

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY STUDIES



TOPIC

**The Effectiveness Of Social Media In The Present Day Policing In Zimbabwe: A Case Of
Zrp (Cid Law And Order Division, Mutare).**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRE-
MENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (HONOURS) DE-
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APPROVAL FORM

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RELEASE FORM

I, Miriam Chipendo, affirm that this dissertation titled "The Effectiveness of Social Media in Current Policing in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of ZRP (CID Law and Order Division, Mutare)" is my own original work and has not been submitted for any other academic purposes. I allow this dissertation to be accessible to the public

Signed

Date : 01 June 2025

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout my academic journey. Their belief in my potential has been a constant source of motivation.

ABSTRACT

In an increasingly digital world, law enforcement agencies are exploring the potential of social media to enhance their policing strategies. This study examined the effectiveness of social media in policing, using a case study of the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Mutare. It investigates the potential of social media platforms to enhance community engagement, streamline communication, and improve crime reporting within the CID Law and Order Division. A mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data from CID officers and community members gathered through interviews, surveys, and focus groups, was used. The sample for the study was 60 individuals inclusive of Constables, Sergeants and Assistant Inspectors at Mutare Urban Police Station. The findings suggest that while social media offers significant opportunities for improved communication and enhanced community trust, its full implementation is challenged by resource constraints, historical issues affecting public trust in law enforcement, and gaps in police training. The study concludes that the establishment of a dedicated social media unit, comprehensive officer training, public awareness campaigns, and strong community partnerships are critical to leverage social media for advancing policing strategies, improving community relations, and empowering citizens to actively participate in promoting safety and security within their communities. This research contributes to the development of more effective policing frameworks in the digital age.

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ABBREVIATIONS

COPS - Community Oriented Policing Services

CID – Criminal investigations department

CRLO - Community Relations Liaison Officer

IACP – International Association of Chiefs of Police

OIC – Officer in Charge

TPS – Toronto Police Service

ZRP- Zimbabwe Republic Police

NWC/G – Neighbourhood Watch Committee/Group

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter offered an overview of the role of social media in contemporary policing in Zimbabwe through a case study of CID law and order in Mutare, examining the study's background and highlighting the problem statement. This chapter addressed research objectives, questions, the study's significance, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and definitions of terms.

1.1 Background of the study

The 21st century has experienced a significant change in technology, with social media becoming one of the most important advancements. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram have become prevalent, influencing numerous facets of everyday life worldwide (Melekian & Wexler, 2013). These platforms have transformed how individuals communicate, exchange information, and interact with each other, significantly affecting numerous sectors, including law enforcement. Melekian and Wexler (2013) state that social media constitutes 22 percent of internet usage time, boasts around 955 million monthly active users globally, and even attracts individuals aged 65 and above, who are typically not regarded as primary users of modern technology. They also suggest that one out of four individuals is currently engaged on a social media platform. The swift growth of social media offers police services both chances and difficulties in their pursuit of public safety and in tackling criminal behavior. With the emergence of these new communication platforms becoming essential to the everyday lives of individuals across various ages and backgrounds, the police are compelled to update their methods and utilize social media to improve their policing strategies (Wagley, 2014).

Melekian and Wexler (2013) state that police agencies like the New York Police Department have started to investigate utilizing social media for tactical reasons, including collecting intelligence on threats of mob violence, riots, or specific criminal acts. The Toronto Police Service is among the earliest and most progressive law enforcement agencies to explore social media. Scoles-Fogg (2012) state that presently, more than 200 members of the Toronto Police Service have been trained in utilizing social media for modern policing and are permitted to use it to communicate with clients and informants for the department. Scoles-Fogg

supra also notes that constable Scott Mills from the Toronto Police Service's Public Information Unit was among the first officers to highlight social media to his superiors in 2007, believing that the Toronto Police Service was “missing the boat” regarding social media. In order to meet its constitutional obligations as stated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013, section 219 (1), the ZRP has implemented various initiatives in crime investigations to identify criminal activities and apprehend offenders.

One such initiative is the community policing strategy that promotes collaboration between the police and the public. Community policing utilizes informants, neighborhood watch committee members, and suggestion boxes, along with other diverse approaches, to gather information from the public. Suggestion boxes are containers located in accessible areas where the public can provide any information that may be important for the police to enhance their effectiveness in law enforcement. Nonetheless, owing to technological progress, individuals are now reluctant to utilize these boxes. Consequently, in 2012, the Bindura Urban Police District recommended the incorporation of social media as a supplementary alternative to traditional policing methods. It obtained several mobile phone devices preloaded with applications such as Whatsapp, Email, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, and set up office Wifi networks to facilitate communication, thereby simplifying area surveillance. The figures and various social media sites were made available to the public through television, radio, and newspapers, enabling citizens to share them when communicating with the police. An official launch ceremony took place in the Mutare Urban Policing area, and posters were displayed throughout the area to inspire the public to utilize these platforms for communicating information to the police. (The Outpost, April 2012).

At first, the Mutare Urban Police District's engagement with social media yielded encouraging outcomes, featuring greater public involvement and enhanced rates of crime detection and prevention. In recent years, public involvement via these social media platforms has decreased, resulting in increased crime rates and a failure to achieve crime prevention and detection goals (ZRP Mutare Central Tip-off Register, 2021-2022). The Law and Order division of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Mutare, Zimbabwe, is one unit that has been investigating the application of social media in its daily tasks. The CID Law and Order division handles the investigation and resolution of various criminal offenses, such as violent crimes, property crimes, and public order matters. In this regard, leveraging social media can enhance the division's capacity to collect intelligence, share information, and promote collaboration with the community (Chinengundu & Makasi, 2018).

Social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become omnipresent in contemporary communication. These platforms can enable real-time information exchange, foster community involvement, and serve as a significant source of intelligence for law enforcement agencies (Reuter & Spielkamp, 2017). Utilizing social media, the CID Law and Order division in Mutare could improve its crime prevention strategies, aid in reporting criminal activities, and collect important evidence to assist with investigative procedures (Guzha & Chimwaza, 2019).

Nonetheless, the successful use of social media by the CID Law and Order division comes with its difficulties. Worries about privacy, data protection, and the credibility of information exchanged on social media can create considerable obstacles to the effective execution of policing strategies that rely on social media (Rosenbaum, 2017). Moreover, the division might encounter internal organizational issues like resistance to change, insufficient training, and resource constraints, which could obstruct the smooth incorporation of social media into their law enforcement methods (Mangena, 2013).

This research intends to explore the impact of social media on the current policing practices of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) Law and Order division in Mutare, Zimbabwe. The study will offer important insights to guide the creation of more efficient and community-focused policing strategies in Zimbabwe by analysing the current practices of the division, recognizing the challenges, and investigating the possible advantages of incorporating social media.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Notwithstanding the effective utilization of social media by the CID Law and Order division in Mutare, concerns regarding privacy, data security, and the authenticity of information shared on social media platforms can pose significant barriers to the successful implementation of these strategies. The decline in crime tip-offs received is a cause for concern since the ZRP had earlier on established a good partnership with the public and tip offs were received through suggestion boxes. If the problem is not addressed the effort will go to waste and will negatively affect the relationship between the police and the public. Social media in Zimbabwe has at times resulted in rampant loss of property and life. For example, during the August 1 of 2018 incident, social media was abused to pre-announce election results erroneously in the favour of MDC-Alliance, culminating chaos in the country. Is the use of social media in crime policing an effective policing strategy or a mere rhetoric? As a relatively new philosophy, having been introduced in the ZRP in the year 2012, it is necessary to know whether the concept can effectively deal with crime problems or not. It is therefore the objective of this study to establish the effectiveness of social media as a community policing initiative in policing crime.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify forms of social media platforms that are being utilised by Mutare CID law and order.
2. To determine the effectiveness of social media on policing in Mutare Urban policing area.
3. To suggest strategies that can be put in place by the ZRP Mutare Urban command to encourage the adoption and use of social media as a policing initiative.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the pre-determined objectives, the study seeks to find solutions to the following research questions:-

1. Which social media platforms are being utilised by Mutare CID law and order?
2. How effective are the social media platforms on policing in Mutare Urban policing area?
3. What strategies can be put in place by the ZRP Mutare Urban command to encourage the adoption and use of social media as a policing initiative?

Significance of the Study

The study has been and will be of importance to various parties in varying ways as highlighted below;

To the researcher

This study has enriched the researcher with knowledge about the relationship between social media and policing. The researcher who is a police detective stationed at Mutare Urban District gained the requisite skills in curbing the scourge.

To the academic world

In Zimbabwe, the area of social media in policing is under researched. This research will contribute to the literature currently in place on the research topic as well as open research gaps for further study. It will also add to Bindura University library material and will be used as referral material by future students.

To the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)

The Zimbabwe Republic Police will gain an insight into the effectiveness of social media in policing which is an important basis for community policing. Besides, the Zimbabwe Republic Police can implement recommendations in this research to improve its partnership with the public. This will help create an effective

modern way of communication between the police and the public and ZRP will be in line with current technological trends.

To the public

If the public become aware of the social media platform and use it effectively, a reduction in crime will be realised in the society. There will be increased flow of information from the community to the police and vice versa.

To Bindura University of Science Education

The study will be referral material to students studying subjects such as criminology and principles and methods of investigations and will also stimulate further research on the impact of technology on policing thereby increasing the body of knowledge on media and the police.

To the government or the state

The strengthening of the criminal justice system is every sovereign state's ultimate goal due to the fundamental benefits set to be derived from such as protection of internal security, political stability and economic stability. Therefore, the strategies posited from this study are significant to the state security policy makers as they help in fighting crimes and arresting perpetrators.

Assumptions

The research is based on the following assumptions:

- ❖ It was assumed that the sample taken was a true representative of the population under study.
- ❖ It was also assumed that the selected individuals responded within a reasonable time to enable the researcher to conclude the research timely.
- ❖ The ZRP is fully utilizing social media platform for policing activities.

Delimitations

This study on the effectiveness of social media in present-day policing in Zimbabwe will be delimited as follows:

Geographical Delimitation

The study will be conducted within the Mutare region, focusing specifically on the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) Law and Order division. Mutare was selected as the geographical area of focus due to the

division's active exploration of social media integration into its policing strategies. The findings and recommendations of this study will be primarily applicable to the Mutare region and may require further adaptation and contextual considerations before being applied to other regions in Zimbabwe.

Conceptual Delimitation

The study will focus on investigating the effectiveness of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, in enhancing the policing efforts of the CID Law and Order division in Mutare. While other technological innovations may be relevant to policing, the research will be delimited to these specific social media platforms, as they have been identified as the primary tools used by the division in its efforts to engage with the community and improve crime prevention, detection, and investigation.

Organizational Delimitation

The study will be confined to the CID Law and Order division within the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in Mutare. The research will not examine the broader organizational structure or strategies of the ZRP, but rather concentrate on the specific challenges, opportunities, and outcomes related to the utilization of social media by the CID Law and Order division.

Time Delimitation

The study will cover the period from 2015 to the present day. This timeframe has been selected to capture the recent trends and changes in the effectiveness of social media integration within the CID Law and Order division's policing efforts, particularly in light of the observed decline in public engagement through these platforms since 2015.

Limitations

A number of constraints were encountered during the course of the study. These include the following;

Resource constraints

These can be explained in terms of costs for stationery and feeding. The researcher needed money to print questionnaires which was very costly. To overcome this, the researcher had budgeted for these costs prior to the commencement of the study. The researcher also relied upon a personal laptop for typing and would finance the printing services from his pocket.

Organisational concerns

Since the operations of Police attract much attention from the media, civil groups nationally, regionally and internationally, the organisation did not easily give access to records. The research was required to first seek approval from the Police General Headquarters which he successfully got. The researcher also overcame this problem by giving a clear account of purpose that this research was purely for academic purposes after being accorded access.

Definition of key terms

Social media: According to Chander (2014) social media describes a variety of web-based applications and mobile platforms through which users can create and share digital content. The digital contents may include texts, pictures, audios, videos, just to mention a few. Social media can also be defined as an internet-based resources category that integrates user-generated content and user participation.

