Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Social media as a Government Communication tool: The case of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office

By

Daniel Bisset

June, 2019

Addis Ababa

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By

Daniel Bisset

A thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University, Graduate School of Journalism and Communication in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and communication: specialty in Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

Advisor:- Getachew Dinku (PhD)

June, 2019

Addis Ababa

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

These days the Social media has become dominant communication tool among individuals and organizations, both governmental and private. This study is conducted mainly with an objective of exploring how the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has been using the social media to communicate with its publics. The study specifically addresses how concerned staffs of the Office see the potential of social media as a government communication tool; describes the extent the Office uses social media to reach out to its publics; examines the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office and investigates the factors that affected the office's decision of choosing social media as a government communication tool. In order to achieve these objectives of the study, exploratory research design is employed. The research approach used in this study is qualitative while in-depth interview and qualitative content analysis data collection methods are used to gather relevant data for the study. The samples for the study are selected purposefully from the Office in general and from the specific department, the press secretariat, which has the responsibility of managing the social media activities of the Office. Accordingly in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty people and seventy-eight social media posts which are shared on the official Facebook page of the Office from March 1 to May 20, 2019 were investigated. Posts on the official Telegram channel of the Office during the same period of time were also explored The result of the study indicates that the use of social media as a government communication tool is well understood by the staffs of the Office. There is a directorate whose responsibility is managing the social media activities of the Office and there is also frequent use of the social media at the Office. The activities of the Office on the social media lacks strategies and mainly focused on information delivery while false information on the social media is among the challenges faced by the Office on its activities. The popularity of the social media amongst the society is, its simplistic nature to use and the less amount of time that it require to accomplish the task are the factors that made the Office to engage in the social media.

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I Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background of the study

Technological innovations and progressions that the world is experiencing in recent years have brought a considerable impact on the day-to-day activities of people all around the world. The communication sector and public relations practices are among the sectors significantly affected by the changes happening with technology. These days most people go online to get the information they want, to communicate with each other and to interact with institutions. Communication is a two-way process in which the participants exchange information and create a shared meaning so that they can create a mutual understanding on the subject matter. It is the exchange of ideas, thoughts, messages, or the like, by speech, signals or writing.

Communication, when it comes to the government and publics, is much more essential and needs to be carried out with a planned and sustained manner since governing necessarily involves constant exchanges of information and communication about socio economic and political decisions, ideas and policies between governors and the governed so that mutual understandings are to be reached. According to Canel and Sanders (2012) the term government communication is often used to refer solely to top-level executive communication. But it can also be used to refer to institutions established by government to do its work at national, regional and local levels. While Mulatu (2017) noted that government communication refers to the communication activities of the government body which are aimed at informing the public, encouraging dialogue, reaching consensus, and acquiring support for the implementation of the government's policies.

In order to execute the functions and achieve its goals the practice of government communication employs different tools like press releases, conferences, workshops, seminars and social media to interact and exchange information with the public on matters that directly or indirectly influence the socio-economic and political activities. Two-way communication is essential if a common understanding is needed to happen and mutual understanding between the public and government

institutions is vital for the smooth running of governmental activities. The advent of social media is believed to change the traditional way of one-way communication and bring a much more favorable platform for two-way communication to take place easily among institutions and the public. Bertot et al.,(2010) argues that the instantaneous, direct, and interactive communication components that social media provide can be particularly beneficial to governments at all levels as they pledge to be more transparent, participatory, and collaborative with their citizens (as cited in Graham, 2014).

Social media is platform where dialogue takes place between two parties without the involvement of any other third party. This nature of the social media is believed to benefit governments at all levels but the importance is much higher at local level of the government because the interaction between the government and the public is more likely to be direct at the local level. Graham (2014) states that social media usage enhances governments' ability to interact with and engage citizens and this more open form of government public relations that social media usage provides is particularly beneficial to local governments.

On the other hand, even though its importance is much higher for both the government and the public, government communication has been a neglected area of study for a while. Canel and Sanders (2012) argue that despite its key importance for 21st-century politics, the study of government communication is an under researched area of political communication studies, finding itself in a kind of theoretical no-man's land between political communication, public relations and organizational communication research.

But things are changing in recent years and the subject matter has started to attract the interest of scholars. Government communication (and related concepts such as political public relations, government public relations and government political marketing) has attracted the interest of a growing number of researchers (Canel & Sanders, 2012). Howlett (2009) also argues that government communication is a large growth industry in many countries as governments contract agencies and expand capacity (as cited in Canel & Sanders, 2013).

Mulatu (2017) argues that in recent years countries, more specifically developing ones, would face an enormous communication challenges as equal as their struggle for change and

development and there is an increasing need for two-way communication. Ethiopia is no exception in this regard.

In Ethiopia it is not clear when the practice of public relations was started. Solomon (2003) noted that the establishment of the ministry of Pen in 1940's paved the way for the introduction of public relations in government offices (as cited in Mulatu, 2017). These days the public relations departments in all the government offices act as a bridge to link the government and the public. They are major information sources for both journalists and the public regarding the governmental decisions and actions. Mulatu (2017) noted that they represent as a major information provider both to journalists and the public.

There is no doubt that government has to communicate its programs, policies, activities to the public but how this task could be undertaken to reach the desired outcome is the subject of continuing assessment in academia, in the media, among the public, and in government itself. Despite the fact that the government communication sector is drawing scholarly interest in recent years there is much left to do researches on the subject matter. According to Canel and Sanders (2013) there is still work to be done. Although there is research examining specific issues, concepts and countries, there is as yet no thorough and systematic interdisciplinary study of the subject (Canel and Sanders, 2013).

In this regard, social media usage by itself is a recent phenomenon that gave government communication another venue. Thus, a scientific study of government communication in Ethiopian organizations in the age of social media would have both practical and theoretical importance. It is in light of this context that the current study tries to explore the use of social media as a tool for governmental communication activities taking Addis Ababa City Mayor's Office as a case in point.

1.1.2 Statement of the problem

Addis Ababa is the economic and political capital of Ethiopia, a political center for Africa and also among the top ranking diplomatic cities of the world. As the responsible organ to the administration of the city Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office look over, along with other tasks, all the socio economic and political activities of the city. In this regard it quite

obvious that communication with its publics, both internal and external, is a vital element in the activities of the Office so that its objectives are achieved.

These days communication has become subject to change with the technological advancements. Technology has brought enormous impact in the information communication sector. Due to this impact a shift from the traditional approach to information dissemination to a new model has happened in which the social media became a significant tool in a communication practice. The government is no exception in this case and the ever-changing technology has affected the governmental communication activities around the world. Therefore the opportunities social media platforms are offering to organizations as additional ways of reaching out to their publics and how the organizations are harnessing the potentials is an area that needs to be looked into.

There are studies which showed that social media usage enhance government communication by creating a suitable platform for two way communication which in turn possibly facilitate the interaction between the government and its publics and increase public engagement in the decision making process. Newsom et al. (2013) noted that the Internet has changed the power balance between the public and an organization to an extent of assuring symmetric two way exchange of information. Social media therefore, has paved way for unexpected possibilities of engaging the public in government roles (as cited in Sakali, 2017).

While concluding that currently in Ethiopia there is an increasing need for two-way communication, Mulatu (2017) argues that social media usage of government not only helps to prevent problems that could arise from lack of information or misinformation but also makes things easier to the public who are searching for quick facts and it is an ideal method to disseminate information on daily basis. Failing to do this might be considered as keeping information from the public. The lack of professionalism in government communication in developing countries presents a serious challenge (World Bank, 2009).

Although it has been practiced for a while in a traditional way, the professional field of public relations is a recent phenomenon for Ethiopians and the same is true for the government communication, sometimes referred as government public relations. On the other hand, the notion of social media by itself is a new thing for Ethiopians and even for the World at large. Keeping in mind that the government communication is an under researched area of study there

are only few studies, at least the researcher of this study is able to find, dealing with the subject matter of usage of social media as a government communication tool.

The changes in many aspects of relationships and communication that the world is experiencing these days due to the emergence of social media has also brought a considerable effect on the communication trend in Ethiopia. Alemayehu (2013) noted that from the young to adult, from scholar to ordinary public has engaged in the social media and social networking activities and the engagement in the social networking sites has changed many aspects of citizens' communication and relationship. Government should acknowledge the potential positive effect of the use of social media.

On the other hand, despite the fact that government institutions are seen engaged in social media activities in recent times, it is hard to find academic studies, as far as the effort made by the researcher, conducted specifically to address the use of social media in government communication in Ethiopia. Therefore this study would bring a significant contribution in the effort to fill the gap in the scientific literature by showing how the social media is used as a government communication tool at Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office.

1.1.3 Objectives of the study

1.1.3.1 General objective

The main objective of this study is to explore how far the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has been using the social media to communicate with its publics.

1.1.3.2 Specific objectives

- The research has an objective of exploring how the staffs of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office see the potential of social media as a government communication tool.
- The study describes how frequently the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office uses social media to reach out to its publics.
- The research examines the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office, if any.

- The study also investigates the factors, if any, the affected the office's decision of choosing social media as a government communication tool.

1.1.4 Research questions

- What is the awareness of the staffs of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office regarding the use of social media as a government communication?
- To what extent do the Office use social media to communicate with its publics?
- What are the factors that affected the Office's decision of choosing social media as a government communication tool?
- What are the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office?

1.1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of this study, in the first place, are useful for the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office since they recommend areas for strengthening, improving or further investigation. On the other hand, the outcomes of this study are essential for any other governmental institutions, at different levels, particularly to the departments with the responsibilities of undertaking the communication and public relations activities with regard to the application of social media in government communication actions. In addition to these this research is also important to policy makers because it provides information regarding the use of using social media within government office. The results of this study are also important for future researchers and academicians as it can be used as reference to deal with government public relations and social media usage subject matter.

