guidelines that can effectively assist Namibian SMEs with their overall B2B marketing performance on social media platforms.

While research by Thier (2018), Granitz and Forman (2015), Hestad (2013) and Heinemeyer and Reason (2016) emphasised the importance of brand storytelling for organisations, the themes and constructs identified by Fakiha (2018), Spear and Roper (2013); Smith and Wintrob (2013:37); Barry and Gironda (2018), and Perkins (2015) are not generalisable to Namibian SMEs, prompting further exploration. This study accordingly sought to determine if there are any similarities or correlations with the B2B co-created story elements used by SMEs on Facebook, in Namibia.

Owing to the engaging principles of social media platforms such as Facebook, Fagerstrøm and Ghinea (2011:130) argued that brand stories are co-created during dialogue with stakeholders, as confirmed in studies by Von Wallpach, Voyer, Kastanakis and Mühlbacher (2017), Black and Veloutsou (2017), as well as Singh and Sonnenburg (2012). Therefore, compelling brand storytelling typically engages, entertains or inspires business prospects (Smith & Wintrob, 2013). The next section explores the literature on co-creation, which is the third and final theoretical concept for this study.

## **2.6. Co-creation process in business**

Another theoretical concept governing this research is co-creation. The next section unpacks and discusses literature on the concept and how it can be used for B2B purposes.

### **2.6.1. The essence of co-creation**

Co-creation refers to any act of co-operative creativity, shared by two or more individuals (Sanders & Stappers, 2008:6) and this creativity can also be applied to and expanded between businesses. Co-creation is also defined as the process whereby the exchange value is jointly created between organisations and consumers (Bertilsson & Cassinger, 2011:412). Furthermore, the process involves collective efforts by clients, management and staff taking an interest in brand improvement (Ind et al., 2013:5), whereby each person's distinctiveness has an influence on the co-creation process (Etgar, 2008:98). The concept of co-creation emphasises consumer experience, influence and power in the development of the brand value (Kent & Millspaugh, 2016:322).

Dialogue is an essential component in co-creation, as it enables a platform of interactivity, engagement and a propensity to act for both consumers and business organisations (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004:6), therefore co-creation should not be viewed as a single process but rather as a phenomenon that occurs on multiple levels and intensities (Buhalis, Ladkin & Neuhofer, 2014:348).

The notion of co-creation derives from the concept of co-production, which Etgar (2008:98) argued is a process whereby consumers participate in various activities performed in one or more of the proposed five stages of production, namely: (1) development of antecedent conditions, (2) development of motivations which motivate customers to engage in co-production, (3) calculation of the co-production cost benefits, (4) activation for when customers become engaged in the actual performance of co-producing activities, and (5) production of outputs and assessment of the outcomes arising from the process. Consequently, the stages discussed by Etgar (2008) are incorporated into the characteristics of a five-stage process model of social media-based co-creation stressed by Kao, Yang, Wu and Cheng (2016). This model is examined later.

Other scholars have argued that co-production and co-creation are two different concepts with different meanings. For example, Brandsen and Honingh (2016) argued that both terms refer to collaborations between professional service providers in public agencies and citizens, but neither include collaborations between businesses. A different perspective is offered by Coates and Ind (2013) which argued that co-creation is a diverse concept best described by incorporating collaborative components with the two main objectives. These components are first about how organisations can objectively influence co-creation insights and secondly, how individuals can collaborate with each other to meet their needs of socialisation and create meaning.

Research by Rialti, Zollo, Caliandro and Ciappei (2018) identified four primary types of co-created experiences, namely: brand products individual usage, auto-celebrative individual experiences, brand

products communal usage and collective celebrated experiences. This was further expanded by Kao et al. (2016:145) through a proposed five-stage process model of social media-based co-creation known as the Interact-Engage-Propose-Act-Realize (IEPAR) model. This model is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 2.4: Five stage process model of social media-based co-creation moves from imperative instructions to infinitive purpose**

Stage	Aims	Process	Means
Interact	Clearly define social media strategies, build an interactive brand community, and facilitate effective interaction.	Develop a plan for adapting to a social media channel.	Dialogue with customers, open access, reduce the risks, maintain the transparency of information, have fun and benefits.
Engage	To increase consumers sentimental and emotional bonds when engaging with the online brand community. To build consumer trust, loyalty, sense of belonging, and perceived value toward the community.	Enhance user experiences to improve effective bonds.	Design detailed user activities on social media to generate personal experiences that are exclusive.
Propose	To facilitate the proposal of ideas and knowledge sharing for users.	Create a supportive environment for co-creation.	Construct emotional, cognitive and action encounters.
Act	To develop a mutual agreement on collective innovation to enforce changes.	Promote communication, allow users to review & revise the proposals.	Listen, interpret, evaluate, and transform into actions.
Realize	To evaluate the value of co-creation.	Reduce costs, increase efficiency, expand markets and enhance brand character.	Invest in product/service recovery and innovation.

Source: Kao et al. (2016:145)

Research by Gallagher and Ransbotham (2010:198) noted that social media platforms greatly enhance traditional customer business interaction by enabling the business and customers to monitor what other customers are saying about the brand. This was supported by Brito and Rosenthal (2017:931) as they argued that co-creation of brand meaning on Facebook may occur as a result of collective and/or communal interaction with followers.

The emergence of social media platforms has, to a certain extent, influenced the traditional way of co-creation that was largely based on B2C towards other types of collaboration, such as B2B. This is confirmed by the demonstrated influence through the power of Web 2.0 and the increasing mobility of technologies which have led to the development of connected social and mobile consumers (Buhalis et al., 2014:349).

Considering literature on the characteristics of co-creation (Bertilsson & Cassinger, 2011; Ind et al., 2013; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; and Kent & Millspaugh 2016), it would seem that co-creation is not an exclusive term for defining collaborative efforts in B2B. The researcher, therefore, also acknowledges the use of the synonymous term “collaboration” with reference to the process of collaborative creation between two organisations. This decision was further strengthened by the fact that literature on co-creation is largely based on B2C studies (Brito & Rosenthal, 2017; Gallagher & Ransbotham, 2010; Rialti et al., 2018). The models of co-creation such as that of Kao et al. (2016:145) are also not inclusive of characteristics of B2B co-creation.

Considering the aforementioned factors and for the purpose of this study, the researcher defines collaboration as a process of creating and sharing experiences between two or more entities, which may involve a business and other businesses or individuals. Similarly, Drummond et al. (2018:72) defined collaboration as the collaborative activities between an organisation and its B2B network, which may include the collaborative creation of new products, services, ideas and networks. Organisations can, therefore, use social media platforms such as Facebook to demonstrate or promote collaborative interactions (Livermore & Verbovaya, 2016:56). The next section explores the stance of B2B collaborations on social media platforms

### **2.6.2. B2B collaboration on Social media platforms**

The literature on social media collaborations in recent years has been widely dominated by research focused on B2C (Brito & Rosenthal, 2017; Polese, Mele, Gummesson, Tregua, Russo-Spena & Casbarra, 2015; and Horbel, Popp, Woratschek & Wilson, 2016). Literature focused on B2B collaborations on social media or on the collaboration of brand stories is scant, which ultimately translates into a gap in the literature that requires further exploration.

Social media has the potential to facilitate relationship development between organisations (Livermore & Verbovaya 2016:564). B2B connections enabled by the use of internet innovations, such as Facebook, are referred to as e-collaboration (Chan, Chong & Zhou, 2012:329). According to Kautz, Selman and Shah (1997: 63-65), collaboration of social media platforms is essential in terms of establishing referral links. Similarly, research by Kooli, Tzempelikos, Foroudi and Mazahreh

(2019:3) suggested that organisations in the B2B industry use social media platforms to gain and maintain long-term relationships with other organisations.

According to Livermore and Verbovaya (2016:553), organisations collaborate with other organisations to expand the influence of their work, through sharing information, building relationships and creating trust. Research by Drummond et al. (2018:77) noted that SMEs occasionally create collaborative industry events such as festivals, collaborative competitions and prize giveaways which are organised regularly between SMEs to jointly create awareness for both businesses. Some SMEs may opt to collaborate with bigger brands (Etemad, Wright & Dana, 2001:482) to capitalise on collaboration benefits expressed by Livermore and Verbovaya (2016). Research by Evans (2010:15) suggests that B2B collaboration on Facebook is largely based on engagement between brands. Collaboration between organisations stems from willingness to work together and influence each other (Felício, Caldeirinha & Ribeiro-Navarrete, 2015:801). Therefore, when entering into B2B collaborations, all parties involved need to understand that it is a long-term commitment which revolves around trust (Chan et al., 2012:349).

Some of the collaborative trends that have risen in popularity in many online communities such as Facebook, are that of using social media influencers as well the use of collaborative tagging. Social media influencers establish themselves opinion leaders, introducing the latest information and ideas to their social media followers and facilitating the agenda for discussion (Lutkenhaus, Jansz & Bouman, 2019:2). Collaboration with influencers offers businesses fresh opportunities to formulate interactive engagement with their audiences (Lutkenhaus et al., 2019:2). Collaborative tagging on the other hand refers to the process of attaching metadata in the form of keywords to shared content on social media (Golder & Huberman, 2006:198). The explored literature on collaboration in the B2B sphere is widely focused on western research and the gap in the African literature is evident; more particularly, there is a dearth of research in the Namibian context.

## **2.7. Theoretical background**

It is valid to bear in mind that this research was focused on the exploration of the phenomenon that is not sufficiently researched from the Namibian perspective. Therefore, instead of applying an existing theoretical framework or model, the researcher attempted to investigate in the context based on the researcher's knowledge and exploration of theoretical concepts, namely: co-creation, brand storytelling and B2B marketing. Although the concepts have been widely researched, the combination of the three aforementioned theoretical concepts have rarely been combined in one single study, especially in the Namibian context.

In addition to the explored literature, the research further took cognisance of two theories which make assumptions that inform certain components of this study. These are the theory of inter-organisation collaboration and the organisational symbolism theory. The inter-organisational theory assumes that the engagement of organisations in effective collaborations is based on the understanding that (1) alliances within networks more likely to be formed between organisations with common partners, and (2) the status of organisations within the network influences its reputation and access to information (Gulati, 1998:301). The inter-organisational theory is based on alliances between at least two organisations (Reid, Bussiere & Greenaway, 2001:79) forming cooperative marketing exchange relationships (Achrol, 1996:56), which Hamel (1989) suggested is motivated by the desire to gain competitive advantage. According to Livermore and Verbovaya (2016:554), inter-organisational collaboration occurs when organisations build formal and informal relationships working together towards a common goal. From a network perspective of inter-organisational collaboration theory, the present study focused on the SMEs in the B2B market of Namibia, which can be viewed as a network consisting of small and medium enterprises. However, the inter-organisational linkages and interchangeable relationships assumed to be within the SMEs' B2B network cannot be ascertained and whether or not these relationships have been extended to the social media discourse, especially on Facebook, may not be clearly determined using this theory. This is largely because the literature on inter-organisational theory was mainly focused on the supply chain industry (Koschmann, 2013; Paulraj, Lado & Chen 2008; Gold, Seuring & Beske, 2010; Humphreys, Lai & Sculli, 2001). The explored social media perspective on the inter-organisational theory focused on a non-profit relations perspective (Livermore & Verbovaya, 2016). The inter-organisational collaboration theory literature has not been exhaustively explored from the B2B social media perspective; hence the researcher's decision not to apply the theory.

Another theory that informed the background for this research is organisational symbolism theory which assumes that symbols and meanings are essential aspects of human affairs which form the basis for collective action and social order (Alvesson, 1991:215). Organisational symbolism views storytelling as a form of sharing organisations' experiences through narrative and short stories in order to share practices, define connections and simplify concepts and ideas (Sole & Wilson, 2002:6). The symbols used in stories are seen as various independent forces encompassing physical, moral, economic and political components that can also be combined to form social relationships (Turner, 1975:145). The symbols used in the organisations' stories consist of universal archetypes that are already known and internalised by most people (Mahler, 1988:348). Applying this theory to the present study would assume that SMEs use symbolic and familiar anecdotes in their brand stories, which may assist the researcher in determining the type of brand story elements used in SME brand

stories on Facebook. However, there is a need for further exploration on how organisational symbolism can be applied in the following perspectives: (1) B2B marketing, (2) social media platforms, and (3) co-creation or collaboration.

Although the two theories discussed were not adopted as theoretical frameworks for the study, they contributed to the researcher's ability to effectively explore the three proposed theoretical concepts: co-creation/collaboration, brand storytelling, and B2B marketing. The investigation of this study further strove to shed light on this relatively unexplored aspect of how brand stories are collaborated on by SMEs on Facebook for the B2B industry.

## **2.8. Summary of the chapter**

This chapter unpacked and explored the literature on the research topic. Initially, the conversation highlighted on the establishment of Facebook as the most popular social media platform globally, followed by a review of the state of SMEs in Namibia. Additionally, the literature discussed ways in which SMEs could potentially take advantage of Facebook and incorporate it into its integrated marketing strategies. Furthermore, the chapter unpacked the theoretical concepts of brand-storytelling, B2B marketing and co-creation, which were used interchangeably with collaboration.

Literature on the topic informed the researcher on the conversation around the research topic, which in turn informed some of the researcher's choices in addressing the research topic.

The next chapter discusses the methodology for this study.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter reviewed and discussed literature on the research phenomena. This chapter describes the methodological choices for this study. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the aim of this research was to explore the factors surrounding the use of Facebook by SMEs in Namibia in the co-creation or collaboration of brand stories for a B2B market.

The study conducted was exploratory in nature and adopted a pragmatic research philosophy using an inductive approach. Exploratory research usually entails the study of a relatively undiscovered area (Bezuidenhout, Davis & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:75). The theoretical concepts of co-creation, B2B marketing and storytelling, highlighted in the previous chapter, are considered to be emerging areas of research, especially in the Namibian context, which further informed the researcher's decision to venture into an exploratory study. Furthermore, questions posed during exploratory research are suitable for a newly emerging phenomenon and are based on topics that are inadequately studied, with the main aim of discovering valuable basic information for further research (Park & Wang, 2016:84).

The study implemented a sequential mixed design, which enabled the researcher to complimentarily use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study adopted a non-probability sampling design consisting of a qualitative sample of ten employees responsible for official social media management functions at selected SMEs around Windhoek and a quantitative sample of 150 employees responsible for official social media management functions at selected SMEs, also from Windhoek. During the qualitative phase, semi-structured, in-depth, interviews were used while hard copy questionnaires were used during the quantitative phase. Data collected from the qualitative in-depth interviews was analysed using the Atlas.ti 8 for Windows and data collected from the self-administered questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software version 26 (IBM).

The study achieved a remarkable response rate of 91.5% for the administered questionnaires and scored a good Cronbach Alpha score of  $\alpha = .81$  on the questionnaire reliability. Considering the challenges of the population for this study, a response rate of 91.5% counted as an achievement. The population challenges were due to the difficulty of attaining an up to date SME database and the fact



that social media management at SMEs was hardly done by social media managers, but by anyone assigned to the task.

In this chapter, the research philosophy, research approach, research design, sampling design and criteria, data collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study are discussed. The next section discusses the research philosophy of the study.

### 3.2. Research philosophy

A pragmatic research philosophy, which is based on a critical orientation of first conducting social research which results in knowledge claims (Baronov, 2015:137), was adopted during this study. Pragmatism involves combining positivism and interpretivism (Mitchell, 2018:110). The positivist philosophy is oriented towards working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalisations (Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders, 2019:144). Interpretivism denotes that individuals are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings (Lewis et al., 2019:1480). The characteristics of the three philosophical approaches are clearly illustrated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Social research philosophies: Positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism**

	Typical Approach	Axiology	Approaches
<b>Positivism</b>	Deductive	Objective	Quantitative
<b>Interpretivism</b>	Inductive	Subjective	Qualitative
<b>Pragmatism</b>	Deductive and / or Inductive (Abductive)	Objective and or Subjective (value-driven)	Qualitative and or Quantitative

Source: Researcher's own design, adopted from Lewis et al. (2019:144-145)

Considering pragmatic philosophy, this study adopted an inductive approach. In inductive research, the researcher works from raw data to theory (Tjora, 2018:12). Therefore, for this particular study the research design focused on attaining raw data from participants and developing a theory. Details of the methods used are discussed in the next section.

### 3.3. Research approach

The researcher used a mixed methods approach. There are two commonly known strategies of enquiry, namely quantitative and qualitative research approaches, which can either be implemented separately or combined as a mixed research approach (Creswell, 2009:11; Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011:11-12; Curtis & Curtis, 2011:6; Mackey & Gass, 2005:2, Flick, 2015:9).

Qualitative research is “research conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a field or life situation” (Punch, 2005:141). According to Flick (2015:11), qualitative research addresses issues based on one of the three approaches: (i) it aims at grasping the subjective meaning of the issue from the perspective of participants, (ii) latent meanings of the situation are in focus, and (iii) social practices and the life world of participants are defined. Data collected and analysed in qualitative research consists of textual material, such as interview transcripts, field notes, documents and/or visual materials such as photographs, video recordings, and internet sites, that document individual and third-party human experiences (Beretvas, Leavy & Saldana, 2011:3). Qualitative researchers usually select participants purposively and assimilate small numbers of cases according to their relevance (Flick, 2015:11).

The quantitative research approach, on the other hand, conceptualises reality in terms of variables and relationships among them (Punch, 2005:237). Data collected in quantitative data enables standardised and objective comparisons to be made, measured and analysed (Punch, 2005:238). In addition, Babbie (2013:25) maintained that although quantitative data offers the advantage that numbers have over words as measurements of quality, quantitative data also has the disadvantage of not capturing richness in meaning.

When it comes to social research, the difference between quantitative and qualitative data is fundamentally based on the distinction between numerical and non-numerical data (Babbie, 2013:24). Considering the fact that the study aimed to explore non-numerical data and explain numerical data, a combined quantitative and qualitative methodological orientation, also referred to as a mixed research approach, was considered appropriate.

Mixed methods are defined as “the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypotheses” (Creswell, 2014:217). Researchers using mixed methods believe in the flexibility of the selection of research methods (Lewis et al., 2019:181). Although literature by Bazeley (2018:6) argues that it is difficult to clearly define and set boundaries for mixed methods as a research approach, and any attempt to do so is bound to be disputed, the mixed methods approach also has the advantage of data and method triangulation. Triangulation has been defined by Skott and Ward (2013:137) as the use of more than one method in approaching a research question. Using triangulation in mixed methods allows the researcher to combine data and to ascertain if the findings from one method mutually corroborates the findings from the other method (Lewis et al., 2019:185). The main aim for implementing triangulation in this study was to interchangeably complement strengths and compensate for weaknesses of each data collection technique used. The researcher used triangulation of data

collection techniques by combining qualitative, semi-structured in-depth interviews with quantitative, self-administered, questionnaires.

In addition to triangulation, Clark and Ivankova (2016: 79:81) expanded on other advantages of mixed methods. These include the following: (i) obtaining rigorous conclusions by offsetting the strengths of quantitative methods to the weaknesses of qualitative methods and vice versa, (ii) obtaining more complete and complementary conclusions by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the problem.

For this study, the researcher incorporated both qualitative findings, presented in Chapter 4, and quantitative findings, presented in Chapter 5, to reach a well-informed conclusion. Based on insights from Creswell (2014), Creswell and Creswell (2018), Lewis et al. (2019), Flick (2015:11), Gilbert (2008), Curtis and Curtis (2011), Tashakkori, Teddlie and Teddlie (1998), Clark and Ivankova (2016), as well as Remler and Van Ryzin (2011), the researcher made an informed decision to employ both qualitative and quantitative designs to ensure that all research dimensions were covered and to strengthen the research findings and conclusions. The next section discusses the research design adopted in the study.

### **3.4. Research design**

The research design ultimately outlines all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project, from the initial identification of the problem to reporting and publishing the findings (Punch, 2005:62). Therefore, the research design for this study acted as a strategy map in ensuring that the research problem was addressed accordingly.

Scholarly work by Creswell and Creswell (2018:15) identifies and defines three forms of mixed methods designs as follows: (i) Convergent mixed methods design, which entails a type of mixed methods design whereby by the researcher equally congregates or combines quantitative and qualitative data so as to produce a comprehensive analysis of the research problem, (ii) Explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which entails that the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyses the results and then adds on the results to obtain more insights using qualitative research, and (iii) Exploratory sequential mixed methods, which entails that the researcher primarily begins with qualitative research and discovers the outlooks of the respondents on a particular matter in order to use the results for building a secondary quantitative phase.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher adapted an exploratory sequential mixed methods design. During an exploratory sequential mixed method design, qualitative data and analysis are

primarily investigated by the researcher. Subsequently, the results from the primary phase are validated in a second quantitative phase (Creswell, 2014).

For this study's exploratory sequential design, the researcher collected and analysed qualitative data before doing the same for quantitative data. The results from the qualitative data analysis were used to build towards the subsequent quantitative phase. The researcher also connected the phases by using the qualitative findings to shape the quantitative phase by stipulating research questions and variables. The purpose of this design, because of the unknown, was to explore variables, theories, hypotheses applicable to the use of Facebook to co-create brand stories in the B2B market. Hence, the researcher intended to expand the understanding of this fairly new research phenomenon.

A summary of the exploratory sequential mixed design used for this study is illustrated in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2: Exploratory sequential mixed design used in this study**

	<b>Qualitative phase</b>	<b>Quantitative phase</b>
<b>Sampling</b>	A purposive & snowball sample of 10 employees responsible for SMEs' official social media management function at SMEs that are geographically located within (north, south, central, east and west) Windhoek were purposefully selected from the NCCI database comprising of 70 SMEs.	A purposive and snowball sample of 150 employees responsible for SMEs' official social media management functions at SMEs that are geographically located within (north, south, central, east and west) in Windhoek only. The sample was drawn from the NCCI's database of the remaining 60 supplemented by NUST Incubation Centre's database of 34 as the starting point for the sample.
<b>Data collection methods</b>	Semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face.	Hard copy questionnaires distributed to participants by hand at their workplace.
<b>Data analysis methods</b>	Thematic analysis using Atlas ti 8 software for windows.	Descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS Software version (IBM) 26.

The next section discusses the population and sampling of the study.

### **3.5. Population and sampling**

Population can be defined as a total collection of objects (anything we can identify as belonging to a single taxonomic class) in the real world in which the researcher is interested in investigating (Gilbert, 2008:167; Leavy, 2017:76; Ruane, 2015:233). Similarly, Christensen, Johnson and Turner

(2011:135) defined a population as all the events, things or individuals to be represented. There are two types of population when conducting research, target population and accessible population. According to Fink (2003:2), a target population “consists of the institutions, persons, problems, and systems to which or to whom the survey's findings are to be applied or generalized”. Therefore, a target population can also be described as a semantic account of the population of the study (Matei & Till, 2016:311).

The Geographically Accessible Population (GAP) population for this study, from which a sample was drawn, is SMEs that use Facebook for B2B marketing in Namibia. The target population for this was all SMEs in Namibia and the accessible population consisted of the SMEs residing in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia that the researcher had access to.

### **3.5.1. Sampling design**

A sample design refers to a definite plan or procedure that the researcher will implement in obtaining a sample from a given population (Garg & Kothari, 2014:52). A sample is a smaller subset or individual cases drawn from the research population (Leavy, 2017:76; Ruane, 2015:233).

Researcher, Kumar (2014: 229) observed that “Sampling is the process of selecting a few (sample) from a bigger group (sampling population) as the basis of estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group.” Sampling can also be referred to as the process of selecting entities to be part of the research study (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011:139). Similarly, Du Plooy (2009:100) also concurred that sampling is a particular procedure that involves the selection of units of analysis from the larger population.

There are two types of sampling methods of enquiry, namely probability and non-probability sampling, which can either be implemented separately or combined as a mixed sampling design (Bhandakar, Wilkinson & Laldas, 2010:267; Kumar, 2014:234). Probability sampling allows the researcher to stipulate for each element of the population the probability or independent statistical chance of it being included in a sample (Bhandakar et al., 2010:270; Kumar, 2014:234). Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, does not have any basis for estimating the probability of including each component in the population sample (Bhandakar et al., 2010:284). Hence, Terre Blanche, Durheim and Painter (2012:139) referred to non-probability sampling as any kind of sampling whereby the selection of elements is not determined by the random statistical principle.

Non-probability sampling designs are suitable for studies where it is difficult for the researcher to gain access to the entire population (Bezuidenhout et al., 2014:137). Due to challenges of obtaining

clear and updated databases containing the list of SMEs in Namibia, the researcher experienced some difficulties in getting access to the entire population, which motivated the researcher to make use of non-probability sampling. According to Du Plooy (2009: 113), non-probability sampling is recommended when conducting exploratory research, such as the present study, which further motivated the researcher's decision in using this type of sampling.

For both the qualitative and quantitative phases, this study implemented a non-probability sampling mixed methods design involving purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods. Purposive sampling, also identified as judgemental sampling, is a sampling design that is based on a judgement as to who can provide the most appropriate information to subsequently achieve the objectives of a study (Kumar, 2014:244). According to Du Plooy (2009:114), when incorporating the purposive sampling method in research, previous data about the population and the objectives of the research may influence the researcher in using their judgement in selecting a sample. Additionally, when implementing a purposive sampling method, researchers rely on their expert judgement in selecting elements that are a true representation of a population (Singleton & Straits, 2012). Additionally, participants may recommend extra participants they think can provide fundamental inputs to the research topic (Leavy, 2017:80), also known as snowball sampling.