Policing-According to the Oxford Dictionary of English 2014 edition, means keeping a place or people in order by means of a police or a similar body or keep in order, to administer or to control.

Community Policing - is a philosophy that promotes a new partnership between the people and their police. It is based on the premise that the police and the community must work together as equal partners to identify and solve contemporary problems such as crime with the goal of improving the overall quality of life in the area. (Trojonowicz andBucqueroux,1994)

Organisation of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter and it presents the problem and its setting. Chapter 2 deals with the literature review, that is, the main conceptual and theoretical views on effectiveness of social media in policing as well as empirical evidence. Chapter 3 deals with the research methodology. It focuses on research design, sampling procedures, data collection methods and analysis procedures. Chapter 4 includes data presentation, analysis and discussion. Finally, chapter 5 summarises the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Summary

This chapter looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, assumptions, and significance of the study. Apart from that, delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms were also discussed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed relevant literature from authors whose work is linked to the topic under study. This was guided by set objectives to critically review the literature and empirical studies of other experts and authorities so as to get direction as well as identifying the knowledge gap.

2.1 Definition and Purpose of Literature Review

According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), “literature review is the process of locating, analysing and synthesising the published research articles and opinion papers pertaining to a particular subject so as to discover their relationship with the current study”. The process involves explanation, analysis and critical discussion of studies that have been conducted so as to discover their relationship with the current study. The purpose of literature review was to increase knowledge of related information on the topic under study. The literature review aided in refining the research problem and avoiding duplication. It further helped the researcher to establish research gap (Cooper and Schindler, 2005).

2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 What is social media?

Nations (2014) in an effort to define social media, breaks it down and says, media is an instrument on communication like a newspaper or radio and social media is a social instrument of communication like facebook or twitter. Nations supra, further alludes that it is a website that does not just give you information, but interacts with you while giving you that information. This interaction can be as simple as asking for your comments or responding to a report. Regular media is a one way-street where you can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but you have very limited ability to give your thoughts on the matter. Social media on the other hand, is a two way street that gives one the ability to communicate too.

Littlejohn and Foss (2011) described social media as the “second media age” that marks a new era where interactive technologies and network communications, especially the internet, would change society. The emergence of personal computers and mobile phones is a significant factor in the transition from traditional media to social media. Poster (1995) agrees with the previous claims by stating that the second media age (social media) is characterized as decentralized, interactive, outside state influence, democratizing, enhancing personal awareness, and focused on the individual. It employs the social interaction method.

Levy (1997) views the World Wide Web (www) as an accessible, adaptable, and evolving information space that enables individuals to cultivate a fresh perspective on knowledge, leading to a more engaging, community-oriented, democratic realm of collective sharing and empowerment. Social media offers online gathering spaces that broaden social networks, generate new opportunities for learning, and facilitate the exchange of viewpoints globally. Scholes-Fogg (2012) examines the particular categories of social media as outlined below:

2.2.2 Forms of social media

Twitter

Twitter ranks among the globe's most well-liked social networking platforms, boasting over 500 million users; it enables individuals to share brief messages limited to 140 characters. Users have the option to 'follow' specific individuals or organizations to receive these messages. Twitter provides a fast method for the force to share messages directly with the public and keep them informed with relevant updates. As per Scholes-Fogg (2012), more than 600 law enforcement officers and local policing teams possess individual Twitter accounts. Currently, 22 million individuals in the UK utilize Twitter, and this figure is expected to grow swiftly as an increasing number of people turn to social media for faster and more affordable communication.

Facebook

Facebook is the world's most used and most popular social networking website with over one billion users worldwide. Facebook allows users to post pictures, messages and interact with businesses and

other users. The majority of police forces within the UK currently have a Facebook page whereby the police can post updates about cases, appeal for information and hold question and answer sessions with the public (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). He further explains that, if a Facebook user 'likes' the police page then news that is posted onto the police Facebook page will be shown in the news feed of the user. Whilst there is one main force Facebook page there are some police forces that have separate Facebook pages for each of their boroughs such as GMP who have separate pages for Bolton, Salford and Royton forces need to ensure that information they post on the Facebook page is interesting and engaging. Rather than simply appealing for information use it as a tool to interact and ask those who 'like' the page for their thoughts and ideas. Post pictures of behind the scenes at the police station and run competitions.

Whatsapp

This is a Smartphone application which is used to connect people from various areas across the globe. It is a modern and fast way of passing of information between people. The police and the public share crime related information. Its role is not fixed to receiving tip offs only but ranges from crime prevention tips to the public and traffic awareness to crime chats and blogs. The Surrey Police were the first police force based in the United Kingdom to use the mobile phone app and they have led the way in using social media within an app to interact with the community. The app consists of; an option to view monthly crime (NPIA Crime Data) including a break down into different categories such as ASB, an option to report crime online or to contact the police at the touch of a button, the option to connect with the police on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The app also allows the user to view news from the local community or from the entire police force.

The Surrey police app has been downloaded around 15,000 times and has interest from the fire service and police forces both inside and outside the UK. The app went from idea to first iteration in just 4 months and it is available free to the public on apple and android and is automatically updated via the app stores. The app was developed by Multizone (www.multizone.co.uk) which is based in Surrey. In terms of how much of the budget was allocated to creating and developing this police app, Surrey started with £20,000 for creating the app and this included purchasing 500 Smartphone. They also allocated £5,000 to training their neighborhood teams on how to use the software and how to ensure that the information they Tweet is within force guidelines (Scholes-Fogg, 2012).

YouTube

YouTube is the world's leading video sharing website which was established in 2005. YouTube enables the police to post videos which can be viewed by the public, this means that the police force can directly post videos and footage to help them solve crimes, appeal for public information or to give the public a behind the scenes insight into the police service. All forces in the United Kingdom use YouTube to post a video appeal to appeal for information and unlike Twitter there is only one force YouTube account rather than individual accounts for each Neighbourhood Policing Team (Schole-Fogg, 2012).

Crime Maps

Street-level crime maps were set up by the Home Office in 2011. The Police UK website gives people access to a crime map which allows the viewer to see crime street by street. The street level crime map means for the first time the public can see exactly what category of crime is being committed in their neighborhood. In addition to showing the crime figures for the previous month the website allows the viewer to pull up details of their police force including how to keep updated with the work they do via social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The website gives information about who their local beat officers are, what the priorities are in their area and details of the next community meeting. Police.uk is a fantastic website which enables the viewer to see what sort of crime is being committed in the community where they live. The website also allows the viewer to compare a particular category of crime such as burglary to previous years which enables the reader to see clearly whether crime has risen or fallen (Schole-Fogg, 2012).

2.2.3 Threats posed by social media.

Viral content

Certain social media platforms have the capacity for content shared there to go viral across social networks. The phrase is a comparison to the idea of viral diseases that can quickly transmit from one individual to another. In the realm of social media, content or websites labeled as "viral" are those that have a higher probability of users redistributing content originally posted by others within their social networks, resulting in additional sharing (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). In certain instances, posts featuring trending content or breaking news have been quickly shared and reshared by a large volume of users. Numerous social media platforms offer unique features to assist users in resharing content, like Twitter's retweet feature, Pinterest's pinning tool, Facebook's sharing option, or Tumblr's reblogging capability. Companies are especially focused on viral marketing strategies since a viral campaign can reach extensive advertising exposure (especially if the

viral sharing catches the media's attention) at a significantly lower cost than a conventional marketing campaign, which generally relies on printed formats such as newspapers, magazines, direct mail, and billboards, as well as television and radio ads. Non-profit organizations and activists often share the goal of posting content on social media platforms to make it go viral. A widely used element and characteristic of Twitter is retweeting (Wagley, 2014). Twitter enables individuals to stay informed about significant events, maintain connections with others, and engage in diverse ways across social media platforms. When specific posts gain popularity, they begin to be shared repeatedly, causing them to go viral. Hashtags can appear in tweets and can also track the number of users who have employed that hashtag.

Circulation of hate speech

In recent years, there has been an increase in calls globally for greater regulation of social media platforms, including in Europe. In this respect, the way in which social media companies address 'hate speech' on their platforms is a particularly burning issue for governments, policy makers, regulatory bodies, self-regulatory institutions, media, civil society and, the public at large, (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). 'Hate speech' is an emotive concept which has no universally accepted definition in international human rights law. Many would claim they can identify it where they see it, however its characteristics are often elusive or contradictory. Analysis has shown that making a decision as to whether a specific message can be identified as 'unlawful hate speech' and, as such, should or could legitimately be prohibited, is a fairly complex task. It requires an analysis of all the circumstances of a given instance of 'hate speech', which, in turn, demands a deeper understanding of the local and regional context in its political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, as well as a strong knowledge of international human rights standards and relevant case-law.

The on-going legal and policy debates related to content moderation by social media companies on their platforms are hindered by the difficulty in appropriately classifying the role played by these companies in the modern media landscape. While it is clear that tech giants have a genuine capacity to influence public debates online, identifying the actual impact they have on their audiences or determining an appropriate response to their perceived power remains a complex undertaking. Existing institutions and legal and regulatory frameworks have been elaborated to deal with traditional media actors, and, as such, their application to new actors is at the very least uneasy (Wagley, 2014). At the same time, in a number of countries the regime of limited liability, which has allowed Internet intermediaries (including social media platforms) to act as efficient enablers of freedom of expression, has been put under increasing pressure. These debates are nonetheless of vital importance to democratic societies. It is also important to ensure that any measures

related to content regulation on social media platforms, including of ‘hate speech’, are fully compatible with international freedom of expression standards.

Promotion of child pornography

Social media platforms have become an important tool of today's culture and have helped define the 21st youth generations (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). In spite of the promise of enhanced socialization, communication, and education, however, many adolescents' lived experience of social media use has been negative on balance. From lowering self-esteem to creating new social norms that encourage increasingly risky behaviour, SNS use jeopardizes the sexual and social wellness of adolescents. Thus social media promotes distribution of pornography material which facilitates child pornography in the society. Police and civilian agencies responsible for investigating the spread of child pornography say they are overwhelmed by the flood of images and videos hitting the internet even through everyday sites like Facebook, Twitter and Flickr (Wagley, 2014).

Circulation of fake news

False bulletin (Fake news) is a politicized and controversial term, used both to criticize mainstream media and to refer to problematic content online. Websites containing deceptions and misrepresentative information pop up across the Internet and are often shared on social media to escalate their reach by both human users and artificial bots, deliberately or unintentionally spreading falsehoods (Wagley, 2014). In this case, we talked about critical consumption, and how we can make good choices about what we give our attention to, about where and how we seek out expertise and perspective, about how we process what we read and view.

Facilitation of violent protests

It is often claimed that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are profoundly shaping political participation, especially when it comes to protest behaviour. Whether or not this is the case, the scrutiny of “Big Data” produced by social media usage offers unprecedented opportunities to observe complex, dynamic effects associated with large-scale combined action and social activities. In earlier researches, the researcher can encapsulate evidence from studies of protest activities in the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine demonstrating that: to start with, Social media platforms enable the exchange of information that is vital to the coordination of protest activities, such as news about transportation, turnout, police pres-

ence, violence, medical services, and legal support; additionally, social media platforms facilitate the exchange of emotional and motivational contents in support of and opposition to demonstrate, including messages emphasizing anger, social identification, group efficacy, and concerns about impartiality, justice, and dispossession as well as explicitly ideological subjects; and characteristics of online social networks, which may vary as a function of political ideology, have significant impact for information exposure and the success or failure of organizational efforts (Wagley, 2014).

2.2.4 Role of social media in crime prevention.

The most operational law enforcement agencies recognize and prioritise partnerships with their stakeholders to prevent crime (International Association of Chiefs of Police [IACP], 2012). Citizens who are engaged and empowered to be responsible for their societies are valuable assets to the work of any police department. As the popularity of social media rises, these tools provide opportunities for law enforcement agencies to proactively reach out and connect with citizens and promote crime prevention in their communities. The IACP came up with the followings ways in which the police can make use of social media for crime prevention.