1.1.6 Scope of the study

The study was limited itself to investigating the use of social media as a communication tool at the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office for more certain results. This research only explored the awareness regarding the use of social media as a government communication tool, investigated the use of social media to reach out the public, examined the opportunities and challenges for using the social media and also investigated the factors for the preference of social

media to be used as a government communication tool at the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office. Therefore, since the study limited itself to the case of the office it may not represent the general aspect of the use of social media as a government communication tool in Ethiopia.

1.1.7 Limitation of the study

Because the subject matter, social media is a recent phenomenon, it is under researched, finding relevant resources, particularly significant local resources, for the study was challenging. The study limits itself on exploring the Facebook page and Telegram channel of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office therefore the appearance and engagement of the Office on other social media is not addressed on this study. Methodologically the study limits itself in a qualitative method of data analysis.

1.1.8 Organization of the study

Chapter one of the study deals with the introductory part. In this section, the discussion of the problem, the background, the objectives, the significance, the limitation and the scope of the study are discussed. Chapter two of this study deals with the review of literature relevant to the research. In chapter three, the methods and methodologies that are employed to do the research are discussed and the data presentation and analysis part is discussed in chapter four while chapter five deals with the conclusion and recommendations part.

II Chapter Two

2.1 Review of literature

2.1.1 Government communication defined

Communication is vital if an interaction between two entities needed to achieve the desired outcome. Communication, as a two-way process of information exchange, creates a mutual understanding among the parties engaged in it and this common understanding among the parties on a subject matter that could affect them both, either way, is crucial to make decisions and achieve a common goal.

When it comes to the government and publics, since governing is all about decision making, communication is much more essential. Governing necessarily involves continuous exchanges of information and communication about socio economic and political decisions, ideas and policies between governors and the governed so that mutual understandings are to be reached (Canel & Sanders, 2012). In this regard it is essential that ordinary citizens are constantly informed about government work and empowered to take active part in it.

Mulatu (2017) noted that alike the term government communication, one can simply understand the word government public relations as communication activities of the government body which are aimed at informing the public, encouraging dialogue, reaching consensus, and acquiring support for the implementation of the government's policies. Lee, Grant and Stewart (2012) in Canel & Sanders (2013) deal with the practice of government communication understood in terms of government public relations.

In this regard, despite the fact that both terms have a slight difference in the depth and breadth of academic study and since sometimes the one replace the other, the researcher of this study uses the term government communication and government public relation interchangeably in order to address the task of defining the goal, function, type and role of government communication.

Exactly what is meant by government communication varies from author to author. Howlett (2009) sees government communication as a policy tool or instrument to give effect to policy

goals; to influence and direct policy actions through the provision or withholding of information or knowledge from societal actors. Pasquier (2012) defines government communication as:

> All the activities of public sector institutions and organizations that are aimed at conveying and sharing information, primarily for the purpose of presenting and explaining government decisions and actions, promoting the legitimacy of these interventions, defending recognized values and helping to maintain social bonds. (p. 1)

According to Canel and Sanders (2012) the term government communication is often used to refer solely to top-level executive communication. But it can also be used to refer to institutions established by government to do its work at national, regional and local levels. Government communication also refers to the role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of public institution(s) whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that are constituted on the basis of the people's indirect or direct consent and charged to enact their will (Canel & Sanders, 2012).

Government communication can also be used to refer to communication undertaken by executive institutions at regional and local levels (Ipsos, 2008; Jenei, 2012, as cited in Canel & Sanders, 2013). Moreover, government communication research typically employs a multilevel analysis by looking at micro, meso and macro levels in the organizational structure including "meso-level central government structures" (Canel & Sanders, 2014 as cited in Johansson & Raunio, 2019)

Canel and Sanders (2013) tried to give a holistic definition for government communication including both its conceptual and functional aspect and defined it as:

> The role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of public institution(s) whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that are constituted on the basis of the people's indirect or direct consent and charged to enact their will. P. 4

Building on their previous work, Canel and Sanders (2016) in Johansson and Raunio (2019), later defined government communication broadly as the:

> Area of practice and study of communication directed to key publics in the pursuit of both political and civic purposes. This communication is carried out by executive politicians and officials, usually in a managed way, working for public institutions that are constituted on the basis of citizens' indirect or direct consent and are charged to enact their will. p. 450

Another approach treats government communication as a process and practice in public affairs or relations (Johansson & Raunio, 2019). For example, Hiebert (1981) in Johansson and Raunio (2019) presents a model of the government communication process, showing how the parts of the process of organizing and communicating fit together. Hiebert (1981) in Johansson and Raunio (2019) notes that many different decisions must be made in the process; first, one must decide upon one or more of four different strategies: withholding, releasing, staging and persuading. In each of these communication strategies, a variety of communication techniques can be used, each to a different effect.

According to Johansson and Raunio (2019) studies on government communication also include historical perspectives, implying that historical factors may shape today's government communications. For one, lessons of the past may explain the trend in government communication to move away from a reactive approach to a more proactive approach. According to Pasquier (2012) a general distinction is made between active government communication and passive public communication. Active communication active is a term used to refer to all information that is provided, unbidden and generally in an organized fashion, to the public or specific target groups by the authorities and the administration. Thus, most communication activities conducted by government organizations can be said to be active, as they are planned, organized and financed by these entities. In contrast, passive communication refers to the information conveyed by the administration to those persons who request it under the provisions of access to information laws now current in most countries (Pasquier, 2012).

Puddington (2009) in Canel and Sanders (2012) argue that government necessarily implies the principle of public-ness in two senses: first, there is always a public institutional setting even in the most authoritarian regimes; second, again regardless of the political realities, it is almost

always claimed that government is constituted on the basis of the people's direct or indirect consent and charged to enact their will.

In sum government communication is characterized by, and can be conceptualized as: (1) the institutional and organizational structures; (2) the process; and (3) the managerial aspects (Johansson & Raunio, 2019). Government communications is the essential lifeblood and the strategic element in service delivery which is worth investigating. It provides citizens with information about how they can take part in local, provincial and national discourse so that they influence the direction in which the country is going. Government's ability to deliver optimally transparent, productive, communication and interaction at all levels is a key to a future success.

2.1.2 Types of Government Communication

Pasquier (2012) distinguishes between several types of government communication. The first such type is government-wide communication. Indeed, most governments have structures enabling them to communicate about government activities. These structures generally come under the auspices of heads of government or ministers and are charged with explaining decisions, presenting actions and contributing to debate over the government's values and objectives.

Then, an administration has communication duties in respect of citizens' civil rights. In this capacity, it may be called on to encourage citizens to make use of their rights, spell out these rights and, as part of the political debate process, provide whatever information is requested by individuals. Although this type of communication is, in theory, highly factual in nature, it can also acquire a political quality depending, for example, on when the information in question is released.

The other type is that the communication activities that constitutes policy instruments. Communication is one of the main activities used to accomplish the corresponding public policy. The next type, involving institutional communication, consists in enhancing the visibility and influence of the organization. Organizations are increasingly required to develop a communications strategy for the purpose of creating or strengthening their image and reputation.

The last type of communication that administrations must consider is crisis communication. A particular feature of such communication is that it concerns any and all spheres of administration, arising in connection with, for example, a relationship problem originating in political institutions, a crisis of confidence with respect to organizational functioning, the emergence of a serious problem in a large-scale project, a service failure, or an internal crisis.

It is also worth noting that while the general principles of communication are the same for all the types of government communication discussed above, each type nevertheless possesses its specific characteristics, requires the appropriate kind of planning, and implies using a range of different communication tools (Pasquier, 2012).

2.1.3 Goal and functions of government communication

2.1.3.1 Goal

Despite it may vary in nature and the tools that it employs whether it takes place in the privet sector or in the governmental institutions communication is all about achieving goal. On the other hand the goal of government communication by itself may vary in accordance with the nature and motive of the government. According to Vos and Westerhoudt (2008) the principal goals of government communication are to make government action more transparent and to generate interaction with the outside world.

Government communication wrestles with considerable complexity in terms of goals, needs, audiences, definition and resources. The multilayered and organizationally diverse nature of government communication is a key factor in the complexity of understanding its needs, goals and resources. In relation to the issue of goals, for example, government communication often has to juggle what appear to be conflicting objectives set by political masters (Canel & Sanders, 2012).

Based on the survey they made to assess the then state of the art of government communication in The Netherlands Vos and Westerhoudt (2008) has identified and ranked four government communication goals in order of importance.

- Interaction with the outside world;

- Transparent government policy;
- A policy support base; and
- A positive image.

Beside the above mentioned major goals of government communication goals Vos and Westerhoudt (2008) also added some other goals of government communication and these goals are Enhance trust in the government; Manage expectations; Keep the public informed so that people can participate in our democracy; Realise a vibrant (local) democracy; Make government action understandable to various target groups; Internal communication to realize integrated communication; Monitor developments among public groups and More accountability.

2.1.3.2 Functions

Pasquier (2012) argues that in contrast with private organizations, whose primary goal is to persuade people to purchase goods and services, government communication often performs several highly different functions at the same time. Government communication operates on a multilayered level and organizationally diverse environment, taking into account a diverse group of stakeholders including other politicians, service users, minority groups, regulatory bodies, and the like (Canel & Sanders, 2013).

Government has to ensure that all information from government is provided to all people at all times. It needs to be acutely aware of the need to communicate effectively both to influence public opinion and maintain its legitimacy. In this effort, government should also explore a two-way communication approach as this will ensure a closer engagement. The ability to engage in two-way communication with citizens involves a complex set of interlocking structures, processes and practices, which government has already put in place to communicate effectively with the public.