Snowball sampling is an approach that is built through social links and recommendations (Ruane, 2015:247) and initially sampled participants are asked to contact and recruit others in their social network (Crano, Brewer & Lac, 2015:235). Similarly, Bernard (2000:179) suggested that snowball sampling is used in studies of social networks and in studies of difficult-to-find populations.

The population of the proposed study, namely SMEs that use Facebook for B2B marketing in Namibia, was difficult to find because the researcher only had access to two databases with a limited number of documented SMEs. The first database was from the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI). NCCI is an entity that acts as a representative responsible for facilitating marketing and business growth for all its 152 registered members countrywide. The businesses registered with the NCCI range from micro and small to medium and large enterprises. The NCCI database is subject to paid-up membership, meaning that a business entity is only considered a member if it made a membership payment for that specific financial year. This might have affected the number of businesses on the database because membership is not compulsory for businesses. Considering that this study's main focus was on small and medium enterprises, the researcher drew a purposive sample of ten interview participants from the 70 SMEs that were on the NCCI database and that are within the inclusion criteria discussed in Section 3.5.2.

The second database was from the Namibia Business Innovation Centre (NBIC). The NBIC is a department within the Namibia University of Science and Technology responsible for providing upcoming SMEs all over the country with training workshops and the necessary skills for entrepreneurship. The number of SMEs totalled 79 but only 34 were from Windhoek. NCCI's database is not subject to paid up membership. It is based on the number of SMEs that have attended training workshops within that specific year. The list used by the researcher was for the 2017/18 financial year.

The two available databases also contained SMEs from other towns in Namibia and the number of SMEs located in Windhoek was not sufficient for both qualitative and quantitative samples. There was also a possible chance that some SMEs may appear on both databases, which would further reduce the potential sample size. The checking was done by the researcher through conducting thorough cross examination processes of the SMEs listed on both databases. This included comparison of names and addresses to ensure that there were no duplications. A record of a clearly defined database containing informative data on all Namibian SMEs is non-existent, which presented challenges in terms of obtaining or locating the proposed adequate sample size. The challenges experienced are elaborated further in the limitations section. Four of the participants from the qualitative interviews also formed part of the quantitative questionnaires, mainly because of their keen interest in the topic and desire to contribute to the research findings.

### **3.5.2. Sampling criteria**

This research did not adopt any specific sampling frame because there is no clear database with all the registered SMEs currently in existence. A sampling frame is defined by Singh (2007:88) as a subsection of the population which stipulates a detailed context for the assortment of sampling units. An effective and inclusive sampling frame identifies all entities of a particular target population only once per entry, and comprises the supporting of information that may be useful in making sampling choices (Daniel, 2012:13). Ideally, a sampling frame should be comprised of up to date and accurate information; however, this was not the case for the study conducted. The sample of the population for this particular study was drawn from the population parameters, which Newton and Rudestam (2013:69) defined as the measures that describe the characteristics of the population of the study. The population parameters for this study are addressed in the inclusion criteria below.

The inclusion criteria used for both quantitative and qualitative samples are as follows:

- i. Employees responsible for SMEs official social media management functions;

- ii. All SMEs to be included in the study must be located within the geographical borders of Windhoek city (capital city of Namibia), the accessible population;
- iii. All SMEs to be included in the study must have an active Facebook page for their organisation; and
- iv. All participants must be willing and available to voluntarily participate in the study.

It is worth noting that although Windhoek is the capital city of Namibia, it has a population of only 431,171 inhabitants (World Population Review, 2019) which is relatively low in comparison to major South African cities such as Johannesburg which is home to 5 782 747 inhabitants (World Population Review, 2019). Hence, considering the inclusion criteria and the population of every SME geographically positioned within the borders of Windhoek was feasible. Any entity that did not meet all the inclusion criteria was automatically part of the exclusion criteria and therefore did not qualify to participate in the research.

#### ***3.5.2.1. Qualitative sample***

The researcher conducted only ten semi-structured in-depth interviews for the qualitative sample interviews, mainly because of shortage of resources as this study was self-funded. However, the larger quantitative sample made up for the shortages of the qualitative sample through triangulation of data collection techniques, as discussed in Section 3.3.

As a starting point, the purposive sample was drawn from the NCCI's 2018/19 database. However, the number of Windhoek-based registered SMEs on the NCCI's database was not adequate for both the qualitative and quantitative samples. The purposive sample for the qualitative interviews was first purposefully drawn from this database.

#### ***3.5.2.2. Quantitative sample***

Research by Neuman (2000:25) recommends that a quantitative sample should apply the principle whereby the smaller the population, the larger the sampling ratio needed to attain an accurate sample. This means that for a small population under 1 000, the researcher would require a larger sampling ratio of about 30% whilst a population of 10 000 will require about 10% to be equally accurate and a population of 150 000 will need a small ratio of 1%. However, in the context of the proposed study, the exact number of SMEs that use Facebook was not clear or predetermined. For this reason, it was proposed that a sample size of 150 employees responsible for the official social media management functions of their SME would be adequate for statistical purposes.



### **3.6. Data collection**

The data collection procedure was done through collection of qualitative data first, followed by quantitative data. For the sake of this study, the data collection procedure indicates that qualitative and quantitative data were collected sequentially. The procedure was meant to provide a more comprehensive understanding than using either quantitative or qualitative separately. Both numeric data and text data were collected for this study.

#### **3.6.1. Qualitative data collection**

Qualitative interviews were implemented as a primary data collection method for this study. Generally, interviews can be defined as a person-to-person interaction, either face-to-face or between two or more individuals with a similar resolve (Kumar, 2014:176). Qualitative interviews are comprised of intentional conversations between the interviewer and interviewee, with detailed ways of analysis and reflexivity (Bhattacharya, 2017:126). The study conducted aimed to interpret the experiences of the employees responsible for SMEs' official social media management functions on the research topic at hand.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured in-depth interviews. According to Gray (2009:373), semi-structured in-depth interviews are non-standardised, and their interview questions may change depending on the direction the interview takes, which allows the interviewer to probe for views and opinions from respondents. Correspondingly, Crano et al. (2015:287) and Gilbert (2008:246) also defined semi-structured interviews, sometimes referred to as semi-standardised interviews, as an enquiry based on predetermined topics but allowing the researcher flexibility in determining the sequence in which to ask these questions, which are usually tailored to each interviewee for probing purposes.

As a guide to ensure that effective qualitative interviews were conducted for this research, the researcher avoided the common questioning errors identified by Terre Blanche et al. (2012:301), namely: i) asking too many questions, ii) using closed-ended questions, iii) using leading questions, iv) using excessively probing questions, v) using poorly timed questions and vi) using why questions.

Before the interviews commenced, the researcher started the preparatory process by preparing a written interview guide, which is a preliminary requirement for semi-structured interviews. The interview guide may consist of specifics with carefully worded questions, or it can consist of a list of topics to be covered (Given, 2008:810). Additionally, interview guides are founded on the main themes that primarily structure the interview (Morris, 2015:41), as this ensures that the researcher exhausts all possible related themes/topics. Due to the flexible nature of the semi-structured

interviews discussed above, the interview guide should therefore not necessarily be strictly followed, but should rather be treated as a guide, with topics that can be implemented in any particular order based on the direction of the interview. Hence, an interview guide forms an integral part of the researcher's preparation for data collection.

For this particular study, the researcher first prepared the first draft of the interview guide (See Appendix F). The draft interview guide was then used for the pilot study. The pilot study was tested on five employees responsible for SMEs' official social media management functions from Windhoek, before the final interview guide was completed. The pilot study process is elaborated on later in the reliability and validity section. The final interview guide consisted of six demographical questions and six topic-related questions as outlined in Appendix C. The demographical questions were part of the interview guide to learn more about the participants. The six topic-related questions comprised semi-structured, open-ended, questions. Open-ended questions have the advantage of tapping into participants' views with greater fidelity compared to closed-ended questions (Crano et al., 2015:324).

Another essential part of the qualitative data collection process was building rapport with the participants. The researcher ensured that a rapport was established before the interview and maintained throughout the entire interview process. Ideally, rapport should be established in the beginning of the interview, hence, the questions asked in the early stages of the interview should be easy to answer and not induce anxiety (Morris, 2015:49). According to Mariampolski (2001:179), the process of rapport refers to a feeling of comfort, which creates a sympathetic relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Building rapport or a human, personal connection with the interviewee is imperative for effective interviewing (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013:145). Therefore, in order to develop thorough rapport with participants, the interviewer established constant communication by form of an email communication per participant as well as a telephone call with the selected interview participants. The participants also received an information sheet letter prior to the interviews in order to inform them about the nature of the research as well as to encourage dialogue and answering of any queries that they may have had before the interview (the information sheet is illustrated in Appendix A). Further rapport was established during the interviews by maintaining eye contact with respondents and listening to their answers attentively throughout the interview.

During the interview, the researcher occasionally probed for answers. Probing is a specific method that is implemented by researchers when conducting interviews to further encourage explanations from respondents, which is usually achieved through non-verbal pauses or gestures, or verbally by

posing follow-up questions (Given, 2008:681). In qualitative research, probes involve the use of inductive and unscripted questions that are posed by the interviewer based on the respondent's previous responses (Guest et al., 2013:148). For this specific study, the researcher exercised probing by asking respondents to elaborate on answers that were not clearly articulated or understood, to ensure that the true representation of the answer was recorded.

All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded using an audio or voice recorder to ensure that the researcher was able to save the audio files for transcription and later, for analysis. Using an audio recorder ensures that the respondents' words, their tone, pauses etc., are recorded in a form that can be transferred directly to a computer and relistened to countless times (Kvale, 2007:93). The next section will discuss the quantitative data collection process.

### **3.6.2. Quantitative data collection**

For the quantitative data collection, the researcher administered 150 questionnaires to employees responsible for official social media management functions at SMEs in Windhoek. A questionnaire is defined by Tan (2017:86) as a list of questions that are intended to collect information from participants. The researcher used self-administered paper questionnaires (printed hard copies) as opposed to the online self-administered questionnaires proposed in the research proposal stage. The hard copies were used in order to avoid a high rate of non-responsiveness that is associated with online questionnaires (Kumar, 2014:181-182), to circumvent potential lack of motivation from respondents to complete the questionnaire and to ensure that clarity on the complex questionnaire was provided (Gilbert, 2008:309).

The questionnaires made use of Likert scales aptly described as follows: "The Likert scale is a composite measure developed by Rensis Likert, in an attempt to improve the levels of measurement in social research through the use of standardized response categories in survey questionnaires to determine the relative intensity of different items" (Babbie, 2013:217). When using Likert scales, respondents indicate the extent of agreement or disagreement towards each item or question using a multi-choice format (Crano et al., 2015:331). The Likert scales were informed by the qualitative data collected from the first phase of the data collection process in order to ensure that all possible attitudes regarding the question posed were mutually included in the questionnaire, a sample questionnaire is illustrated in Appendix D.

All the questionnaires were administered face to face by the researcher who was therefore present throughout the entire process. This enabled participants to ask questions on questionnaire content that they required clarity on. However, some of the participants received questionnaires to go and fill in

during their spare time with a commitment to return them once completed. The questionnaires took a month to distribute, complete and collect from the respondents. The process was lengthy because there was need to ensure that the respondents completed the questionnaires as required. Similar to the qualitative interviews, the researcher was able to address questions that participants required clarity on.

The researcher printed and distributed 164 questionnaires and received 150 questionnaires back. This translates to a response rate of 91.5 %. The response rate constitutes the ratio of the number of participants in a study to the number of participants who were asked to participate (Frey, 2018:142).

The response rate in this particular study was mainly influenced by three factors:

- i) Some of the individuals preferred to take the questionnaire to complete during their free time and never returned them to the researcher when contacted,
- ii) Some questionnaires were returned uncompleted by participants, and
- iii) Some participants were not interested in completing the questionnaire after scanning through the questions.

According to Frey (2018:142), sometimes individuals refuse to participate in surveys due to lack of time or interest in the topic being researched or from suspicion that the survey request might be a promotional ploy, or because of the sensitive nature of the questions being asked by the researcher. Similarly, Berinsky (2008:311) noted that response rates in survey research are mostly influenced by common refusal patterns such as younger and older participants being more likely to cooperate with an interviewer than middle-aged participants. Participants within a lower socio-economic position are more likely to agree to be part of a survey than individuals with higher positions. Low cooperation rates among households in high-density areas as well as matters related to the structure of the survey practices also pose a challenge.

### **3.7. Data analysis**

Data analysis is defined by Coghlan and Brydon-Miller (2014: 239) as the procedures of obtaining meaning and understanding from the several data sets that may be collected during a particular research to allow for further exploration and theory building. The methods used are discussed below.

#### **3.7.1. Qualitative data analysis**

According to Babbie (2013:390), qualitative analysis is a non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations to determine causal meanings and patterns of relationships. Qualitative

data analysis entails creating logic from the text and image data collected (Creswell, 2014:194-195). The aim of qualitative data analysis is to extract meaningful insights from the data collected and to produce valid and reliable findings that assist in answering the research problem (McGivern, 2003:271). Therefore, in this research, the qualitative data analysis intended to highlight the significance of the data collected and deduce correlating patterns of the findings.

For the qualitative data analysis, the research adopted thematic analysis which is a method taken from the inductive analysis approach. Due to its roots in grounded theory, thematic analysis requires more involvement and detailed interpretations from the researcher, which aims to classify both ambiguous and unambiguous ideas from the data, also referred to as themes (Guest et al., 2013:10). According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:2), some of the advantages of thematic analysis for qualitative research are as follows: it is a relatively easy technique that can be grasped by early/new researchers, the technique offers a flexibility to modify the approach to the needs of a particular qualitative study and is beneficial for critically analysing the perspectives of various research participants. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006:94-95) also identified possible disadvantages that may be experienced during thematic analysis as follows: (i) Researchers may fail to effectively extract illustrative analytical points from the data, and (ii) Using the questions contained in the interview guide may lead to weak thematic analysis which in turn may lead to inconsistent and incoherent themes. Similarly, Javadi and Zarea (2016:38) cautioned researchers using thematic analysis to avoid biases of personal inferences and pre-judgements that may lead to loss of latent content of text as well as potentially destroy value and validity of the analysis. To ensure that the thematic weaknesses were addressed in the present study, the researcher applied rigorous examination of data in order to make sense of the emerging themes. Furthermore, the researcher refrained from using the interview guide questions as themes in order to allow for the themes to emerge from the data.

The thematic analysis process distinguishes topics within the data, which allows the researcher to identify patterns and themes, scrutinise relationships between topics and report on themes discovered (Ignatow & Mihalcea, 2017:75; Flick, 2014:147). The themes discovered are an outcome of coding, categorisation and analytical reflection (Saldana, 2013:14), and they can be either inductive or deductive. Deductive analysis begins with a known theory and seeks to acquire the general context about the theory in the data collected in order to obtain knowledge about that particular research topic (Reichertz, 2014:127). When conducting deductive data analysis, data is collected and analysed to test if the hypothesis can be confirmed and substantiated by the theory (O'Leary, 2007:56). Inductive analysis, on the other hand, focuses on the properties of a sample and generalises the results of a single case into a dictum (Reichertz, 2014:129). Inductive data analysis enquires into the data

collected to check for regularities, patterns and themes that will lead the researcher to generalisations and, later, theory (O'Leary, 2007:56).

Considering that this study was exploratory, the researcher conducted an inductive-focused thematic analysis for the qualitative data collected from the interview transcripts. The researcher adopted the thematic analysis based on a framework from the procedure of analysis by Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood (2013:4-5) as indicated below:

- Stage 1: Transcription
- Stage 2: Familiarisation with the interview
- Stage 3: Coding
- Stage 4: Developing a working analytical framework
- Stage 5: Applying the analytical framework
- Stage 6: Charting the framework matrix
- Stage 7: Interpreting the data.

After the interview, the audio files were transferred onto the computer for transcription purposes. Transcription is defined by Brown and Gibson (2009:109) as a process of rendering material that has been gathered from the research into a new depictive format. Transcribing interviews from the oral to written format structures the interview conversation in a form that is flexible for analysis (Kvale, 2007:94). Transcripts assist the researcher in recalling what happened in the field during an observation or interview and are also beneficial to researchers when presenting their findings (Rapley, 2007:50). There is also a benefit of unique opportunity to review participants' responses to each question asked when researchers conduct their own transcription (Adu, 2019:60). The transcription for the ten interviews of this study was a lengthy and meticulous process and it required the researcher to listen to the audio files repeatedly to ensure that all the information recorded by the audio recorder was indeed a true reflection of the information in the transcripts. The researcher transcribed all the audio recordings and therefore became further familiarised with the content of the interviews before starting with the coding process.

Coding is defined by Terre Blanche et al. (2012:324) as a process of breaking up data into analytically relevant ways. Coding enables the researcher to organise and cluster codes with similar characteristics into categories or families (Saldana, 2013). The process entails working through data, finding themes and patterns as well as classifying them under headings or brief descriptions that summarise their meanings (MGivern, 2003:276).

To begin the coding process, the researcher uploaded the transcripts in a form of Microsoft word documents onto the Atlas ti software for further analysis and to start with the identification of codes from the interview transcript data. In qualitative research, a code is often defined as “a word or phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based data” (Saldana, 2013:3).

The codes used by the researcher were identified using quotations. Quotations are statements spoken by participants during the interview (Saldana, 2013:20). To make the codes more identifiable, the researcher assigned different colours to the codes using the Atlas ti software. The codes emerged from the data and, thereafter, the researcher grouped the codes with noticeable similarities into categories. Categorisation in qualitative data analysis entails clustering similar or comparable codes into groups to enable the construction of patterns and further analysis of the data (Leavy, 2014:587). The clustered groups of codes are referred to as categories (Adu, 2019:121).

In order for the researcher to conclude on the final set of categories and codes for analysis, they are required to go through the research data or material numerous times and continuously revise codes as new ways of looking at the material emerge (Schreier, 2018:84). Categories were further analysed and reduced to concepts that addressed the research questions for this study. As a result, themes emerged from the examination of categories (Adu, 2019:121). According to Leavy (2014:596), theme data entails constructing collective and phenomenological denotations from the data through extended passages of text.

The researcher also made use of memoing and code memos during qualitative data analysis. According to Babbie (2013: 400), memoing is a process whereby the researcher writes memos or notes for themselves and others involved in the project. These become part of the data for the analysis in qualitative research. According to Punch (2005:202), memoing is considered to be the more creative and speculative part of developing qualitative analysis. Additionally, memo writing assists the researcher with initiating new ideas, creating concepts and identifying novel relationships (Charmaz, 2001:687). For this particular study, the researcher kept a research diary as a form of memoing (See Appendix G). The diary was updated on a regular basis, highlighting some of the processes the researcher experienced during the research journey.

After the final themes had been established, the researcher proceeded to interpret the findings. Interpretation is defined by Rossman and Rallis (2017:247) as the process of capturing the researcher’s experience in the field in order to attach meaning and express it to the reader. To ensure sufficient interpretation, the researcher provided a descriptive interpretation of the qualitative data in

Chapter 4. The qualitative data analysis process was lengthy and meticulous, and it took the researcher one month to complete.

### **3.7.2. Quantitative data analysis**

Quantitative data analysis entails procedures and guidelines used by researchers to reduce large amounts of data into more manageable forms that allow for people to draw conclusions and insights about patterns in the data (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015:3). The researcher used descriptive statistics to organise and present the quantitative data, which has been defined by Cleff (2014:3) as “any technique of obtaining information based on the description of data from a particular population”.

The primary aim of descriptive statistics was to unify and describe data obtained from a sample of observations by means of presentations of distribution in tables and graphs, data reduction methods that recap data from large numbers of interview observations and descriptive relationships between observations (Newton & Rudestam, 2013:68).

An internal scale reliability analysis was conducted out on the perceived task values scale comprising 8 items. Cronbach’s alpha showed the questionnaire to contain an acceptable reliability score of  $\alpha = 0.81$ . Most items seemed to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if deleted. The one exception to this was item 4, which would increase the alpha to  $\alpha = 0.83$ . Therefore, removal of this item was considered. The results of the reliability statistics from Cronbach Alpha are in Appendix I. This study applied SPSS (IBM, version 26), a statistical analysis software application for the quantitative data analysis. The researcher used factor component analysis and frequencies.

## **3.8. Trustworthiness of qualitative study**

For the qualitative phase, Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggested that credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are all essential tools in evaluating trustworthiness in research.

### **3.8.1. Credibility**

Credibility was enhanced through respondent validations and trustworthiness was enhanced by collecting data from two sources. To enhance credibility, the researcher also applied the member checking technique, which entails consulting participants during analysis as a way of validating the findings (Saldana, 2013:35).

### **3.8.2. Confirmability**

For this study, the researcher applied member checks by sending interview transcripts to research participants for them to review the transcribed data and confirm that the information in the text is



indeed a true reflection of their statements. This practice also contributed to the confirmability of data. Appendix E shows an email communication carried out by the researcher as part of member checking.

### **3.8.3. Dependability**

For dependability, the researcher also conducted an interview pilot study on five participants. The aim of the pilot study was to determine if the questions were clear enough for the respondents to understand them. The same interview guide was used for all interviews to strengthen dependability (see Appendix C). The following section focuses on the validity and reliability of the qualitative study.

## **3.9. Validity and reliability of quantitative study**

According to Bernard (2000:46-47), validity refers to the correctness and dependability of the instruments, data and results in research, whilst reliability refers to whether or not the research instruments used are nonpartisan on their impact and steady over different events of utilisation. Therefore, reliability measures the extent to which the analysis of data yields consistent responses/results that can be repeated or reproduced at different times or by different researchers (Colton & Covert, 2015:74; Curtis & Curtis, 2011:13; Sahu, 2013:26).

### **3.9.1. Validity**

Reliability in quantitative research is essentially based on the consistency of measurement to test if upon repeated application, the same value is obtained, observed or recorded (Mood, Morrow & McQueen, 2019:38). To enhance the reliability of the quantitative data collection instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study of a small sample of the survey. According to Salkind (2010:1032), a pilot study is a trial run before the main research or pre-test of a specific instrument or procedure is conducted. Similarly, Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004:223) described a pilot study as “conducting feasibility or small-scale studies in preparation of the main study and the pretesting of a particular research instrument”. The pilot study was conducted to test the feasibility of the study and the instrument. A pilot study is imperative for the research process as it enables the researcher to identify and address potential problem areas that may arise throughout the entire survey procedure as well as to assess whether the project is feasible and realistic, before administering the full-scale study (Gillespie, Ruel & Wagner, 2016:115).

According to Gillespie et al. (2016:114-5), the general rule of thumb of a pilot test survey is 30 to 100 pilot participants; however, this number may vary depending on the sample size of the study.

As indicated in the population and sampling section, the exact number of the population was not predetermined for this research, and the general rule of thumb discussed by Gillespie et al. (2016) was not mutually inclusive of the circumstances surrounding this particular research, hence the researcher's decision to limit the pilot survey to five participants. The pilot study process was therefore fundamental in this research as it assisted in ensuring that the respondents and the researcher understood the questions in the same way, which further reduced errors of the instruments adopted.

### **3.9.2. Reliability**

The researcher further used Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of quantitative data of the Likert scales. Cronbach's alpha is defined by Gliem and Gliem (2003:84) as a test reliability technique that requires a solitary test administration to give a notable gauge of the dependability for a given test. The Cronbach alpha test is commonly used to test for the internal reliability of coefficients, using a computed alpha coefficient that varies between 1 (meaning perfect internal reliability) and 0 (meaning no internal reliability), whereby the figure of 0.75 or more is commonly used as the principle to denote an accepted level of reliability (Singh, 2007:78).

An internal scale reliability analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising 8 items. Cronbach's alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability,  $\alpha = 0.81$ . The results of the reliability statistics from Cronbach's alpha are in Appendix K. This study applied (SPSS) IBM, (version 26), a statistical analysis software application for the quantitative data analysis. The researcher used factor component analysis and frequencies.

### **3.10. Research ethics**

When conducting communication research, ethical considerations such as privacy, confidentiality and institutional or professional control are vital (Du Plooy, 2009:211). Research ethics can be defined as a set of principles that assist researchers in deciding how to conduct ethical research (Christensen et al., 2011:96). According to McGivern (2003:353), research ethics entail the moral principles that are used as standards of conduct or guidelines with regards to the rights and wrongs of the researcher's behaviour towards a particular person or group. This study adopted a thorough ethical consideration process. Some of the ethical principles considered included informed consent, voluntary participation, no harm to participants, anonymity, confidentiality (privacy), transparency and not deceiving subjects (McGivern, 2003:352). The ethical considerations taken during this study are described below.

### **3.10.1. Informed consent for interviews**

Informed consent is when participants are well informed about what the study entails and it provides the researcher with written authorisation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:121). According to Ruane (2015:50), informed consent is basically an ethical directive specifying that all possible research participants must be aware of all research characteristics that may potentially influence their decision to take part in the research. On the day of the interview, all participants signed a consent form before the interview commenced, the consent form was to be kept for safe record keeping by the researcher. According to Allen (2017:706), an informed consent form includes full disclosure of the purpose of the study, and the risks and benefits associated with the research being conducted. The informed consent form is illustrated in Appendix B. The researcher also ensured that permission was granted by the participants for the interview to be recorded.