2.2.4.1 Posting crime prevention Tips-Offs.

Department websites and social media pages provide excellent platforms for posting crime prevention tips. These tips can emphasize and reinforce crime prevention activities taking place in a particular month (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). For instance, bicycle safety can be emphasized in August as part of back-to-school activities. Home safety and security tips can be introduced in June as part of summer vacation and travel planning. Identity theft awareness and prevention propositions can be brought forward in April as citizens are preparing tax returns. More so, theft consciousness messages can be passed to farmers during the tobacco auction season in Harare or morning traffic updates can be done through the face-book or twitter from the police websites.

2.2.4.2 Supporting neighbourhood watch groups.

The sustained participation of the local law enforcement agency in crime watch activities is critical. Social media can be utilised to link the work of a neighbourhood watch group to the department's major concern and sustain the relationship IACP (2012). For example, neighbourhood watch committee meeting messages can be posted or linked to a department's Facebook page. A law enforcement agency can feature the "Neighbourhood Watch Committee of the Month" and highlight the work and endeavours of the community group. This type of appreciation will foster support for crime prevention and benevolence in the community. Most importantly, social media can be used to effectively disseminate information to many neighbourhood watch

groups without any delays. Furthermore, it is easy to harmonize the activities of the N.W.C for example calling them for particular tasks at the station.

2.2.4.3 Promoting Crime Prevention Events.

The departments can make use all of their social media tools to organize and prioritise crime prevention activities and events (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). Examples of such activities include crime awareness campaigns during the festive season, Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) and stock theft campaigns. Instead of police officers visiting schools and the community, they can do so in the comfort of their offices by simply propagating the campaign message through say face-book or twitter. Even those committed to attend the campaigns will simply get the message whilst doing their business, thereby maintaining the current Presidential Mantra of “Leaving no one behind.”

2.2.4.4 Developing a Crime Prevention Blog.

A blog that focuses on crime prevention unlocks the opportunity for communities to respond to and discuss information posted by a department (Scholes-Fogg, 2012). Because blogs can be interactive, they encourage dialogue with a department and provide important community feedback. A crime prevention blog can help connect law enforcement officials to the public and improve accessibility. It also enables the police executive to get first-hand information from the public IACP (2012). For example, complaints against police are communicated directly to the police command without being watered down.

2.2.4.5 Hosting a crime prevention chat-boats and web chats.

Hosting chat-boats or websites that are able to chat with the chief or the public information officer allows the department to interface with many citizens regarding ways that they can keep themselves and their communities safe. Because chat-boats and web chats are interactive, they allow citizens to post enquiries and responses to crime prevention information IACP (2012). In the ZRP, this can be done through the Public Relations Office whereby the Chief Staff Officer Press can create a web chat to communicate with stakeholders where information on crime prevention can be obtained.

2.2.4.6 Creating a crime prevention podcasts

A podcast is an audio presentation that can be posted to a website and downloaded for playing at the expediency of the listener. Though podcasts are not provide an interactive type of information communication, they are a way for a police department to create a warnings, announcements or appreciation messages that can be downloaded by anyone who is interested in learning more about crime prevention, (Scholes-Fogg, 2012).

Podcasts can be posted online along with crime prevention pamphlets or text and other useful police department information IACP (2012). This is more appropriate to those people who are always having busy schedules; they can download the information at their own time convenient to them. For example farmers and business people in Mutare Urban policing area may find this helpful considering that it is a farming area.

2.3.0 Theoretical frame work

Criminological and sociological theories were adopted in trying to explain how people end up in criminal activities. This issue was of great interest to scholars and researchers. Listed below are some criminological theories which shed light on how people end up being criminals. Each of the under-listed theories is analysed and a nexus to the current study is attempted.

2.3.1 Routine active theory (basic crime triangle theory)

The routine activities theory stresses the idea that for criminals to commit a crime they would first balance the costs and benefits of committing such a crime. The theory ascribes to the idea that criminals are neither impulsive nor unpredictable for the reason that they balance the costs as well as benefits of committing a crime. In trying to develop a critical understanding of crime and routine activities, Cohen and Felson (1979) explains the relationship between crime trends in terms of the changing routine activities of everyday life.

Felson and Clarke (1998:25) postulate that, crime occur in particular locations and under specific conditions due to the union of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians against a violation. According to Degarmo (2011:585), self-interest is the major motivator for criminal offenders to commit crimes. Due to the presence of an unfulfilled self-interest and a suitable target, many individuals may be motivated to break the law. A suitable target may be in the form of valuable property or people from whom the perpetrator may gain positive rewards or pleasure by infringing their rights. The presence of a capable guardian, according to Cohen and Felson (1979:589), increases the cost of committing a criminal act and therefore reduces the attractiveness of the target. According to Hollis-Peel et al (2011:4), “guardianship is the physical or symbolic presence of an individual or group of individuals that acts either intentionally or unintentionally to deter a potential criminal event”. Routine activity theory ascribes to the notion that the society is awash with motivated offenders and that law enforcement should focus more on prevention and deterrence as provided for by the constitution rather than on the nature of criminality. The theory asserts that in order to reduce crime more efforts

should be directed towards the reduction of the attractiveness and accessibility of a target to the motivated offender through the constant availability of a capable guardian (Cohen and Felson, 1979).

In the context of this study, individuals who commit crimes aboard social media platforms can be categorically equated to the motivated offenders whilst the suitable target may be in the form of valuable property or vulnerable human beings who may be victims of social media use or abuse. A capable guardian can therefore be likened to the law enforcement agencies as well as other security measures that may render the commission of crimes through social media more costly to the offender. The lack of knowledge on the various social media crime prevention, detection and investigation tools that are available for use by the law enforcement agencies coupled with little or no clear government initiative against social media abuse renders the presence of the guardian ineffective.

According to Cohen and Felson (2007) it is also possible for a guardian to be present, but ineffective. If a guardian is merely present but incompetent due to a variety of reasons ranging from ignorance, physical incapability, attitude towards work just to mention a few, it is just the same as having no guardian at all since his presence will not pose any difficulties to the motivated offender. Factors such as poverty and unemployment on the backdrop of an ignorant population regarding the dangers of social media have also exposed young girls to human traffickers thereby making them suitable targets. Our guardians who are the law enforcers are either being rendered ineffective due to ignorance or corruption.

This theory has largely gained empirical support in the aspect victim's exposure to the offenders. It offers an understandable insight into the causes of crime. According to Dolu (2010), one of its major tenets is that in the absence of efficient and effective controls, criminals will prey upon attractive targets. This theory clearly explains the relationship between the three main attributes to the commission of crime which are the motivated offender, the suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian. However while routine activities theory provides valuable contributions to the study of space and crime, it has faced criticism on a number of grounds. While the theory assumes the presence of a motivated offender, it fails to acknowledge that motivation is not uniform across all offenders (Clarke and Cornish, 1985). Brunet (2002), argues that, the discouragement of a criminal act today does not mean it will not be committed by the same offender on another day. According to him goes, guardianship simply moves crime from one area to another area hence it serves as just a delaying technique.

2.3.2 The Space Transition Theory

The Space Transition Theory (STT) was propounded by Karuppannan Jaishankar in 2007 after discovering that most criminological theories do not adequately explain the phenomenon of cyber-crimes. The theory explained the causation of cyber-crimes, and also explains how persons bring out their conforming and non-conforming behaviour in the physical and in the cyber space. It explains the movement of people from one space to another, for example from physical to cyber space. The theory also argued that individuals behave differently when they move from one place to another.

The theory assumes that, persons who pull out from criminal behaviour have a tendency to commit more crimes in the cyber space of which they cannot commit in the physical space due to their societal status. The theory also postulates that identity suppleness, dissociative anonymity and lack of discouragement factor in the cyber space provide the offenders with the choice to continue commit offences in the cyber space. Offenders' criminal behaviour in the physical space is likely to be transferred to the cyber space and vice versa. The discontinuous course of action of offenders into the cyberspace and the dynamic spatio-temporal nature of cyberspace gives criminals a chance to escape. Also strangers are likely to unite in the cyberspace for the purpose of committing crimes in the physical space. People who unite in the physical space are likely to integrate their criminal mindsets in the cyberspace to commit crime. The conflict of norms and values of physical space with norms and values in the cyberspace may lead to the commission of crimes in the cyber space.

This researcher went beyond this theory and links it to the impact and challenges of social media on Policing in Zimbabwe. In view of the Zimbabwean's challenges of social media on policing, the law enforcement agencies are facing a plethora of challenges caused by social media. Despite its beneficial role, social media has of late been hijacked to further the interest of criminals especially for the purpose of denigrating the government and committing crimes against the state. The preparatory part of the politically motivated offences are done on cyber space that is on social media platforms like whatsapp groups where criminals premeditate and cover much ground on the offences that would then be committed on physical space. Needless to say criminals are buoyed by identity flexibility, dissociative anonymity and lack of deterrence factor in the cyber space which provides the offenders with the choice to commit offences in the cyber space. More-so, the discontinuous course of action of offenders into the cyberspace and the dynamic spatio-temporal nature of cyber space gives criminals a chance to escape. In Zimbabwe ever-since the social media platforms became ubiquitous part of citizens' daily lives it created a fertile breeding ground for computer and cyber related crimes and as such criminals migrated from committing offences in physical space to cyber space.

Most importantly, the absence of social media Policy creates opportunities for abuse of the social media platforms. The platforms are being used as a conduit for ideological radicalisation, fermenting civil unrest, instigating acts of violence, sabotage and the general instability mostly by social movements. For example during the demonstrations organised by social movements groups like #Tajamuka property worth thousands of dollars were looted and destroyed, (Chikanda 2015)

2.3.3 The social learning theory

As introduced by Akers (1991) this theory assumes that criminal behaviour is more likely to result when an individual associates with criminal offenders. By knowing the origin of how people engage in criminal activities, preventive strategies might be easily formulated to reduce the crime rate. In general, the theory suggests that crime is learnt through social interaction. A person associating with individuals who have deviant or unlawful behaviour is likely to end up being of deviant behaviour also. The problem with social media is that it allows users to communicate with strangers, having access to all sorts of information, either good or bad. The researcher is of the opinion that young people who are highly using social media are at high risk of learning criminal and deviant behaviour.

It was the intent of the researcher to link the theory to the Zimbabwean context. There is a litany of cases where law abiding citizens end up committing crimes through associating with individuals of deviant behaviour. In January (2019) in Zimbabwe a group of youths who sell second hand cell-phones and stolen phones at Ximex mall mobilised themselves through the social media platforms like the whatsapp and attacked MDC supporters at Harvest House accusing them of harassing them and stealing their wares. Some of the youths who participated in the act were innocent but because they associated with individuals of deviant behaviour they ended up committing crimes. Some of them ended up stealing because they are taught how to dispose stolen items like cell-phones as was reported by Kudzai Chawafambira in the Newsday. Of late Zimbabwe has been hard hit by human trafficking syndicates. The much heralded Kuwait saga is a typical example of how crime of human trafficking was premeditated through the social media. The syndicates established a contact person in Zimbabwe who recruited unsuspecting job seekers and traffic them to Middle East countries. This was done through association.

2.3.4 The deterrence theory

Beccaria came up with the deterrent theory in 1764. The assumptions of the theory were that punishment can deter people from committing offences. If people are not punished after committing offences then they will continue with their criminal activities. He further stated that, for it to be effective the punishment should be instantaneous so that the offender links the behaviour of crimes with the response of punishment in his mind. The punishment must also be certain, offenders should know that if a crime is committed then negative consequences will occur. The punishment must be proportional to the crime so that it outweighs the positive benefits individual expects from committing that crime. He assumed that criminals have the ability to make a rational choice to either follow the law, or to violate it. A system of punishments is necessary to deter individuals from committing crime. Committing criminal acts brings a certain amount of pleasure to the individual. To counteract this pleasure, punishments must be provided that carry with them enough pain to outweigh the pleasure received by committing a deviant or criminal act.