Admittedly, it is difficult to rank government communication functions, owing to how they all may be important depending on the type of organization, policy area or practical situation involved. However, Pasquier (2012) distinguished core functions from ancillary functions on the basis of legal or statutory requirements:

- **Core functions**: informing the public, explaining and supporting decisions; defending values and promoting responsible behaviors; facilitating dialogue between institutions and citizens.

- **Ancillary functions**: orienting citizens and residents; demonstrating responsiveness, in particular through opinion surveys; promoting the legitimacy of government organizations and actions; contributing to the solidity of social bonds.

Government should provide information to the public in a coordinated manner. Given the rapidly changing information and communication environments around the world, strengthening government communication capacity should leverage existing and potential convergences in a country's communication space and media mix. New information and communication technologies can help enhance the government efforts to communicate proactively with the public. In planning communication of government messages, a combination of new and traditional information and communication technologies can provide leapfrog opportunities in some contexts.

2.1.4 Government communication roles

According to the World Bank (2009) communication represents an important function of government, responsible for improving three principle elements of government:

- Effectiveness: - building broad support and legitimacy for programs
- Responsiveness: - knowing citizens needs and responding to them
- Accountability: - explaining government stewardship and providing mechanisms to hold governments accountable

Enhanced citizen participation is a key indicator of effective government communication. Effective public communication efforts enable citizen participation. Therefore, government communication is more than just developing effective spokespeople, it also involves the provision of customer oriented services, and building capacity for citizens to provide government with feedback as regards these services. In developing countries, this requires crafting and promoting good practices when it comes to transparency issues (World Bank, 2009).

It is important to understand that neglecting to provide information to the public represents a serious impediment to governance, and underscoring the benefits of improved government communication has a strong multiplier effect. Weak government communication has clear negative consequences.

Government communication involves not only sending out persuasive messages to the public, but also explaining working policies, creating awareness of the rights of citizens, and developing mechanisms that enable two-way communication between citizens and government.

Government communication has several ethical dimensions World Bank (2009). These include:

- To provide useful and relevant information to constituents
- To listen to citizens and stakeholder groups
- To continuously learn from interactions with citizens and stakeholders
- To communicate with professionalism
- To be truthful (do no harm and do not willingly mislead)
- To illuminate issues and add value to public discussion

Government communication entails not only communicating messages, but also requires a firm understanding of the substance of government policies. In this light, much of the work to improve government communication involves addressing structural issues. Effective government communication requires the creation of an empowered communication environment, in which communication experts are willing to take risks. Well drafted policies that are legally binding and enforceable are crucial factors of an enabling environment. Citizen media literacy and strengthening of media organizations are also necessary.

2.1.5 Government communication tools

Never before has government had so many tools to communicate to citizens: through print, television, and online media, through social media feeds, through e-mail and text notifications, through a mobile app ecosystem that seems to change by the day. Combine all these options it is no surprise that effective communication is hard to achieve. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy

for government communication. The task will vary greatly across agencies and localities, by platform and channel, and ultimately depending on what the message is and who needs to hear it.

According to Howlett (2009) government communications tools can be thought of as falling into four general types:

2.1.5.1 Substantive Producer-Directed Tools: Notification Instruments and 'Moral Suasion'

Adler & Pittle (1984) in Howlett (2009) describe this tool as "notification instruments" which:

> "Convey factual information to the intelligent target. Implicit in the notification approach is the belief that the target, once appraised of the facts, will make the appropriate decision."

Some notification tools attempt to be purely factual, ongoing and passive in nature, such as nutritional labeling on foodstuffs or health warnings on cigarettes (Padberg 1992; Baksi & Bose 2007 as cited in Howlett, 2009). They are usually enacted in regulations (i.e. disclosure is mandatory) and are aimed at providing information to consumers allowing them make better decisions, or overcome information asymmetries (Jahn et al., 2005 as cited in Howlett, 2009) between producers and consumers, with the expectation that they will change their behavior in some way consistent with government goals.

2.1.5.2 Substantive Consumer-Directed Tools: Exhortation and Persuasion Instruments

Adler and Pittle (1984) in Howlett (2009) provide a definition of substantive, information-based, 'back-end' tools directed at consumers as "persuasion instruments" which entail "persuasion schemes (which) convey messages which may or may not contain factual information which overtly seek to motivate target audiences to modify their behavior". These are probably the best known government communication tools.

The most prominent type is the appeal from political leaders to various social actors, urging them to follow a government's lead in some area of social or economic life (Cobb & Elder 1972 as cited in Howlett, 2009). Mass media and targeted information campaigns are also highly visible examples of tools in this category, by definition, and tend to be aimed less at producers than at consumers.

2.1.5.3 Procedural Tools Affecting Agenda-Setting and Policy Formulation: General Information Disclosure and Concealment

Stanbury and Fulton (1984) in Howlett (2009) describe common 'front-end' procedural policy tools as monitoring and information disclosure instruments (for example, environmental audits, ombudsmen, prices and incomes commissions as well as freedom of information and privacy laws). All of these tools can involve information bans or release prevention as well as information disclosure; they can be general or specific in nature; can be focused on individuals or the public and can be mandatory or optional in nature.

Freedom of Information legislation allows access to individual's own records and those of others, - with numerous exemptions - again many benign (to protect other individuals from unnecessary disclosure) and (access to information) allowing access to documents and records of others, - with numerous exemptions - again many kinds (to protect individuals from unnecessary disclosure - privacy rights.

There is also a wide range of these tools designed to protect certain kinds of information on government activities or in government files from entering the public realm or in suppressing certain knowledge or information considered undesirable. These include protecting not only information collected by governments but that which comes into their possession. These range from wartime censorship and bans on political parties and speech to Official Secrets Acts with various levels of confidentiality and penalties imposed for publicizing or releasing government secrets.

2.1.5.4 Procedural Tools for Policy Implementation and Evaluation: Data Collection and Release

Stanbury and Fulton (1984) in Howlett (2009) also discuss several tools in which affected parties are given information on government plans, like public hearings; the discrete use of confidential information such as planned leaks to press or planned public disclosure of government intentions; as well as government media relations and communications strategies intended to legitimize government actions and pre-empt criticism and dissent.

Some of these tools are used in order to generate information, such as inquiries, surveys and polling. Government information requests can be much focused and can be quite secretive. Many recent government efforts at e-communications (websites, mail lists, wiki's, twitters, and the like) also fall into this category. Tools in this category can also be used to prevent specific types of information from circulating.

Distinguishing between information tools that are procedural or substantive in nature is a first step in the development of this taxonomy. The second step is to distinguish between those procedural and substantive instruments that focus on the front-end of policy and production processes and those which focus on the back-end. Taken together these two criteria reveal four distinct types of communication instruments: product information; consumer information campaigns; general disclosure tools and data collection and release tools (Howlett, 2009).

2.1.6 Concept of social media

There are different definitions of social media, ranging from more limited to broader interpretations of social media. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the term social media is a noun, plural in form but singular or plural in construction, which refers to the forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) in Looy (2016) define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (p. 61). This definition seems to restrict social media to Web 2.0 and user generated content, but more general definitions exist.

Web 2.0 refers to the use of the Internet (or the World Wide Web, WWW) in order to create content, share, and collaborate among Internet users. In particular, Web 2.0 is the technical platform for the evolution of social media, as it allows online content and applications (e.g., blogs or wikis) to be modified by all users in a rather participatory and collaborative way (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 as cited in Looy, 2016). While user-generated content (UGC) can

be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 as cited in Looy, 2016).

Safko and Brake (2009) in Looy (2016) refer to media that people can use to be social or "the story is in the tactics of each of the hundreds of technologies, all of the tools that are available for you to connect with your customers and prospects, and the strategies necessary to use these tactics and tools effectively" (p. 3). While Boyd and Ellison (2007) in Sakali (2017) defined social media as a web-based application allowing users to create a profile in a closed system, has other users with whom one relate with and can perceive them as friends. In the end, social media are about online interactions and connections.

2.1.7 Types of social media

According to Looy (2016) the social media can be classified in two ways. The first classification relies on theories in the field of media research and theories on social processes while the second one is based on the common characteristics of the social media.

According to theories in the field of media research, one can better influence the behavior of someone else with personalized and synchronous communication than with mediated and asynchronous communication (i.e., social presence theory). In particular, social media are more personalized compared to the mass media (e.g., radio, television, newspaper) and allow faster interaction. Further on, social media allow providing a large amount of information in a relatively short time interval (compared to the mass media with predefined time slots), which may result in less uncertainty and more knowledge about facts (i.e., media richness theory).

On the other hand, according to theories in the field of social processes, people tend to influence what others think of them by acting as such (i.e., self-presentation theory). Hence, social media can be used for reasons of image building. Besides self-presentation, you must ascertain that all personal information you (unconsciously) reveal about yourself is consistent with the desired image (i.e., self-disclosure theory).

By combining these theoretical insights, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) in Looy (2016) propose classifying social media tools according to their degree of instant contact and image-building opportunities.

The second classification is based on common characteristics of social media tools to detect social media types. Safko and Brake (2009) in Looy (2016) listed some examples of specific social media tools that correspond to each social media type.

No.	**Social media types**	**Examples of social media tools per type**
1	Social communities	Facebook™, LinkedIn™, Google+™, Yammer™
2	Social text publishing tools	Blogs, Wikipedia™, Slideshare™, Quora™
3	Microblogging tools	Twitter™, Tumblr™
4	Social photo publishing tools	Pinterest™, Instagram™, Flickr™, Picasa™
5	Social audio publishing tools	Spotify™, iTunes™, Podcast.com
6	Social video publishing tools	YouTube™, Vimeo™, Vine™
7	Social gaming tools	World of Warcraft™
8	RSS	RSS 2.0, Google™ FeedBurner
9	Live casting tools	Live365, Justin.tv
10	Virtual worlds	Second Life™, Kaneva™
11	Mobile tools	Foursquare™, Swarm™
12	Productivity tools	SurveyMonkey™, Google™ Docs, Doodle™
13	Aggregators	MyYahoo!™, iGoogle™ (until November 2013)

Table 2.1 A classification of social media types and tools, based on common characteristics [adapted from Safko and Brake (2009) in Looy (2016)]

The table does not intend to list all social media tools, but it gives an overview of those social media tools that are commonly used nowadays and merely as an illustration. Safko and Brake (2009) in Looy (2016) mentioned that an organization should not necessarily use all social media types but that it should rather focus on those types that are most important or beneficial.