### **3.10.2. Confidentiality and anonymity**

The researcher further upheld research ethics by ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of research subjects and data obtained during the research process. According to Lewis et al. (2019:96), confidentiality denotes that the researcher does not reveal the identity of participants or report participants' answers in ways that may reveal their identity or that may be ascribed to them. Confidentiality also implies that information provided by the participant is private and is offered voluntarily to the researcher in confidence (Israel & Hay, 2006:77). Moreover, confidentiality is guaranteed when the researcher can identify a given person's response but promises not to disclose it publicly (Babbie, 2013:36). Although participants were identifiable to the researcher, the researcher promised not to disclose their personal particulars. To further enhance confidentiality, the researcher ensured that, during both data collection and analysis, no personal particulars of the participants and that of their businesses were documented. Instead, the interview transcripts were allocated code names from P1 to P10 and the questionnaires were numbered from 1 to 150 to avoid using the actual particulars. This can be confirmed on the attached Appendices (C and D) of the interview guide and questionnaire attached.

Anonymity is the desire of individuals/participants for moments of public privacy (Kimmel, 1988:87). Similarly, David and Sutton (2011:47) defined anonymity as a circumstance whereby the researcher does not recognise or may not document individual particulars of respondents such as their names and/or addresses. A research study guarantees anonymity when neither the researcher nor any other person reading about the research can attach a given response to a particular respondent (Babbie, 2013:35). The allocation of code names discussed in confidentiality was done randomly to ensure that readers could not attach a given response to any particular participant.

The nature of the research conducted required the sample of the population selected to participate in the research at their own free will or voluntarily. Voluntary participation implies that no one should be forced to participate in the research (Babbie, 2013:32). Voluntary participation of the participants was also indicated on the informed consent letter and the questionnaire documents, and the participants were verbally informed about it prior to the commencement of the interviews.

### **3.10.3. Permission granted and data management**

The researcher received, ethical clearance from the University of Johannesburg's Research Ethics Committee before the research commenced, (see Appendix H). Additionally, the researcher received permission from management of the NCCI as well as the NUST incubation centre to get access to their databases containing SMEs that were used for this study. The researcher was granted permission by the NCCI and NUST incubation centre on the condition that the databases were not to be accessed by third parties outside the University of Johannesburg's strategic communication department. Furthermore, the databases were not to be accessed by any third party for marketing strategies targeted at SMEs.

The researcher saved the audio recordings, transcripts, databases and the typed data containing research information under a password protected folder on the hard-drive and personal computer to ensure that the information was kept safe. The questionnaire hard copies were all kept in a locked place.

### **3.11. Limitations of the study**

This is a Namibian-focused study that is limited or subjected to a small sample of employees responsible for official social media management functions for SMEs geographically located in Windhoek only. As a result, findings may not be transferable or generalisable to the wider Namibian population located outside Windhoek, or to other countries.

Considering that the size of population for this study was not clearly stipulated, the researcher found it challenging to locate additional SMEs, hence the decision to implement snowball sampling. It is for this reason that at times the researcher used purposive and snowball sampling methods concurrently to achieve the sample target for both qualitative and quantitative samples. Furthermore, the researcher also experienced resource constraints with financing of the study and, hence, conducted only ten interviews for the qualitative phase.

### **3.12. Summary of the chapter**

This chapter clearly outlined the general overview of the methodological choices explored by the researcher in the planning and execution of the study. The research was exploratory; hence the researcher used a sequential mixed methods approach which allowed the complementary use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, starting with the qualitative phase and followed by the quantitative phase. The data generated from the qualitative phase was analysed in this chapter and the findings are discussed and interpreted in Chapter 4, whilst the data generated from the quantitative phase is analysed and discussed in Chapter 5.

Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher clearly discussed and justified the appropriateness of the data collection tools used for this study as well as the data analysis techniques used to ensure that data generated would sufficiently address the research questions and research sub-objectives outlined in Chapter 1. The chapter also covered the trustworthiness aspects for the qualitative study as well as the issues of validity and reliability pertaining to the quantitative study. Lastly, the ethical considerations of the study were highlighted.

The next chapter discusses and interprets the qualitative findings.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

# **DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The aim of the study was to determine how SMEs in Namibia can use Facebook to co-create brand stories for a B2B market. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the type of study conducted was exploratory and the approach adopted was a sequential mixed design. Data collection started with semi-structured interviews for qualitative data collection, and the qualitative findings were analysed using the Atlas ti software. The analysed data was then used to strengthen the context of the quantitative questionnaires. Considering that the research used the mixed methodology approach, for this chapter the researcher discusses the qualitative findings and interpretation from the thematic analysis. The quantitative findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the following: the demographic profile of the participants, an overview of all the themes that emerged from the analysis, a narration of the experiences of the participants in the respective sub-themes, an interpretation of the findings per theme and then a conclusion of the chapter.

### **4.2. Demographic profile of the research participants**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with ten participants from different SMEs around Windhoek. The participants interviewed are the individuals responsible for running the social media business pages in their respective SMEs. A summary of the demographical information of the participants is illustrated in Table 4.1.

*Table 4.1: Demographical information of the interview participants for the qualitative phase of the research*

Participant	Gender	Position	Size of SME	Do you have an active Facebook page?	Do you have any other type of social media apart from Facebook	Years of social media management experience	Years of industry experience	Years of B2B experience	Location
P1	M	Managing Member	Medium	Yes	Instagram & Twitter	12	13-14	10+	Windhoek Prosperita Area
P2	M	Founder	Medium	Yes	Instagram, Twitter & WhatsApp	5	10	10	Windhoek CBD
P3	M	Founder/ Creative Director	Small	Yes	Instagram & Twitter	10	8	8	CBD Windhoek
P4	F	Managing Partner	Small	Yes	Instagram & Twitter	3	6	5-6	Windhoek North
P5	M	Communications & Marketing Manager	Small	Yes	Facebook Instagram	1	2	2	Wanaheda, Windhoek
P6	M	Owner	Small	Yes	Facebook only	5 +	10- 15	8	Windhoek CBD
P7	M	Owner	Small	Yes	Twitter & Instagram	7	7	4	Khomasdal Windhoek
P8	F	Manager: Marketing & Communications	Small	Yes	LinkedIn Twitter	5	9 +	5+	Pioneers park Windhoek
P9	M	Co-Founder	Small	Yes	Twitter & Instagram	10	10	15	Southern Industrial Area, Windhoek
P10	M	Sales & Marketing Executive	Small	Yes	Instagram Twitter	8	12	12	Windhoek West. Windhoek

All the participants interviewed were purposefully selected to ensure that they fit the sampling criteria discussed in the methodology chapter. The table shows that the majority of the participants interviewed are the founders or owners of the SMEs represented. The gender representation in the table indicates that only two out of the ten participants were female and the remaining eight were male. Furthermore, the table also indicates the diverse number for the years of experience in social media management, B2B experience and the overall industry experience from participants. The participants also come from different areas within Windhoek. The overall themes that emerged from the analysed transcripts are discussed in the next section.

### 4.3. An overview of the themes and sub-themes

During the thematic analysis, a total of six themes emerged from the codes that occurred from the data in the transcripts. A summary of the overall themes and subthemes that emerged is demonstrated in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Overall themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis**

<b>Theme 1: Essential elements of an effective brand story</b>	
Sub-themes	Frequency
Using a clear strategic message	11
Using pictures, videos and typography that relate to the story	10
Combining structured indices to influence the audience's opinions and attitudes	8
Seeking the audience's emotional reactions	7
Developing a brand story with familiar local archetypes	5
Using a storyline concept	5
Use of current and informative news story content	3
Using actors to attract the attention to your SME brand	3
Using original story narratives in SME stories	3
Stories about the growth of the organisation	3
Total	58
<b>Theme 2: Facebook features and services</b>	
Use of Facebook boosting/sponsoring feature	14
Using tags and post re-sharing as referrals	10



Use of 24-hours Facebook stories for ephemeral content marketing	8
Using Facebook exposure to attract and engage a larger B2B online audience	8
Taking advantage of cost-effective engagement	5
Using Facebook analytics to determine effective B2B market engagement	3
Use of Facebook Live tool to market live events	3
Total	51
<b>Theme 3: B2B collaborations on events and general business activities</b>	
Sub-themes	Frequency
Creating referral links between B2B Facebook pages	11
SMEs co-hosting events and collectively posting on Facebook	6
Using B2B endorsement deals	5
Total	22
<b>Theme 4: B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services</b>	
Sub-themes	Frequency
B2B SME hubs on Facebook for easy product access and extended exposure	7
Two or more organisations working on an advertising campaign for Facebook	4
Total	11
<b>Theme: 5 Challenges experienced by SMEs in their use of Facebook for B2B</b>	
Sub-themes	Frequency
Reputation harm associated with collaborating brands	5
Experienced challenges in SME Facebook optimisation due to lack or limited technical skills	3
The culture of competition amongst SMEs influence B2B collaboration	3
Total	11
<b>Theme 6: Recommendations for effective B2B storytelling on Facebook</b>	
Sub-themes	Frequency
Implementing dedicated and knowledgeable social media functions for SMEs	5
Using group effort to drive business	3

B2B-focused familiarisation	3
Total	11

The six themes summarised in Table 4.2 are deliberated in more detail in the next section. Each theme is discussed and sorted according to frequencies whereby the sub-themes within each respective theme are arranged in descending order from the most to the least frequencies and discussed accordingly. It is worth noting that as discussed in the methodology chapter, to hide the identities of the participants, all interview participants were allocated code names in Atlas ti ranging from [P 1.] to [P 10.]. Therefore, during the discussions, the researcher used the allocated code names on the quoted statements of the participants accordingly.

#### 4.4. Theme 1: Essential elements of an effective brand story

In this theme, “essential elements of an effective brand story” are defined as the components that form part of brand stories used by SMEs on Facebook. During the thematic analysis, ten sub-themes emerged from the data. A summary of theme 1 with its related sub-themes and frequencies is illustrated in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3: Theme 1 – Essential elements of an effective brand story and supporting sub-themes**

Theme 1: Essential elements of a good brand story		
Sub-themes	Frequency	Operational definition
Using a clear strategic message	11	A visibly focused strategic message that an SME aims to communicate to the Facebook audience in a story
Using of pictures, videos and typography that relate to the story	10	The use of pictures, videos, typography and overall visual components in Facebook stories for SMEs
Combining structured indices to influence audience opinions and attitudes	8	The detailed components that make a story memorable such as places, characters, activities, as well as problems and attitudes outlined in an SME’s story on Facebook
Seeking audience’s emotional reactions	7	Using emotionally attractive elements or emotions in an SME’s Facebook story, e.g. use of humour

Theme 1: Essential elements of a good brand story		
Sub-themes	Frequency	Operational definition
Developing a brand story with familiar local archetypes	5	A pattern or representations of images that embody an archetypal human experience and define the personality of an SME brand that makes it relatable to the Facebook audience
Using a storyline concept	5	Setting the start and end of a temporal sequence of events in an SME's Facebook story
Use of current and informative news story content	3	The use of short digital stories that have an element of news value content
Using actors to attract attention to your SME brand	3	The actors or entities who have roles in a plot
Using original story narratives in SME stories	3	The quality of truth, genuineness and originality portrayed in an SME's Facebook brand story
Stories about the growth of the organisation	3	Story elements that focus on the triumph of the SME and positive outcomes
Total	57	

#### 4.4.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Using a clear and strategic message

Most of the participants were of the opinion that SMEs must have a strategic message for every story they post on Facebook. Some participants indicated that the audience was more attracted to stories containing messages or information about that particular product that an SME offers as well as the after service that clients receive after purchasing or making use of their product or service, for example service warranty, etc. A few participants also highlighted the likelihood of a message spreading to a wider B2B audience when transmitted through Facebook. Participant 9 commented and said:

[P 9.] *“First and foremost, the story must have a message, because, without a message, a story is pointless.”*

Participant 5 also commented and said:

[P 5.] *“Businesses should just be clear on whatever message that they want to give when people are reading it to avoid misinterpretation.”*

The findings of this chapter emphasise the importance of having a clear strategic message in the Facebook story, which reflects on the products and services associated with the brand. These findings correspond with the research by Fakiha (2018:25), and Aaker and Aaker (2016:61). Similarly, Fog et al. (2010:34) noted that messages communicated by organisations should always reflect positively on their brand. The findings also show that participants prefer to use story messages that are concise and short. These findings correspond with research by Sloane (2003, as cited in Chiu et al., 2012:264) who stressed the importance of having a clear message in each brand story.

#### **4.4.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Using pictures, videos and typography**

The majority of participants were in consensus that visual elements (videos, pictures & typography) are essential components in B2B storytelling on Facebook. The use of pictures emerged as the most popular visual component used by participants, citing that pictures make stories more interesting. Some participants indicated that a story with a picture attached has more potential to reach a wider audience compared to a story without a picture attached. Participant 2 commented and said:

[P 2.] *“As long as your story has a picture to it, it will end up reaching more people, but if you just post a normal text story its reach is limited somehow.”*

The findings in this sub-theme indicate that the use of the picture element in stories is highly popular among the majority of participants that were interviewed, which is usually done in order to maximise audience reach. This finding also indicates that videos are not as popular as picture elements among the participants in this study as only a few participants said they use videos. This is also partly due to the fact that videos take longer to load and this was highlighted by some of the participants. Although the use of videos is not as high as photos, Mowat (2018:19) argued that by the year 2019, 80% of the world’s internet traffic would consist of videos.

#### **4.4.3. Sub-theme 1.3: Combining structured indices to influence audience opinions and attitudes**

Most of the participants were of the view that SMEs should have a carefully planned story sequence before they share their stories with Facebook audiences. This includes planning on how they intend to develop the story and vetting how their stories may influence the audience’s attitudes on both the positive and the negative stance. A few participants highlighted the importance of having a clear plan

on how to involve the Facebook audience in problem solving decisions and combining other aspects that make the story memorable to the audience. Participant 4 commented and said:

[P 4.] *“Your story can even say, have you ever heard of a tyre burst? these are the results and this is why it is important, the person will immediately go and check their tyres because you guided them to positive change.”*

The findings show that organised structured indices are therefore details that make a story memorable. It is these structured indices that help the audience to remember the details of the story rather than just facts and logic alone (Dolan, 2017:13). Singh and Sonnenburg (2012:189) argued that the more indices a story has, the more likely it can be recalled by the memory of the audience.

#### **4.4.4. Sub-theme 1.4: Seeking audience emotional reactions**

In this sub-theme, evoking emotions is defined as using emotionally attractive elements or emotions in an SME’s Facebook story, for example the use of humour. This sub-theme emerged eight times during the analysis. The category that emerged from this sub-theme is discussed below.

Various participants were of the opinion that the most effective stories aim to bring out emotions from the Facebook audience. The most popular emotion indicated by the participants was humour. Some participants indicated that expressing humour in story messages such as jokes and funny stories draws the audience’s attention to an SME story. Participant 3 commented and said:

[P 3.] *“Being funny and humorous in stories pushes the message out there because it’s something people would want to laugh about but, in a way, also educate them.”*

Emotions are an essential element in storytelling. This was confirmed by Mowat (2018:141) who argued that a story is a method through which businesses emotionally engage with their audiences to communicate their messages in an effort to change their behaviours.

The findings indicate that participants aim to have emotional attributes to their brand stories on Facebook, which corresponds with research by Dolan (2017:13). The findings also indicate that storytelling for SMEs are focused on generating emotions from their audiences, and this corresponds with research by Carnevale et al. (2017:84).

#### **4.4.5. Sub-theme 1.5: Developing a brand story with familiar local archetypes**

Some of the participants indicated that developing a brand story with familiar and unique aspects, for example naming an archetype using a local “Namibian” familiar attribute increases the chances of

creating interest as well as receiving more attention from their Facebook audience. Participant 3 commented and said:

[P 3.] *“People were really inspired by us going back to the community and taking these visuals in the community and posting these stories on Facebook, because the whole idea was to represent our people.”*

According to English and Weiner (2006:32), archetypes infuse recognisable integrity and a recognisable endurance into the story. Therefore, using familiar archetypes such as those described by the participants makes the story richer and more engaging (Burgess & Rousselet, 2015:23).

#### **4.4.6. Sub-theme 1.6: Using a storyline concept**

Some participants were of the opinion that SMEs should first come up with a well-thought-out storyline concept that has a beginning and an end. This will guide the Facebook audience through the story and ultimately the achievement of the outcome. A few participants indicated that their Facebook stories sometimes consist of images or characters that show a before and after outcome of an SME project, which ensures that the audience is attracted from the start of the plot to the outcome of the plot. Participant 7 remarked and said:

[P 7.] *“Our Facebook story images show the beginning, and then during and after, just to show the clients how the things were before and the current outcome.”*

In this sub-theme participants indicated the importance of having a storyline for every story on Facebook. It is therefore established that storylines define the essence of a story (Burgess & Rousselet 2015:23), as it guides the audience through the story narrative.

#### **4.4.7. Sub-theme 1.7: Use of current and informative news story content**

Some of the participants in the journalism industry were of the view that short news articles were more effective for their storytelling. Participant 10 commented and said:

[P 10.] *“The kind of stories that you find on our Facebook page are stories that are informative, be it on sports, business, politics or lifestyle.”*

The type of story element identified in this sub-theme emerged from participants in the newspaper SME industry. Newspapers in recent years have had to adjust their models of communication and incorporate social media such as Facebook in their storytelling techniques (Tu, 2015:7).

#### **4.4.8. Sub-theme 1.8: Using actors to attract attention to your brand**

Some participants were of the opinion that portraying actors in stories make stories more interesting. Participants also indicated that SMEs sometimes use characters to address social issues in their stories. Participant 1 commented and said:

[P 1.] *“Imagine helping out the community and posting your story on Facebook, your followers will look at you like you are their hero or saviour.”*

The findings indicate that participants preferred to use actors that SME Facebook audiences can relate to or identify with because audiences are most likely to react positively towards such characters. This finding is confirmed by research by Dessart and Pitardi (2019:189), and Fog et al. (2010:41).

#### **4.4.9. Sub-theme 1.9: Using original story narratives in SME stories**

Some participants were of the view that incorporating aspects of originality in stories makes your brand unique. Participant 3 commented and said:

[P 3.] *“Originality plays a big role because it makes you different from the rest.”*

The category on the authenticity element that emerged from the data consisted of original stories and stories with original story narratives that are created when collaborating. Participants indicated that SMEs that incorporated an element of uniqueness to their stories on Facebook resonated well with the audience and their brand stories were different from the rest. The findings therefore confirm the need for authenticity in brand storytelling as affirmed in studies by Perkins (2015:275), Aaker and Aaker (2016:490), and Dolan (2017:21).

#### **4.4.10. Sub-theme 1.10: Using stories that focus on the growth of an organisation**

A few participants espoused the element of portraying the triumph of an SME and the positive outcomes associated with it. Participant 5 commented and said:

[P 5.] *“Stories on growth actually form the fundamental nature of what every SME likes to post.”*

The characteristics of growth and success elements highlighted in this sub-theme form part of the vision stories highlighted by Smith and Wintrob (2013:37). Start-up organisations or SMEs set up future expectations through projective and growth stories to gain legitimacy from the audience (Garud et al., 2014:1489).

#### 4.4.11. Interpretation of Theme 1

Based on the findings, the story elements identified by the researcher are applied from an interactive digital media context as a form of digital storytelling adopted from Anderson and Chua (2010:32).

Most of the SME brand story elements that were identified through the analysis resonate with brand story elements in earlier works by Spear and Roper (2013:493), Smith and Wintrob (2013:37), Aaker and Aaker (2016:49), and Fakiha (2018:25). The elements discovered in this theme were more descriptive than the elements discussed by Fakiha (2018); however, the similarities between them are manifested in the descriptions. For example, the use of strategic message structured indices, familiar archetypes and original story narratives discovered in this research apply the same mechanisms with the main message, structured indices, archetypes and authenticity discussed by Fakiha (2018).

In addition to the elements that were identified by the aforementioned researchers, the researcher for the present study also identified other elements such as current affairs and pictures, videos and visual elements. Visual elements were among the sub-themes with the highest frequencies, which is no surprise considering the persuasive power of virtually enticing content on social media audiences (Gretzel, 2017:1).

The next section focuses on the findings and interpretation of theme 2, the Facebook features and services used by SMEs in the B2B market.

#### 4.5. Theme 2: Facebook features and services

In this theme, the use of Facebook features and services for SMEs is defined as the ways in which SMEs in the B2B market utilise the features and services offered by the Facebook social media platform for B2B purposes. A summary of theme 2 with its related sub-themes and frequencies is illustrated in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4: Theme 2 – Facebook features and services and supporting sub-themes**

<b>Theme 2: Facebook features and services</b>		
<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>
Use of Facebook boosting/sponsoring features	14	The use of Facebook boosting features to enhance post potential
Using tags and post-re-sharing as referrals	10	When an SME mentions or identifies another business in a Facebook story/post



Use of 24-hours Facebook stories for ephemeral content marketing	8	The use of Facebook 24-hour stories to market ephemeral content marketing
Using Facebook exposure to attract and engage a larger B2B online audience	8	The opportunities SMEs experience from using Facebook to connect and interact with a wider spectrum of audiences globally
Taking advantage of cost-effective engagement	5	The affordable and sometimes free marketing opportunities experienced by SMEs on Facebook
Using Facebook analytics to determine effective B2B market engagement	3	The use of Facebook data to create specialised content for targeted audience
Use of Facebook Live tool to market live events	3	Promoting events on Facebook using the Facebook Live streaming feature
Total	51	

As illustrated in Table 4.4 above, 7 sub-themes emerged from the theme of the use of Facebook features and services for SMEs.

#### 4.5.1. Sub-theme 2.1: Use of Facebook boosting/sponsoring feature

The most popular Facebook content marketing feature among the participants was the Facebook boosting feature. This feature is normally used by SMEs to boost their content, for example stories, adverts, posts, etc., on Facebook. Furthermore, the feature allows SMEs to select a budget option that enables them to manage the acceleration and boosting of particular content to ensure that it reaches the specified target audience. Although the feature is a paid service, it is a popular practice among the participants interviewed and the majority of the participants have used Facebook boosting for their stories. As quoted in the interview transcript, Participant 10 said:

[P 10.] *“Boosting is an effective way because it allows you to actually grow your audience and viewership far faster than organic ways.”*

Similarly, Participant 3 also commented and said:

[P 3.] *“Facebook Sponsoring is when you put money into an advert or a campaign which allows you to access a large following which means if a person does not even follow you, they are able to see your message.”*

Participant 2 had a different view and commented as follows:

[P 2.] *“Boosting is only effective when you are trying to reach a certain maybe market or region because that gives you an option of where exactly you want your boost to be seen mostly if you want it to be seen by female or male and particular age group.”*

The findings in this sub-theme presented Facebook boosting as the most commonly used feature among participants due to its potential for a broader post reach, which corresponds with the study findings by Marshall et al. (2017). According to Marshall et al. (2017), the Facebook boosting feature enhances the potential of a post’s reach, which was indicated as the main motivation by participants for using it. Similarly, Vahl (2014) also maintained that Facebook boosting is aimed at bringing traffic to your business page. Research by Walther et al. (2009) further suggests that features such as Facebook boosting contribute to user impression formulations for businesses.

#### **4.5.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Using tags and post re-sharing as referrals**

Several participants indicated that when an SME mentions another business in their post it is a form of referral. This is usually done when one SME delivers services/products to another SME and as a show of satisfaction for the services rendered, an SME would tag or mention their service provider in the comments as a form of referral for other SMEs that may be interested in receiving similar services. Participant 7 commented saying:

[P 7.] *“We mention their name in a post by stating that they did this work for us, then they also mention us that we did this for them in their post.”*

Participant 5 also said:

[P 5.] *“You can easily refer clients from your business to another business by simply tagging the name of their [referring to another business] business Facebook page.”*

Some participants indicated that they have re-posted or re-shared the content posted by other SMEs as a form of a B2B marketing strategy intended to direct the Facebook audience’s attention to the other page. A few participants were of the opinion that sharing or re-posting another business’s post has a mutual benefit of marketing each other’s products and services to each other’s audiences. Participant 1 commented as follows:

[P 1.] *“We share each other’s posts to our followers, allowing us to market fellow businesses on our page and vice versa.”*

Most of the participants were in agreement that using Facebook to refer audiences to other businesses is an easy, convenient and effective way to support each other’s businesses. This corresponds with

the study by Cho et al. (2015:859) which suggests that as a form of support the audiences within your Facebook network like and share your content.

#### **4.5.3. Sub-theme 2.3: Use of 24-hour Facebook stories for ephemeral content marketing**

Several of the participants were of the opinion that the use of the 24-hour story Facebook feature is not as effective as timeline stories. Only a few participants supported the use of the 24-hour stories feature for content marketing, indicating that stories generate more views and easily grasp the attention of the audience. Some of the participants shared their views on the feature as follows:

Participant 3 said:

[P 3.] *“Only with Instagram it (24-hour story) is more effective, but with Facebook, I don’t think it is effective for us.”*

Similarly, Participant 2 also commented and said:

[P 2.] *“When you have the 24-hour story it does not come back, so it is best to share a post or advertise using post and not the 24-hour stories.”*

Most of the participants for this study expressed dissatisfaction with the use of the 24-hour story because of the time limit that is assigned to every post. Participants expressed concern about the retention of information posted on the 24-hour stories.

The findings are supported by the research by Shehu (2018:140) which indicated that Facebook 24-hour stories was the least used ephemeral content compared to WhatsApp and Instagram 24-hour stories. Although ephemeral content marketing is not the most common feature used by participants, sharing marketing content for a limited period is still an essential element in content marketing as confirmed by Bayer et al. (2016).