In general, taking Zimbabwe as an example, the crimes committed through the utilisation of social media is on the increase. This is because those crimes are difficult to obtain evidence. Even though section (98 of the Post and Telecommunication Act of 2000), allows the government to intercept suspicious communications on any network, however, section 57 (d) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Act 2013 provides that every person has a right to privacy, which includes the right not to have the privacy of their communication infringed or their possession seized. Since any law which is inconsistent with the constitution is invalid to the extent of its inconsistency. It is against that backdrop that section 98 of the Post and Telecommunications may not hold water. Therefore, it is difficult for police officers to get information from the service providers like Econet Wireless, Telecel Zimbabwe and Net One. These service providers will be protecting their customers from arrest and also protecting their business. This means most of the offenders will go unpunished. The other problem is that in Zimbabwe there is no social media policy as yet and most of the original data servers are located and governed in the United States of America beyond the reach of Zimbabwean Police. Moreover, most people will not commit criminal acts because they believe it is wrong to do so thus the theory does not work in such instances. Deterrence theory won't apply in other social groups because they follow the norms of society thus their beliefs won't allow them to participate in deviant activities.

2.4.0 Empirical Evidence

According to a study by Altunbas et al (2013) in Dallas Fort Worth in United States of America in 2013 on why police departments using social media, manage their media tools and how do they cope with the problems and challenges they experience as they use social media. The study revealed that world over police departments using social media is facing a coterie of challenges and problems. The study adopted a qualitative approach. As alluded by Altunbas (supra) all police departments using social media faced a number of challenges and barriers. These include inappropriate comments by the followers since the Police did not have control over it. The social media sites needed 24/7 monitoring, the problem with the issue of monitoring is that most police organisations do not have enough manpower to monitor the information send on social media and the information is difficult to monitor due to its large volumes. It was the intention of the researcher to analyse the study in view of the exigencies of Mutare Urban Police and establish if the challenges faced by police departments' world over are pertinent to Zimbabwe' Mutare Urban Police.

Their research findings showed that postings about the case by police officers or citizens may damage an on-going investigation so officers should be careful when using social media tools. Implementing an effective social media policy is an essential step for police agencies considering adding social media tools to their departments. It is a prerequisite for both officer and citizens so that there will be responsible and effective use of the social media tools. Most police departments have locally designed social media policies. Social media policy provides a defence for both departments and officers.

Waters' (2012) conducted a research titled an investigation on the potential risks of using social media by police and the community and the research was carried out in California in the United States of America. The research findings revealed that the nature of social media and law enforcement make their relationship volatile. He threw more light on the volatility of relationship between law enforcement agencies and the nature of social media. He further highlighted that there is a potential for police to be affected by attacks on their credibility. It is easier to attack a police officer's character through social media of which personal credibility is essential for police officers. It was the intention of the researcher to establish if the foregoing is pertinent to Zimbabwe. The study helped the researcher to answer the first objective as it provided the challenges of social media on policing. It also proffered solutions to the problems posed by social media on policing thus being related to the current study.

Muktesh Chander from the Indian Institute of Technology carried out a research in 2014. He examined the implication of social media revolution for law enforcement agencies in India and further discussed

the strategy to deal with the challenges it poses. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats (SWOT) analysis were also discussed. He used a qualitative technique. The findings of the study were that criminals have not been left behind in realising the potentials of this powerful media. Cyber is a digital beat, which now needs to be patrolled by police just like a real and physical beat. According to the research, numerous legal and illegal activities are taking place in the cyber beat. Social media is used by criminals to sell illegal imports like dangerous drugs. The findings by Muktesh Chander are in tandem with what was alluded to in Space Transition Theory by Karuppannan Jaishankar (2007) that Offenders' criminal behaviour in the physical space is likely to be transferred to the cyber space and vice versa hence the need for monitoring of the cyber space. This phenomenon has led the researcher to establish if the foregoing is pertinent to Zimbabwe. However, it must be noted that Zimbabwe is not immune to the cyber activism such as the uploading of sensitive information over social media which encouraged the political and social unrest thereby impacting negatively on the policing initiatives.

However, it is folly to focus only on the challenges and problems caused by social media on policing. It is worth noting that social media also provides several opportunities to law enforcement agencies (Miller & Hess, 2017). If used judiciously, it can be used to harness the power of information technology. Police can use social media to instantaneously connect with members of the community, updating police activities, issuing press releases, and providing traffic alerts concerning congestion among other issues of importance (Carter & Schneider, 2018). Social media can also be useful in the identification of criminals, their activities, and locations (Holt, 2015). In 2005, Virginia Police used social media to solve the Taylor Behl murder case by tracking her MySpace page (Baker, 2005). The above study is relevant to the current study as it addresses the first and third objectives of this current study. As alluded to, the world has been reduced to a global village (Castells, 2000). Technological advancements and networks have surrogated the old morphology of societies, becoming the perfect means of completing an assortment of both negative and positive purposes (Katz & Aakhus, 2002). The technological trajectory observed in the preceding millennium in all facets of human enterprise has abetted and created a seemingly enabling global environment for technology-based policing driven by robust communication with other players to thrive.

In light of the above phenomenon and realising the dire need for improved communication and the need to foster international police cooperation, International Criminal Police Organisation [INTERPOL] through Police global communication channel the I-24/7 [INTERPOL 24 hours a day seven days a week] is able to share information pertaining to wanted persons, stolen vehicles and stolen passport.

The I-24/7 dashboard is a distinctive gateway that provides access to INTERPOL databases and contains a wealthy, variegated repository information pertaining crime related issues. Members of the public can access the INTERPOL wanted person list on the website and it against that backdrop that should they encounter a wanted person on the INTERPOL list, they can easily communicate with the police on policing initiatives like the whatsapp platforms which were introduced by the Police as investigative aid in policing.

In a study carried out by Silver Raynor and Retana (2015) in Nairobi, Kenya it was revealed that cybercrime is one of the major challenges hampering the effectiveness of police in fighting transnational crime. The main thrust of the study was to investigate the interrelatedness between increase in cybercrimes and the use social media. Silver et al (2015) highlighted that cybercrime is a global threat where criminals take advantage of internet anonymity, speed and convenience to commit crime. The above sentiments are buttressed by Karupppannan Jaishankar (2007)'s [Space transition theory]. In the study, he further highlighted that 38% of mobile users were falling prey to mobile cyber-crime and 600 millions civilians were victims of a solitary form of cyber-crime. It was the view of the researcher and the intention of the research to establish if the empirical studies cited above had attributed the increase of crime in ZRP Mutare Urban.

In another study by Rachel K Wisnefski in (2017) at Walden University, the drive of the study was to investigate and explore potential connections between social media and delinquent acts committed by juvenile offenders through police officers' perceptions of those types of acts. The study was based on a qualitative approach. The main findings were that 100% of the police officers who responded had first-hand experience of juveniles who commit offences through social media. They all believe that the deterrence theory was lacking in the present policies in order to effectively deter deviant behaviour by juveniles through the use of social media. The other perception was that positive social changes can be effectuated through creating or further implementing penalties at each level of public policy and ensuring sufficient educational program exist to inform juveniles of the possible ramifications of these acts. This could lead to decreased rates of juvenile delinquency and victimisation relative to the use of social media. The types of delinquency caused by social media on juveniles include cyber bullying, sexual harassment which may result in rape and flash robberies among others.

Hanson (2013) & Wisnefski Supra) reflected a new trend in the use of social media by adolescents to perpetrate delinquent acts known as flash robberies. Sometimes these youths have also used social media platforms to discuss the use of mutual disguise wear to prevent identification. The youths will

then organise themselves through social media platforms and rob a retail shop in a swift fashion such that the shop attendants are stunned and unable to control the large crowd. This same situation happened in Zimbabwe in August 2016 during a demonstration by the #TAG TAJAMUKAS who conspired on whatsapp, twitter and facebook to loot Choppies Supermarkets in Harare and the police officers could not contain the situation in time. Also some of the youth and juveniles end up being victims of rape, murder, kidnapping or human trafficking as a result of befriending strangers on social media, especially face-book.

Thomas Holt and Adam Bossler conducted a study in (2012). The main thrust of their study was to investigate police perceptions of computer crimes in two South-Eastern Cities basing on the view of Patrol Officers in America. The study took a qualitative approach. The main findings indicate that many patrol officers do not have strong opinions on several aspects of computer crimes. They perceive it to be a serious problem and consider some computer crimes to be as serious as traditional forms of crimes. In the Zimbabwean context, what poses the most problems on policing is that the cyber bill has not been passed into law. Therefore, there are no concrete laws and punishment to deter criminals from committing internet fraud. Wicknel Chivhayo, a Zimbabwean businessman has for several times been arraigned before the courts to answer charges of fraud but he has always been acquitted on technicalities. This shows that police is facing challenges with such types of crimes and all their efforts have failed indicating a knowledge gap between police officers and criminals. There is need for the government to put in place a social media policy and to pass a cyber-bill into law to govern the use of the internet and social media platforms. It is therefore the intention of this researcher to establish whether the above police perceptions apply to ZRP Mutare Urban.

2.5 Gap Analysis

At present, there is insufficient research in Zimbabwe on effective use of social media in crime management. The ZRP faces a number of challenges such as lack of communication equipment, unreliable telephone lines especially in remote areas and transport shortages. Suggestion boxes are no longer being used. These challenges can be alleviated by the effective use of social media were mobile network is available even in rural areas. Most of the empirical studies reviewed were carried out in developed countries such as the studies by Altunbas et al (2013), Waters' (2012) and (Holt and Bossler 2012) which was conducted in the United States of America and therefore their results cannot be generalised to Zimbabwe due to significant geo-economic development differences between the two countries. Also, Raynor and Retana (2015) conducted a study in

Nairobi, Kenya on the interrelatedness between increase in cybercrimes and the use of social media yet the current research is going to focus on the effectiveness of social media as a community policing initiative in policing crime and particularly in Bindura, in Zimbabwe not in Kenya, thus creating another gap.

Apart from the above, Muktesh Chander from the Indian Institute of Technology carried out a research in 2014 and examined the implication of social media revolution for law enforcement agencies in India and further discussed the strategy to deal with the challenges it poses, the study differs to the current study in the sense that firstly the study was carried out in India and the current study was carried out in Zimbabwe, secondly, the scope of the study in terms of the main focus of the study differs since the current study concentrated on the effectiveness of social media as a community policing initiative in policing crime and particularly in Mutare.

Those done locally focused on effectiveness of community policing initiative, other than social media. It is therefore against this backdrop that this study will help shed light on Zimbabwean police use of social media in its endeavour to cement police public partnership in crime policing. In the current state of affairs, policy makers are relying on remote information provided by researches conducted in foreign environments which may not apply to our local situation. Further, this study stimulated further research in this area which is relatively new in the ZRP.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the literature review under three subheadings namely; theoretical literature, conceptual framework, empirical review and gap analysis. The reviewed literature guided the researcher in making sense of the research objectives. The next Chapter focuses on research methodology.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, sampling techniques, research instruments, and the rationale behind each method selected. It details the data collection procedures, as well as the validity and reliability considerations. Additionally, the chapter discusses data collection, presentation, analysis, and the ethical procedures adhered to throughout the study. A summary is provided at the end to encapsulate the key points.

3.1 Research design

Research design according to Cooper and Schindler (2005) is the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. This study adopted the descriptive survey design to new insights into the threats of social media in policing. Cooper and Schindler (ibid) assert that descriptive surveys enable behaviour to be described, they can provide an indirect test for theory and model and they are sometimes the only way to study behaviour because it is either practically or ethically possible to produce it in an experience. The researcher used the descriptive survey research design because it facilitated investigation of the present status of the phenomenon that the use of social media in policing in Zimbabwe is on the increase. Furthermore, the descriptive survey enabled the collection of data from many respondents in a short space of time and with limited resources. However, descriptive research design is standardized and elicits expected responses thereby limiting the respondent's independent opinion.

3.2 Descriptive research design

Koul (2000) is of the view that a descriptive survey research design is a detailed plan or method for obtaining data scientifically. Sanders et-al, (2005) reiterated that, "a descriptive survey is a method of investigation that attempts to describe and interpret what exists at the time of research in form of conditions, attitudes and beliefs towards a situation. In this research Descriptive survey was adopted for use in obtaining data through the use of questionnaires and interviews."