2.1.8 Purposes of social media use

People and organizations use social media for different purposes depending on their respective objectives. Safko and Brake (2009) in Looy (2016) explain that social media can be used for four general reasons: (1) for communicating, (2) for collaborating, (3) for educating, and (4) for entertaining.

- **Social media use for communication**, e.g., to convince and to sell. Organizations should think through what they are communicating and how they measure the effectiveness of their communication and the perceptions by the audience.
- **Social media use for collaboration**, e.g., to convince and to sell. Collaboration has frequently the same purpose of communication. However, it focuses on sharing experience between customers and prospects while using a product.
- **Social media use for education**, e.g., to learn about an organization's products, brand, suppliers, etc.
- **Social media use for entertainment**, e.g., trying to be funny. Organizations can also use social media in order to be interesting and compelling. They can even try to experiment. Nonetheless, they should wonder whether the majority of the targeted audience will find the message funny, as people may have different types of humor. They should also be aware of cultural differences between what is considered as being funny.

2.1.9 Government communication and social media

Historically, governments have relied heavily on traditional mass media to disseminate public information. The advent of blogs, podcasts, and social networks provides government officials the means to communicate directly with their publics without the intervention of editors and reporters who can act as gatekeepers. Decades ago, governments began using the Internet to communicate with citizens through the automation of routine government operations, which later evolved to web sites, RSS feeds, blogs, and wikis (Dixon, 2010 as cited in Graham, 2014). Commonly referred to as e-government, these technologies had initially and primarily been used as one-way methods of communication, allowing citizens to access services or retrieve information.

The popularity of social media in recent years has revolutionized the way the world communicates. The instantaneous, direct, and interactive communication components that social media provide can be particularly beneficial to governments at all levels as they pledge to be more transparent, participatory, and collaborative with their citizens (Bertot et al., 2010 in Graham, 2014).

Graham (2014) argues that social media usage enhances governments' ability to interact with and engage citizens. This more open form of government public relations that social media usage provides is particularly beneficial to local governments, as it is the local level of government where citizens often feel the most direct access and potential importance in governance. Since more and more citizens are going online to get information, public information officers have to be cognizant of this reality (Graham, 2014).

Governments have more opportunities to interact with and engage stakeholders, and social media are an inexpensive and swift communication channel for them to do this. The open, dialogic nature of social media eliminates many of the barriers in communication that governments have experienced in the past. Communication with constituents can be more frequent, open, and targeted (Graham, 2014). Social media provide governments with the ability to enhance and improve government–citizen relations.

2.1.10 Internet in Ethiopia

Nowadays, children are part of a digital generation, and they can hardly image a world without the Internet, smart phones, tablets, games, and apps. Social media can be seen as part of the Internet evolution. While the first Internet generation primarily looked for information in the 1990s, we now use the Internet to share information and opinions and to collaborate or participate in online content. Given its high impact on our daily lives and on today's economy, the Internet can also be called a revolution instead of only an evolution (Looy, 2016).

There is contradicting information about when the internet technology was introduced to Ethiopia. On the one hand, the information from the Ministry of Transport and Communication and Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency 2005/06 Annual Statistics Bulletin indicated that the Internet service has started in Ethiopia since 1997. At the time, the number of internet subscribers was not more than 1000. One year later, the number of subscribers rose by 98.5% and reached 2,068 subscribers (Agency, 2005; Worku, 2005 as cited in Alemayehu, 2013).

Another release by the International Telecommunications Union (2002) in Alemayehu (2013) stated that the use of the Internet in Ethiopia began in 1993 by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (whose headquarter is in Addis Ababa). Since there was no service during that time, it was connected to GreenNet's Internet gateway in London. The users were mainly international organizations and NGOs as well as some academics, individuals and private companies. Its user were the service about 1'200.

However, Internet coverage has been improving in recent years. According to Internet World Stats (2019) In March 2019 the number of internet user in Ethiopia reached 16,437,811 which count 14.9% of the population. The penetration rate is estimated around 14.9 percent and the internet growth from 2000 to 2019 is 164,278 percent.

AFRICA 2019 POPULATION AND INTERNET USERS STATISTICS						
Africa	Population (2019 Est.)	Internet Users 31-Dec-	Internet Users 31-Mar-	Penetration (%	Internet Growth % 2000 -	Facebook subscribers 31-Dec-

		2000	2019	Population)	2019	2017
Ethiopia	110,135,635	10,000	16,437,811	14.9 %	164,278 %	4,500,000

Source: https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm

2.1.11 Social Media in Ethiopia

Since the Internet has revolutionized the way most people in the world live, Ethiopia is no exception. According to Ali (2012) in Alemayehu (2013) the internet has become the integral part of our economic, political, and social life. It alters the way we purchase goods, the way we bank, and the way we communicate with one another. Thus, the emergence of internet not only changes the way we live, it also offers the platform for the rising of different social media and social networking sites.

The emergence of social media changes many aspects of relationships and communication. The phenomenon of the social media and social networking has been happening in Ethiopia. From the young to adult, from scholar to ordinary public has engaged in the social media and social networking activity. In addition, the engagement in the social networking sites has changed many aspects of citizens' communication and relationship (Alemayehu, 2013).

According to the We Are Social, a website that work on global digital report, by January 2019 there are 6.1 million active social media users in Ethiopia and the penetration is estimated around 5.6 percent. The mobile social media users in Ethiopia by January 2019 count 5.6 million and the penetration is 5.1 percent. Compared to the same time in last year there is more than 61 percent increment in the number of active social media users and more than 56 percent increment in the number of mobile social media users (we are social, 2019). Among the many different social network sites Facebook™ is the most visited site in Ethiopia with an estimated 9.43 minute per day visit.

2.1.12 Government communication in Ethiopia

According to the information from the former FDRE Government Communications Affairs Office it is believed that government communication activity in Ethiopia is a century old activity. The first news paper was written by hand and till the introduction printing machineries hand written news papers were the communication channels between the government and the people. After the Italian conquerors left the country press and information ministry was established which helped for the booming of print and electronic media, including the then Ethiopian Television (now Ethiopian broadcasting corporate, EBC).

The FDRE promotion ministry was established on 1964EC during the imperial regime. After two years the ministry reorganized to add tourism as its activity. During the Dergue regime the ministry reformed by the name promotion and national advisory ministry on 1975EC. This time the ministry was granted with power to regulate organizations like the Ethiopian news service, press directory, public relation directory, news paper and magazine distribution agency and the censorship service.

After the fall of Dergue the transitional government abolished the censorship and declared the freedom of speech. During the transitional government communication activities were carried out by the ministry of promotion which later reformed as the promotion and culture ministry. Currently the government communication affairs office which was established on 2000EC is serving as a communication channel between the government and the public, both nationally and internationally.

2.1.13 Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office

Established by Proclamation No. 35/2012 of the Addis Ababa City Government Executive and Municipal Service Organs Reestablishment Proclamation the Addis Ababa city Administration Mayor's Office is vested with, among other power and functions,

- Superiorly organize, direct and administer Office of the Mayor;

- Ensure participation of the public by disseminating, using website and other means, information about activities of the Mayor and the office; build image of the City using different tools of promotion;
- Perform foreign relation activities on common agenda in cooperation with foreign cities, governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- Follow up, evaluate, and give feedback on the plan and performance of plan of the executive organs of the City; submit timely information to the Mayor;
- Accept and give response to the complaints and grievances of the public up on order of the Mayor;

Addis Ababa city Administration Mayor's Office has a mission of enabling Addis Ababa City government to become among one of medium income cities in the year 2020 competing with such cities with conductive life style and an example of good governance. The Office stated its vision as "Enable Addis Ababa City government peaceful, secure and good governance becoming conducive for residents social and economic benefits and needs as well as international diplomatic city." While the Values of the Office are accountability, transparency, readiness to change, leading by knowledge and service excellence.

2.1.14 Two-way communication

According to the World Bank (2009) Two-way communication between the government and the public produces governance outcomes that are of higher quality and more sustainable (many governments do not have sufficient capacity for effective one-way communication). Consulting and engaging the public should not be limited to elections, crises, and politically risky issues. Governments need to be aware that if they don't communicate, opposing forces may dominate the public agenda. Showing citizens that the government is listening may be as important as actually listening. Over the long run, however, citizens need to see that their input is being taken seriously.

Efficiency is an incentive that may serve as motivation for governments to improve their communication capacity. E-government initiatives, such as Web 2.0 technologies and SMS applications, can serve to promote improvements, as can traditional communication tools, such

as community radio call-in shows and local television. Community media can stimulate two-way communication between civil society and the state (World Bank, 2009).

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984) Two-way communication involves persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires and does not use research to find out how stakeholders feel about the organization when it is asymmetrical in nature. But when it is symmetrical two way communication Uses communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its stakeholders.

In the Two-way asymmetric communication practitioners conduct scientific research to determine how best to persuade publics to behave in the way their organizations wish. With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitude and behaviors of both their organizations and publics through research and dialogue.

The idea of two ways communication was introduced as a result of looking for a feedback for information disseminated that began to be considered as part of the communication process. However, the purpose of seeking feedback wasn't to change position that has been seized by an organization, instead the feedback was to be used to introduce another form of persuasion so that the audience would accept the interest of the organization (Seitel, 2011 as cited in Mulatu, 2017).