#### **4.5.4. Sub-theme 2.4: Using Facebook exposure to attract and engage a larger B2B online audience**

Several participants were of the opinion that SME exposure that comes as a result of using Facebook has widened their online audience reach in both local and international B2B markets. One participant commented and said:

[P 10.] *“Facebook reach also allows linking of co-boundaries, which means that someone in Germany with an interest about Namibia can go to our Facebook page and see the kind of stories, that Namibian people publish through Facebook.”*

One participant reported to have experienced an increase in B2B clients as a direct outcome of Facebook exposure. Participant 1 commented and said:

[P 1.] *“Facebook brought us a lot of exposure and we have received a serious number of customers because of that.”*

Some of the participants also highlighted that the use of Facebook features has enabled SMEs to participate in dialogue with their audience through comments, likes, etc. According to a few participants, using Facebook features enables SMEs to give immediate feedback on queries posed by the audience which creates a two-way strategic communication channel which is an essential for the sharing of ideas and efficient product and service delivery. Commenting on Facebook interactions, Participant 10 said:

[P 10.] *“You get to share ideas and get feedback from people.”*

The findings of this sub-theme indicated that Facebook connects SMEs to a wider audience which in turn increases the business exposure and visibility, as confirmed by studies by Barlow and McCann (2015:282), Mershon (2012), Ng and Zimmerman (2015:366) and Stelzner (2017:14-15). The findings of this sub-theme are also supported by Masidwali (2018) who noted that engagement allows businesses to collect and respond to feedback from their social media audiences, creating a two-way strategic communication channel of engaging the online Facebook audience.

#### **4.5.5. Sub-theme 2.5: Taking advantage of cost-effective engagement**

The affordability factor of Facebook marketing also emerged from the data analysed. Some participants were of the opinion that when an SME posts content on a Facebook page it is a form of free marketing directed at their Facebook audience and this promotes the organic growth of the business. Participant 4 commented and said:

[P 4.] *“If you have ten thousand followers, you have those ten thousand followers who you are reaching at not a single cost.”*

Similarly, a few participants were of the view that Facebook use for business generally has a low-cost advantage. Participant 1 commented as follows:

[P 1.] *“I am glad that Facebook marketing is very cheap because all you need is the internet which has become an essential need for all of us now globally.”*

Participants also indicated that SMEs find content marketing on Facebook convenient and affordable because of its low-cost advantage which corresponds with the findings of the study on Namibian SMEs by Shehu (2018). The findings also indicate that participants are motivated to use Facebook for B2B because of the various free marketing tools available, which is confirmed in the research findings by Batum and Ersoy (2016:145).

#### **4.5.6. Sub-theme 2.6: Using Facebook analytics to determine effective B2B market engagement**

Some participants indicated that they use Facebook data and insights to determine audience needs that will inform their decisions in creating tailor-made content targeted at specific audiences. Some participants indicated using Facebook data to determine post reach. One participant commented and said:

[P 10.] *“Facebook offers us information or insights which makes it easier for businesses to target a specific target audience.”*

The use of Facebook data polls also emerged from the analysis. One participant explained that the option gives the audience a selection to vote between product options to determine the most preferred items. Remarking on Facebook polls, Participant 2 said:

[P 2.] *“Let’s say its winter and you are not sure you want to sell jerseys and jackets, then you can ask your followers on Facebook what they would prefer to buy by voting on a poll.”*

This sub-theme indicates the use of Facebook data by participants to create suitable content targeted for specific audiences and determine post reach which corresponds with the study by Ng and Zimmerman (2015), which emphasised that Facebook insights inform the businesses decision in determining the type of content suitable for a particular type of audience.

#### **4.5.7. Sub-theme 2.7: Use of Facebook Live tool to market live events**

Participants indicated that they used the Facebook Live feature to broadcast SME events as a form of marketing their products and services to other businesses. Some participants were of the opinion that the Facebook Live feature enables SMEs to broadcast and share live experiences with the Facebook audience. Participant 10 commented on the feature and said:

[P 10.] *“Facebook live is a cheaper marketing tool that Facebook offers, to allow anyone to be a broadcaster.”*

Participants indicated they use the Facebook Live streaming feature to market their events by encouraging audiences to share their experience to give them a sense of proximity to the event – which is supported by the study by Hunter (2019), who suggests that the proximity allows the audience to feel like they are present at the exact location of the event.

#### **4.5.8. Interpretation of Theme 2: Facebook features and services**

Based on the findings on the theme on Facebook features and services, it can be noted that the strategic use of Facebook features and services can lead to effective digital marketing for Namibian SMEs. The same sentiment was shared in the study by Shehu (2018:146). Overall, the sub-themes discussed under the theme on Facebook features and services demonstrate the various ways in which SMEs in Windhoek have utilised Facebook for the B2B market in Namibia.

Reviewing the sub-themes, it is evident that SMEs utilise various Facebook features and services in marketing their products and services to their B2B audience. SMEs also recognise the benefits experienced as a result of utilising these features and services. The most used features among SMEs is Facebook boosting and Facebook Live. SMEs use the Facebook exposure to share content with each other as well as to connect with potential B2B audiences across the globe. Most SMEs are willing to go the extra mile and pay for more exposure through paid marketing by using Facebook boosting (the most frequent sub-theme), although some participants were still reluctant to pay to use the feature and opted for organic marketing through generic posts using free Facebook features and services. Even though Bayer, Ellison, Falk and Schoenebeck argued that the use of ephemeral content for Facebook is on the rise globally, the findings in this research indicate that most of the participants in the research were not in favour of the use of 24-hour Facebook stories.

The next section discusses the third theme that emerged from the codes. Theme 3, B2B collaborations in the organisation of events and general business activities.

#### **4.6. Theme 3: B2B collaborations on events and general business activities**

The theme of B2B collaborations on events and general business activities refers to events and activities that are co-hosted between two or more SMEs using the Facebook social media platform. During the thematic analysis, three sub-themes emerged from the data. A summary of theme 3 with its related sub-themes and frequencies is illustrated in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5: Theme 3 – B2B collaborations on events and general business activities and supporting sub-themes**

<b>Theme 3: B2B collaboration on events and general business activities</b>		
Sub-themes	Frequency	Operational definition
Creating referral links between Facebook pages	11	Two or more SMEs forming B2B networks through Facebook referral links to capitalise on each other's audiences.
SMEs co-hosting events and collectively posting on Facebook	6	Any activity of having two or more SME brands partnering up to collectively host an event and posting the event activities on Facebook.
Using B2B endorsement deals	5	B2B collaboration whereby an SME brand enters into an endorsement deal with another brand on Facebook.
Total	22	

As illustrated in Table 4.5, three sub-themes emerged from theme 3 and these are discussed and interpreted in further detail in the next section.

#### **4.6.1. Sub-theme 3.1: Creating referral links between Facebook pages**

Some participants were of the opinion that establishing Facebook referral links between various B2B pages is a form of collaboration which benefits all the parties involved through maximised traffic and audience footprints. According to the participants, by clicking on a referral link, the audience will be automatically redirected to the Facebook page that is linked to that referral link. Commenting on the use of Facebook links, Participant 9 said:

*[P 9.] "For instance, you have 20 business Facebook pages and then you link all your pages, each individual will already benefit from an increased number of footprints (number of page visitors)."*

Similarly, Participant 7 remarked that:

*[P 7.] "Whenever we post any story related to our cars or anything like that we should at least, site or copy in the company that did our work and then if the other businesses get impressed and they also want to use their services, they will the know where to click on a link to contact them."*

The findings confirm the importance of forming collaborative links on web-based social networks as highlighted in a study by Kautz et al. (1997: 63-65). The importance of collaborative links is associated with maximised traffic that is generated as a result.

#### **4.6.2. Sub-theme 3.2: SMEs co-hosting events and collectively posting on Facebook**

Several participants indicated that their SMEs have collaborated in hosting a variety of events. One particular event that some of the participants made reference to was the “Kasi-Vibe” festival. The festival brings SMEs from different sectors to participate by showcasing their products and services. During this festival, all participating SMEs have their stories posted on the Kasi-Vibe festival main page which enables them to take advantage of the larger Kasi-Vibe Facebook page audience. Participant 8 commented on the organisation of the popular Kasi-Vibe festival and said:

[P 8.] *“If you check through the Kasi Vibe Facebook page you will see that they post a story about every participating SME brand to showcase their products and every collaborating brand gets a chance to be seen.”*

The use of the Facebook Live feature as a collective B2B engagement component for events was also highlighted during the analysis. Another form of collaborative event that emerged from the analysis is hosting competition events online for various B2B audiences. During these events, two or more businesses host a collaborative competition where the audience stands a chance to win prizes and the winners are announced on both pages of the collaborating businesses. Participant 3 commented as follows:

[P 3.] *“We host competitions on our Facebook page where different companies come together and give away prizes and we announce the winners on all our Facebook pages.”*

The participants indicated that SMEs further strengthen their B2B relationships by organising collaborative events and combining marketing efforts on Facebook. These findings correspond with the findings in the research conducted by Drummond et al. (2018:77), which noted that when SMEs regularly organise festivals, they collectively create awareness for all businesses that are participating.

#### **4.6.3. Sub-theme 3.3: Using B2B endorsement deals**

Some participants were of the opinion that when another brand shares your Facebook story or acknowledges work done by an SME on Facebook, it is considered to be a form of endorsement by the Facebook audience. Therefore, when a brand that is known to have a good reputation endorses an SME, the Facebook audience is most likely to view that particular SME in a positive light. Participant 4 commented as follows:



[P 4.] *“If you get endorsed by a brand that is known for excellence, then your endorsement already sends that positive message to your followers.”*

Some participants indicated that using a brand of a famous person (celebrity or social media influencer) that has a larger following on Facebook to promote SME products and services is an effective way to attract more audiences to an SME Facebook page. Participant 3 commented and said:

[P 3.] *“When you use a celebrity, people start to notice you and the people that did not know you will get to notice your brand because they follow that celebrity on Facebook.”*

The findings indicate that SMEs engage in collaborative B2B endorsement partnerships. These partnerships are aimed at gaining enhanced exposure and usually entail making use of social media influencers which, according to Lutkenhaus et al. (2019:2), is the latest and fastest rising collaborative trend on social media.

#### **4.6.4. Interpretation of Theme 3: B2B collaboration on events and general business activities**

Based on the theme on B2B collaboration on events and general business activities, it can be noted that the Facebook platform is considered to be a powerful collaborative tool among SMEs in the B2B sphere:

The sub-themes under this theme indicate that SMEs co-create brand stories through collaborations of organised events, referral links and endorsement deals. The common mutual benefit as a result of the aforementioned collaborations is increased page visitors and an increase in the audience reach. Facebook referral links is one of the most common type of collaboration incorporated in SME's storytelling. The popularity of referral links by SMEs is attributed to the convenience and ease of use. Based on these findings, it is evident that event collaboration plays a major role in SMEs towards a collective goal. Facebook therefore has a positive impact on the ability for SMEs to strengthen and expand B2B networks through organised events such as festivals, competition events, etc. Based on the findings, the three types of collaborations discussed in this theme, namely collaborating by using Facebook B2B referral links, event collaborations and endorsement collaborations can be utilised by SMEs concurrently. This means that, for example, two or more SMEs can organise an event, use an influencer to promote the event to their followers and use referral links in the stories posted on Facebook.

The next section focuses on the findings and interpretations of theme 4, which is the use of B2B collaboration for advertising the products or services.

#### 4.7. Theme 4: Use of B2B collaboration for advertising the products or services

In this theme, the use of B2B collaboration for advertising products or services is defined as the way in which SMEs collaborate with other businesses to market their products or services. During the thematic analysis, two sub-themes emerged from the data. A summary of theme 4 with its related sub-themes and frequencies is illustrated in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6: Theme 4 – Use of B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services and supporting sub-themes**

Theme 4: B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services		
Sub-theme	Frequency	Operational definition
Creating B2B SME hubs on Facebook for easy product access and extended exposure	7	The creation of a central SME page with the sole purpose of promoting all SMEs from different industry sectors
Joint B2B advertising campaign	4	The process of having two or more SMEs working together on creating a Facebook advertising campaign
Total	11	

As illustrated in Table 4.6. above, two sub-themes emerged from theme 4, the uses of B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services.

##### 4.7.1. Sub-theme 4.1: Creating B2B SME hubs on Facebook for easy product access and extended exposure

Some participants were of the opinion that having a central SME page would generate audience growth and business exposure. This is because central page would have a larger following on Facebook and can be used to advertise on behalf of SMEs with much fewer followers. Participant 1 said:

[P 1.] *“If we create a business hub, users will have easy access to our different products; we will then also be creating a platform where we can all market our businesses jointly.”*

Similarly, Participant 10 also remarked that:

[P 10.] *“We also advertise for businesses on our Facebook page, just to push them further so that they can also maximize their marketing on our 25,000 followers.”*

Additionally, some participants were of the view that an initiative such as an SME hub would promote cross-industry B2B collaborations and that it is easier to collaborate with SMEs from different industries.

According to findings, for some of the participants, a Facebook SME hub which simply translates into having a joint business Facebook page that connects all SMEs would make products and services offered by different SMEs easily accessible to the B2B audience. This allows the SME with fewer followers to leverage on the SME with a larger following.

#### **4.7.2. Sub-theme 4.2: Joint B2B advertising campaign**

Some of the participants have collaborated with other SMEs on presenting advertising campaigns together. This includes creating combined adverts and other promotional activities that are shared on the Facebook pages of all participating SMEs. All participating SMEs share the exposure created from the campaign buzz. Participant 3 said:

[P 3.] *“We run an advertising campaign together with another brand, we sort of push the marketing on both sides which draws audiences to either my page or the page that I am in collaboration with.”*

The findings in this sub-theme indicate how SMEs have collaborated on paid content in order to market their brands on social media. Social media marketing has a cost-effective benefit as also highlighted in the research by Odoom, Dorson and Acheampong (2017:338).

#### **4.7.3. Interpretation of Theme 4: B2B collaboration in advertising the products or services**

Based on the findings in theme 3, it can be noted that SMEs in Windhoek are slowly moving away from the traditional advertising campaigns approach to more versatile social media advertising campaigns which incorporate a more integrated marketing strategy.

The most frequent sub-theme was the creation of SME hubs on Facebook. This may be subject to lack of B2B synergies in the Namibian community. However, based on the sub-themes and categories in this theme, it is evident that SMEs are taking a narrative advertising approach. Narrative advertising aims to tell a story about product consumption and related experiences of the benefits and consequences of usage (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010:368). Through collaborated advertising campaigns, SMEs share their experiences with combined Facebook audiences from each

collaborating brand. These experiences are shared through combined advertisements within and across different SME industries and they are narrated into stories that speak to all collaborating brands and their audiences.

The next section focuses on the findings and interpretation of theme 5, challenges experienced by SMEs' use of Facebook for B2B.

#### 4.8. Theme 5: Challenges experienced by SMEs' use of Facebook for B2B

This theme refers to the challenges that SME brands may potentially experience as a result of collaboration with other businesses on Facebook. Three sub-themes emerged from the data. A summary of the sub-themes and frequencies under theme 5 is presented in Table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7: Theme 5 – Challenges experienced by SMEs' use of Facebook for B2B and supporting sub-themes**

<b>Theme 5: Challenges experienced by SMEs' use of Facebook for B2B</b>		
Sub-themes	Frequency	Operational definition
Reputation harm associated with collaborating brands	5	The negative effects that may be experienced by an SME brand due to the association with a collaborating brand that they are in a partnership which may hinder the reputation of their own SMEs
Experienced challenges in SME Facebook optimisation due to lack or limited technical skills	3	The social media technical skills challenges are the challenges experienced that prevent SMEs from fully utilising Facebook to its optimal capacity
The culture of competition amongst SMEs influences B2B collaboration	3	The lack of desire for some SMEs to participate in collaborations with the competitors
Total	11	

As illustrated in Table 4.7 above, three sub-themes emerged from the theme of challenges experienced by SMEs' use of Facebook for B2B. The next section discusses and interprets the sub-themes.

#### **4.8.1. Sub-theme 5.1: Reputation harm associated with collaborating brands**

In this sub-theme, reputational associated challenges are defined as the negative effects that may be experienced by an SME brand due to the association with a collaborating brand that they are in a partnership with, which may hinder their own reputation. This sub-theme appeared five times.

Several participants from the interviews shared their concerns regarding the consequences of collaboration that may have a negative influence on the reputation of an SME. According to the analysed interview transcript, the negative influence may lead to negative press presentation, negative Facebook comments and reputational harm. Participant 5 was recorded saying:

[P 5.] *“I have seen somewhere, whereby an SME page can be negatively affected by bad press experienced from a page that they are collaborating with, which can lead to bad comments on their page as well.”*

Correspondingly, Participant 8 also said:

[P 8.] *“If one SME business has a reputation that is not so uplifting it might hinder your own (business).”*

Potential reputational harm that may occur from B2B collaborations emerged as one of the major concerns for participants in this study, which also forms part of the concerns raised by Rugova and Prenaj (2016:95).

#### **4.8.2. Sub-theme 5.2: Challenges experienced in SME Facebook optimisation due to lack of limited technical skills**

In this sub-theme, social media technical skills and challenges are the challenges experienced that prevent SMEs from fully utilising Facebook to its optimal capacity due to limited or lack of technical skills within their organisations. This sub-theme appeared four times during the analysis.

Some of the participants highlighted the need for SMEs to garner more knowledge and skills to ensure that they can utilise Facebook to its maximum capacity. Participant 7, as quoted verbatim, said: “We are missing out a lot, we are not using a platform that we have, the Facebook platform that we have to its optimal capacity”. Correspondingly, Participant 6 also said:

[P 6.] *“I think one of the issues SMEs have is the challenges in terms of the knowledge, skills on how to utilise the social media optimisation to get the value out of it.”*

The participants indicated that they experience some challenges in fully optimising Facebook due to lack of technical skills and limited capacity. These findings correspond with findings from research by Hamburg and Hall (2013:86) and Rugova and Prenaj (2016:95). Similarly, the findings for this sub-theme were further confirmed in a study by Alford and Page (2015:664) which identified the need for SME owners or managers to acquire new skill sets in order to overcome barriers to adopting the use of technology for purposes of marketing their businesses on social media.

#### **4.8.3. Sub-theme 5.3: The culture of competition amongst SMEs influences B2B collaboration**

In this sub-theme, competitor-related challenges are the challenges of the lack of desire for SMEs to participate in B2B collaborations with businesses that they consider to be in competition with. This sub-theme appeared three times during the analysis.

This theme highlighted the lack of B2B synergies that are influenced by the fear of competition. Some of the participants highlighted that competition between SMEs is amongst one of the main reasons why SMEs avoid collaborating with each other on Facebook. Participant 10 in particular said:

[P 10.] *“The biggest challenge for most SMEs is when you talk about collaboration, SMEs don't believe in the idea of working together to achieve the bigger picture, because they are scared of competition.”*

Some participants attributed the lack of collaboration to the small size and limited opportunities of the Namibian population. Participant 7 commented as follows:

[P 7.] *“Our population is very small. The pie is too small for to allow for collaboration and competition is too high.”*

The findings indicate competition among SMEs as one of the challenges hindering collaborations. The competition is attributed to the fear of limited resources and a small population such as that of Namibia. This type of competition among SMEs comes from the pressure on competitors to gain a greater market share (Felício et al., 2015:801).

#### **4.8.4. Interpretation of theme 5**

The challenges experienced by SMEs that may potentially hinder collaborative partnerships in the B2B market, discussed in this theme, correspond with those identified in the research by Felício et al. (2015:801), Hamburg and Hall (2013:86), and Rugova and Prenaj (2016:95).

This study was conducted with SMEs in Namibia, which is a developing country with unexplored market opportunities. Although SMEs play a big role in the overall development of a country's economy such as Namibia, most SMEs are faced with challenges such as financing constraints (Beck, 2007:1) and lack of human capital resources (Rugova & Prenaj, 2016:95). Such challenges may have an influence on the overall growth of the SME industry. Limited resources may also influence the nature of co-existence and competition among SMEs.

The Namibian relatively small population of less than three million people may also influence the nature of competition in comparison to other countries with larger populations and more marketing opportunities. A lack of trust between the SMEs may also play a role in the fear of experiencing reputational damage because of association.

The next section focuses on the findings and interpretation of theme 6, and recommendations for effective B2B storytelling for SMEs on Facebook.

#### **4.9. Theme 6: Recommendations for effective B2B storytelling and collaboration for SMEs on Facebook**

In this theme, recommendations for effective storytelling and collaboration for SMEs are defined as some of the suggestions contributed by the participants that may contribute towards effective B2B storytelling and promoting beneficial collaborative partnerships among SMEs in Namibia. Three sub-themes emerged from the data. A summary of theme 6 with its related sub-themes and frequencies is illustrated in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Theme 6 – Recommendations for effective B2B storytelling for SMEs on Facebook and supporting sub-themes**

<b>Theme 6: Recommendations for effective B2B storytelling and collaborations on Facebook</b>		
Sub-themes	Frequency	Operational definition
Implementing dedicated and knowledgeable social media functions for SMEs	5	The advancement of the social media managers' skills in SMEs
Using group effort to drive business	3	The benefits that SMEs can experience from collective B2B group efforts on Facebook
B2B-focused familiarisation	3	Forming B2B relationships with other businesses offline before online
Total	11	

The three sub-themes that emerged from theme 6 are discussed and interpreted below.

#### **4.9.1. Sub-theme 6.1: Implementing dedicated and knowledgeable social media functions for SMEs**

Some of the participants were of the opinion that to ensure effective storytelling, SMEs need to invest in hiring a full-time dedicated social media manager. According to some of the participants, hiring a full-time social media will ensure that client queries are addressed on time and with utmost professionalism. A few participants suggested that SMEs should further ensure that they are knowledgeable and up to date with the latest social networking trends in the market. Participant 9 commented as follows:

[P 9.] *“The content creator or social media manager must know and understand the latest trends to ensure that the story is relevant and up to date.”*

Participants highlighted the challenge of lack of skilled and full-time social managers as a plausible factor in hindering effective social media usage. These findings correspond with the challenges highlighted in the research by Rugova and Prenaj (2016:95).

#### **4.9.2. Sub-theme 6.2: Using group effort to drive business**

Some of the participants were of the opinion that B2B partnerships on Facebook can be a cost-effective practice for SMEs because of the shared efforts from all parties involved. A few participants



were of the view that collaborations drive business further in terms of extended exposure and marketing gained from all parties involved. Participant 6 said:

[P 6.] *“I would encourage SMEs to look at opportunities in terms of partnerships, collaborating on joined marketing, be it on social media or whatsoever, collaborate efforts, as that would also reduce cost.”*

The findings in this sub-theme presented the benefits of exposure and the business growth that is experienced as a result of B2B collaborations on Facebook. Similar benefits of collaboration were identified in the five-stage process model of social media-based co-creation proposed by Kao et al., (2016:145).

#### **4.9.3. Sub-theme 6.3: B2B-focused familiarisation**

A few of the participants recommended that SMEs should network and get to know each other's businesses offline (face-to-face) before getting into collaborations online (Facebook). Participants argued that this would ensure that SMEs can build trust among each other in the B2B community which will enhance the desire for collaborations. Participant 4 commented that:

[P 4.] *“Before collaboration you would obviously first go into doing business with each other in order for you to have relevance on how to promote each other.”*

Participants in this theme recommend businesses to build relationships to ensure that trust is built before entering into B2B partnerships on Facebook. Trust is an essential component in B2B collaboration and this was confirmed in the research by Chan et al. (2012:349).

#### **4.9.4. Interpretation of Theme 6: recommendations for effective B2B storytelling and collaboration for SMEs on Facebook**

Some of the participants made valuable contributions that may be used as recommendations for effective storytelling and for shaping the overall nature of collaboration among SMEs in Namibia. Some of these recommendations may also be used to address the challenges expressed in theme 5.

Some participants recommended that SMEs should make use of more qualified and knowledgeable expertise for their organisation. However, this recommendation may prove challenging to achieve because of many underlying factors. One such factor observed by the researcher is that most SMEs may not be able to afford highly skilled expertise as they can hardly make ends meet. Another observation made by the researcher was that to avoid spending on a social media manager, SME owners were also the individuals responsible for social media management including Facebook. A

few recommendations emerged on the benefits of forming relationships off and on Facebook. It is therefore evident that some SMEs recognise the potential that may arise from establishing B2B relationships. The benefits may potentially include reduced costs and increased product and service efficiency (Kao et al., 2016:145).

#### **4.10. Summary of the chapter**

The data analysed in this chapter proved to be useful in informing the researcher on how SMEs collaborate through the use of brand stories for the B2B market in Namibia.

The six themes that emerged from Atlas ti analysis, namely: essential elements of an effective Facebook brand story; Facebook features and services; B2B collaborations on events and general business activities; B2B collaborations in advertising products and services; challenges experienced by SMEs when they make use of Facebook for B2B; and recommendations for effective B2B storytelling for SMEs on Facebook, were all discussed and interpreted in the chapter.

The researcher used the findings from the six themes to inform the structuring and formation of the questionnaire for the quantitative research. The findings in this chapter were later integrated with the quantitative findings in Chapter 5 to form final conclusions. To further show the characteristics of the findings of the different themes, the researcher further discussed the sub-themes and categories that emerged in the themes.

The next chapter discusses and interprets the quantitative findings.

## **CHAPTER 5.**

### **DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The focus of this chapter is on the presentation and discussion of the quantitative findings of the study. The previous chapter focused on the qualitative findings and interpretation. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the researcher conducted an exploratory sequential mixed design. The aim of the study was to determine how SMEs in Namibia use Facebook to co-create or collaborate brand stories for a B2B market.

In addition to the qualitative data collection and analysis discussed in Chapter 4, the researcher collected data using quantitative questionnaires and the data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social sciences (SPSS) IBM version 26. The data collected from these respondents was analysed and a comprehensive discussion of these findings is presented in the next sections.