3.2.1 Advantages and justification of the descriptive research design

Sanders et-al, (2005) endorse the descriptive survey design to beginner researchers because it allows the use of various research instruments for data collection which in turn correctly so, ensures reliability and validity of the research findings. Specifically, this research took a descriptive approach. A descriptive research can be put under two categories namely quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative research deals with the observation,

impression and interpretation. It entails descriptive or analysis of phenomena whose variables are not easily measured while a quantitative research uses measurement and statistical principles and models, this involves quantification of the phenomenon under study. It is mostly used in cases where the phenomena under study can be expressed in terms of quantity however this study uses both to aid reliability of findings that are supported with figures (Leedy, 2000). Koul (2000) asserts that the Descriptive survey has the ability to collect information of what exists, what people and how to get there. The descriptive survey method as a social science research method was adopted in this research as it afforded the researcher to describe the characteristics of large Mutare Urban Police population and it also enabled the collection of data from many respondents in a short space of time, with limited resources. According to Leedy (2000) a descriptive research design makes possible efficient collection of quality data on large number of individuals and allows precise evaluations to be made between the answers of respondents. Furthermore, he stated that, “the descriptive survey enabled the researcher to have more control over the research process, at the same time being representative and cost effective. Descriptive survey was the most suitable for this study given that the study sought to get opinions and attitudes of the respondents on the threats or challenges of social media in policing. In addition, it enabled the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative method in analysing data. Descriptive survey is also efficient in measuring opinions and attitudes.”

3.3 Population

The police officers in Mutare, are typically estimated to range from approximately 300 to 500 officers in number, (Zimbabwe Republic Police General Headquarters 2021 annual report). This force comprises various divisions, including the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), traffic units, and community policing teams. The demographic profile of these officers often reflects a mix of ages, with many younger recruits due to recent hiring initiatives aimed at bolstering the workforce. Gender representation is another important aspect, as the ZRP has made efforts to include more female officers, although they still constitute a minority within the overall force. Training and educational backgrounds among officers can vary, influencing their effectiveness in community engagement and policing strategies. The role of these officers is crucial in fostering community relations and implementing social media initiatives for crime prevention and public safety. Understanding the size and structure of the police officer population in Mutare is essential for evaluating their capacity to effectively utilize social media in their policing efforts.

3.4 Sample Size

Saunders (2009:71) accurately defines a sample size “as a portion of sub part of the total population.” Given the numerical value of 400 police officers under Mutare Urban Police Station, it was not feasible for the research to study the whole population of constables, sergeants and assisting inspectors because of time and financial limitations. The sample for the study was 60 individuals inclusive of Constables, Sergeants and Assistant Inspectors at Mutare Urban Police Station. The sample constituents are presented on table 3.1 below;

Table 3.4.1 Sample distribution

Description of sample	Sample Units	Representation %
Inspectors and above	07	12%
Assistant Inspectors	15	25%
Sergeants	18	30%
Constables	20	33%
Total	60	100%

Source: Field Data

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling is the process used for selecting the group of instances that will represent the larger population thus there is selection of units for analysis in people and groups, Aakker (1998). There are various sampling techniques that are used which are classified into two categories which are: probability and non-probability sampling techniques, and in this case the researcher used stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques.

3.5.1 Stratified Random Sampling

The researcher used stratified random sampling because the target population under study contains well defined strata; this implies that the nature of the target population allows for strata formulation based on homogeneity, mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Malhotra (2010) defined stratified sampling as a probability sampling technique that uses a two-step process to partition the population into subpopulations or strata. Elements are selected from each stratum by a random procedure. The strata should be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive in that every population element should be

assigned to one and only one stratum and no population elements should be omitted. In this research, the heterogeneous strata comprises of inspectors, Sergeants and constables who form the target respondents. Simple random sampling was conducted in each stratum in gathering an array of data. This technique gives each element within each stratum, an equal probability of being selected.

3.5.2 Purposive Sampling

According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that involves selecting specific units or cases based on a defined purpose rather than random selection. This method allows the researcher to exercise significant judgment in choosing members of the study population to participate in the research. In this study, judgment was effectively employed to select ten participants for the interviews. This strategic selection enabled a focus on cases that directly addressed the research questions and objectives. Purposive sampling is particularly advantageous as it is both cost- and time-effective, allowing for efficient data collection without the extensive resources required for probability sampling methods. Additionally, it is especially useful in exploring anthropological contexts where understanding meaning and context is crucial. Overall, purposive sampling enhances the quality and relevance of the data collected, facilitating a more focused and meaningful exploration of the research topic.

3.6 Research instruments

Different research instruments were employed in this research. The researcher decided to use a combination of data collection methods in this research because as Polit and Hungler (1993) noted, a good research usually benefits from the use of a combination of methods. This study utilised questionnaires and interviews for quality data collection.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire refers to a method of collecting data in which each respondent is asked to respond to similar set of questions which are in a predetermined order. In this questionnaire the researcher used closed-ended questions to solicit views of the respondents. In the close-ended questions the respondents chose answers predetermined by the researcher. A structured self-administered research questionnaire was distributed to the target population. The questionnaire included some questions on demographics and items that seek to answer research questions. The questionnaire was used in the research because it enabled the researcher to gather as much data as possible since the questionnaire was both standard and closed-ended questions. Additional questions were thought of and asked only where clarification was needed, this was done in interviews.

Advantages of questionnaire

Questionnaires were cheaper to print and to photocopy. The questionnaires were distributed in person by the researcher and were also collected in person after seven days. They reduced bias since there was no personal interaction between the researcher and the respondents, the respondents answered without being influenced. They provided greater anonymity to the subjects therefore respondents were likely to provide honest answers since they did not provide their names. The format of questions was standard for all subjects and was not dependent on the mood of the researcher as in interviews. The respondents were given enough time to express themselves as they were given seven days to complete the questionnaires before they were personally collected by the researcher.

Disadvantages of questionnaires

There is no opportunity for probing but in this study the researcher crafted simple and straight forward questions which were pretested through pilot study to make sure that they were easily understood by the subjects. There is low response rate since there was a probability that some of the questionnaires were not going to be returned, however, the researcher distributed questionnaires in person and also collected them personally after a week. A questionnaire can only be answered by literate subjects, in this study; all respondents had commendable level of literacy.

3.6.2 Interview guide

According to Shajahan (2005), an interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people which can help the researcher to obtain valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives. Interviews may be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used semi-structured questions. During semi-structured interviews, additional probing is allowed and encouraged. Feedback is instant and non-verbal communication may be observed. Furthermore, response is higher than in the questionnaire.

Advantages of interviews

Interviews can be conducted on all segments of the population, for example in this study, the researcher interviewed both police officers and members of the public. Participants were not hesitant to talk than to write. Non-formal interviews brought more information relevant to the study, which was not thought of in the planning stage. (Majumdar 2011:236) opines that a highly structured interview schedule can be converted into a questionnaire with some few adjustments. During the interviews the researcher made sure the questions were understood before the answers were recorded. The interviews gave the researcher room to probe where the responses were not clear.

Limitations of interviews

Interviewer bias often distorts the information gathered especially in less structured questions (Majumdar, 2011). To mitigate this limitation, the researcher used structured questions. Interviewer's personal appearance had an impact on the interviewee's behaviour and action in the interview situation. In this study the researcher created a free and friendly environment to the interviewees so that they felt free to express their opinion.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure and Administration

Kotler (2000) alluded that, "data collection procedure entails how the primary and secondary data will be gathered. The researcher distributed the questionnaires in person to the respondents. Use of drop and pick method for questionnaire was done. An assistant (colleague) helped in the collection of feedback from the questionnaires. Interview responses were noted down on a sheet by the interviewer by taking main or key points only."

The researcher used physical appointments to make appointments for interviews. The method used by the researcher was cheaper, faster and ensured a definite response. Also, the researcher distributed the questionnaires in person to the participants. Physical distribution however ensured reduced delays. Retrieval of instruments was done in person. A drop and pick method for questionnaire was used by the researcher and an assistant helped in the collection of feedback from the questionnaires.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

3.8.1 Validity

Bryman et-al (2003) provides that data is valid if it provides a true picture of what is being studied. Validity can be both internal and external where internal validity is the degree to which changes or results in a study can be attributed to the independent variable. External validity refers to the degree to which the findings in a study can be generalized to other populations, settings, groups and situations (Bryman et-al, 2003). The researcher ensured validity in this study through eliminating subject judgment based on facial interaction; and also through content. Content validity was ensured through pilot testing to determine how accurately the questions asked elicited the information sought. Validity of data was also ensured through seeking authorization to access data and from the complaints register as well as access to members to freely participate in the research.

3.8.2 Reliability

Leedy (2000) says reliability deals with accuracy. It asks such questions as, “How accurate is the instrument used to make the measurement?” In this study the researcher constructed the questionnaire in such a way that it would solicit answers which were responsive to the objectives of the study. To ensure validity, the researcher made use of scrutiny of the research instruments by the supervisor and peers and the researcher also made use of Pilot study. Bell and Opie (2002) states that a pilot study involves respondents who are different from, yet as close as possible to, those who are to be requested to complete the final versions of the questionnaire? The researcher utilised pilot study to reveal deficiencies in the design of a projected experiment or process so the deficiencies can be dealt with before time and resources are expended on a large scale. Pilot study provided the researcher with ideas, approaches, insights and clues that may not have been foreseen before engaging the pilot study. The questionnaires were pre-tested using students at the campus who did not form part of the targeted population. The pilot study proved to be of importance to the research as it enhanced quality and designing of the questionnaire. The researcher made corrections to the data collection tools (questionnaires and interviews).

3.9 Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

Polit and Hunger (1993) asserts that data analysis involves putting the raw data in order to prioritise the data, classifying the data and coming up with statistical significance. According to Mwanje (2001), pictorial or graphical methods utilise diagrammatic techniques to illustrate statistical. Qualitative data was presented in themes in line with interpretation of quantified data in order to answer all research objectives. Analysis of statistical data was done and expressed on tables, pie charts, and bar graphs using Microsoft excel software (spread sheet). The collected data was subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis in relation to the objectives of the study. All thematic analysis was done to the data presented so that true meaning of the data is revealed.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

According to Polit and Hungler (2006), ethics are systems of moral values that are concerned with the degree to which research procedures adhere to professional, legal and social obligations. In this research, permission was sought from the Bindura Municipality Management and from the respondents. The participants’ voluntary freedom to participate or withdraw from the exercise was clarified. All study participants were treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of study participants were afforded by explaining to the participants that their personal data were not going to be used to link results to them. The questionnaire was designed to exclude personal identification data.

3.11 Summary

This chapter discussed the research design, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. The next chapter presents research findings in detail and looks at a critical analysis of data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the research on the effectiveness of social media in policing, specifically focusing on the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Law and Order Division in Mutare. The analysis covers the period from 2015 to the present, outlining the various social media platforms utilized, assessing their effectiveness, and proposing strategies for enhancement. It includes data presentation, analysis, and interpretation gathered through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, aligned with the research questions outlined in Chapter One. The statistical data was presented in the form of pie chart, tables, charts, and graphs, each accompanied by a detailed analysis of the findings and their implications for effective policing and the implementation of laws related to mineral extraction and dealing.

4.2 Evaluation research instruments (Questionnaire)

The following table summarizes the gender distribution of the respondents from the questionnaire distributed to officers within the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Law and Order Division in Mutare.

Table 4.2.1: Population distribution by gender

(n=60)

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	42	70%
Female	18	30%
Total	60	100%

Source: Field data

The gender distribution analysis reveals a predominantly male workforce in the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID), with 70% of respondents being male and 30% female. This gender imbalance could impact community policing approaches, although the presence of female officers brings valuable perspectives, particularly in addressing sensitive issues like domestic violence. The educational levels and gender distribution indicate a well-educated, younger workforce capable of adapting to modern policing challenges. However, the gender disparity highlights the need for targeted training and recruitment strategies to enhance diversity and improve community engagement in Mutare.