On the other hand in the Two-way symmetric communication practitioners serve as mediators between organizations and their publics. Their goal is mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. When it comes to the government Social media are outlets that hold great promise because of their ability to foster democracy by allowing for greater citizen participation, knowledge of government actions, and more opportunities for engagement. This is achieved through the two-way flow of information that is facilitated through social media use.

Social media emphasize interactivity and co-creation of content fostering a two-way exchange of information (Kingsley, 2010 as cited in Graham, 2014), which offers great potential for enhanced democratization of information exchange at the local level. Graham (2014) concluded that by having a two-way dialogue through social media, PIOs in local government report being able to quickly address citizen concerns and mitigate negative feelings and comments. This

encouragement of both positive and negative feedback makes the government's efforts to provide transparency and accountability more plausible.

Grunig in cooperation with Jaatinen (1999) in Canel and Echart (2011) acknowledges that his symmetrical model would have to be adapted to the specific c conditions of government communication. Government communication is conceived as the cultivation of long-term relationships oriented to mutual understanding rather than being modeled on short-term, vote-winning approaches to communication.

III Chapter Three

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Design

Research design is a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study is to be completed. Kerlinger (1986) states that a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The plan is the complete scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data (as cited in Kumar, 2011).

According to Kumar (2011) research design has two main functions. These are: - Identification and/or development of procedures and logistical arrangements required undertaking a study; and quality assurance which includes ensuring validity, objectivity and accuracy.

Accordingly this study employed exploratory research design to assess the use of social media as a tool for governmental communication activities taking Addis Ababa City Mayor's Office as a case in point. As the term suggests by itself exploratory research design deals with exploring into the phenomenon. Exploratory research is undertaken with the objective either to explore an area where little is known or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular research study (Kumar, 2011).

3.1.2 Research Approach

In order to explore and understand the use of social media as a tool for governmental communication activities at the Addis Ababa City Mayor's Office this study employed a qualitative research approach. Creswell (2009) states that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. While Morse (1991) argues that qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. This type of approach may be needed because the topic is new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or

group of people, and existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study (as cited in Creswell, 2009).

Martin (2009) states that qualitative research is committed to viewing the social world: social action and events from the view point of the people being studied; that is discovering their socially constructed reality and penetrating the frames of meaning within which they conduct their activities (as cited in Sakali, 2017).

In qualitative study the process involves flexibility and staying open for emerging questions and procedures. Data are typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure (Creswell, 2009).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) as cited in Mulatu (2017) suggest that in order for a qualitative research to achieve its objectives, there are four primary data collection methods it relies on:

- Participating in the setting
- Observing directly
- Interviewing in depth
- Analyzing documents and material culture

Therefore as the subject matter of this study is new and the trend of using social media in the day-to-day communication activities of our society by itself is a new phenomena qualitative research approach was founded out as a suitable approach for this study. In depth interview and qualitative content analysis data gathering techniques are employed to obtain all the necessary data for the research.

3.1.3 Data Collection methods

Research data are nothing but facts or observation on which test or argument is made. Data may be of two types namely primary and secondary data. This research makes use of both of them. Myers (2008) says that primary data is the data which is collected for the research project. Primary data do not exist until and unless it is generated through the research process as part of the project. Primary data is closely related to and has implications for the method and techniques

of the data collection. In this study primary data collected in qualitative form from in depth interviews.

Secondary data is the data that were collected by someone else for a different purpose. When gathering secondary data every source of information used must be indentified in the paper. Secondary data are cheaper and quicker to gather. In this research, secondary data are collected from books, journals and online magazines.

This study conducted by taking the case of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor' Office to put the study in a more practical context. According to Bell and Emory (2011) case study research is associated with the investigation of a particular place, community, setting or organization (as cited in Sakali, 2017).

3.1.3.1 In-depth interview

An interview is an important qualitative research method in which the researcher collects data directly from the participants. Interviews are significant in unfolding opinions, experiences, values and various other aspects of the population under study. Gorry and Westbrook (2009) states that Interview is the most widely employed method in qualitative research because it allows a thorough examination of experiences, feelings or opinions (as cited in Sakali, 2017). In-depth interview involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation.

As a data collection method, interviews are one of the most significant sources for use in obtaining case study information (Sakali, 2017). Specifically, the interview method allowed the researcher to focus directly on the case study topic. Additionally, interviews were insightful in that they gave perceived causal conclusions (Yin, 1994).

The format of an interview is determined by its goals or objectives. On the basis of different methods of extracting information, interviews may be broadly categorized into three categories; structured, semi-structured and unstructured. If an interviewer follows a list of predetermined questions, the interview becomes structured. In the same way, if the interviewer has a list of areas or topics instead of specific questions, it becomes a semi-structured interview. There is no fixed sequence to be followed in this type of interview. The questions are asked about a specific

area and as the conversation develops, different questions keep coming. On the other side, unstructured interviews are moreover like a daily based conversation. There is no specific set of predetermined questions. If the interviewer doesn't follow the list of specific questions prepared for the interview, a structured interview may turn into a semi-structured or unstructured interview.

In-depth interviews are one of the most efficient methods of collecting primary data. The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods. They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information. People may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you about their experiences as opposed to filling out a survey.

In-depth interview has a disadvantage as well. The disadvantages are, it is prone to bias, consumes time to analyze, information could be distorted through recall error, selective perceptions, desire to please interviewer and people do not always say what they think, or mean what they say (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Boyce, C. & Neale,P. 2006; Jensen, 2002 as cited in Mulatu, 2017).

As it is stated in chapter one this study has an objective of understanding how concerned staffs of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office see the potential of social media as a government communication tool. For this reason in depth interview data collection method is used in this study in order to assess the staff's perception and understanding regarding the use of social media as a government communication tool.

Accordingly semi structured in-depth interview was used as a main tool to gather data from key informants regarding their understanding and experience of social media usage as a government communication tool.

3.1.3.2 Content analysis

There are numerous approaches for analyzing qualitative data and content analysis is one of the approaches. Content analysis is one of the main methods of analyzing qualitative data. It is the process of analyzing the contents of interviews or observational notes in order to identify the main themes that emerge from the responses given by respondents or the observation notes made

by the researcher (Kumar, 2011). Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages (Cole 1988, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

Content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980 as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The aim is to attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon.

Content analysis is a method that may be used with either qualitative or quantitative data; furthermore, it may be used in an inductive or deductive way. If there is not enough former knowledge about the phenomenon or if this knowledge is fragmented, the inductive approach is recommended (Lauri & Kyngas 2005, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Through content analysis, it is possible to distil words into fewer content related categories. It is assumed that when classified into the same categories, words, phrases and the like share the same meaning (Cavanagh 1997, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

Accordingly this study has employed content analysis data collection method in order to understand what the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is being delivering to its publics through the social media. In this regard relevant social media posts of the Office are investigated in order to answer the 'why?' and 'what?' questions arose about them. The question about what the posts are telling and why is addressed with the content analysis method. This helps to understand if the Office is using social media to carry out is government communication activities or not.

3.1.4 The target population

The press secretariat of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is vested with the responsibilities, along with other duties, of informing the public about the activities of the organs of the city government; undertaking promotional activities and boosting international relations and establishing new partnerships. It is also the responsible to manage and monitor tasks of the office that are executed using the social media.

Therefore for the purpose of analyzing how the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has been using the social media to communicate with its publics the target populations are taken from the staffs of the Office in general and from the staffs of the press secretariat specifically. Twenty staffs are interviewed and investigated in order to generate all the necessary data for the study. In this regard five respondents are taken from the press secretariat and fifteen respondents are taken from other departments of the Office.

3.1.5 Sampling

A purposive sampling procedure was employed. The samples are selected based on the assumption that they are the responsible individuals to undertake the communication activities of the Office and also they are a staff member of the Office. In this regard individuals on a managerial level whose task is related to the social media are contacted by the researcher first to make an appointment for interview and discussed the appropriate date and time. After making schedule the researcher interviewed the respondents one at a time taking twenty minute on average per a single interview.

On the other hand, even though they might not be directly take part in accomplishing the communication tasks of the Office, as one of the staff members of the Office, employees of the Office represent, by default, their Office in relation to the communication with the general public both on the social and mainstream media. In this regard the same procedure which is taken for those individuals on the managerial level are applied to make an interview with the staff members of the Office. While being the staff member of the Office on one hand and being on the position to administer the social media activities of the Office on the other are the conditions used to determine the samples having experience of using social media is also another factor employed to take the samples. The contents of Facebook and Telegram posts by the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office from March to May of 2017 are also taken as a sample and analyzed qualitatively.

3.1.6 Data analysis procedure

In order to analyze and interpret the qualitative data that are gathered using in depth interview and document analysis data collection methods qualitative data analysis software named ATLAS ti™ is used.

Accordingly the data gathered through in-depth interview and qualitative content analysis data collection techniques are transcribed. A total of three hundred ninety four minutes of interview is transcribed and fed to the software and coded. After the first stage of coding similar or related topics are merged and grouped to form a bigger category on one hand and topics irrelevant to the study are eliminated on the second stage. On this stage the data are compiled in a way that they can generate themes that address the general and specific objectives of the study.

After all the coding process, four major themes are generated which are mainly focused on answering the research questions of this study. In this regard thematic data analysis is employed to analyze the data qualitatively.

IV Chapter Four

4.1 Data presentation, analysis and discussion

4.1.1 Introduction

This study has different specific objectives which are derived from the main objective of the study. These objectives are focused on understanding how concerned staffs of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office see the potential of social media as a government communication tool; describing to what extent Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office uses social media to reach out to its publics; examining the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office and investigating the factors the affected the office's decision of choosing social media as a government communication tool.