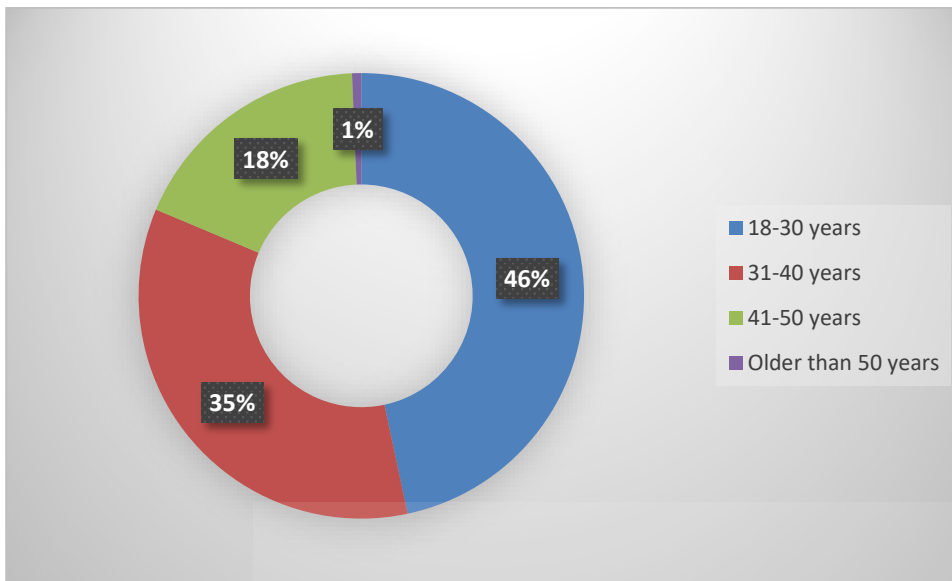
This chapter covers the following: a demographic profile of the research participants, storytelling for SMEs, the Facebook features adopted by SMEs and the collaboration practices in the Namibian SME industry.

#### **5.2. Demographic profile of the research respondents**

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6), the researcher collected data from 150 respondents, representing SMEs that are geographically located within Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, which the researcher had access to. The respondents were the individuals responsible for running the social media business pages in their respective SMEs. The following sections present the biographical profile of all the research respondents.

##### **5.2.1. Gender of respondents**

A total of 91 respondents that responded to the questionnaire from the total of 150 were males, which translates to 61% males and 39% females. More men responded to the questionnaire than women. This shows that men are dominating management positions in SMEs in Namibia and most likely dominating SME ownership compared to women. Similarly, findings by Irene (2016:1122) showed that more men than women owned small business start-ups in Africa. The ages of respondents are illustrated in the graph in Figure 5.1



**Figure 5.1: Age distribution of respondents**

The findings indicate that 70 (46%) of the respondents were less than 30 years old. This shows that the majority of respondents were mostly middle-aged. Fifty-two (35%) of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years and 18% (n=27) were aged between 41-50 years. Only one respondent (1%) was over 50 years. The findings show that SMEs from Windhoek that participated are mostly run by young people who are most likely to be entrepreneurs.

### **5.2.2. Highest academic qualification**

Out of 150 respondents, more than half (59%) were in possession of an undergraduate university degree, followed by 27% that had enrolled for a postgraduate qualification. Few respondents (11%) had reached matric, high school and primary qualification levels and 3% had other qualifications. These included qualifications from vocational training centres, such as the Vocational training centre of Namibia.

### **5.2.3. Race**

The findings indicate that 105 (70%) respondents were black Africans, 20 (15%) were coloured, 18 (12%) were white and five (3%) were Indian/Asian. This shows that most of the SMEs in Windhoek are run by black Africans, which may be attributed to the fact that more than 80% of the Namibian population consists of black Africans (World Population Review, 2019).

### **5.2.4. Work experience in social media management roles for an organisation**

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years of working in the social media management roles of their respective SMEs. The respondents indicated a range from the minimum of less than a

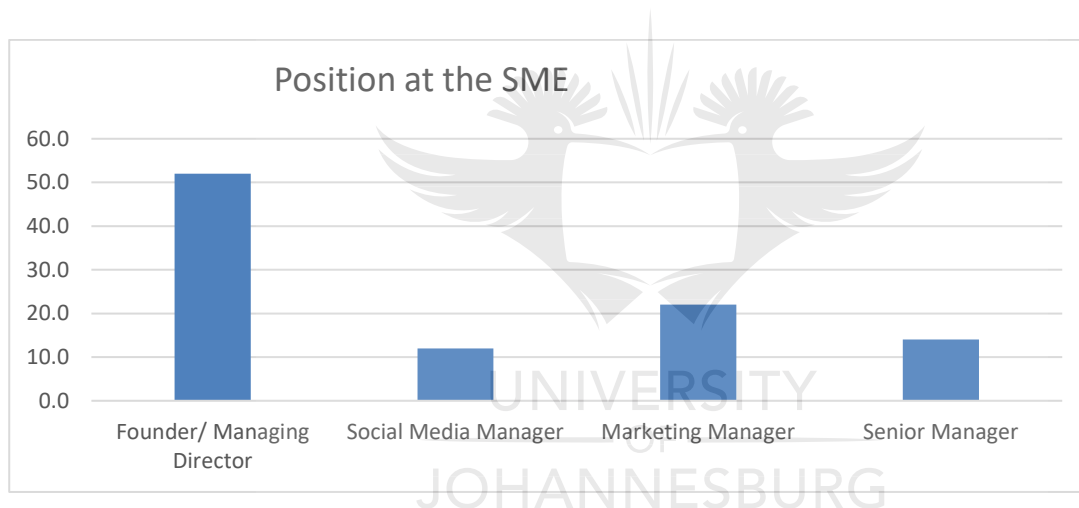
year to the maximum of over ten years. Most (59%) respondents had one to three years, followed by those (31%) with three to four years and seven to ten years (13%). Some respondents (10%) had less than a year and only a few respondents (7%) had more than ten years of experience. The high percentage of respondents with less than three years' experience may be attributed to the high number of young managers, as discussed in Section 4.2.1, that may not have worked long enough to acquire more years of experience.

### 5.2.5. Current job classification

The overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents were in management positions and only a few (10%) were in staff positions for SMES.

### 5.2.6. Position currently served in the organisation

This is illustrated in Figure 5.2 below.



**Figure 5.2: Results on the position of the respondent at the SME**

As illustrated in Figure 5.2, respondents were asked to state their roles in the SMEs. The majority of respondents (52%) indicated that they were the founders or managing directors at the SME that they represented, followed by some (22%) that indicated that they worked at the SME as marketing managers. Senior managers were also part of the respondents, constituting 14%. Only a few respondents indicated that they worked as social media managers at their respective SMEs.

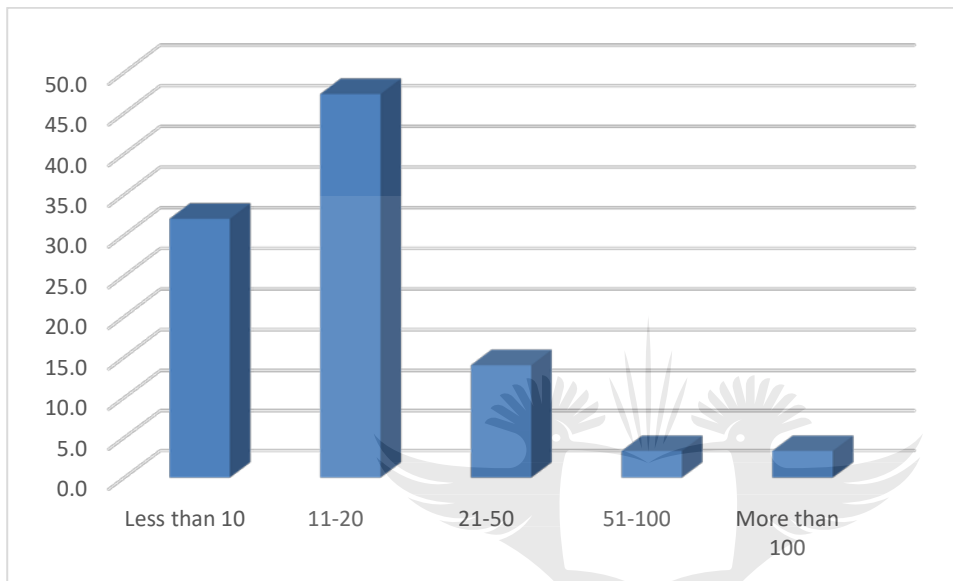
### 5.2.7. Length of time employed in this post

The highest number of respondents (35%) indicated one to three years and four to six years (33%) of time spent on current job posts. Some (13%) had less than one year, seven to ten years (11%) and others (7%) had over ten years in their current post.

### 5.2.8. Length of time working for current organisation

The majority (53%) of respondents indicated that they had worked for less than five years at the SMEs where they were currently employed. Some (34%) of the respondents indicated five to ten years and only a few (13 %) indicated working for more than ten years at the SMEs where they were currently employed.

### 5.2.9. Number of employees working in organisation

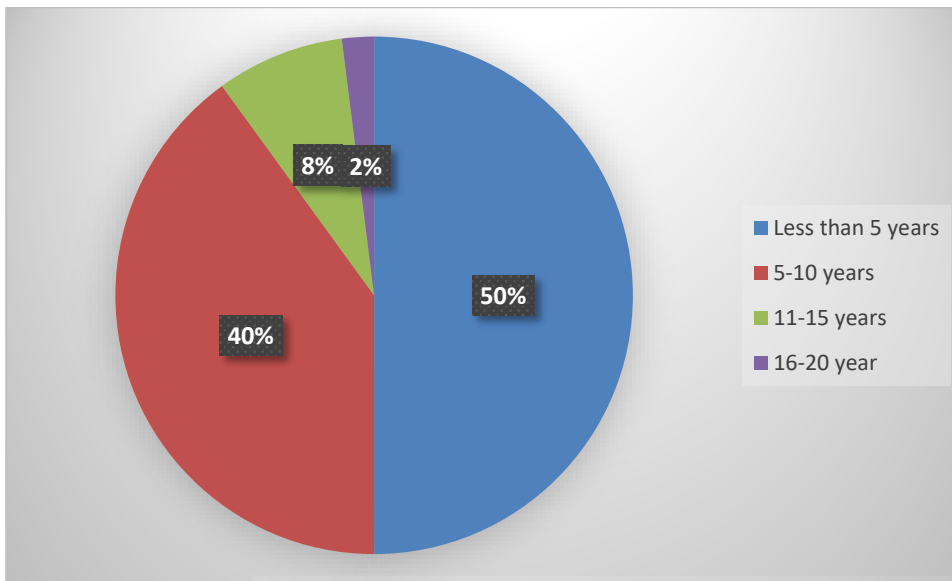


**Figure 5.3: Results on the number of employees at the SME**

The highest number of respondents (47%) indicated that their SMEs employed 11 to 20 people and only 3% of the respondents reported more than 100 employees. According to the definition of SMEs in Namibia, an SME that employs less than 30 employees is classified as a small enterprise (MITSMED, 2015:7). It can therefore be interpreted that the larger portion of the SMEs in Namibia fall under the small enterprise classification.

### 5.2.10. Length of time working in Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing for SMEs

The results of SMEs' length of time in B2B marketing is illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 5.4: Results on the number of years in the B2B market**

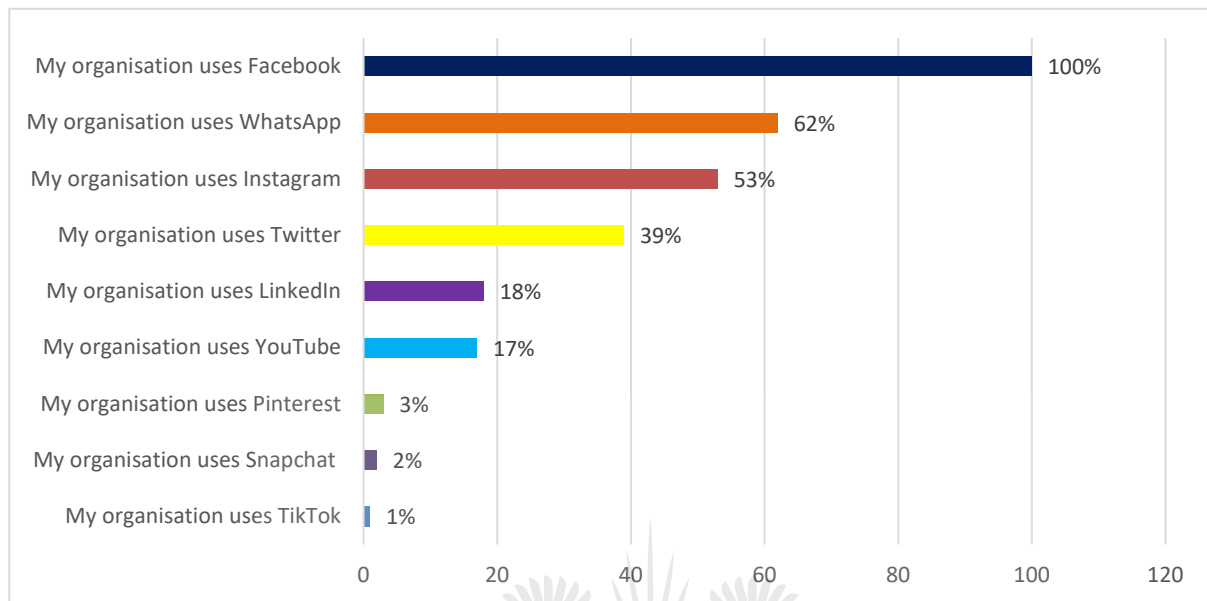
The results indicate that half of the respondents ( $n=75 = 50\%$ ) had less than five years of experience in the B2B, followed by some ( $n=60$  or  $40\%$ ) that indicated that they had five to ten years of B2B experience. Only a few respondents ( $n=15 = 10\%$ ) had more than ten years of B2B experience. It can therefore be interpreted that majority of the employees running social management in SMEs have had less than five years' experience.

#### **5.2.11. Area in which SME is located**

The results indicated that 53 (35%) of the SMEs included in the study were located at Windhoek's Central Business District (CBD) of the city, followed by Windhoek North and Windhoek South areas with 28 (18.7%) each, Windhoek North-west with 25 (16.7%) and Windhoek East with 16 (10.7%), respectively. It can be interpreted that the majority of SMEs are located in the CBD of the city.

### 5.3. SME social media use

#### 5.3.1. Social media platforms used by the organisations



**Figure 5.5: Results on social media platforms use**

As illustrated in Figure 5.5 above, the findings show that all (n=150) respondents use Facebook, which translates to a 100% Facebook usage. This makes Facebook the most used platform by SMEs in Windhoek. The results further show that out of the 150 respondents, the two most used social media platforms after Facebook are WhatsApp, with 62%, followed by Instagram, with 53%. Only 1% of the population uses Tik-Tok.

The findings that Facebook is the most popular social media platform among SMEs in Namibia corresponds with findings by Shehu (2018:139), where Facebook emerged as most the popular, followed by Instagram. Similarly, findings by Essoungou (2010:3) and StatCounter (2017) confirm that Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Africa. The high popularity of Facebook in SMEs in Africa may be attributed to the cost-effective marketing opportunities offered by the platform (Heggde & Shainesh, 2018:13; Batum & Ersoy, 2016:145; Rugova & Prenaj, 2016:92).

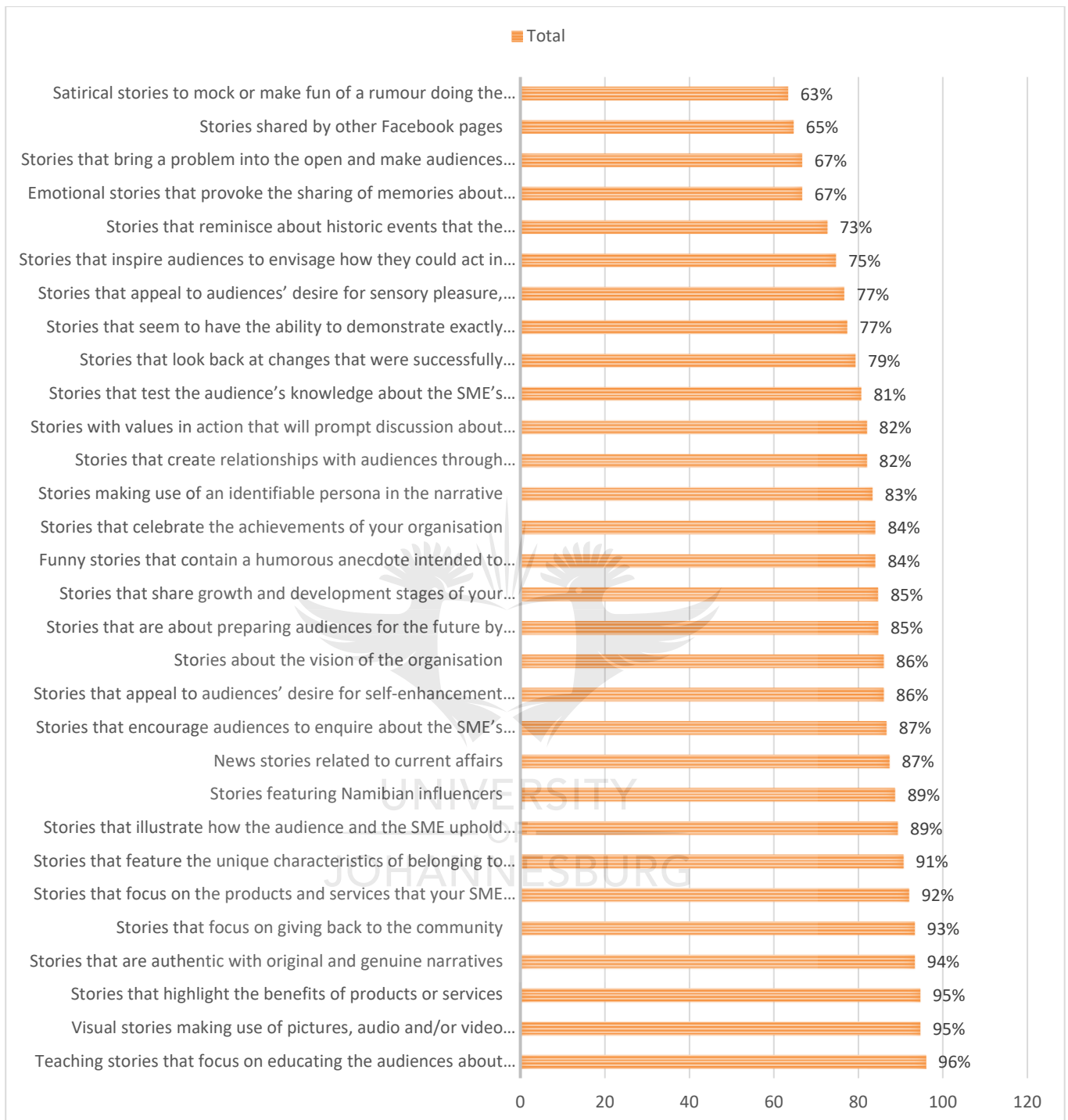
The next section discusses and interprets the results, which focused on brand storytelling, from Facebook features and collaboration experiences of the respondents of the study.

### 5.4. Brand storytelling on Facebook

This section discusses results of brand storytelling.



### 5.4.1. Brand storytelling on Facebook



**Figure 5.6: The most effective stories**

The percentage distribution in Figure 5.6 indicates responses from the respondents on the type of stories they find effective.

The summary in Table 5.1 below illustrates the statistical distribution of the mean average of the responses.

**Table 5.1: Mean score results for brand storytelling on facebook**

<b>Description</b>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Stories that focus on the products and services that your SME has to offer	<b>3.49</b>	0.683	1	4
Teaching stories that focus on educating the audiences about the organisation's products and services	3.48	0.576	2	4
Visual stories making use of pictures, audio and/or video elements on Facebook	3.48	0.621	1	4
Stories that highlight the benefits of products or services	3.45	0.619	1	4
Stories that are authentic with original and genuine narratives	3.39	0.654	1	4
Stories that focus on giving back to the community	3.39	0.632	1	4
Stories featuring Namibian influencers	3.36	0.717	1	4
Stories that encourage audiences to enquire about the SME's products and services	3.33	0.825	1	4
Stories that share growth and development stages of your organisation	3.32	0.726	2	4
Stories that feature the unique characteristics of belonging to Namibian communities	3.31	0.677	1	4
Stories that celebrate the achievements of your organisation	3.31	0.820	1	4
News stories related to current affairs	3.29	0.754	1	4
Stories about the vision of the organisation	3.26	0.728	1	4

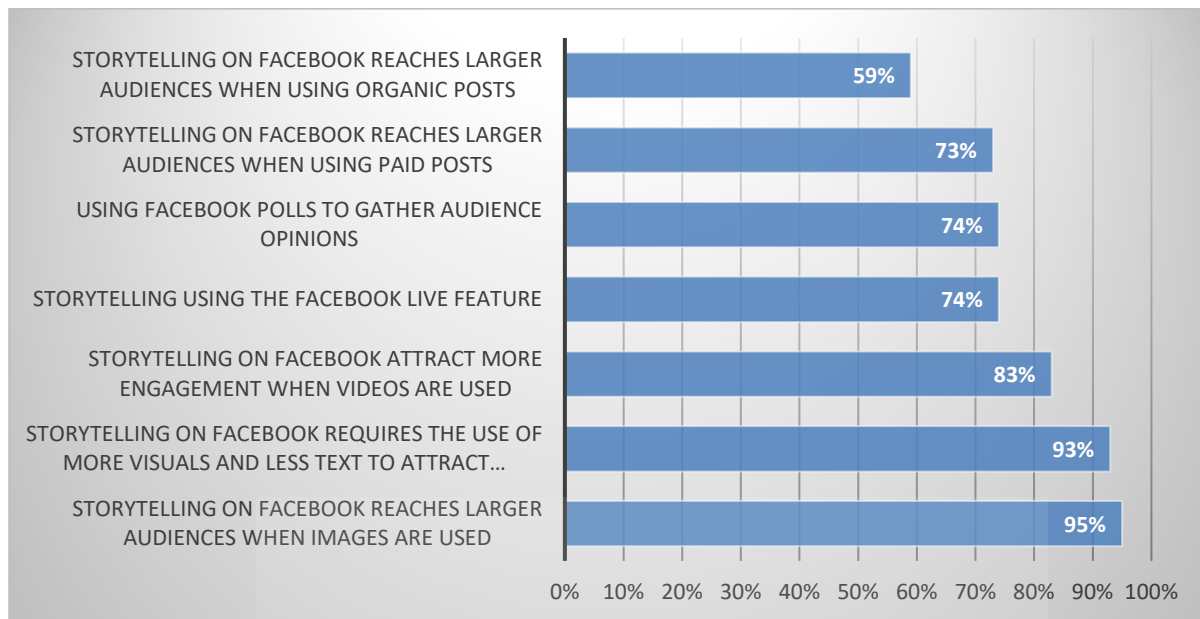
<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Stories that illustrate how the audience and the SME uphold the same values	3.22	0.664	1	4
Stories that appeal to audiences' desire for self-enhancement that will make them feel good about themselves	3.21	0.726	1	4
Funny stories that contain a humorous anecdote intended to provoke laughter from the audience	3.20	0.882	1	4
Stories that create relationships with audiences through evoking emotional attachment to a post	3.17	0.781	1	4
Stories that are about preparing audiences for the future by envisaging a new direction that the organisation wants to take	3.16	0.760	1	4
Stories that look back at changes that were successfully completed	3.15	0.825	1	4
Stories that test the audience's knowledge about the SME's products and services	3.14	0.852	1	4
Stories making use of an identifiable persona in the narrative	3.11	0.738	1	4
Stories with values in action that will prompt discussion about the discussions raised by the value being promoted	3.07	0.748	1	4
Stories that reminisce about historic events that the organisation commemorates	3.03	0.881	1	4
Stories that seem to have the ability to demonstrate exactly what the audience is thinking at a particular moment	3.01	0.811	1	4
Stories that inspire audiences to envisage how they could act in a different manner	3.01	0.859	1	4

Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Stories that appeal to audiences' desire for sensory pleasure, variety and cognitive stimulation	3.01	0.784	1	4
Stories shared by other Facebook pages	2.84	1.004	1	4
Emotional stories that provoke the sharing of memories about a situation that audiences have also experienced in the past	2.81	0.960	1	4
Stories that bring a problem into the open and make audiences view the problem in a different light	2.79	0.922	1	4
Satirical stories to mock or make fun of a rumour doing the rounds	2.74	1.026	1	4

The respondents were asked which types of stories they found to be effective for B2B storytelling on Facebook. Table 5.1 reveals that stories that focused on the products and services offered by SMEs were leading. The highest number of respondents indicated that stories that focused on products and services were effective (Mean=3.49), followed by teaching stories that educated the audiences about the organisation's products and services with (Mean=3.48), and visual stories that used pictures, audio and/or video elements on Facebook with (Mean=3.48). The stories rated the least effective by respondents, as highlighted in Table 5.1, were satirical stories that mocked or made fun of rumours doing the rounds, with a score of Mean= 2.74.