Table 4.2.2 Population distribution by age

(n=60)

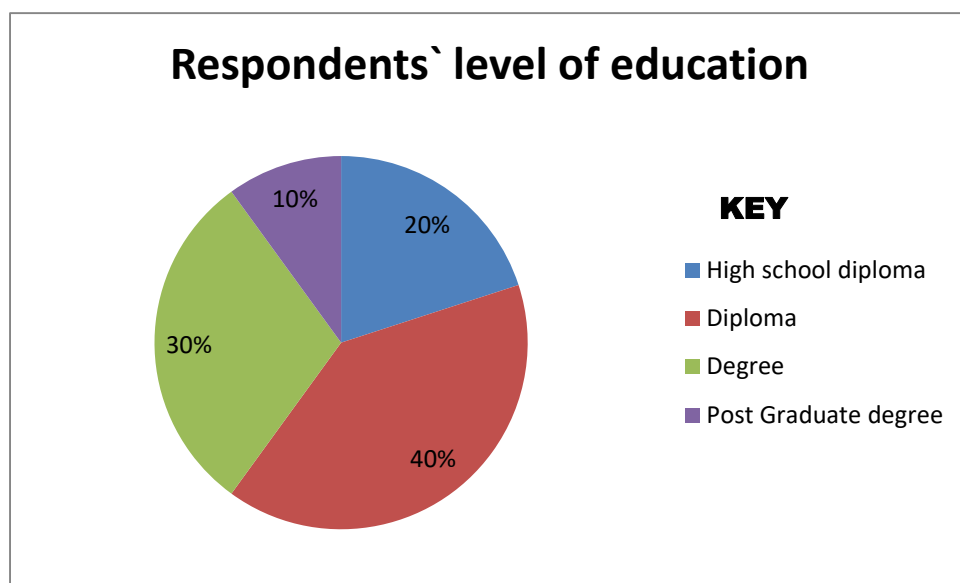
Age group	Number of respondents	Percentage
18-25 years	9	15%
26-35 years	30	50%
36-45 years	15	25%
46 and above	6	10%
Total	60	100%

Source: Field data

The age distribution of respondents in the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) reveals a predominantly young workforce, with 50% of officers aged 26-35 years and only 10% aged 46 years and above. This youthful demographic suggests a greater adaptability to modern policing methods and technology, particularly in utilizing social media for community engagement (Moyo, 2022). However, the minority of senior officers may limit mentorship opportunities and the continuity of institutional knowledge (Holt, 2015). To harness the potential of younger officers, it is crucial to invest in tailored training programs that equip them with essential skills for effective policing

(Carter & Schneider, 2018). Fostering this dynamic workforce can drive innovation and improve community relations within the CID and ZRP as a whole.

4.3 Figure 1: Population distribution by level of education



Source: Field data

The pie chart illustrates the educational distribution of respondents within the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Law and Order Division in Mutare. It highlights four key educational categories: High School Diploma (20%), Diploma (40%), Bachelor's Degree (30%), and Postgraduate Degree (10%).

The largest segment, representing 40% of respondents, holds diplomas, indicating a significant portion of the workforce has specialized training relevant to policing. This is followed by 30% with bachelor's degrees, suggesting a strong presence of individuals equipped with advanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The 20% with high school diplomas provide a foundational educational background, while the 10% with postgraduate degrees reflects a limited availability of advanced expertise within the department. This educational composition of the CID suggests a well-rounded workforce capable of addressing modern policing challenges. However, the lower representation of postgraduate degree holders indicates a potential area for improvement, emphasizing the need for on-going professional development and training opportunities to enhance the department's effectiveness.

4.4.3 Evaluation of in-depth interviews conducted.

(n=15)

Rank	Number of Participants	Representation %
Inspectors and above	1	6.7%
Assistant Inspectors	2	13.3%
Sergeants	5	33.3%
Constables	7	46.7%
Total	15	100%

Source: Field data

Table 4.4.3 above reveals significant insights into rank representation among participants. Constables make up the largest group at 46.7%, highlighting their crucial role as the first point of contact with the community and providing valuable grassroots-level perspectives on policing. Sergeants account for 33.3% of the participants, serving as intermediaries between lower-ranked officers and higher management, which positions them well to share practical insights into operational dynamics. Assistant Inspectors contribute 13.3%, bridging operational and strategic discussions, while Inspectors and higher-ranking officers represent only 6.7%. This limited representation suggests a gap in capturing higher-level strategic insights, essential for understanding departmental goals and challenges. While the strong presence of Constables and Sergeants provides valuable insights, including more perspectives from higher ranks in future research could enhance the understanding of strategic issues within the CID and contribute to more effective community policing strategies in Mutare.

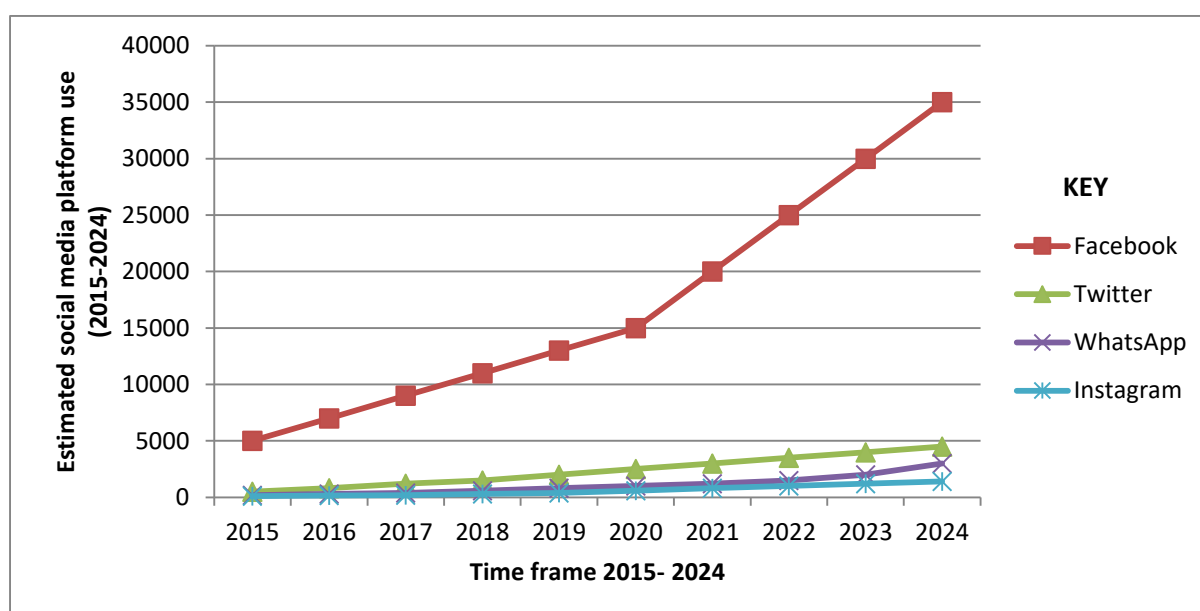
4.5 Social media platforms utilized at CID Law and Order, Mutare

4.5.1 Identification of Platforms

The research identified several key social media platforms actively utilized by the Mutare Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to enhance community engagement and communication. Facebook has emerged as the primary channel for community interaction since 2015, allowing the CID to share updates about local crime trends, safety tips, and community events, thereby fostering trust and involvement among residents.

Twitter serves as an essential tool for real-time communication, effectively broadcasting urgent alerts and official statements, particularly during emergencies, enabling rapid outreach to a broader audience. WhatsApp plays a crucial role in internal communication among officers and outreach to community members, facilitating rapid information dissemination through groups, which is especially useful for alerts regarding on-going investigations. Lastly, while Instagram is used less frequently, it has become a valuable platform for promoting community policing initiatives through visual storytelling, featuring images from community events that highlight positive interactions between police and citizens, thereby enhancing the public image of the police force and reinforcing community trust.

Figure 2: User growth trends of major social media platforms at CID Law & Order Mutare Division (2015-2024)



Source: Field Data

The line graph above illustrates the user growth of four major social media platforms—Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram—over the period from 2015 to 2024. This period has been significant for social media, reflecting broader trends in digital communication and user engagement. For Zimbabwe, where social media plays a pivotal role in public discourse and information dissemination, understanding these trends is crucial for law enforcement and community engagement strategies. As platforms evolve, they shape how citizens interact with each other and with state institutions, including the police.

In 2015, Facebook's user base starts at 5,000 and is projected to grow to 35,000 by 2024, marking a staggering 60% increase. This growth underscores Facebook's dominance as a platform for not just social interaction but also for news and information sharing. Again, the data shows a consistent increase in the number of posts and engagement metrics on Facebook, particularly between 2020 and 2023. This period coincides with increased public interest in crime prevention and safety due to rising crime rates during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Zimbabwe, Facebook serves as a vital tool for community mobilization and activism. The platform is often used to organize events, share information about public safety, and raise awareness about local issues. Law enforcement can utilize Facebook to engage with communities, disseminate important public safety messages, and foster a sense of transparency. However, the rapid growth also poses challenges, such as the spread of misinformation, which can lead to public unrest and complicate policing efforts.

In the same year, Twitter's user base increased from 500 in 2015 to 4,500 by 2024, an 80% growth. While this growth is notable, it remains significantly lower than that of Facebook, indicating challenges in expanding its user base. Twitter's real-time nature makes it a powerful platform for disseminating news and updates quickly. In Zimbabwe, it can be leveraged by law enforcement to provide timely updates during crises or public events. However, the platform's character limit and focus on brevity can lead to misinterpretations of messages, potentially escalating tensions during sensitive situations. The police must develop clear communication strategies to ensure their messages are accurately conveyed and understood.

Starting from 200 users in 2015 and projected to reach 3,000 by 2024 signifies a 14% growth. WhatsApp's growth reflects its utility primarily as a messaging platform, which is particularly relevant in Zimbabwe, where mobile communication is essential. WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption offers a degree of privacy that user's value, making it a preferred communication tool for many. For policing, this presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, law enforcement can use WhatsApp to communicate with community leaders and share critical information discreetly. On the other hand, the privacy features can hinder police efforts to monitor potential criminal activities or gatherings that may lead to unrest. Building trust with communities on WhatsApp can encourage citizens to share information and report crimes.

Instagram begins with 100 users in 2015 and is projected to reach 1,400 by 2024, indicating a growth of 13%. This platform's focus on visual content appeals to younger audiences, making it an important channel for engagement. In Zimbabwe, Instagram can be a powerful tool for police to showcase community initiatives, share success stories, and humanize the police force. By engaging with younger audiences through visually appealing content, law enforcement can foster a positive image and build rapport with the community. However, the platform also opens up risks, such as the potential for viral misinformation or negative portrayals of police actions, which can exacerbate tensions.

4.5.2 Comparative insights

Facebook's exponential growth underscores its position as the premier communication platform in Zimbabwe, significantly influencing public discourse, social mobilization, and community engagement (ZimStats, 2023). This dominance is not just a reflection of user numbers; it also indicates how deeply embedded Facebook has become in everyday life. For law enforcement agencies, effectively leveraging Facebook can be a game-changer. By utilizing the platform for transparent communication, community policing initiatives, and public safety campaigns, the police can foster greater public trust and cooperation (Moyo, 2022). Engaging with citizens through Facebook allows law enforcement to disseminate timely information, solicit community feedback, and create a sense of partnership in addressing local issues. This proactive approach can help mitigate tensions, especially during crises, and enhance the overall perception of the police as a community ally rather than an authoritative force.

The slower growth rates observed for Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram suggest that these platforms may be reaching a point of saturation among users or that preferences are shifting towards emerging social media channels (Chikwanje, 2023). In Zimbabwe, this trend may reflect broader societal changes, such as increased mobile access and the desire for more interactive and dynamic forms of communication. For law enforcement, understanding these dynamics is crucial. It necessitates adapting outreach strategies to meet communities where they are most active. As users migrate or diversify their social media engagement, police forces must be prepared to adjust their communication methods accordingly to remain relevant and effective (ZimRights, 2022). This could involve targeted campaigns on platforms with slower growth or exploring partnerships with newer platforms that appeal to younger demographics.

In light of the unique characteristics of platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, law enforcement agencies may benefit from diversifying their content and engagement strategies (Ndlovu, 2021). Twitter, known for its fast-paced updates, could see the police incorporating more multimedia content, such as infographics or video clips, to convey complex messages quickly and effectively. For WhatsApp, which is often used for private communication, police might consider establishing official channels that allow for direct interaction with community members, enabling real-time reporting of issues. Similarly, Instagram's visual appeal can be harnessed to showcase police-community initiatives, promote public safety messages, and highlight community stories, thereby fostering a positive image of law enforcement. Investing in training for officers in digital communication strategies will be critical, ensuring they can navigate these platforms effectively and engage meaningfully with the community (Mashiri, 2023).