Since the issue to be dealt with is a recent phenomenon exploratory research design is employed so that the study meets the above mentioned objectives. In this regard qualitative research approach was founded out as a suitable approach for this study while in depth interview and content analysis data collection techniques are used to generate qualitative data. Twenty staff members of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office, which are selected purposively from different position and departments are interviewed and on average twenty three minutes used for each interview. Seventy-eight Facebook posts on the official page of the office, which are posted between the month of March and May 20, 2019, and posts shared official Telegram channel of the Office during the same period of time are investigated to generate the qualitative data.

The official Facebook page of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office named "Mayor Office of Addis Ababa" is created on August, 2018 and as of May 20, 2019 the page has 168,281 page likes while 171,437 peoples are following it. On the other hand the official Telegram channel of the Office "Mayor Office of Addis Ababa" is created on February, 2019 and as of May 20, 2019 the channel has joined by 1942 peoples. Although the Office also has appearance on other social media like Instagram, Viber, Youtube and Twitter the activities are negligible.

4.1.2 Data presentation and analysis

As stated earlier, based on the main and specific objectives of the study, in depth interview and qualitative content analysis data collections techniques are employed to answer the research questions. Accordingly in order to have a better understanding of the subject matter the data gathered through the two techniques are presented in general. Rather than presenting the data in a parallel way in accordance with the data collection technique the researcher believes that presenting the data combined one to the other gives a bigger picture and a better understanding.

4.1.2.1 What is the perception of the staffs of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office regarding the use of social media as a government communication?

To address this specific objective of the study questions like what is their understanding regarding the use of social media as a platform for government communication how they describe the importance of using social media for a government to communicate with its publics are raised for the respondents after some introductive questions which are focused on whether they are familiar with the social media and how much time a day they spend using the social media either for personal or organizational purpose.

All the respondents are familiar with the social media and all of them answered that the use Facebook more often. They all also have experience of using Telegram and there are also respondents with the experience of using Twitter. The amount of time per day that the respondents spent on using social media differs one from another. Some of them spend a lot of time which go more than four hours a day. For example Mr. Dereje Sisay, a young professional whose responsibility at the Office is directly related to the task on the social media and assigned on recording audio visual information said,

> My job is related with the Internet and the social media so I spend a lot of time on it because along side with other tasks I use the social media to gather information and update myself. I use social media more than four hours a day. Of course I use the online media to learn new things that can help me develop my skill but mainly I spent much time on gathering socio economic and political information about my country and my city.

On the other hand there are also respondents who spend negligible amount of time on using the social media for whatever purpose. For example Biruk Ashenafi, Director of one of the directorates under the press secretariat, whose responsibility mainly not related to direct engagement on the social media said,

> I am not that much in to the social media. I use Facebook occasionally to gather information and update myself about what is going on and nothing else I do with the social media related to my job. My experience on posting and sharing staffs on social media is minimal. I do not believe that social media is a better place to spend one's time.

The purpose they use the social media for is also differs among the staffs of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office. Most of them use the social media for personal purposes and only those whose tasks are related to the online media uses the social media for the purpose of their job. Those respondents who spend a lot of time said that using the social media helps them to be much more effective on their job. This is because, on the social media, they can find and follow peoples and pages which provide trainings and materials which helps them to develop their respective knowledge and skills related to their profession. For example Ms. Meseret Dagne, a system administrator at the Office watch video that teaches her to develop her knowledge and skill. She believes that watching such videos on the social media helped her to be creative on her job.

On the other hand for those respondents with a minimal involvement on the social media, the relation between effectiveness on the job and the usage of social media is a mere talk. Social media has nothing to do with one's effectiveness on the job. Biruk Ashenafi, said

> It is more subjective to relate one's job performance with the usage of the social media. I believe it can be seen in different contexts. In our case, for instance, I believe the social media adds nothing for the effectiveness on the job. But for those who use the social media to deliver their product, services or even themselves it might help but in our case the social media is a place where irrelevant things are in chaos so it benefits nothing and I do not even choose the social media to share information.

Despite the difference on their view of relationship between effectiveness on one's job and the use of social media, understanding of all the respondents regarding the use of social media as a platform for government communication is positive. All the respondents believe that the social media is helpful and can serve as a bridge between the government and its publics. Unlike the mainstream media, both electronic and print media, the social media is much more flexible to access information. The introduction of social media on the communication world has brought a significant change on the availability of information and service delivery. Now days everybody can access whatever information they want online and can communicate with the service or product provider wherever they are and whenever they want using their computer, laptop or cell phone. The social media is not time bounded. Daniel Abiy, Director of the department which is vested with the power to manage the social media activities of the Office believes that the social media has the potential to eases the communication process. One can update information so easily and reach the public more frequently. The social media enables to deliver information with text, picture or videos in a simplistic manner.

In this regard the since governing necessarily involves constant exchanges of information and communication about socio economic and political decisions, ideas and policies between governors and the governed the social media is supportive for governments to reach out the wide public. Unlike the conventional media in which information is manipulated the editors in line with the specific editorial policies of that media the social media provides the opportunities for government organization to communicate directly with their public without the involvement of third party. Describing the importance of using social media for a government to communicate with its public Daniel Abiy said,

> I believe the emergence of the social media helped government organizations to be more accountable than any time else. Since it is hard to control the information on social media government organizations are more cautious in doing what they are assigned for because any failure may provoke danger to the organization. I think the promotion of accountability is one of the importance that the social media brought.

The other thing is that the social media has enabled the society to find information on their finger tips. Waiting for the News on television and radio or waiting for the weekly magazines and news

papers to find out what is happening is no more relevant in the age of social media. What happens in one part of the world reach the other part of the world so fast and even it is possible to stream live as it happens and these features has made the new media much more important than others. For Tsion Tekle, a young information technology professional whose responsibility is not directly related on the social media engagement on behalf of the Office, the importance of using social media for a government communication purpose is described as,

> For example if you have an agenda and you worked day long on the television to deliver that agenda and someone else preferred different mechanism and used the social media to address the agenda to the public you will definitely loose to achieve your objective. Because the posts on the social media are much likely to become viral and reach millions of peoples in a few span of time if they are well designed where as the television and radio productions and also the information on the print medium are more prone to not reach to the audience due to the inconvenience of time and place. So the social media can narrow the gap between the government and the public

In general despite their difference regarding the purpose they use the social media for; the time they spent using the social media and the view they have on the relationship between the effectiveness on one's job and the use of social media all the respondent perceive that the social media is a better platform for government communication and provides a better chance to narrow the gap between government and its publics. The social media is much more favorable platform that a quick and simple communication between government and the public at large can take place. Further the social media is helpful in promoting accountability of government bodies.

4.1.2.2 To what extent do the Office use social media to communicate with its publics?

As it is clearly stated on the official web site of the Office the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has a mission of enabling Addis Ababa City government to become among one of medium income cities in the year 2020 competing with such cities with conductive life style and an example of good governance. The Office stated its vision as "Enable Addis Ababa City government peaceful, secure and good governance becoming conducive for residents social and economic benefits and needs as well as international diplomatic city." While the Values of the

Office are accountability, transparency, readiness to change, leading by knowledge and service excellence.

The Office is vested with, among other power and functions, superiorly organize, direct and administer Office of the Mayor; ensure participation of the public by disseminating, using website and other means, information about activities of the Mayor and the office; build image of the City using different tools of promotion.

Keeping this in mind in order to know to what extent the Office is using the social media to communicate with its publics questions like, what government communication activities are carried out by the use of social media in your Office and how often; if they get inquiries or feedback through social media from their publics and if they get, how often they respond, if not, what is the reason are raised for the respondents to answer.

The social media activities of the Office are carried out by the Press secretary section. The section has three, by the time this study is conducted, directorates namely the press directorate, the protocol directorate and the public and international relations directorate. The press directorate is the responsible organ of the office to carry out the tasks on the social media. This directorate has only two staff members, by the time this study is conducted, and all administration of the social media contents of the Office is done by these two individuals.

Basically there is no guide line and strategy which clearly state for what purpose the Office use the social media. But the Office uses the social media to disseminate information regarding the activities of the Mayor and agendas that are aimed mobilizing the public for a common goal. Posts about planned projects are also shared. Every activities of the mayor or addressed through the social media, mainly Facebook and Telegram. The other thing that the Office is using the social media for is addressing issues that need clarity. The office uses pictures videos and text posts. Daniel Abiy's answer on this issue is,

There is no specific strategy regarding the use of the social media and there is no such thing that we do this and we do not do that on the social media any information that should reach to the public will be disseminated. The public has the right to know what is going on the city and we

work to meet that right. Activities of the city council and the cabinet, meetings and all the activities of the Mayor etc. are the issues that we cover on the social media.

Although the Office is vested with the power to ensure participation of the public by disseminating information by whatever tools of communication and despite the fact that the social media is a favorable platform engage the public the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office appearance on the social media is much more to deliver news and is minimal in encouraging participation.

Majority of the posts both on Facebook and Telegram are focused on the activities of the mayor. More of the social media posts by the Office are protocol news which is less likely to invite engagements or participation of the public. Sometimes issues focused on mobilizing the public are also released. For example posts focused on mobilizing the public to clean the city and solve the problem with garbage are shared in picture, video and text but still in a news format. Links of news made by other Medias about issue related to the city are also shared on the Offices' page and channel. Daniel Abiy said,

The office has a lot of responsibilities and provides different services for the public. For example discussing with persons appearing to get services, hearing the complaints and even the complaints of the employees, following tasks related to the City's cabinet and also the administrative tasks of the office are there but all these staffs are not in the range of issues that are covered and discussed on the social media of the Office. We do only issues that make news. For example issues related to public projects and the activities of the Mayor etc. but there is a plan to use the social media as a platform where the public can directly participate and discuss about the City's affair.