Reviewing the findings in Table 5.1, reveals that the stories that focus on the products and services that an SME has to offer scored the highest mean average, and it can be interpreted that the majority of stories used by SMEs in the Namibian B2B market are completely aligned with the products and services offered at their organisations. These findings correspond to research findings from Chiu et al. (2012) who emphasized the importance of aligning brand story elements to the organisation's products and services. Research by Chiu et al. (2012) further argued that product and service-focused stories should not solely aim to teach the audience about product/service, but it should engage the audience's using humour, authenticity and conciseness. The findings in Table 5.1 show that authenticity and conciseness were rated higher than the use of humour which was rated the lowest. It can be therefore concluded that SMEs in Namibia do not actively use humour in the brand stories on Facebook, compared to authenticity and conciseness.

## 5.5. SMEs' Facebook page features



**Figure 5.7: The use of SMEs' Facebook page features**

The percentage distribution indicated in Figure 5.7 are responses from the respondents on how they rate their SMEs' performance regarding the statements on Facebook features.

**Table 5.2: Mean scores results on Facebook page**

Description	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Storytelling on Facebook reaches larger audiences when images are used	3.47	0.599	2	4
Storytelling on Facebook requires the use of more visuals and less text to attract audience engagement	3.40	0.666	1	4
Storytelling on Facebook attracts more engagement when videos are used	3.18	0.820	1	4
Storytelling on Facebook reaches larger audiences when using paid posts	3.06	0.892	1	4
Using Facebook Polls to gather audience opinions	2.92	0.945	1	4
Storytelling using the Facebook Live feature	2.86	0.920	1	4
Storytelling on Facebook reaches larger audiences when using organic posts	2.59	0.949	1	4

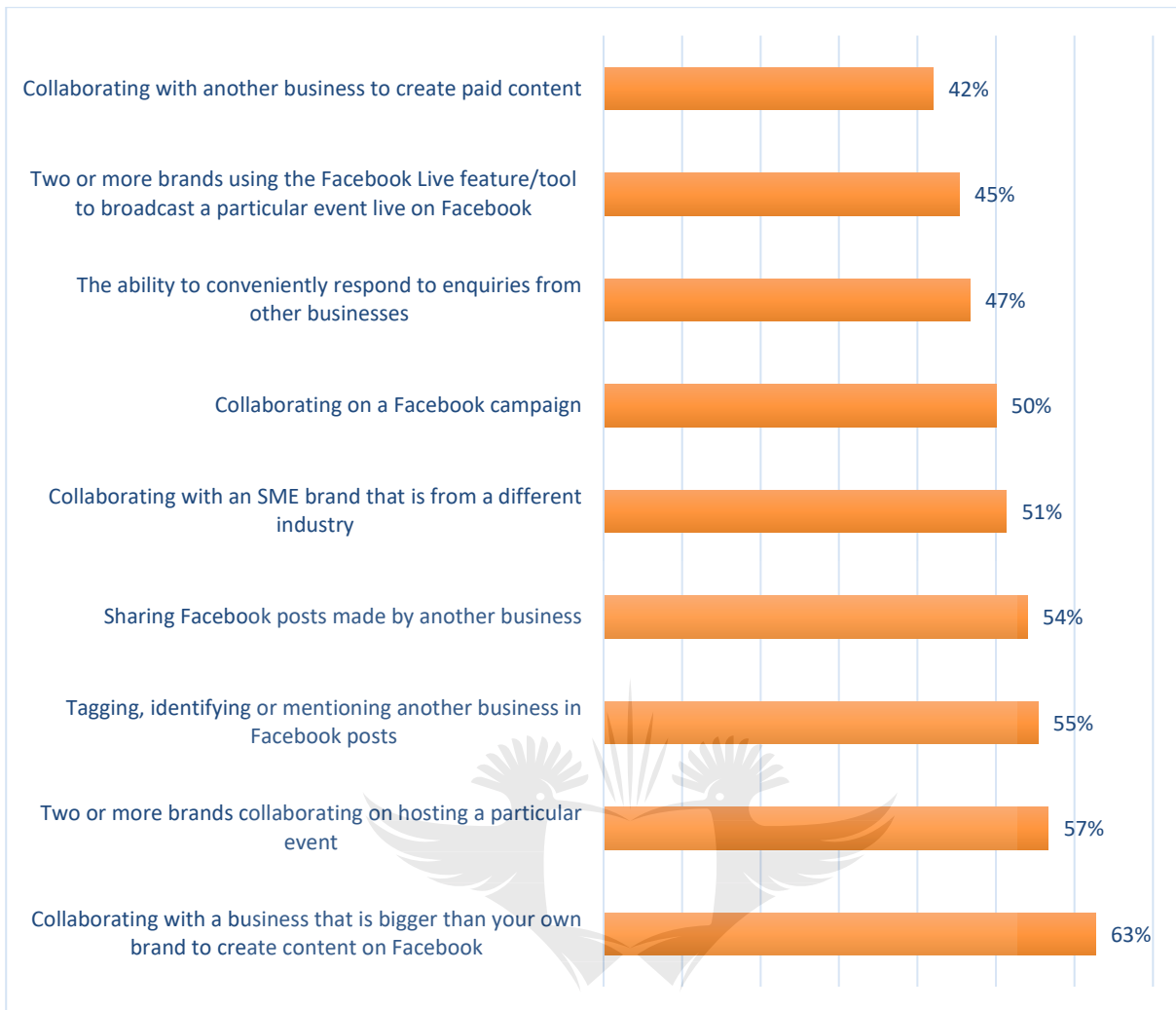
The respondents were asked how they rated their SME Facebook pages in terms of the features used to optimise storytelling. Table 5.2 reveals that most respondents (Mean =3.47) agreed to use images in their storytelling on Facebook in order to attract more audiences, followed by storytelling using visuals and less text to attract audience engagement (Mean-3.40).

Storytelling using organic posts was rated the lowest with (Mean= 2.59). Organic posts mean that audiences visit a particular Facebook page of their own accord and are not persuaded through paid advertising (Ng & Zimmerman, 2015:366). It can therefore be interpreted that SMEs in Namibia prefer the use of paid content in comparison to organic content. Similarly, the findings in Chapter 4, theme 2, confirmed that the use of paid content posts for Facebook brand stories was more popular than organic posts among SMEs.

The significant roles of visual elements in Namibian SME brand stories that emerged from the qualitative findings in Chapter 4 were further expanded in this chapter. The findings show that the three statements that were rated the highest in Table 5.2 by respondents of the study all incorporate social media visual elements, as also identified by Manic (2015). Visuals are classified into three categories, namely illustrations (photos & drawings), infographics and videos (Manic, 2015:90). The aforementioned findings slightly contradict the findings in Chapter 4, which indicated that videos were not as popular as pictures among respondents, with the time videos take to load being the main reason. However, a large proportion of respondents confirmed the importance of video elements in attracting more engagement on Facebook. It can therefore be concluded that SMEs in the Namibian B2B industry incorporate the three visual element categories identified by Manic (2015) to attract more engagement from their audiences on Facebook.

## **5.6. Type of business to business marketing collaborations of SMEs using Facebook**

Figure 5.8 below indicates the types of collaborations SMEs are most likely to use on Facebook.



**Figure 5.8: Results on the type of collaboratory partnerships of SMEs in Windhoek with other businesses**

The results are further broken down in Table 5.3 below.

**Table 5.3. Percentage results on the type of collaborations on Facebook**

Description	Not likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Collaborating with another business to create paid content	17%	41%	<b>42%</b>
The ability to conveniently respond to enquiries from other businesses	16%	37%	7%
Collaborating with a business that is bigger than your own brand to create content on Facebook	6%	31%	<b>63%</b>
Tagging, identifying or mentioning another business in Facebook posts	8%	37%	<b>55%</b>

Sharing Facebook posts made by another business	13%	33%	54%
Collaborating on a Facebook campaign	6%	44%	50%
Two or more brands collaborating on hosting a particular event	7%	37%	<b>57%</b>
Two or more brands using the Facebook Live feature/tool to broadcast a particular event live on Facebook	24%	31%	45%
Collaborating with an SME brand that is from a different industry	11%	37%	51%

The respondents were asked to rate the type of B2B collaborations that they were most likely to participate in on Facebook. The findings show that 63% of the respondents are very likely to enter into a collaboration with a brand that is bigger than their own in order to create content on Facebook, 57% indicated they are most likely to enter into a collaboration between two or more brands to host a particular event and 55% said they are most likely to enter into a collaboration by tagging, identifying or mentioning another business in a Facebook post.

The desire expressed by Namibian SMEs to enter into collaborating partnerships with bigger brands than their own may be linked to the advantage smaller SME brands leverage off bigger brands with a larger Facebook audience to gain market exposure, as highlighted in Chapter 4. Some SMEs may also want to increase global competitiveness through forming collaborations with bigger brands (Etemad et al., 2001:482). However, the study conducted by Etemad et al. (2001:482) on SMEs in the value supply chain industry had its conclusions based on B2C research, while this study focused on the B2B market.

The findings on SMEs most likely entering into collaborations to host events are similar to findings by Drummond et al. (2018:77) that noted that SMEs occasionally form collaborative industry events such as festivals, collaborative competitions and prize giveaways to jointly create awareness for all businesses in a partnership. In addition to the findings of Drummond et al. (2018), the results in theme 3, sub-theme 3.2, confirm that SMEs included in the qualitative study have collaborated with other SMEs in hosting events such as festivals and competitions with prize giveaways on Facebook to generate exposure for all those in the partnership.

The findings also indicate that the practice of B2B Facebook tagging between SMEs is popular among respondents. According to Golder and Huberman (2006:198), tagging on social media entails marking digital content with keywords or tags to use for future navigation and collaborative tagging entails the process whereby various users add metadata into the form of keywords to shared content. The



definition of collaborative tagging by Golder and Huberman (2006:198) is focused on B2C perspectives on allowing all public users on a social media platform to tag their friends into content and does not emphasize B2B networks.

## **5.7. Summary of the chapter**

This chapter discussed, interpreted and presented the quantitative findings generated from the 150 hard copy questionnaires that were administered to employees responsible for social media management at their respective SMEs in Windhoek. The chapter also highlighted the demographical profile of the respondents.

Making use of illustrations, the results obtained from the questionnaires were presented and discussed making reference to the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 to inform the final conclusions of the research.

The next chapter draws final conclusions and discusses the implications and recommendations of the research.



## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the conclusions and recommendations of this research. This final chapter first outlines the aims and main findings in relation to this study. It summarises the potential uses of some of the findings for future research and unpicks and considers some of the main questions which remain unanswered in the existing literature and which link to the study. Also, in this chapter, the three sub-objectives as stated in Chapter 1 are discussed and concluded, taking into consideration the literature reviewed and the methodological orientation adopted by the researcher, to create important insights to the research problem.

### 6.2. Overview of the study

The adaptation of social media in the business sphere has sparked conversations that led to diverse research interests surrounding the discourse. The main aim of this research was to explore the aspects surrounding the use of Facebook by SMEs in Namibia in the collaboration/co-creation of brand stories for a B2B market. Three main theoretical concepts framed governed this research, namely: brand storytelling, B2B marketing and co-creation or collaboration. The research objective for this research was to determine how SMEs in Namibia can use Facebook to co-create brand stories for a B2B market. The research adopted a sequential mixed-methods approach.

The next discussion is a summary and conclusion based on the overall literature review and theoretical positioning of the study.

### 6.3. Conclusions based on the overall literature review and theoretical positioning

The literature reviewed the three theoretical concepts that framed the scope of research (see Chapter 2 Sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6. The main claims that emerged from the literature review of the three theoretical concepts are discussed below:

- **Co-creation:** The claim from collaboration literature is that social media is instrumental in establishing trust, creating and maintaining long-term B2B relationships and facilitating referral links and information sharing (c.f Livermore & Verbovaya 2016; Kautz et al., 1997; Kooli et al., 2019).
- **B2B marketing:** The claim from the literature concerning B2B marketing for SMEs on social media are as follows: increased business exposure, increased page traffic, developing loyal

followers, attracting new business partners and improved sales (c.f Mershon, 2012; Stelzner, 2017; Cole et al., 2017).

- **Brand storytelling:** The claim from brand storytelling literature is that brand storytelling is instrumental in enabling businesses to share event experiences, valuable activities and engage in brand conversations with their audiences (c.f De Fina, 2016; Heinemeyer & Reason, 2016; Hajli et al., 2016).

In conclusion, the researcher became aware of the claims surrounding the three theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 2, which informed knowledge on the phenomenon.

#### **6.4. Conclusions on the sequential mixed methods design**

The research adopted a sequential mixed methods design based on the pragmatic philosophy. Ten (n=10) semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted for the qualitative data collection followed by 150 self-administered questionnaires for the quantitative phase. The data collected from each phase was analysed and interpreted separately. The researcher thematically analysed qualitative data using Atlas ti 8 software for Windows, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.7.1). The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS IBM version 26 as discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.7.2). The researcher took planned measures to ensure credibility, confirmability and dependability of the qualitative process, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8) and validity and reliability of the quantitative process as discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.9). In conclusion, the methodology adopted demonstrated effectiveness in guiding the data collection processes which yielded satisfactory results in all methodological aspects of the study.

The next section discusses the first sub-objective of the research.

#### **6.5. Conclusion for research sub-objective 1**

The first research sub-objective was to determine how SMEs use Facebook for a B2B market in Namibia.

The results demonstrated high levels of Facebook usage by SMEs in the Namibian B2B industry. All the participants in the study indicated that their SME has an official Facebook page.

The qualitative findings are that SMEs have demonstrated various ways in which they use Facebook for the B2B market in Namibia. In terms of the qualitative findings, the participants indicated that they use Facebook features for content marketing of organic and paid B2B content. An example of paid-for content marketing may include promotions or stories that are boosted through the Facebook

boosting feature. An example of organic content may include stories, ephemeral content or promotions posted on the generic wall of an SME page without boosting. However, the main features used for content marketing by SMEs were Facebook boosting, the 24-hour Facebook stories and the Facebook Live feature. It is worth noting that the features are not exclusively limited to content marketing.

For example, as indicated in the quantitative findings, the Facebook Live feature was mostly used as a brand storytelling tool by SMEs.

It can, therefore, be determined from both the qualitative and quantitative findings that the use of Facebook by Namibian SMEs in the B2B market is mainly focused on the four aspects listed below:

- (1) Establishing relationships with other businesses through B2B referrals;
- (2) Taking advantage of Facebook features for cost-effective engagement and marketing of B2B content (organic, paid and ephemeral);
- (3) Gaining brand exposure in the B2B market online;
- (4) Gathering opinions from the B2B audience to make informed business decisions.

In conclusion, in the qualitative findings and some aspects demonstrated in Section 5.4 are aligned with addressing this research sub-objective. The next section discusses the conclusion of the second sub-objective

## **6.6. Conclusion for research sub-objective 2**

The second research sub-objective was to determine how SMEs use Facebook to co-create brand stories in Namibia.

The qualitative findings are that SMEs in Namibia's B2B market co-create brand stories by first engaging in collaborator activities. As discussed in the literature review in Section 2.6, the phrases co-creation and collaboration are because of their mutually similar characteristics. The collaborating activities are mainly centred around co-hosting organised events such as festivals and collaborating on advertising campaigns, such as working on a combined advert. It is primarily through the two collaborator activities that SMEs create B2B links, endorse each other's brands and promote each other's products and services. Collaborated brand stories are therefore created through experiences formed as part of the co-created activities among SMEs in the B2B market.

Some SMEs indicated they are aware of the potential risks, such as reputational harm that may arise from co-creative partnerships and activities, as discussed in theme 5 of the qualitative findings;

however, the findings suggest that the culture of B2B collaborations among Namibian SMEs on Facebook is evidence that most SMEs view collaboration from a benefit point of view. They therefore believe that the positive outcomes outweigh the negative outcomes experienced by their businesses.

Furthermore, the quantitative findings also demonstrated that the majority (62%) of the SMEs in the study preferred to participate in collaborator activities with brands bigger than their own. The desire for small brands such as SMEs to collaborate with bigger brands may be attributed to the larger audience base and market influence that SMEs can capitalise on, as suggested by the literature (c.f Livermore & Verbovaya, 2016).

The next section discusses the conclusion of the third sub-objective.

### 6.7. Conclusion for research sub-objective 3

The third research sub-objective was to determine the elements of SME brand stories that are co-created in Namibia's B2B market on Facebook.

The qualitative findings identified the types of brand story elements that are co-created by SMEs in the B2B market on Facebook.

Ten brand story elements that were identified are listed in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1: Brand story elements**

<b>Brand story element</b>	<b>Description</b>
Using a clear strategic message	A visibly focused strategic message that an SME aims to communicate to the Facebook audience in a story
Use of pictures, videos and typography	The use of pictures, videos, typography and overall visual components in Facebook stories for SMEs
Combining structured indices to influence audience opinions and attitudes	The detailed components that make a story memorable such as places, characters, activities, as well as problems and attitudes outlined in an SME's story on Facebook
Seeking audience emotional reactions	Using emotionally attractive elements or emotions in an SME's Facebook story, e.g. use of humour
Developing a brand story with familiar local archetypes	A pattern or representations of images that embody an archetypal human experience and

<b>Brand story element</b>	<b>Description</b>
	define the personality of an SME brand that makes it relatable to the Facebook audience
Using a storyline concept	Setting the start and end of a temporal sequence of events in an SME's Facebook story
Use of current and informative news story content	The use of short digital stories that have an element of news value content
Using actors to attract attention to your SME brand	The actors or entities who have roles in a plot
Using original story narratives in SME stories	The quality of truth, genuineness and originality portrayed in an SME's Facebook brand story
Stories about the growth of the organisation	Story elements that focus on the triumph of the SME and positive outcomes

The brand story elements in this study share similar characteristics with the study by Fakiha (2018) that identified ten brand story elements of a good brand story. A few of these elements were expanded by previous literature (c.f Barry and Girona, 2018; Burgess and Rousselet, 2015; Fog et al., 2010). Furthermore, the elements discovered in this research were more descriptive than the elements discussed by Fakiha (2018); however, the similarities between them are manifested in the descriptions. For example, the use of strategic message structured indices, familiar archetypes and original story narratives discovered in this research apply the same mechanisms with the main message, structured indices, archetypes and authenticity discussed by Fakiha (2018).

SMEs do not always use the elements in one story; however, the element implemented the majority of the time is the strategic message and the visuals – this was substantiated in both the qualitative and quantitative findings of this research. Therefore, the researcher concludes that SMEs in Namibia prefer to use visuals to convey their strategic messages, which are mainly focused on their products and services, to their B2B audience on Facebook. Visual content is more likely to be shared by audiences across different media platforms compared to text (c.f Diamond, 2013).

In addition to the ten brand story elements identified from the qualitative findings, there were four main storytelling narratives that SMEs in the B2B market co-created the most as indicated in the quantitative findings illustrated in Table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2: Co-created storytelling narratives**

<b>Storytelling narratives</b>
Stories that focus on the products and services that your SME has to offer
Teaching stories that focus on educating the audiences about the organisation's products and services
Visual stories making use of pictures, audio and/or video elements on Facebook
Stories that highlight the benefits of products or services

The narratives indicated in Table 6.2 therefore suggest that SMEs in the Namibian B2B market co-create brand stories that are aligned with the products and services offered at their organisations. This means the product and services offered by the SME comprise the main actor in a story narrative.

Furthermore, the overall qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that SMEs need to maintain a balance between visuals and text when narrating their brand stories on Facebook to ensure satisfactory response and attention from their B2B audience. Therefore, it is essential to keep messages conveyed in B2B stories short and to the point. Most SME managers in the study were aware of the limited short span concentration of online audiences and for this reason, SME brand stories for the Namibian B2B market on Facebook incorporate more visuals than text.

## **6.8. Recommendations for further research**

The qualitative sample consisted of ten participants only, due to limited resources and time constraints, and the quantitative sample consisted of 150 participants only. All participants of the study were SMEs that were geographically located in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. Further research may be conducted with a larger sample including SMEs from other towns in Namibia and conducted over a longer period of time to ensure that the findings become more generalisable to all the SMEs in Namibia.

Further research may also incorporate other social media platforms to determine how SMEs have collaborated brand stories for the B2B market. Further studies have the potential to contribute to the B2B literature, which is still at the infant stage, especially in the Namibian context.

## **6.9. Recommendations for industry**

Although the findings for this study demonstrate that SMEs are aware of the potential benefits of using story narratives for the B2B audience on Facebook, the findings also suggest that there is room for improvement. Therefore, SMEs should apply strategic planning to ensure that each SME develops an integrated marketing communications strategy that incorporates brand storytelling mechanisms for social media management platforms. Such an initiative would ensure that SME brand stories are effectively communicated by the business and clearly understood by the B2B audience.

## **6.10. Summary of the chapter**

In conclusion, the literature reviewed, and the overall choice of methodology immensely contributed to addressing the research problem in the best way possible. The integrated findings brought about useful insights that can contribute to scant scholarly research on the use of Facebook to collaborate brand stories for a B2B market. Considering that this study is a first of its kind in Namibia, the researcher hopes that the findings will motivate other researchers in Namibia to further research the different dynamics of social media used in the B2B industry and produce local scholarly content that will contribute to the discourse.





## REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. & Aaker, J. L. (2016). What are your signature stories? *California Management Review*, 58(3):49-65.
- Achrol, R.S. (1996). Changes in the theory of interorganizational relations in marketing: Toward a network paradigm. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(1):56-71.
- Adamson, G., Kroupa, J., Pine, J. & Van Steenhoven, T. (2006). How storytelling can drive strategic change. *Strategy and Leadership*, 34(1):36-41.
- Adu, P. (2019). *A Step-By-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Coding*. London: Routledge.
- Alalwan, A.A., Algharabat, R., Rana, N. P. & Tarhini, A. (2016). *A Systematic Review of Extant Literature in Social Media in the Marketing Perspective*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Alford, P. & Page, S. J. (2015). Marketing technology for adoption by small businesses. *Service Industries Journal*, 35(11-12):655-669.
- Allen, M. (2017). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Al-Sadani, A. (2015). *How effective is social media as the main marketing tool for small & medium-sized enterprises?* Degree Dissertation. Helsinki: Metropolia University of Applied Sciences.
- Alvesson, M. (1991). Organizational symbolism and ideology. *Journal of Management Studies*, 28(3):207-226.
- Anderson, K. & Chua, P. (2010). Digital storytelling as an interactive digital media context. *Educational Technology*, 50(5):32-36. Available from [www.jstor.org/stable/44429857](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44429857)
- Aryal, S. B. (2012). *A Case Study of Facebook Marketing Approaches of Two Nepali Companies*. Nepali: Turku University of Applied Sciences.
- Babbie, E. R. (2013). *The Basics of Social Research*. Cengage Learning.
- Baporikar, N., Nambira, G. & Gomxos, G. (2016). Exploring factors hindering SMEs' growth: Evidence from Namibia. *Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management*, 7(2):190-211.
- Barlow, A. & McCann, M. (2015). Use and measurement of social media for SMEs. *Journal of Small Businesses and Enterprise Development*, 22(2):273-287.
- Baronov, D. (2015). *Conceptual Foundations of Social Research Methods*. London: Routledge.
- Barry, J. M. & Girona, J. (2018). A dyadic examination of inspirational factors driving B2B social media influence. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 26(1-2):117-143.

- Baruah, T. D. (2012). Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2(5):1-10.
- Bates, C. (2016). 5-tips-for-effective-smallbusiness-storytelling. *The Business Journals*. Available from: <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/marketing/2016/03/5-tips-for-effective-smallbusiness-storytelling.html>
- Batum, T. P. & Ersoy, N. F. (2016). The use of social media in B2B marketing communications: An explanatory study on Turkish companies. *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 18(2):139-151.
- Bayer, J. B., Ellison, N. B., Schoenebeck, S. Y. & Falk, E. B. (2016). Sharing the small moments: ephemeral social interaction on Snapchat. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(7): 956-977.
- Bazeley, P. (2018). Mixed methods in context. In: *Integrating analyses in mixed methods research* (3-20). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781526417190.
- Beck, T. H. L. (2007). Financing constraints of SMEs in developing countries: Evidence, determinants and solutions. In: *Financing Innovation-Oriented Businesses to Promote Entrepreneurship* (1-36).
- Bennett, G. & Wakefield, L. T. (2017). Sports fan experience: Electronic word-of-mouth in ephemeral social media. *Sport Management Review*, 21:147-159.
- Beretvas, N., Leavy, P. & Saldana, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berinsky, A. J. (2008). Survey non-response. In: *The SAGE Handbook of Public Opinion Research* (309-322).
- Bernard, H. (2000). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Bernard, M. (2016). The impact of social media on the B2B CMO. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 31(8):955-960.
- Bertilsson, J. & Cassinger, C. (2011). Governing consumers through freedom: A theoretical discussion of the co-creation branding paradigm. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 9:412-416.
- Bezuidenhout, R., Davis, C. & Du Plooy-Cilliers, F. (2014). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: JUTA & Company Ltd.