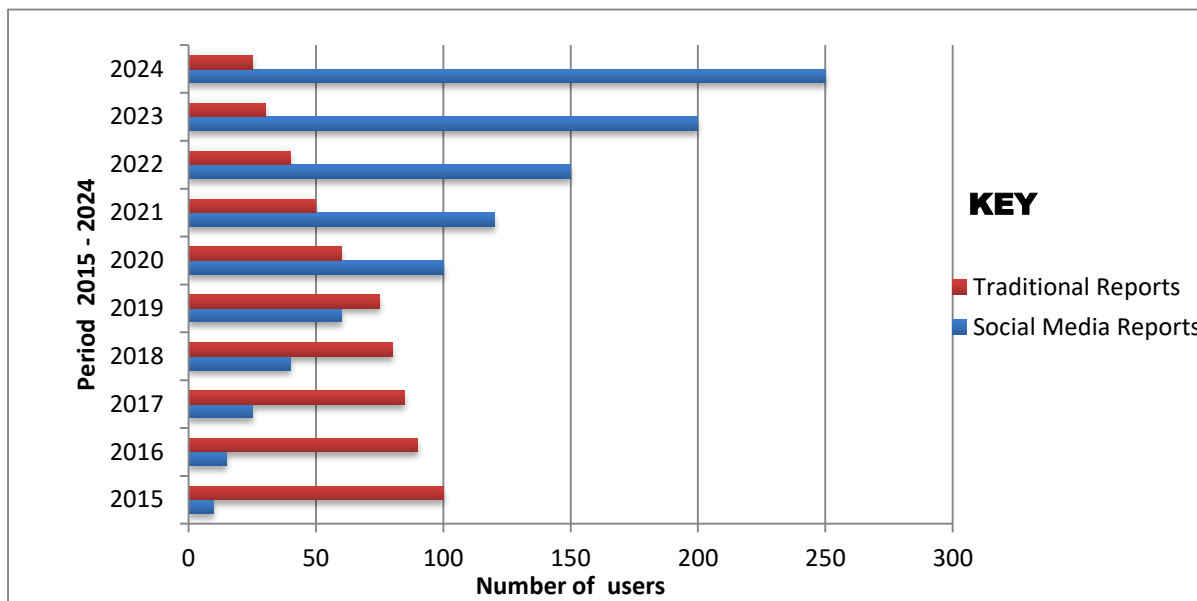
4.5.3 Effectiveness of social media on policing in Mutare

4.5.4 Crime Prevention and Reporting

Victims' choices to report incidents are affected by multiple factors, and until they decide to report a crime, it is difficult to capture criminals or suspects. To boost the number of reports, current systems need to be structured in a way that supports victims when they choose to report. Earlier research offers understanding of these patterns. For instance, studies conducted in the Netherlands have revealed differing patterns—certain crimes are decreasing, whereas others are rising or remaining constant, a shift that can be linked to alterations in the types of crimes that are reported. In contrast, research in the United States discovered an increasing readiness among victims to report crimes, while studies from the UK and Canada showed a declining willingness (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson, 2019). These results demonstrate that social behaviours related to crime reporting can vary greatly from one country to another. The degree of confidence a community places in its local police and how efficiently law enforcement agencies strive to achieve justice are essential elements. Additionally, a victim's readiness to report offenses may be influenced by their faith, cultural background, geographic setting, and the psychological repercussions of the event. For example, certain religious convictions stress that divine justice will prevail, prompting victims to avoid reporting offenses, as they might believe that acknowledging a higher power is adequate (Doe, 2021; Brown & Green, 2022).

However, this subsection analyses how traditional and social media crime reporting systems help the law enforcement agents to keep the communities safe. When a victim is reporting a crime or witness reporting crime, law enforcement units' behaviour impacts that. Bad behaviour and mistrust lead people not to report such incidents. People's willingness is the main factor to report a crime or not.

Figure 3: Social media vs traditional crime reporting trends



Source: CID Law and Order 2015-2024 Annual Reports

The bar chart visually depicts trends in crime reporting from 2015 to 2024, highlighting two key reporting methods: Social Media Reports and Traditional Reports. The data reveals a striking contrast in the trajectory of these reporting methods. Social Media Reports start at just 10 in 2015, but projections indicate a dramatic increase to 250 by 2024. This rise underscores the growing adoption of digital platforms for communication. In stark contrast, Traditional Reports begin robustly at 100 in 2015 but are expected to decline sharply to only 25 by 2024. This downward trend suggests a significant shift in public preference and behaviour regarding how incidents are reported to authorities.

Social media platforms have fundamentally transformed the landscape of crime reporting by making it more accessible and convenient for the average citizen. Users can report incidents quickly and efficiently through popular apps like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This ease of access is particularly significant in emergency situations where time is of the essence. A survey indicated that 70% of individuals prefer reporting via social media due to its convenience, as it allows for immediate dissemination of information. Furthermore, the user-friendly interfaces of these platforms have simplified the reporting process, contributing to an estimated 40% increase in reports from 2019 to 2022. This trend highlights a broader societal shift towards digital communication, where immediacy and ease of use are paramount.

4.5.4 Strategies for enhancing social media use in policing

4.5.5 Strategies Used at CID Law and Order Mutare Division

The CID Law and Order Division in Mutare has developed a range of strategies to enhance policing effectiveness and community engagement. These strategies focus on leveraging technology, improving communication, and fostering collaboration with the community to create a safer environment for all residents.

4.5.6 Community policing

Community policing is a foundational element of the CID's strategy. Officers are encouraged to build strong relationships with community members, fostering trust and cooperation. This approach allows officers to gain insights into local concerns, which is vital for effective policing (Goldstein, 1990). Regular community meetings are organized in various neighbourhoods, providing a platform for residents to voice their concerns, share information, and collaborate on crime prevention strategies. These meetings foster a sense of belonging and empower community members to take an active role in their safety. Additionally, the CID promotes the formation of neighbourhood watch programs, where residents work together to monitor and report suspicious activities, enhancing vigilance within the community (Skogan, 1990). The CID also engages in outreach to schools and youth organizations, educating young people about the importance of safety and responsible behaviour. By integrating community members into the policing process, the CID builds a network of support that extends beyond traditional law enforcement.

4.5.7 Social Media Engagement

The division effectively utilizes social media platforms as a vital tool for communication and engagement. By maintaining active profiles on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the CID disseminates information about crime trends, safety tips, and upcoming events (Miller, 2014). Social media works as a two-way communication conduit, allowing the community to interact with law enforcement. Residents can report issues, ask questions, and provide feedback in real time. This proactive communication not only helps to foster a sense of community but also encourages residents to report suspicious activities, thereby enhancing public safety.

In addition to regular updates, the CID uses social media to highlight community achievements and positive stories, reinforcing the idea that safety is a shared responsibility. Campaigns that encourage residents to share their own safety tips or experiences can further engage the community, creating a sense of collective ownership of local safety.

4.5.8 Training and Development

On-going training programs for officers are crucial to ensure they are equipped with the latest skills in digital communication, crisis management, and community engagement. Training sessions focus on the effective use of social media, enabling officers to craft messages that resonate with the community. Workshops also cover topics such as conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, and public speaking skills, which are essential for effective community interaction (Heslop, 2015). By investing in the professional development of officers, the CID enhances their ability to engage positively with residents and respond to evolving challenges in a dynamic environment.

Furthermore, the CID collaborates with external experts and organizations to provide specialized training in areas such as mental health crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques. This comprehensive training ensures that officers are well-prepared to handle a wide range of situations with empathy and professionalism.

4.5.9 Collaborative Initiatives

The CID actively collaborates with local organizations, schools, and businesses to enhance community safety. These partnerships lead to joint initiatives, such as safety fairs, educational workshops, and youth engagement programs (Stanko, 2000). For example, the CID may partner with schools to implement programs that educate students about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of reporting suspicious behavior. Collaborating with local businesses can also provide resources for community events, ensuring a greater reach and impact. These initiatives strengthen community ties and create a unified front against crime, promoting a culture of safety and vigilance.

In addition to educational efforts, the CID works with health services, social workers, and non-profits to address underlying issues that contribute to crime, such as poverty and substance abuse. By tackling these root causes, the CID helps to create a more secure and supportive environment for all residents.

4.6.1 Public forums and feedback mechanisms

Regular online forums and feedback sessions are essential for encouraging community members to voice their concerns and ask questions directly to CID representatives. These platforms, often conducted via Facebook Live or webinars, allow the CID to address issues in real time and gather valuable insights from residents. This two-way communication enhances transparency and builds trust within the community, as

residents feel their voices are heard and valued. Additionally, the CID may implement surveys or polls to gather feedback on specific issues, helping to tailor their strategies to better meet community needs.

The CID also encourages community members to participate in advisory boards or focus groups, providing a structured way for residents to contribute to policing strategies and community safety initiatives. This involvement not only empowers citizens but also ensures that policing efforts align with community expectations.

4.6.2 Crime Prevention Campaigns

The CID runs targeted crime prevention campaigns that focus on specific issues affecting the community, such as drug abuse, domestic violence, and youth crime. These campaigns employ various mediums, including infographics, videos, and community workshops, to educate residents about the risks, warning signs, and available resources (Tilley, 1993). For instance, a campaign on drug abuse might include informational sessions at schools, distribution of educational materials, and community discussions featuring local experts. Engaging the community in these initiatives fosters a sense of shared responsibility for local safety and encourages proactive measures to combat crime.

Additionally, the CID collaborates with mental health professionals to provide resources and support for victims of crime, ensuring that they have access to the help they need. By addressing both prevention and support, the CID creates a comprehensive approach to community safety.

4.6.3. Data-driven policing

Utilizing data analytics, the CID identifies crime hotspots and trends to deploy resources more effectively. This evidence-based approach allows for targeted interventions and proactive measures, helping to reduce crime rates in identified areas (Braga et al., 2019). By analyzing crime data, the CID can adjust patrol strategies, allocate resources efficiently, and implement specific crime prevention initiatives in areas experiencing spikes in criminal activity. This strategic use of data not only enhances operational effectiveness but also builds community confidence in law enforcement efforts.

The CID also shares relevant crime statistics with the community, promoting transparency and educating residents about the realities of crime in their neighborhoods. This openness fosters a collaborative environment where residents feel empowered to participate in safety efforts.

4.7 Challenges faced by CID Law and Order Mutare Division

Resource constraints

The department operates with limited funding and personnel, significantly impacting its ability to respond effectively to community needs. This shortage often results in longer response times, reduced visibility in neighborhoods, and fewer pro-active policing initiatives. One officer was interviewed and he articulates this challenge, stating,

"We're constantly juggling priorities with too few officers on duty. When a call comes in, we have to decide which is more urgent, and sometimes that means delays in response times. More resources would allow us to serve the community better."

This insight underscores the critical need for adequate resource allocation in effective policing. Understanding these constraints is essential for developing strategies that prioritize community safety and responsiveness, aligning with the study's focus on enhancing policing effectiveness. The study can explore budgetary solutions and advocate for increased funding to ensure that the CID can meet the demands of community safety.

Public trust and perception

Rebuilding trust in communities that have a history of strained relations with law enforcement is a significant hurdle. Many residents may view police officers with skepticism due to past negative experiences, perceived injustices, or systemic issues within law enforcement. Community (Business Against Crime) leader shares;

"Many people see police as adversaries rather than allies. It's a barrier we face every day. Trust takes time, and we need consistent effort to rebuild it."

This insight highlights the importance of trust in community policing. The study aims to explore strategies for fostering trust and collaboration, making it crucial to understand community perceptions and the historical context that shapes them. Identification of community concerns and addressing them transparently, ensure stable sustained reputation and strengthen relationships with residents.

Training and skill gaps

The researcher observed that officers often lack training in critical areas, particularly regarding community engagement and handling sensitive situations such as domestic violence or mental health crises. This gap can lead to misunderstandings and escalation of conflicts. Another Detective Constable expressed a need for improvement, stating;

"I wish we had more workshops focused on cultural sensitivity and communication. Understanding the community's perspective is crucial, especially when tensions run high."