Posts about the activities of the mayor on Facebook





A video post about a planned library project on Facebook

AFacebook post to say thanks for those who supported the project started to make Addis Ababa beautiful

The Office is also uses the social media to counter fake news. In this regard the Office monitors the social media and if any fake news is their which need to be addressed immediate response will be given so that the false information is neutralized before creating any danger in the relation between the government and the public. The best example to raise here is the experience that Mrs. Mulu Geletu and Biruk has faced a little while. They remember,

> On one ordinary day I was sitting in my office and doing my job. While browsing Facebook I just saw a post which tells about the resignation of the Mayor. The post assured the claim by an official seeming evidence letter written by the Mayor about his resignation. I was shocked and not sure what is going on. I am in the Office and heard nothing but someone out there on the social media is telling me that the Mayor has resigned and proved his/her claim with a letter. What an irony.
>
> I was sitting for a coffee with friends. When I browse Facebook I saw a post that claims that 'Arada Building' is on fire and the area is chaos. The post even goes further to prove the claim with a picture of the Building engulfed with flames. Fortunately I was around same place where the Building is found and ran out to check what is happening and noting is there, no fire and chaos at all.

In order to combat such fake information the Office monitors the social media and address the factual information to the public. Starting from April 1 to May 20, 2019 seventy eight posts are made by the Office on its official Facebook page and on the official Telegram Channel of the Office three hundred forty four photos, seven videos, seven files and one link is shared. Sometimes up to five Facebook posts are made per day and some other times the Office shares nothing for three consecutive days. The same holds true on the Telegram channel sometimes many photos are shared and other times nothing is delivered. Sometimes the Office get feedback inquires on the social media from the public. Again those respondents whose tasks are related to the social media said they give response to the feedback and inquires from the public but not always. While those respondents whose tasks are not directly related to using the social media, even if the use social media they said that they do not get neither feedback nor inquire about the Office and their job at all.

One thing to consider here is that despite the fact that they understand the importance of the social media for a government communication purpose, because the administration of the social media is given to a single specific department, those respondents whose tasks is not immediately related to the social media, although as a staff member they represent the Office by default, feel they have nothing to do on the social media with regard to the communication of the Office and the public.



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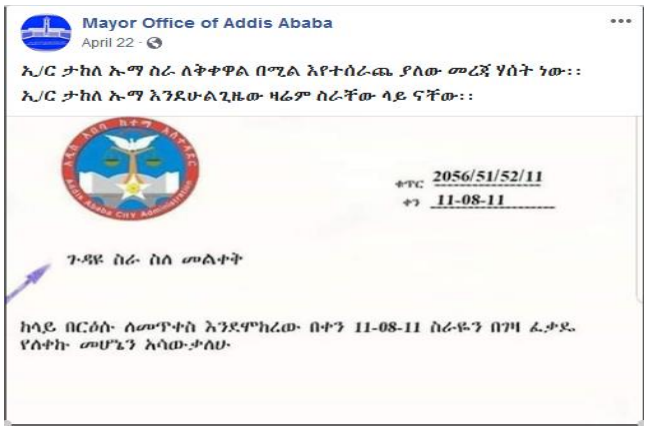
The official seeming letter of the Mayor's resignation



Mayor Office of Addis Ababa
April 22 ·

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A Facebook post by the Office to assure the information about the resignation of the Mayor is false

The other thing to raise here is that although the official Facebook page of the Office is being mainly used to address the activities of the Mayor to the general public the Mayor has his own Facebook account. The account is created on November 2010 and as of May 20, 2019 the account of the Mayor, which is created by his own name, is being followed by more than 139 thousand peoples. On his account the Mayor shares and updates all his activities which are, at the same time, shared by the official Facebook page and Telegram channel of the Office.

In general the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office mainly uses the social media, among other things like countering fake news, to deliver news regarding what the Mayor's doing and nothing else in using the platform to communicate with its publics and enhance its government communication activities. Some of the staffs, in relation to the position they have, receive feedbacks and inquires occasionally. Sometimes up to five posts are made per day and sometimes no posts are made for three consecutive days.

4.1.2.3 What are the factors that affected the Office's decision of choosing social media as a government communication tool?

These days social media has became a popular trend among most of the peoples of the world. The traditional electronic and print Medias are being outdated by the social media. The emergence of the online media has enabled the society to access every information he/she needs on the finger tip. Unlike in the previous times in which the engage third party, electronic or print media including Television Radio News papers Magazines Billboards brochures and etc. for communication with the public, with the emergence of the social media organizations are also enabled to reach out their public in a simplistic manner by posting texts, pictures or videos and directly communicate with them without gate keepers.

The Addis Ababa city Government Mayors Office is also no exception. Since using the social media as a communication tool benefits too much by providing the access to reach the vast majority of the public in a simply and without taking too much time and process like that of the electronic and the print media the Office cannot avoid the social media. According to the respondents these days as an organization not using the social media is rather damaging and it is crucial to follow the trend and engage accordingly in order to achieve the desired objectives.

The popularity of the social can be mentioned as a driving factor for the Office to choose it as a communication tool. The recent information trend is characterized by a simplistic and fast information delivery. What happens out there is immediately shared on line either in texts and pictures or in a video format on the social media. The traditional way of sharing information using the electronic and print media is time consuming, needs a lot of task force and also costs a lot. Before the information reaches the public it has to pass through many production processes. Including recording the event, preparing scripts and getting editors comment on it, making video editing and again getting the comment of the content editor on the final production. If the content editor is not comfortable on the final production there might be a chance to redo it again. The same holds true, except the video editing process, on the print media too.

The social media avoids all this production processes. Without a sophisticated materials and professionals a single random person with an experience of using the social media and just a smart phone can do the whole processes in a matter of few minutes and share the information so

quickly. Even one can stream live what is going on out there. In this regard it is damaging for organizations to ignore the social media and rely on the traditional ones. It is crucial to provide up to date information for organizations to communicate with their public and it might result bad consequence not copping up with and providing out dated information to the public.

The Addis Ababa city Government Mayors Office is also no exception in this regard. The Office is conscious of the social media trend and is engaged to provide up to date information to the public. Tsion said,

> We have a variety of options to communicate with the public. Before the social media we were using the print and electronic media but it is time consuming and less effective in reaching to many people due to the number of copies of the print media and the limitations of the electronic media. But on the social media we do not have to worry about the number of copies and a long production process of the electronic media we just share what we have in a matter of seconds and we can reach the majority of the public. It is simple and effective way to communicate with the public.

4.1.2.4 What are the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office?

The Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has been engaged in the social media officially to communicate with its publics. While engaging it is obvious that one can find opportunities to exploit the potential of the social media and face challenges that hinders one's activity. So what are the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office?

As stated earlier the press secretary section, specifically the press directorate, of the Office is the responsible organ to administer the social media activities of the office. The press directorate is well equipped with materials that are important to accomplish tasks on the social media. There is access to the internet, a camera, computers and professionals to do on the materials. The staffs are trained professionals whose education and experience is related to the communication sector. Most of them have a journalism background which a favorable condition to carry out communication tasks on the social media. On the other hand the communication offices at the

sub city level are also responsible to work closely with the press directorate. The popularity of the social media among the society is also another asset for the Office to exploit its potential and reach a wide range of public in a simple and quick manner.

While the above mentioned opportunities are there for the Office to use the social media as a government communication tool there are also many challenges that the office has to deal with. The first challenge emanates from the openness of the social media to all peoples without restriction on the level of knowledge, skill and the like. This nature of the social media made it more vulnerable to disseminate information that is not verified by the responsible authority or person. This makes it prone to entertain fake information. Anybody can share any information for whatever purpose he/she wants whatever time without considering the consequence. Although this open to all characteristics of the social media benefits in by promoting the notions of freedom of expression and access to information when it is abused it also brought a danger to individuals and organizations.

Unlike the traditional media which require tangible evidence and cross checking, the social media lacks filtering mechanism which can separate the fake news for real one. Beside this the level of awareness of the people is also another thing to be questioned in relation to fake information on the social media.

There so many fake accounts and pages on the social media. Someone with a fake account may post false information, even with a real seeming image made with Photoshop, which can simply able to deceive the person who reads it. Since the social media is a new trend for the majority of Ethiopian people, in fact it is accelerating in an incredible speed to reach more and more people these days, the level of understanding of the majority of users to cross check and verify the information shared on the social media is minimal. Most of the time such fake information go viral and reach too many people in a matter of few minutes because many users take is for granted without questioning and share it as it true.

The Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is no exception in dealing with fake information along side with its activities on the social media. The Office has to monitor and address the public about fake information which can bring damage on the image of the city and make the people be suspicious of everything. But it is not directly that the Office adders such

fake information but rather than addressing the issue on the official page and channel of the office it forwards the issue to the Communication Bureau of the City Government of Addis Ababa and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Front. This two institutions have their own official pages on the social media and as soon as they get the information from the Mayor's Office the react on the issue.

The other challenge is hate speeches and negative comments under the posts made by the Office. Some people give irrelevant comments, sometimes even insults, underneath posts of the Office. In such cases the Office tries to address the individuals in text messages and if the comment persists it goes further to block the user from accessing the page for good. The vulnerable nature of the social media has brought negative impact on the staffs of the Office. Biruk said,

> I am not that into using the social media. Most of the time it makes you spends your time doing other staffs not related to your job. It kills your time. I am skeptical in finding verified information on the social media. There is no filtering mechanism so it is hard to rely on the social media.

Lack of enough human resources is another challenge faced by the Office to exploit the potential of the social media effectively. By the time this study is conducted there are only few staff members in the press secretary section of the Office and there are only two staff member, specifically the director and a cameraman in the press directorate which is the responsible organ to manage the social media activities of the Office. The skill gap of the professionals at the sub city level, which are meant to work closely with the Office, regarding the use of social media for a government communication purpose is also another challenge faced by the Office.