- Bhagwat, S. & Goutam, A. (2013). Development of social networking sites and their role in business with special reference to Facebook. *Journal of Business and Management*, 6(5):15-28.
- Bhandarkar, P. L., Wilkinson, T. S. & Laldas, D. K. (2010). *Methodology & Techniques of Social Research*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. New York: Routledge. Available from:  
<http://0search.ebscohost.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1486859&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Black, I. & Veloutsou, C. (2017). Working consumers: Co-creation of brand identity, consumer identity and brand community identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 70:416-429.
- Boyd, D. M. & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1):210-230.
- Brandsen, T. & Honingh, M. (2016). Distinguishing different types of coproduction: A conceptual analysis based on the classical definitions. *Public Administration Review*, 76(3):427-435.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2):77-101.
- Brennan, R. & Croft, R. (2013). Using social media in business-to-business marketing. *The European Financial Review*, August.
- Britannica. (2019). *Facebook American Company*. Available from:  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Facebook>
- Brito, E. P. Z. & Rosenthal, B. (2017). The brand meaning co-creation process on Facebook. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 35(7): 923-936.
- Brown, A. & Gibson, J. W. (2009). *Working with Qualitative Data*: London: SAGE Publications.
- Buhalis, D., Ladkin, A. & Neuhofer, B. (2014). Co-creation through technology: Dimensions of social connectedness. In: Tussyadiah, I. & Xiang, Z. (eds), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism* (pp. 339-352). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Burgess, B. & Rousselet, V. (2015). What is your brand's compelling story? *Market Leader Quarter*, 1:22-23.
- Caers, R., De Feyter, T., De Couck, M., Stough, T., Vigna, C. & Du Bois, C. (2013). Facebook: A literature review. *New Media & Society*, 15(6):982-1002. Available from:  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813488061>
- Cant, M. C. (2016). Using social media to market a promotional event to SMEs: Opportunity or wasted effort? *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 14(4):76-82.

- Carnevale, M., Yucel-Aybat, O. & Kachersky, L. (2017). Meaningful stories and attitudes toward the brand: The moderating role of consumers' implicit mindsets. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 17(1):78-89. doi:10.1002/cb.1687
- Cawsey, T. & Rowley, J. (2016). Social media brand building strategies in B2B companies. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 34(6):754-776.
- Chakraborty, A., Mutingi, M. & Vashishth, A. (2019). Quality management practices in SMEs: A comparative study between India and Namibia. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*. doi:10.1108/BIJ-08-2017-0210
- Chan, F. T., Chong, A. Y. L. & Zhou, L. (2012). An empirical investigation of factors affecting e-collaboration diffusion in SMEs. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 138(2):329-344.
- Charmaz, K. (2001). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In: Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B. & McKinney, K. D. (eds), *Handbook of Interview Research* (pp. 675-694). London: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412973588
- Chiu, H. C., Hsieh, Y. C. & Kuo, Y. C. (2012). How to align your brand stories with your products. *Journal of Retailing*, 88(2):262-275.
- Cho, E. Y., Park, J. W., & Kim, H. W. (2015). Lessons Learned from the Failure Cases in Social Media Marketing. *Knowledge Management Research*, 16(2):91-111.
- Choudhury, N. (2018). The globalization of Facebook: Facebook's penetration in developed and developing countries. In: Williams, A. A., Tsuria, R., Robinson, L. & Khilnani, A. (eds), *Media and Power in International Contexts: Perspectives on Agency and Identity* (77-97). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Christensen, L. B., Johnson, B. & Turner, L. A. (2015). *Research Methods, Design, and Analysis*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Clark, V. L. P. & Ivankova, N. V. (2015). *Mixed Methods Research: A Guide to the Field* (Vol. 3). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cleff, T. (2014). *Exploratory Data Analysis in Business & Economics: An Introduction to Using SPSS, Stat and Excel*. London: Springer.
- Coates, N. & Ind, N. (2013). The meanings of co-creation. *European Business Review*, 25(1): 86-95.
- Coghlan, D. & Brydon-Miller, M. (2014). *The sage encyclopedia of action research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781446294406
- Coker, K. K., Flight, R. L. & Baima, D. M. (2017). Skip it or view it: The role of video storytelling in social media marketing. *Marketing Management Journal*, 27(2):75-87.

- Cole, H. S., DeNardin, T. & Clow, K. E. (2017). Small service businesses: Advertising attitudes and the use of digital and social media marketing. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 38(4):203-212. doi:10.1080/15332969.2017.1394026
- Colton, D. & Covert, R. W. (2015). *Designing and Constructing Instruments for Social Research and Evaluation*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Crano, W., Brewer, M. & Lac, A. (2015). *Principles and Methods of Social Research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. & Creswell, D. (2018). *Research Design*. 5th ed. London: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Curtis, B. & Curtis, C. (2011). *Social Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Dahnil, M. I., Marzuki, K. M., Langgat, J. & Fabeil, N. F. (2014). Factors influencing SMEs adoption of social media marketing. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 148:119-126.
- Daniel, J. (2012). *Sampling Essentials: Practical Guidelines for Making Sampling Choices*. London: Sage Publications.
- David, M. & Sutton, C. D. (2011). *Social Research: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- De Fina, A. (2016). Storytelling and audience reactions in social media. *Language in Society*, 45(4):473-498.
- Delgado-Ballester, & Fernández-Sabiote, E. (2016). “Once upon a brand”: Storytelling practices by Spanish brands. *Spanish Journal of Marketing – ESIC*, 20(2):115-131.
- Dessart, L. & Pitardi, V. (2019). How stories generate consumer engagement: An exploratory study, *Journal of Business Research*, 104:183-195.
- Diamond, S. (2013). *The Visual Marketing Revolution: 26 Rules to Help Social Media Marketers Connect the Dots*. Indiana: Que Publishing.
- Dolan, G. (2017). *Stories for Work: The Essential Guide to Business Storytelling*. Melbourne, Australia: Wiley.
- Drummond, C., McGrath, H. & O'Toole, T. (2018). The impact of social media on resource mobilisation in entrepreneurial firms. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 70:68-89.
- Du Plooy, G. M. (2009). *Communication research: Techniques, Methods, And Applications*. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.

- El Quirdi, A., El Quirdi, M., Henderickx, E. & Segers, J. (2014). Social media conceptualization & taxonomy. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 9(2):107-126.
- English, L. G. & Weiner, C. A. (2006). *Story, archetype and healing*. *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 19(1):31-39. doi:10.1080/08893670600565629
- Essoungou, A.M. (2010). A Social Media Boom Begins in Africa: Using Mobile Phones, Africans Join the Global Conversation. Africa Renewal Online (December). Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/africarenewal/vol24no4/social-media-boom.html>.
- Etemad, H., Wright, R. W. & Dana, L. P. (2001). Symbiotic international business networks: Collaboration between small and large firms. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 43(4):481-499.
- Etgar, M. (2008). *A Descriptive Model of the Consumer Co-production Process*. Risho Lezion: Springer.
- Evans, D. (2010). *Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Facebook. (2019). *Facebook Reports First Quarter 2019 Results*. Available from: <https://investor.fb.com/investor-news/press-release-details/2019/Facebook-Reports-First-Quarter-2019-Results/default.aspx>
- Fagerstrøm, A. & Ghinea, G. (2011). On the motivating impact of price and online recommendations at the point of online purchase. *International Journal of Information Management*, 31(2):103-110.
- Fakiha, M. A. (2018). *Understanding brand story conceptualisations: Brand practitioner perspectives*. Doctoral thesis. RMIT University: School of economics Finance and Marketing. Available from: <https://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:162633>
- Faulds, D. J. & Mangold, G. W. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Science Direct – Business Horizons*, 52(4):357-365.
- Felício, J. A., Caldeirinha, V. R. & Ribeiro-Navarrete, B. (2015). Corporate and individual global mind-set and internationalization of European SMEs. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(4):797-802.
- Fink, A. (2003). Target populations and samples. In: Fink, A. (ed.), *How to Sample in Surveys: The Survey Kit* (2nd ed) (pp. 2-23). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412984478
- Flick, U. (2015). *Introducing Research Methodology* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Flick, U. (2014). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781446282243

- Fog, K., Budtz, C., Munch, P. & Blanchette, S. (2010). *Storytelling in Practice* (2nd ed.). London: Springer.
- Fowdar, S. & Ramsaran-Fowdar, R. R. (2013). The implications of Facebook marketing for organizations. *Contemporary Management Research*, 9(1):73-84.
- Frey, B. B. (2018). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fulgoni, G. M. (2015). How brands using social media ignite marketing and drive growth: Measurement of paid social media appears solid but are the metrics for organic social overstated? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 55(3):232-236.
- Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S. & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13(1):117. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-117>
- Gallaughar, J. & Ransbotham, S. (2010). Social media and customer dialog management at Starbucks. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4):197-212.
- Garg, G. & Kothari C. R. (2014). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (3rd ed.). London: New Age International Publishers.
- Garud, R., Schildt, H. A. & Lant, T. K. (2014). Entrepreneurial storytelling, future expectations, and the paradox of legitimacy. *Organization Science*, 25(5):1479-1492.
- Gilbert, N. (2008). *Researching Social Life*. London: Sage.
- Gillespie, B., Ruel, E. & Wagner, W. (2016). *Pretesting and Pilot Testing. The Practice of Survey Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781483391700.
- Gitner, S. (2016). *Multimedia Storytelling for Digital Communicators in a Multiplatform World*. Routledge, New York, NY, Available from: <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1021254&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412963909
- Gliem, J. A. & Gliem, R. R. (2003). *Calculating, Interpreting, and Reporting Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for Likert-Type Scales*. Columbus: The Ohio State University: 82-88.
- Gold, S., Seuring, S. & Beske, P. (2010). Sustainable supply chain management and inter-organizational resources: A literature review. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 17(4):230-245.

- Golder, S. A. & Huberman, B. A. (2006). Usage patterns of collaborative tagging systems. *Journal of Information Science*, 32(2):198-208.
- Granitz, N. & Forman, H. (2015). Building self-brand connections: Exploring brand stories through a transmedia perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 22(1):38-59.
- Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing Research in the Real World* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Gretzel, U. (2017). The visual turn in social media marketing. *Tourismos*, 12(3):1-18.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park: SAGE.
- Guest, G., Namey, E. E. & Mitchell, M. L. (2013). *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Gulati, R. (1998). Alliances and networks. *Strategic Management Journal*, 19(4):293-317.
- Guttman, A. (2018). *Social media marketing – Statistics and facts*. Available from: <https://0-www-statista-com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/topics/1538/social-media-marketing/>
- Haenlein, M. & Kaplan, A. M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Science Direct*, 53(1):59-68.
- Hajli, N., Shanmugam, M., Papagiannidis, S., Zahay, D. & Richard, M. O. (2017). Branding co-creation with members of online brand communities. *Journal of Business Research*, 70:136-144.
- Hamburg, I. & Hall, T. (2013). Social networks, web and mentoring approaches in SME continuing vocational education and training. *Journal of Information Technology and Application in Education*, 2(2):85-94.
- Hamel, G. (1989). Collaborate with your competitors and win. *Harvard Business Review*, 67:133-139.
- Hammett, G. (2016). *Entrepreneur Media, Inc.* Available from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/amphtml/270141>
- Heggde, G. & Shainesh, G. (2018). *Social Media Marketing: Emerging Concepts and Applications*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heinemeyer, C. & Reason, M. (2016). Storytelling, story-retelling, storyknowing: Towards a participatory practice of storytelling. *The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 21(4):558-573. doi:10.1080/13569783.2016.1220247.
- Hestad, M. (2013). *Branding and Product Design: An Integrated Perspective*. Farnham: Gower.
- Hom, E. (2013). *What is B2C?* Available from: <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5085-what-isb2c.html>
- Horbel, C., Popp, B., Woratschek, H. & Wilson, B. (2016). How context shapes value co-creation: Spectator experience of sport events. *The Service Industries Journal*, 36(11-12):510-531.



- Hu, H. & Wang, X. (2009). Evolution of a large online social network. *Physics Letters A*, 373(12-13):1105-1110.
- Humphreys, P. K., Lai, M. K. & Sculli, D. (2001). An inter-organizational information system for supply chain management. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 70(3):245-255.
- Hunter, L. B. (2019). Live streaming and the perils of proximity. *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 15(3):283-294.
- Ignatow, G. & Mihalcea, R. (2017). *Text Mining: A Guidebook for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781483399782
- Ind, N., Iglesias, O. & Schultz, M. (2013). Building brands together: Emergence and outcomes of co-creation. *California Management Review*, 55(3):5-26.
- Internet World Stats. (2018). *Usage and Population Statistics*. Available from: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>
- Irene, B. N. O. (2016). A cross-cultural review of the impact of entrepreneurial motivation. *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 5(7):1122-1130.
- Israel, M. & Hay, I. (2006). *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*. London: Sage.
- Jauch, H. (2010). *The role of SMEs in employment creation and economic growth: Lessons from other countries*. In: 12th Annual Symposium 2010: SME Development in Namibia, September.
- Javadi, M. & Zarea, K. (2016). Understanding thematic analysis and its pitfall. *Demo*, 1(1): 33-39.
- Kambwale, J. N. & Chisoro, C. (2015). An investigation into the causes of small and medium enterprise failures in Windhoek, Namibia. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*, 4(7): 80.
- Kao, T. Y., Yang, M. H., Wu, J. T. B. & Cheng, Y. Y. (2016). Co-creating value with consumers through social media. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 30(2): 141-151.
- Kapitako, A. (2016). *Social Media and Police – Community Relations: A Case Study of the Namibian Police Force's Facebook Page*. Unpublished MA dissertation. Windhoek: University of Namibia.
- Karpinska-Krakowiak, M. (2016). The effects of social networking sites on consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 56(3):204-210.
- Kautz, H., Selman, B. & Shah, M. (1997). Referral web: Combining social networks and collaborative filtering. *Communications of the ACM*, 40(3):63-65.
- Kelsey, T. (2017). *Introduction to Social Media Marketing: A Guide for Absolute Beginners*. Illinois: A Press Publishing.

- Kent, A. & Millspough, J. (2016). Co-creation and the development of SME Designer Fashion Enterprises. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 20(3):322-338.
- Kimmel, A. (1988). *Ethics and Values in Applied Social Research*. London: Sage.
- Kleinaltenkamp, M., Plinke, W., Wilkinson, I. & Geiger, I. (2015). *Fundamentals of Business-to-Business Marketing*. Switzerland: Springer.
- Kooli, K., Tzempelikos, N., Foroudi, P. & Mazahreh, S. (2019). What drives B-to-B marketers in emerging countries to use social media sites? *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 26(3-4):245-264.
- Koschmann, M. A. (2013). The communicative constitution of collective identity in interorganizational collaboration. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 27(1):61-89. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318912449314>
- Kumar, R. (2014). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners* (4th ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Kumar, V. & Raheja, G. (2012). Business to business and business to consumer management. *International Journal of Computers & Technology*, 3(3):447-451.
- Kvale, S. (2007). Transcribing interviews. In: Kvale, S. (ed.), *Qualitative research kit: Doing interviews* (pp. 93-100). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781849208963
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods: Arts-based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*. The Guilford Press. Available from: <http://0search.ebscohost.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1497395&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Leavy, P. (2014). *Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press.
- Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. Edinburgh: Pearson.
- Lewis, P., Thornhill, A. & Saunders, N. K. (2019). *Research Methods for Business Students* (8th ed.). London: Pearson.
- Lewis-Beck M. S., Bryman A. & Liao, T. F. (2004). The *SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412950589.
- Livermore, M. & Verbovaya, O. (2016). Doing collaboration: How organizations use Facebook to foster collaboration. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 40(5):553-571.
- Lutkenhaus, R. O., Jansz, J. & Bouman, M. P. (2019). Tailoring in the digital era: Stimulating dialogues on health topics in collaboration with social media influencers. *Digital Health*. doi:10.1177/2055207618821521.

- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Mahwah: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mahler, J. (1988). The quest for organizational meaning: Identifying and interpreting the symbolism in organizational stories. *Administration & Society*, 20(3):344-368.
- Malik, A., Amandeep, D. & Nieminen, M. (2015). Facebook photo tagging culture and practices among digital natives. In: *CCGIDIS 2015 – Fifth International Symposium on Communicability, Computer Graphics and Innovative Design for Interactive Systems*. Blue Herons Editions.
- Mancuso, J. & Stuth, K. (2014). Storytelling and marketing: The perfect pairing. *Marketing Insights*, 26(3):18-19.
- Manic, M. (2015). Marketing engagement through visual content. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Economic Sciences. Series V*, 8(2):89-94.
- Mariampolski, H. (2001). *Qualitative Market Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Marshall, P., Krance, K. & Meloche, T. (2017). *Ultimate Guide to Facebook Advertising: How to Access 1 Billion Potential Customers in 10 Minutes*. Irvine, CA: Entrepreneur Press.
- Masidwali, S. E. (2018). *The use of Facebook to build online communities for SMEs operating in Gauteng*. Doctoral dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Matei, A. & Till, Y. (2016). Basics of sampling for survey research. In: Wolf, C., Jove, D., Smith, T. W. & Yang-Chih, F. (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Survey Methodology* (pp. 311-328). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781473957893
- McGivern, Y. (2003). *The Practice of Market and Social Research: An Introduction*. Prentice Hall, Harlow: Financial Times.
- Mershon, P. (2012). Social media marketing trends: New research. *Social Media Examiner*. Available from: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/b2b-social-media-marketing-research/>
- Mitchell, A. (2018). A review of mixed methods, pragmatism and abduction techniques. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 16(3):103-116.
- MITSMED. (2016). *SME Certificate Registration System Report*. Windhoek: Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development.
- MITSMED. (2015). *SME Certificate Registration System Report*. Windhoek: Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development.
- MITSMED. (2014). *SME Certificate Registration System Report*. Windhoek: Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development.

- Mood, D. P., Morrow, Jr., J. R. & McQueen, M. B. (2019). *Introduction to Statistics in Human Performance*. New York: Routledge. Available from: <https://doi-org.ujlink.uj.ac.za/10.4324/9781351211062>
- Moore, K. & Reid, S. (2008). The birth of brand: 4000 years of branding. *Business History*, 50(4):419-432.
- Morris, A. (2015). Developing the interview guide. In: Morris, A. (ed.), *A Practical Introduction to In-Depth Interviewing* (pp. 39-52). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.  
doi:10.4135/9781473921344
- Mowat, J. (2018). *Video Marketing Strategy: Harness the Power of Online Video to Drive Brand Growth*. London: Kogan Page.
- Muriithi, S. M. (2017). African Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) contributions, challenges and solutions. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Management Sciences*, 5(1):36-38.
- Nabulyato, M. R. (2014). *The Effectiveness of Social Media in Namibia's 2009 Elections: Perspective of Political Parties*. Unpublished dissertation. Windhoek: The University of Namibia.
- Namibia Statistics Agency. (2014). *Namibia Population Projections 2011-2041*, Windhoek: Namibia Statistics Agency.
- Neuman, W. L. (2000). The meaning of methodology. In: Neuman, W. L. (ed.), *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (91-124). Essex: Pearson.
- Newton, R. R. & Rudestam, K. E. (2013). Traditional approaches to statistical analysis and the logic of statistical inference. In: *Your Statistical Consultant: Answers to Your Data Analysis Questions* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications, Ltd.
- Ng, D. & Zimmerman, J. (2015). *Social Media Marketing: All-in-One for Dummies*. New Jersey: Wiley.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E. & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Odoom, R., Dorson, T. & Acheampong, G. (2017). Antecedents of social media usage and performance benefits in small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *Management*, 30(3):383-399.
- Ogbokor, C. A. & Ngeendepi, E. J. (2012). *Investigating the Challenges Faced by SMEs in Namibia*. Windhoek: University of Science and Technology.

- O'Leary, Z. (2007). Deductive/inductive reasoning. In: O'Leary, Z. (ed.), *The Social Science Jargon Buster* (pp. 57-58). Available from: <https://methods.sagepub.com/book/the-social-science-jargon-buster/n144>
- Osborne-Gowey, J. (2014). Starting the social media science communication. *Fisheries*, 39(1):7-7.
- Park, K. & Wang, G.T. (2016). *Student Research and Report Writing*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Paulraj, A., Lado, A.A. & Chen, I. J. (2008). Inter-organizational communication as a relational competency: Antecedents and performance outcomes in collaborative buyer-supplier relationships. *Journal of Operations Management*, 26(1):45-64.
- Perkins, L. (2015). *The Community Manager's Playbook: How to Build Brand Awareness and Customer Engagement*. Verlag: APress.
- Phillips, B. J. & McQuarrie, E. F. (2010). Narrative and persuasion in fashion advertising. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(3):368-392.
- Polese, F., Mele, C., Gummesson, E., Tregua, M., Russo-Spena, T. & Casbarra, C. (2015). Being social for social: a co-creation perspective. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 25(2):198-219. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-09-2013-0183>
- Prahalad, C. K. & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creating unique value with customers. *Strategy & Leadership*, 32(3):4-9.
- Punch, F. K. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research*. (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Rapley, T. (2007). *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis: Qualitative Research Kit*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/978184920890
- Reichertz, J. (2014). Induction, deduction, abduction. In: Flick, U. (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 123-135). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781446282243.
- Reid, D., Bussiere, D. & Greenaway, K. (2001). Alliance formation issues for knowledge-based enterprises. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 3(1):79-100.
- Remler, D. & Van Ryzin, G. (2011). *Research Methods in Practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Rialti, R., Zollo, L., Caliandro, A. & Ciappei, C. (2018). *Emerald Insight*. Available from: <http://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-03-2018-0011>
- Rizomyliotis, I., Konstantoulaki, K. & Kostopoulos, I. (2017). *Business-to-Business Marketing Communications: Value and Efficiency Considerations in Recessionary Times*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Rossman, G. & Rallis, S. (eds). (2017). Analysing and interpreting data. In: *An Introduction to Qualitative Research: Learning in the Field*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.  
doi:10.4135/9781071802694.
- Ruane, J. (2015). *Introducing Social Research Methods* (1st ed.). Oxford: Willey.
- Rugova, B. & Prenaj, B. (2016). Social media as marketing tool for SMEs: Opportunities and challenges. *Academic Journal of Business*, 2(3):85-97.
- Sahu, P. K. (2013). Research design. In: *Research Methodology: A Guide for Researchers in Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences and Other Related Fields* (p. 432). New Delhi: Springer.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Salkind, N. J. (2010). *Encyclopedia of Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781412961288
- Sanders, E. B. N. & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *Co-design*, 4(1):5-18.
- Schenk, F. B (2017). *How small business marketing differs from big business marketing*. Available from: <http://www.dummies.com/business/marketing/how-small-business-marketing-differs-from-big-business-marketing/>
- Scherbaum, C. & Shockley, K. (2015). Introduction. In: Scherbaum, C. & Shockley, K. (eds), *Mastering Business Research Methods: Analysing Quantitative Data for Business and Management Students* (1-8). London: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781529716719
- Schreier, M. (2018). Sampling and generalization. In: Flick, U. (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781526416070
- Schroeder, J. E. (2015). *Brands and Branding*. USA: Rochester Institute of Technology.  
doi:10.1002/9781118989463.wbeccs031
- Serrat, O. (2008). Storytelling. *Asian Development Bank*:1-4.
- Shehu, M. (2019). *Application of Social Media Analytics to Business Intelligence in Namibia* Doctoral thesis. Namibia: University of Science and Technology: Department of Informatics.
- Shehu, M. (2018). Formalizing social media marketing strategies: a case study of Namibian SMEs. In: *Proceedings of the Second African Conference for Human Computer Interaction: Thriving Communities*: 1-5.
- Shiau, W. L., Dwivedi, Y. K. & Lai, H. H. (2018). Examining the core knowledge on Facebook. *International Journal of Information Management*, 43:52-63.

- Sibierska, M. (2017). Storytelling without telling: The non-linguistic nature of narratives from evolutionary and narratological perspectives. *Language & Communication*, 54:47-55.
- Singh, K. (2007). *Quantitative Social Research Methods*. New Delhi: SAGE.
- Singh, S. & Sonnenburg, S. (2012). Brand performances in social media. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(4):189-197.
- Singleton, R. & Straits, B. (2012). Survey interviewing. In: Gubrium, J. F. (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (2nd ed.): 77-98. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781452218403
- Skott, B. P. & Ward, M. (2013). Mixed methods and triangulation. In: Skott, B. P. & Ward, M. (eds), *Active Learning Exercises for Research Methods in Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781506335179
- Slade-Brooking, C. (2016). *Creating a Brand Identity: A Guide for Designers*. Laurence King Publishing Ltd.
- Smith, K. & Wintrob, M. (2013). Brand storytelling: A framework for activation. *Design Management Review*, 24(1):36-41.
- Sole, D. & Wilson, D. G. (2002). Storytelling in organizations: The power and traps of using stories to share knowledge in organizations. *LILA, Harvard, Graduate School of Education*: 1-12.
- Spear, S. & Roper, S. (2013). Using corporate stories to build the corporate brand: an impression management perspective. *Journal of Products & Brand Management*, 22(7):491-501.
- StatCounter. (2017). *StatCounter Global Stats*. Available from: <http://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/africa>
- Statista. (2019). *Social Media Marketing*. Available from: [file:///C:/Users/FabianA/Downloads/study\\_id15449\\_social-media-marketing-in-the-us-statista-dossier.pdf](file:///C:/Users/FabianA/Downloads/study_id15449_social-media-marketing-in-the-us-statista-dossier.pdf)
- Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). (2016). *Statistics in South Africa*. Available from: <http://cs2016.statssa.gov.za/>
- Stelzner, M. A. (2017). *Social Media Marketing Industry Report*. Available from: <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2017/>
- Stelzner, M. A. (2016). *Social Media Marketing Industry Report*. Available from: <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2016/>
- Stockdale, R., Ahmed, A. & Scheepers, H. (2012). *Identifying Business Value From The Use Of Social Media: An Sme Perspective*. Available from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/902b/4a16bb0f6364c77f1f7c06ed6e490cc1ed11.pdf>

- Stueber, H. & Wurth, S. (2017). *A Literature Review of Marketing and Facebook*. Available from: <http://hh.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1080778&dswid=8903>
- Tan, C., Li, Y., Correia, P. A. P., Medina, I. G., Romo, Z. F. G. & Contreras-Espinosa, R. S. (2014). The importance of Facebook as an online social networking tool for companies. *International Journal of Accounting & Information Management*, 22(4):295-320. Available from: <https://0-doi-org.ujlink.uj.ac.za/10.1108/IJAIM-08-2013-0050>
- Tan, W. C. K. (2017). *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for Students and Researchers*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company.
- Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C. & Teddlie, C. B. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Vol. 46). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Terre Blanche, M. J., Durrheim, K. & Painter, D. (2012). *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Thier, K. (2018). *Storytelling in Organizations*. Germany: Springer.
- Thomas, D. R. & Hodges, I. D. (2010). *Designing and Managing Your Research Project: Core Skills for Social and Health Research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.  
doi:10.4135/9781446289044
- Tjora, A. (2018). *Qualitative Research as Stepwise-Deductive Induction*. Milton: Routledge.
- Toria Boutique Windhoek. (2019). *Facebook page*. Available from: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=1262260897137730&story\\_fbid=1937947359569077](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=1262260897137730&story_fbid=1937947359569077)
- Tu, D. L. (2015). *Feature and Narrative Storytelling for Multimedia Journalists*. New York and London: Focal Press.
- Turner, V. (1975). Symbolic studies. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 4(1):145-161.
- Vahl, A. (2014). *How to Drive More Facebook Traffic to Your Website in 5 Easy Steps*. Available from: <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/drive-more-facebook-traffic/>
- Van Belleghem, S. (2011). *Social Media Around the World*. Available from <https://www.slideshare.net/stevenvanbelleghem/social-media-around-the-world-2011/135>
- Von Wallpach, S., Voyer, B. G., Kastanakis, M. N. & Mühlbacher, H. (2017). Co-creating stakeholder and brand identities: Introduction to the special section. *Journal of Business Research*, 70:395-398.
- Vuori, V. & Jussila, J. (2016). The 5C categorization of social media tools. In: *Proceedings of the 20th International Academic Mindtrek Conference*, October (pp. 26-33).



- Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Hamel, L. M. & Shulman, H. C. (2009). Self-generated versus other-generated statements and impressions in computer-mediated communication: A test of warranting theory using Facebook. *Communication Research*, 36(2):229-253.
- Wang, W. Y. (2019). *Digital Media in Urban China: Locating Guangzhou*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Wentz, E. (2014). *How to Design, Write, and Present a Successful Dissertation Proposal*. London: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781506374710
- Weston, R. (2008). *Entrepreneur*. Available from: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/191312>
- World Population Review. (2019). *World Population Review Namibia*. Available from: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/namibia-population/>
- YouNique Medi Spa and IV Clinic. (2019). *Facebook page*. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/YouniqueDaySpa/?pageid=529124873812702&ftentidentifier=2870852992973200&padding=0>
- Zimmerman, J. & Ng, D. (2015). *Social Media Marketing All-in-One for Dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: For Dummies. Available from: <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=981393&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

## Appendices

Appendix A – Information Sheet

Appendix B – Informed Consent Form

Appendix C – Interview Guide Adapted for Qualitative Data collection

Appendix D – Questionnaire Adapted for Quantitative Data Collection

Appendix E – Confirmatory feedback email example

Appendix F -Draft Interview guide (pilot test)

Appendix G – Pages from the research diary

Appendix H – Ethical clearance from UJ's Research Ethics Committee

Appendix I – Cronbach Alpha reliability test results



## Appendix A: Information Sheet



05 June 2019

Manager: Communications & Marketing  
 XXXX  
 Windhoek  
 Namibia

Dear Mr/Ms XXX,

### **RE: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

#### **Research title**

The Use of Facebook to Co-create Brand Stories for a Business-to-Business Market Among SMEs in Namibia

#### **Research overview**

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors surrounding the use of Facebook by SMEs in Namibia with regards to the co-creation of brand stories for a B2B market. The study will cover SME's currently located in Windhoek the capital city of Namibia, where the research will be conducted.

The nature of the study is exploratory, hence the questions will primarily focus on how SMEs in Namibia use Facebook for a B2B market and how they use Facebook to create brand stories, as well as, determine the elements of SME brand stories that are co-created on Facebook. Due to the nature of the sampling methods (purposive and snowball sampling) of this research, to ensure that the population of the study is sufficiently covered, the researcher may ask participants for referrals to other SME's that can also participate in the interviews.

Participating in this study may benefit upcoming SME's in Namibia and the overall business development communities in both Namibia and South Africa. Results obtained from this study will be used to make recommendations that may guide SMEs in incorporating and utilising Facebook as a brand storytelling platform to co-create in the B2B market.

As a research participant, you will be required to partake in a +/-30-minute semi-structured interview facilitated by the researcher. During the interviews, conversations will be audio-recorded for further data analysis and maximum accuracy.



If you agree to participate in this study, I would like to get your written consent for participation that can be signed in the informed consent form. Please note that the information that is gathered will be treated with complete confidentiality. No individual respondents will be identified if they wish, and any identified responses will only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. Participation in the research is voluntary, and you retain the right to withdraw your participation when you see fit.

Should you have any queries pertaining to this study, please contact the researcher Auguste Fabian via email at [afabian436@gmail.com](mailto:afabian436@gmail.com) or +264 813190084 or my supervisor Dr Maritha Pritchard via e-mail at [mpritchard@uj.ac.za](mailto:mpritchard@uj.ac.za) or call her on 082 781 0096.

Yours sincerely

**Auguste Fabian**

**Masters student**



## Appendix B: Informed consent form (unsigned)



15 May 2019

Manager: Communications & Marketing  
XXXX  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Dear Participant,

### RE: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research study on **the use of Facebook to co-create brand stories for a Business-to-Business market among SMEs in Namibia.**

The purpose of this research is to establish how SMEs use Facebook for the B2B market in Namibia and explore how co-creation of brand stories, as well as, the elements of SME brand stories that can be co-created on Facebook. When you agree to participate in this study, you will partake in an online questionnaire and or a semi-structured interview that will be facilitated by the researcher (Auguste Fabian), a Masters student in Strategic Communication from the University of Johannesburg.

The main topics that will be discussed during the interview fully align to the aforementioned purpose. However, other topics that may arise during the semi-structured in-depth interview may also be discussed. English will be used as the medium of communication for this interview as it is the official language used in Namibia.

For data collection and analysis, I must record both the semi-structured interview and online questionnaire. I would therefore kindly request for your verbal and written consent for participation. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. During the 30 minutes, conversations will be audio-recorded to accurately record what is said. For the self-administered questionnaire, a survey link will be emailed to the participant for completion. In an event where the participant has no email address, a hard copy of the questionnaire will be printed and given to the participant to complete. Filling in the questionnaire is estimated to take +/- 30 minutes.

Please note that the information that is gathered will be treated with total confidentiality. No individual respondents' personal information such as name, age etc will be published in the research report and any identified response will only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor. Therefore, your responses will only be used for academic purposes. Participation in the research is voluntary, and you retain the right to withdraw your participation when you see fit.

**Appendix B: Informed consent form (unsigned)**

Your signature on this consent form indicates your agreement to participate in this study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep if you agree to participate. The second signed consent form will be kept by the researcher.

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you once again for voluntarily contributing to this study.

Should you wish to contact me or my supervisor for this study, please find the details below:

Auguste Fabian  
[afabian436@gmail.com](mailto:afabian436@gmail.com)  
+264 813190084

Dr Maritha Pritchard  
[mpritchard@uj.ac.za](mailto:mpritchard@uj.ac.za)  
082 781 0096

Yours sincerely

**Auguste Fabian**  
**Masters student**



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## Appendix C: Interview guide adapted for qualitative data collection

### Interview Guide

My name is Auguste Fabian and I am a master's degree student at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, in the department of strategic communication, I am conducting research about Facebook use in the SME industry. Therefore, kindly feel free to express your honest views, opinions and feelings pertaining to questions.

Further be ensured that your identity will remain anonymous and all information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. We therefore kindly ask for your permission in recording this interview with a voice recorder and taking notes during the interview. In addition to that, your identity will be kept confidential and participation for this interview is voluntary.

Firstly, I would like to ask you some basic questions relating to your experience.

1. What is your position at this specific SME?

To clarify, an SME can be defined by two categories:

(a); a small enterprise that employs 11-30 employees and attains an annual turnover of up to R/N\$ 3 000 000, and

(b); a medium enterprise that employs 31 to 100 employees and attains an annual turnover of up to R/N\$ 10 000 000.

2. Does your SME have a Facebook page/account? If not, could you kindly explain why your SME does not use Facebook?
  3. How many years' experience do you have in social media management?
  4. For how long have you worked in the SME sector?
  5. How many years' experience do you have in business-to-business (B2B) marketing? To clarify, B2B marketing can be defined as marketing activities by organisations that focus on selling their products or services solely to other organisations.
  6. In which area is your SME located in Windhoek?
  7. Based on your experience, or what you have noticed, how do businesses in the SME sector collaborate with one another when using Facebook?
  8. Ideally, how could SMEs then encourage collaboration with other businesses on Facebook to promote their products or services?
  9. From what you have noticed on Facebook, or based on your experience, what are the most effective stories that SME brands tell about themselves?
  10. What do you think are the requirements of effective storytelling about SME brands on Facebook?
  11. **How do you think SMEs could tell their brand stories on Facebook if they were to collaborate with other businesses or SMEs?**
- Replaced with:**
12. **Based on your experience what are the possible positive and negative outcomes that are experienced by SMEs collaborating with other businesses on Facebook?**
  13. Based on our discussion, is there anything else that you would like to mention about brand storytelling in business-to-business marketing for SMEs using Facebook?

## Appendix D: Questionnaire adapted for quantitative data collection



The questionnaire you are about to complete has been designed to examine, among others, how your Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Namibia **use of Facebook to co-create brand stories for a Business-to-Business market in Namibia**. The purpose is to examine how you rate your organisation's use of Facebook for business clients. **Please answer ALL the questions** as spontaneously and as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

Your responses will remain entirely anonymous and confidential and any demographic data will be used only for research purposes. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to refuse to answer any question in the questionnaire. If you have any questions about this survey, you may ask me.

--	--	--

### SECTION A

This section explores your social media platforms

Please indicate your answer by marking with an 'X'.

1. Which social media platforms are being used by your organisation? (mark all applicable)

1.1	My organisation uses Twitter	
1.2	My organisation uses Facebook	
1.3	My organisation uses Instagram	
1.4	My organisation uses WhatsApp	
1.5	My organisation uses LinkedIn	
1.6	My organisation uses YouTube	
1.7	My organisation uses TikTok	
1.8	My organisation uses Snapchat	
1.9	My organisation uses Pinterest	
1.10	Other please specify	

### SECTION B

#### ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

This section explores your role in the organisation.

Please answer the following questions by marking with an 'X'.

2. What is the kind of position do you currently serve in the organisation you are working for?

Founder/ Managing Director	1
Social media manager	2



Marketing manager	3
Senior manager	4

**3. In which area is your SME located?**

Windhoek CBD	1
Windhoek North	2
Windhoek South	3
Windhoek West	4
Windhoek East	5
Other, specify	

**4. Please indicate your current job classification**

Management	1
Staff	2

**5. How long have you been employed in this post?**

Less than 1 year	1
1 – 3 years	2
4 – 6 years	3
7 – 10 years	4
More than 10 years	5

**6. How long have you been working in social media management roles for an organization?**

Less than 1 year	1
1 – 3 years	2
4 – 6 years	3
7 – 10 years	4
More than 10 years	5

**7. How many employees work in your organization?**

Less than 10	1
11-20	2
21-50	3
51-100	4
More than 100	5

**8. How long have you worked for the organisation where you are currently employed?**

Less than 5 years	1
5-10 years	2
11-15 years	3
16-20 year	4
More than 20 years	5

**9. How long have you worked in Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing for SMEs?**

Less than 5 years	1
5-10 years	2
11-15 years	3
16-20 year	4
More than 20 years	5

---

### **SECTION C**

10. The following statements deal with effective brand storytelling on Facebook.

**What types of stories do you think are the most effective for a Namibian SME to tell on Facebook?**

Please indicate your answer using the following 4-point scale where:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

		Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>10.1</b>	Stories that are authentic with original and genuine narratives	1	2	3	4	
<b>10.2</b>	Stories making use of an identifiable persona in the narrative	1	2	3	4	
<b>10.3</b>	Stories that create relationships with audiences through evoking emotional attachment to a post	1	2	3	4	

10.4	Funny stories that contain a humorous anecdote intended to provoke laughter from the audience	1	2	3	4
10.5	Stories that share growth and development stages of your organisation	1	2	3	4
10.6	News stories related to current affairs	1	2	3	4
10.7	Stories that focus on the products and services that your SME has to offer	1	2	3	4
10.8	Stories that focus on giving back to the community	1	2	3	4
10.9	Stories that encourage audiences to enquire about the SME's products and services	1	2	3	4
10.10	Stories that test the audience's knowledge about the SME's products and services	1	2	3	4
10.11	Visual stories making use of pictures, audio and/or video elements on Facebook	1	2	3	4
10.12	Teaching stories that focus on educating the audiences about the organisation's products and services	1	2	3	4
10.13	Stories that illustrate how the audience and the SME uphold the same values	1	2	3	4
10.14	Stories with values in action that will prompt discussion about the discussions raised by the value being promoted	1	2	3	4
10.15	Stories that highlight the benefits of products or services	1	2	3	4
10.16	Stories that appeal to audiences' desire for self-enhancement that will make them feel good about themselves	1	2	3	4
10.17	Stories that feature the unique characteristics of belonging to Namibian communities	1	2	3	4
10.18	Stories that appeal to audiences' desire for sensory pleasure, variety and cognitive stimulation	1	2	3	4
10.19	Stories about the vision of the organisation	1	2	3	4
10.20	Stories that seem to have the ability to demonstrate exactly what the audience is thinking at a particular moment	1	2	3	4
10.21	Stories that bring a problem into the open and make audiences view the problem in a different light	1	2	3	4
10.22	Stories that inspire audiences to envisage how they could act in a different manner	1	2	3	4
10.23	Stories that look back at changes that were successfully completed	1	2	3	4
10.24	Emotional stories that provoke the sharing of memories about a situation that audiences have also experienced in the past	1	2	3	4
10.25	Satirical stories to mock or make fun of a rumour doing the rounds	1	2	3	4
10.26	Stories that are about preparing audiences for the future by envisaging a new direction that the organisation wants to take	1	2	3	4
10.27	Stories that reminisce about historic events that the organisation commemorates	1	2	3	4
10.28	Stories shared by other Facebook pages	1	2	3	4
10.29	Stories that celebrate the achievements of your organisation	1	2	3	4

<b>10.30</b>	Stories featuring Namibian influencers	1	2	3	4
--------------	--	---	---	---	---

11. The following statements deals with Facebook features available to businesses such as SME's to optimise storytelling.

**How do you rate your SME's Facebook page in terms of the features being used?**

		Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
<b>11.1</b>	Storytelling on Facebook requires the use of more visuals and less text to attract audience engagement	1	2	3	4
<b>11.2</b>	Storytelling on Facebook reaches larger audiences when images are used	1	2	3	4
<b>11.3</b>	Storytelling on Facebook attract more engagement when videos are used	1	2	3	4
<b>11.4</b>	Storytelling on Facebook reaches larger audiences when using paid posts	1	2	3	4
<b>11.5</b>	Storytelling using the Facebook Live feature	1	2	3	4
<b>11.6</b>	Storytelling on Facebook reaches larger audiences when using organic posts	1	2	3	4
<b>11.7</b>	Using Facebook Polls to gather audience opinions	1	2	3	4
<b>11.8</b>	Other, specify				

12. The following questions deals with the type of business to business marketing collaborations SMEs may use on Facebook. **How will your SME most likely collaborate with other businesses when using Facebook?** Please indicate your answer using the following 3-point scale where: 1 = Not Likely 2 = Somewhat Likely 3 = Very Likely

		Not likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
<b>12.1</b>	Collaborating with another business to create paid content	1	2	3
<b>12.2</b>	The ability to conveniently respond to enquiries from other businesses	1	2	3
<b>12.3</b>	Collaborating with a business that is bigger than your own brand to create content on Facebook	1	2	3
<b>12.4</b>	Tagging, identifying or mentioning another business in Facebook posts	1	2	3
<b>12.5</b>	Sharing Facebook posts made by another business	1	2	3
<b>12.6</b>	Collaborating on a Facebook campaign	1	2	3
<b>12.7</b>	Two or more brands collaborating on hosting a particular event	1	2	3
<b>12.8</b>	Two or more brands using the Facebook Live feature/tool to broadcast a particular event live on Facebook	1	2	3
<b>12.9</b>	Collaborating with an SME brand that is from a different industry	1	2	3
<b>12.10</b>	Other, specify			

## SECTION D

Please answer the following **demographical** questions by marking with an 'X'.

### 13. Gender

Male	1
------	---

**PLEASE TURN OVER**

Female	2
--------	---

**14. How old are you?**

18-20 years	1
21-30 years	2
31-40 years	3
41-50 years	4
Older than 50 years	5

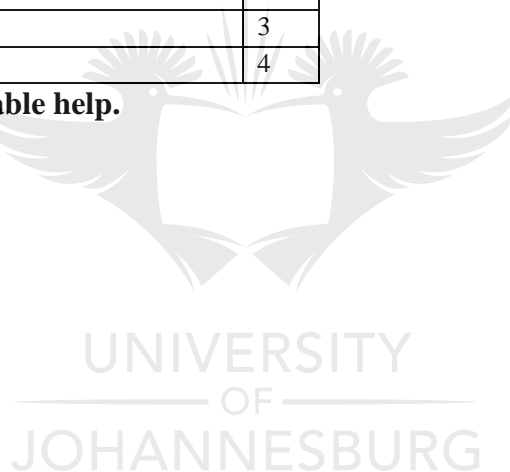
**15. Highest academic qualification**

Primary school	1
Some high school	2
Matriculated	3
University completed (undergraduate)	4
Post-graduate qualification	5
Any other qualification	6

**16. Ethnicity**

Black African	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian or Asian	4

**THANK YOU for your valuable help.**



Appendix E – Confirmatory email

Appendix E – Confirmatory email example.

## Interview Feedback: The Use of Facebook to Co-Create Brand Stories for a Business-to-Business Market Among SMEs in Namibia

Inbox



**Auguste Fabian** <afabian436@gmail.com>  
to XXX

Sun, Oct 13, 2019, 6:26 PM

Dear XXXX,

First of all, I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule, agreeing to an interview session and speaking to me regarding the aforementioned research topic. Your contributions were truly helpful and insightful.

As part of research confirmability, I have attached the interview transcript of our interview session for your perusal and confirmation.

Kindly read through and should you wish to make any amendments, clarify anything or ask questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you find that everything is in order, kindly confirm the authenticity of the content via email.

Thank you once again for participating in my research. I will forever be grateful.

Warm regards,  
Auguste (Student)  
Attachments area



## Appendix F: Draft Interview guide (pilot)

### Semi-structured In-depth Interview Guide

My name is Auguste Fabian and I am a master's degree student at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, in the department of strategic communication, I am conducting research about Facebook use in the SME industry. Therefore, kindly feel free to express your honest views, opinions and feelings pertaining to questions answered.

Further be ensured that your identity will remain anonymous and all information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. We therefore kindly ask for your permission in recording this interview with a voice recorder and taking notes during the interview. In addition to that, your identity will be kept confidential and participation for this interview is voluntary.

Firstly, I would like to ask you some basic questions relating to your experience.

1. What is your position at this specific SME? To clarify, an SME can be defined by two categories (a); a small enterprise that employs 11-30 employees and attains an annual turnover of up to R/N\$ 3 000 000, and (b); a medium enterprise that employs 31 to 100 employees and attains an annual turnover of up to R/N\$ 10 000 000.
2. Does your SME have a Facebook page/account? If not, could you kindly explain why your SME does not use Facebook?
3. How many years' experience do you have in social media management?
4. For how long have you worked in the SME sector?
5. How many years' experience do you have in business-to-business (B2B) marketing? To clarify, B2B marketing can be defined as marketing activities by organisations that focus on selling their products or services solely to other organisations.
6. In which area is your SME located in Windhoek?
7. Co-creation Based on your experience, or what you have noticed, how do businesses in the SME sector collaborate with one another when using Facebook? What is your view on the active involvement of inputs from other businesses regarding your products and or services?
8. How could SMEs encourage collaboration with other businesses on Facebook to promote their products or services? How do you allow and encourage the co-creation process (collective collaboration of development of your products & services) with your current clients at your organisation?
9. From what you have noticed on Facebook, or based on your experience, what are the most effective stories that SME brands tell about themselves? (stories can be defined as,
10. What do you think are the requirements of effective storytelling about SME brands on Facebook? How do you think brand stories should be marketed on Facebook, or any other social media?
11. How do you think SMEs could tell their brand stories on Facebook if they were to collaborate with other businesses or SMEs? How would you describe your experience on creating brand stories on Facebook?
12. Based on our discussion, is there anything else that you would like to mention about brand storytelling in business-to-business marketing for SMEs using Facebook?

Appendix G- Pages from the Research Diary

**Google Online Research Diary**  
**MA in Marketing Communication**

Entry date: 12 June 2019

Student name: Auguste Fabian

Student Number: 217092601

**Theme: Could this be a dead-End?**

- I have conducted one pilot interview so far.
- Attempts to get interviews with other SME's in the area proved fruitless
- I never knew that being turned down for an interview can really weight down your spirit to some extent but today I had to grasp that.
- I mean it is stated in the informed consent forms that participation is voluntary and interviewees retain the right to say No should they wish. After all, they are just practising their constitutional rights.
- The two of the interview participants I had scheduled for today, backed out on the last minute, however, I will not let the rejections of today put me down.
- I will push for more interviews; I know that I can do this!

UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG



Appendix G- Pages from the Research Diary

**Google Online Research Diary  
MA in Marketing Communication**

Entry date: 17 June 2019

Student name: Auguste Fabian  
Student Number: 217092601

**Theme: Interviews Continue**

- ★ Had my second interview today and it went very well, I must say that I have learnt a lot from this specific participant.
- ★ The Interview was with the owner and founder of a very popular SME brand
- ★ This specific participant was one of the recommendations that I received from my first interview.
- ★ Since I am making use of purposive sampling methods, it was also ideal for me to follow up because they have a strong social media presence.
- ★ The brand has become a household name in Namibia, especially in Windhoek.
- ★ The participant also recommended two other local brands, one of them being the founder of [REDACTED] and the other one being the founder and content producer of [REDACTED].
- ★ Today's interview was more than 30 minutes long and I captured a lot of information regarding the topic.
- ★ What stood out for me the most was that this particular participant expressed great knowledge on the topic of collaboration and he also made reference to a lot of practical examples that I found very useful.

## Appendix H: Ethical clearance from the research Committee



### FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

### RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

25 July 2018

<b>ETHICAL CLEARANCE NUMBER</b>	<b>REC-02-0062-2018</b>
<b>REVIEW OUTCOME</b>	Approved with Recommendations
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Fabian, AK
<b>TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT</b>	The Use of Facebook to Co-Create Brand Stories for a Business-to-Business Market Among SMEs in Namibia
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Strategic Communication
<b>SUPERVISOR/S</b>	Dr M. Pritchard

Dear Fabian,

The Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee has scrutinised your research proposal and would like to confirm that complies with the approved ethical standards of the Faculty of Humanities; University of Johannesburg. We have made some recommendations, set out below, for consideration in consultation with your supervisors.

- The research aim and the research questions are not in sync. Thus, the following questions become irrelevant: How do SMEs use fb to co-create brand stories in Namibia?; What are the elements of SMEs' brand stories that are co-created in Namibia's B2B market on Facebook?; There is need to reconcile the research aim & the research questions.
- Many languages are spoken in Namibia. The researcher needs to make clear which language they are going to use to conduct the research and why?
- In the information sheet, it is indicated that the responses by participants will be kept confidential but there is no indication how?
- What if someone agrees to be interviewed but does not want to be audio-recorded? Would you take in such a person? If so, make provision for such in your consent form.
- Why give a person a consent form to keep if the person is not participating in the research? Remove the statement. Maybe allow them to keep the information sheet not the consent form.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace Khunou', is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

**Prof Grace Khunou**  
Chair: Faculty of Humanities REC  
Tel: 011 559 3346  
Email: [gracek@uj.ac.za](mailto:gracek@uj.ac.za)



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

## Appendix I: Cronbach Alpha reliability test results

Data analysis

Determine the KMO measure of sampling adequacy.

**Table 5.5: KMO and Bartlett's Test results of 30-point scale on types of stories do you think are the most effective for a Namibian SME to tell on Facebook**

### KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.792
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1545.938
	df	435
	Sig.	.000

**Table 5.6: KMO and Bartlett's Test results of 7-point scale on Facebook features available to businesses such as SME's to optimise storytelling**

### KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.668
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	272.811
	df	21
	Sig.	.000

**Table 5.7: KMO and Bartlett's Test results of 9-point scale on the type of business to business marketing collaborations SMEs may use on Facebook**

### KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.676
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	335.300
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

**Table 5.8: Scale on types of stories do you think are the most effective for a Namibian SME to tell on Facebook**

## Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.803	.865	30

**Table 5.9: Scale on Facebook features available to businesses such as SME's to optimise storytelling**

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.715	.701	7

**Table 5.10: Scale on the type of business to business marketing collaborations SMEs may use on Facebook**

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.762	.760	9

#### Reliability Statistics

The first table you need to look at in your output is the **Reliability Statistics** table. This gives you your Cronbach's alpha coefficient. You are looking for a score of over .7 for high internal consistency. In this case,  $\alpha = .81$ , which shows the questionnaire is reliable.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.811	.812	8