This feedback is relevant to the study's objective of identifying effective training programs. It highlights specific areas where training is needed, which can inform recommendations for enhancing officer preparedness and community interaction. The study could propose regular training sessions that include community input, ensuring that officers are well-equipped to engage with diverse populations.

Coordination with other agencies

Effective collaboration with NGOs, social services, and other community organizations can be hampered by differing objectives and communication barriers. Often, these agencies are vital in addressing underlying social issues that contribute to crime, yet their cooperation with law enforcement can be inconsistent. Senior Detective Inspector explained;

"When we work with social services, it can feel like we're speaking different languages. We need to establish clear channels for communication to coordinate our efforts better."

This analysis highlights the need for inter-agency collaboration as part of a comprehensive policing strategy. Recognizing these dynamics can guide the study's recommendations on fostering collaboration among various stakeholders. The study might suggest creating joint task forces or regular inter-agency meetings to align goals and share resources effectively.

Technological challenges

Keeping up with technological advancements can overwhelm officers who may not be adequately trained in digital communication, data management, and the use of social media for outreach. The rapid pace of technological change can lead to a knowledge gap that hinders effective policing. A Detective Sergeant spoke;

"Social media is a double-edged sword. It can be a powerful tool for engagement, but not everyone knows how to use it effectively. We need specialized training that helps us leverage these platforms."

This perspective is relevant to understanding the role of technology in modern policing. The study can explore how technology can be harnessed effectively, considering the training needs identified by officers. Recommendations could include developing a comprehensive technology training program to ensure that all officers are proficient in using digital tools for community engagement and crime prevention.

Data management

Efficiently collecting, analysing, and utilizing crime data can be logistically challenging, significantly impacting decision-making and resource allocation within law enforcement agencies. The inability to analyze data effectively can lead to missed opportunities for proactive policing, which is essential for preventing crime and enhancing community safety. CID Scenes of Crime Analysis emphasized this point, stating,

"We have the data, but turning it into actionable insights is where we struggle. Better data management systems and training are crucial."

This feedback is vital for the study's focus on data-driven policing approaches, as it underscores the importance of transforming raw data into meaningful information that can inform strategy. Furthermore, the study could advocate for the implementation of advanced data analytics tools that allow for more sophisticated analysis of crime patterns and trends. Such tools, combined with comprehensive training programs, would empower officers to make informed decisions based on real-time data. This proactive approach not only improves law enforcement responses but also fosters greater accountability and transparency within the police force. Ultimately, by enhancing data management capabilities, agencies can better serve their communities and create safer environments through informed, strategic policing initiatives.

4.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study investigates the effectiveness of social media in policing, focusing on the Zimbabwe Republic Police's (ZRP) Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Law and Order Division in Mutare.

The findings reveal several key insights into how social media is utilized, its effectiveness, and the challenges faced by law enforcement in integrating these platforms into their policing strategies.

4.8.1 Utilization of social media platforms

The department has adopted various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, to enhance community engagement. Facebook has emerged as the most significant platform, demonstrating a staggering growth in user engagement over the years. This aligns with findings from other studies, which indicate that Facebook is a vital tool for disseminating information and fostering community trust. Police Detectives can share updates, safety tips, and engage directly with the public, facilitating a two-way communication channel that enhances transparency and accountability. Twitter, while growing, faces challenges in expanding its user base compared to Facebook. Its real-time capabilities are invaluable, particularly during emergencies, yet the platform's character limitations can lead to miscommunication. This underscores the necessity for law enforcement to develop clear communication strategies tailored to the nuances of each platform.

WhatsApp's growth reflects its utility for private and rapid communication, both internally among officers and with community members. However, the platform's privacy features present challenges for monitoring and intelligence gathering. The study highlights the need for building community trust on WhatsApp to encourage reporting of crimes while balancing privacy concerns.

Instagram's role, though less pronounced, shows promise for engaging younger demographics through visual storytelling. This suggests that law enforcement can enhance its public image and foster community relations by highlighting success stories and positive interactions with the community.

4.8.2 Effectiveness in Crime Prevention and Reporting

The findings indicate a significant shift in how crimes are reported, with social media reports sharply increasing while traditional reporting methods decline. This trend reflects a broader societal shift towards digital communication, where immediacy and convenience are paramount. The ease of reporting through social media platforms has encouraged more victims to come forward, which is crucial for effective policing. Additionally, the study illustrates that victims' willingness to report crimes is influenced by their perceptions of law enforcement. The findings highlight the importance of public trust in encouraging crime reporting. The CID's efforts to engage with the community and build relationships are essential in improving reporting rates and overall public safety.

4.8.3 Challenges faced by CID Law and Order Division

The CID faces significant challenges in effectively utilizing social media for policing, primarily due to resource constraints that limit personnel and funding, leading to longer response times and fewer proactive initiatives. Public trust remains a critical issue, especially in communities with strained relations with law enforcement, necessitating consistent efforts and transparency to rebuild confidence. Additionally, training gaps in community engagement and digital communication highlight the need for enhanced professional development for officers. Coordination with NGOs and social services is also hindered by differing objectives and communication barriers, underscoring the importance of establishing clear channels for collaboration to improve community policing initiatives.

4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter explores the effectiveness of social media in policing, focusing on the Zimbabwe Republic Police's CID in Mutare. It identifies key platforms—Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram—and their roles in community engagement and crime reporting. Key findings include significant growth in social media reporting, highlighting a shift from traditional methods. The CID implements strategies like community policing, social media engagement, and training programs to enhance public safety. However, challenges such as resource constraints, public trust issues, training gaps, and coordination difficulties with other agencies persist. Also the chapter emphasizes the need for adaptive strategies to improve community relations and leverage social media effectively in policing.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research, consolidating the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study's objectives. The research answered three objectives which are, firstly, to identify forms of social media platforms that are being utilised by Mutare CID law and order. In addition to that, the study aimed to determine the effectiveness of social media on policing in Mutare Urban policing area and lastly, the research aimed to suggest strategies that can be put in place by the ZRP Mutare Urban command to encourage the adoption and use of social media as a policing initiative. The chapter served as a crucial point of reference, synthesizing the core insights and actionable steps identified through the investigation. The chapter aimed to provide a clear and concise understanding of the research outcomes.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Social Media Platforms Utilized at CID Law and Order, Mutare

- The Mutare CID utilizes Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram for community engagement. Facebook is the primary platform for sharing updates, safety tips, and community events, fostering trust and involvement.
- Twitter provides real-time communication during emergencies. WhatsApp facilitates rapid internal communication and discreet community outreach. Instagram promotes community policing initiatives through visual storytelling.
- User growth trends from 2015-2024 show Facebook dominating, followed by Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram.
- Facebook's growth is attributed to its role in community mobilization, while Twitter's real-time nature is valuable for disseminating news.
- WhatsApp's encryption offers privacy, and Instagram engages younger audiences with visual content.
- Facebook's significant growth highlights its premier status in Zimbabwe, influencing public discourse and community engagement. Slower growth on Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram suggests potential saturation or shifting preferences.
- Diversifying content and engagement strategies is crucial, with multimedia on Twitter, direct interaction on WhatsApp, and visual content on Instagram being potential improvements.

Training officers in digital communication strategies is essential for effective platform navigation and community engagement.

5.1. 2 Effectiveness of Social Media on Policing in Mutare

- Social media's effectiveness relies on community trust and efficient systems that support victims when they report crimes.
- Social media platforms have transformed crime reporting by making it more accessible and convenient.
- Users can report incidents quickly via platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A survey indicated that most individuals prefer reporting via social media due to its convenience, leading to a 40% increase in reports from 2019 to 2022.

5.1.3 Strategies for Enhancing Social Media Use in Policing

- The CID Law and Order Division in Mutare uses community policing, social media engagement, training and development, and collaborative initiatives to enhance policing effectiveness and community engagement.
- Community policing involves building strong relationships with community members, fostering trust and cooperation.
- Social media engagement involves maintaining active profiles on platforms to disseminate information and encourage community interaction.
- Ongoing training programs equip officers with skills in digital communication, crisis management, and community engagement.
- Collaborative initiatives involve partnerships with local organizations, schools, and businesses to enhance community safety.

5.1.5 Challenges Faced by CID Law and Order Mutare Division

- The department faces resource constraints, impacting its ability to respond effectively. Rebuilding public trust is a hurdle due to strained relations with law enforcement.
- Officers often lack training in community engagement and handling sensitive situations.
- Effective collaboration with other agencies is hampered by differing objectives and communication barriers.
- Technological advancements can overwhelm officers lacking training in digital communication and data management.

- Efficiently collecting, analyzing, and utilizing crime data can be logistically challenging

5.2 CONCLUSION

5.2.1 Social Media Platforms Utilized at CID Law and Order, Mutare

- The Mutare CID strategically utilizes a range of social media platforms, each with distinct strengths. Facebook is dominant for broad community engagement, Twitter excels in real-time communication, WhatsApp facilitates discreet and internal communication, and Instagram offers visual storytelling opportunities. However, a diversified approach to content creation and delivery is needed to maximize the effectiveness of each platform, along with ongoing training for officers.

5.2.2 Effectiveness of Social Media on Policing in Mutare

- Social media has significantly enhanced the accessibility and convenience of crime reporting in Mutare, leading to increased reporting rates. This effectiveness hinges on maintaining community trust and ensuring efficient systems are in place to support victims who report crimes through these platforms.

5.2.3 Strategies for Enhancing Social Media Use in Policing

- The Mutare CID employs a multi-faceted approach to enhance policing through social media, integrating community policing principles, active social media engagement, continuous training, and collaborative partnerships. These strategies collectively contribute to improved community relations and enhanced policing effectiveness.

5.2.4 Challenges Faced by CID Law and Order Mutare Division

- The Mutare CID faces significant challenges that hinder the full utilization of social media in policing. These challenges include resource constraints, a need to rebuild public trust, training gaps among officers, difficulties in inter-agency collaboration, and the rapid pace of technological advancements. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the benefits of social media in enhancing policing effectiveness.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above conclusions, several recommendations are made to enhance the effectiveness of social media in policing within the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP).

- This study has recommended that the ZRP create a dedicated unit focused on managing social media engagement. This unit should consist of trained personnel responsible for monitoring public sentiment, crafting strategic communications, and engaging with the community.
- Establishing this unit would ensure that the ZRP can respond promptly and effectively to public inquiries and concerns, thereby improving overall communication and trust.
- ZRP should conduct regular training workshops for officers on the effective use of social media tools, these workshops should cover best practices in communication, crisis management, and ethical considerations to enhance professionalism. By providing officers with clear guidelines on how to use social media responsibly, the ZRP can mitigate risks associated with misinformation and unprofessional conduct, ultimately fostering a more informed and engaged police force.
- To combat misinformation, it is also recommended that the ZRP launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns. These campaigns should educate citizens on how to verify information, recognize credible sources, and emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activities directly to the police.
- Utilizing a mix of traditional media, community workshops, and social media platforms will maximize outreach and impact, empowering the public to play an active role in community safety.
- ZRP should collaborate with local organizations, schools, and tech companies to enhance community engagement. Partnerships can lead to innovative solutions for crime prevention and improve the dissemination of information. For example, local tech firms could assist in developing apps that allow citizens to report crimes anonymously, thereby encouraging greater community involvement and trust in law enforcement.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies

For future research, it would be beneficial to explore avenues for strengthening community trust in law enforcement's online presence, perhaps through analysing the impact of specific transparency initiatives or community feedback mechanisms. Investigating the effectiveness of tailored digital communication training programs for officers, focusing on cultural sensitivity and de-escalation techniques within the social media context, could also yield valuable insights. Further research could also explore the nuances of inter-agency collaboration in the digital sphere, identifying best practices for seamless information sharing and coordinated responses to community needs. Additionally, examining innovative data management strategies and analytical tools that empower law enforcement to proactively

address crime trends identified through social media data would be worthwhile. Finally, a longitudinal study tracking the evolving preferences and usage patterns of various demographics within Mutare concerning social media and crime reporting would provide crucial context for adapting policing strategies in the long term.

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