4.1.3 Discussion of the findings

Historically, governments have relied heavily on traditional mass media to disseminate public information. The advent of blogs, podcasts, and social networks provides government officials the means to communicate directly with their publics without the intervention of editors and reporters who can act as gatekeepers. The same is true for the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor’s Office. Decades ago, governments began using the Internet to communicate with citizens through the automation of routine government operations, which later evolved to web

sites, RSS feeds, blogs, and wikis (Dixon, 2010 as cited in Graham, 2014). Commonly referred to as e-government, these technologies had initially and primarily been used as one-way methods of communication, allowing citizens to access services or retrieve information.

The popularity of social media in recent years has revolutionized the way the world communicates. The instantaneous, direct, and interactive communication components that social media provide can be particularly beneficial to governments at all levels as they pledge to be more transparent, participatory, and collaborative with their citizens (Bertot et al., 2010 in Graham, 2014). The Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is no exception in this regard. The Office has been relied on the traditional media before the advent of the internet and the social media. The findings above clearly points that, there is use of social media as a tool for a government communication practice at the Office in the mean time.

Graham (2014) argues that social media usage enhances governments' ability to interact with and engage citizens. This more open form of government public relations that social media usage provides is particularly beneficial to local governments, as it is the local level of government where citizens often feel the most direct access and potential importance in governance. Since more and more citizens are going online to get information, public information officers have to be cognizant of this reality (Graham, 2014).

The findings of this study shows that there is a better understanding among the staff members of staffs of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office regarding the potential of the social media in enhance the government's ability to interact with the public directly without the intervention of third party, reporters and editors. Beside the open nature of the social media which allows direct communication between the government and the public the simplistic nature and the less amount of time that the social media takes to accomplish tasks compared to the mainstream media is considered as more beneficial for a government communication practice among the staffs of the Office.

Governments have more opportunities to interact with and engage stakeholders, and social media are an inexpensive and swift communication channel for them to do this. The open, dialogic nature of social media eliminates many of the barriers in communication that governments have experienced in the past. Communication with constituents can be more frequent, open, and

targeted (Graham, 2014). Social media provide governments with the ability to enhance and improve government–citizen relations.

The study found out that the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has a frequent appearance on the social media. The official Facebook page of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office named "Mayor Office of Addis Ababa" is created on August, 2018 and as of May 20, 2019 the page has 168,281 page likes while 171,437 peoples are following it. On the other hand the official Telegram channel of the Office "Mayor Office of Addis Ababa" is created on February, 2019 and as of May 20, 2019 the channel has joined by 1942 peoples. Although the Office also has appearance on other social media like Instagram, Viber, Youtube and Twitter the activities are negligible. Seventy eight Facebook posts on the official page of the office, which are posted since the month of March to May 20, 2019, and posts shared on the official Telegram channel of the Office during the same period of time.

Governing necessarily involves constant exchanges of information and communication about socio economic and political decisions, ideas and policies between governors and the governed the social media is supportive for governments to reach out the wide public. Although the social media is a favorable platform in which two-way communication could take place the findings of this study indicates that the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is using the social media just as they use traditional channels, as a way to push information rather than using them to facilitate two-way symmetrical dialogue. According to the World Bank (2009) Two-way communication between the government and the public produces governance outcomes that are of higher quality and more sustainable (many governments do not have sufficient capacity for effective one-way communication). Consulting and engaging the public should not be limited to elections, crises, and politically risky issues. Governments need to be aware that if they don't communicate, opposing forces may dominate the public agenda. Showing citizens that the government is listening may be as important as actually listening. Over the long run, however, citizens need to see that their input is being taken seriously.

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984) Two-way communication involves persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires and does not use research to find out how stakeholders feel about the organization when it is asymmetrical in

nature. But when it is symmetrical two way communication Uses communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its stakeholders. The social media has the potential to adhere both symmetric and asymmetric two way communications. Although there is a better perception of this potential of the social media among its staff members currently, according to the findings of this study, the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is using the social media for a purpose of asymmetric two way communication. In this regard the Office is using the social media just for the delivery of the information from the office to the public. The exchange of messages only from the government to the public by itself cannot be fulfilling the notion of dialogue; off course it promotes interactivity that builds mutual understanding and trust between the government and publics. The study has revealed that although the there is a recognition of the potential of social media for a two-way symmetric communication it is currently being used for a mere purpose of news delivery.

The idea of two ways communication was introduced as a result of looking for a feedback for information disseminated that began to be considered as part of the communication process. However, the purpose of seeking feedback wasn't to change position that has been seized by an organization, instead the feedback was to be used to introduce another form of persuasion so that the audience would accept the interest of the organization (Seitel, 2011 as cited in Mulatu, 2017). In the Two-way asymmetric communication practitioners conduct scientific research to determine how best to persuade publics to behave in the way their organizations wish. With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitude and behaviors of both their organizations and publics through research and dialogue. In the Two-way symmetric communication practitioners serve as mediators between organizations and their publics. Their goal is mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. When it comes to the government Social media are outlets that hold great promise because of their ability to foster interactivity by allowing for greater citizen participation, knowledge of government actions, and more opportunities for engagement. This is achieved through the two-way flow of information that is facilitated through social media use.

Social media emphasize interactivity and co-creation of content fostering a two-way exchange of information (Kingsley, 2010 as cited in Graham, 2014), which offers great potential for enhanced

democratization of information exchange at the local level. Graham (2014) concluded that by having a two-way dialogue through social media, public information officers in local government report being able to quickly address citizen concerns and mitigate negative feelings and comments. This encouragement of both positive and negative feedback makes the government's efforts to provide transparency and accountability more plausible.

Government communication is conceived as the cultivation of long-term relationships oriented to mutual understanding rather than being modeled on short-term, vote-winning approaches to communication. For a long term relation is required to happen dialogue is needed amongst the government and the public. Social media is important for it promotes transparency and accountability through pushing important information online. Transparency is achieved through information access, which can be fulfilled by only one a two way asymmetric communication but for accountability to be achieved dialogue must be there. The government should be able to answer the questions raised by the public regarding its deeds. The social media has the potential to facilitate such interaction. This potential, promoting accountability, is well understood by the staffs of the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office but the activities of the Office is on the social media are just information delivery which cannot help to secure is accountability.

The findings of the study show that the popularity of the social is a driving factor for the Office to choose it as a communication tool. The recent information trend is characterized by a simplistic and fast information delivery. What happens out there is immediately shared on line either in texts and pictures or in a video format on the social media. The traditional way of sharing information using the electronic and print media is time consuming, needs a lot of task force and also costs a lot. Before the information reaches the public it has to pass through many production processes. Including recording the event, preparing scripts and getting editors comment on it, making video editing and again getting the comment of the content editor on the final production. If the content editor is not comfortable on the final production there might be a chance to redo it again. The same holds true, except the video editing process, on the print media too.

The study found out that the Office has equipped itself with materials that are important to accomplish tasks on the social media and there is access to the internet, a camera, computers and

professionals to do on the materials which is an opportunity to engage in the social media. The staffs are trained professionals whose education and experience is related to the communication sector. The communication offices at the sub city level are also responsible to work closely with the press directorate. The popularity of the social media among the society is also another asset for the Office to exploit its potential and reach a wide range of public in a simple and quick manner. On the other hand Lack of enough human resources, fake information that have a potential to damage the image of the city or bring a danger on the governmental activities of the city, hate speech negative comments under the posts made by the Office and skill gap among the professionals are the challenges faced by the Office in relation to its tasks on the social media.

In general, the potential of the social media to serve as a government communication tool at the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office is well perceived by the staffs. There is a directorate whose responsibility is managing the social media activities of the Office. There is a frequent use of the social media at the Office. Sometimes up to five posts per day are shared on the official page and channel of the Office. The popularity of the social media amongst the society is, its simplistic nature to use and the less amount of time that it require to accomplish the task are the factors that made the Office to engage in the social media. There is a good facility at the Office to engage in the social media. There are professionals to do the task on the social media and there is enough material to do with. On the other hand fake information, hate speech and skill gap among the professionals are the challenges faced by the Office in relation to its tasks on the social media.

V Chapter Five

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter conclusions which are reached based on the findings that are emanated from the study are presented. Alongside with the conclusions recommendations of the researcher of this study will be presented for a better exploitation of the potential of social media to serve as a government communication tool.

5.1.1 Conclusion

This study is conducted with a main objective of exploring how the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has been using the social media to communicate with its publics. It is also conducted to address specific objectives of understanding how concerned staffs of Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office see the potential of social media as a government communication tool; describing to what extent Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office uses social media to reach out to its publics; examining the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at the Office and investigating the factors the affected the office's decision of choosing social media as a government communication tool.

In this regard, based on the findings the study, concludes that the use of the social media for a government communication purpose is well perceived among the staff members of the Addis Ababa City Government Communication Mayor's Office. In fact there is some divergence regarding the benefits that the social media could bring for the society. Some believes that it benefits a lot and some has hesitation on that claiming that it has no filtering mechanism to separate the true information from the false one.

Cognizant of the trend in which the world at large and Ethiopia specifically is moving with the online information system, the Office is engaged in the social media to communicate with its publics. But while the social media is a platform which is favorable to promote the participation and engagement of the public on the decision make process of the government the Office use of the social media is mainly focused on information delivery. This is the same old trend used on

the traditional media; electronic and print. The information which is shared by the Office is mostly focused on the activities of the Mayor and other protocol related issues which are less inviting for a discussion. The Office understands the potential benefits that the social media could bring to enhance the relationship between the government and the public. But its engagement lacks strategy to use the social media for dialogic purpose and only uses it as mere news delivery tool.

Although it lacks the ability to make use of the potential of the social media effectively and efficiently there is an engagement of Office on the social media. The Office has a frequent appearance on the social media and has official page and channel on Facebook and Telegram respectively. Compared to general population which can be potentially reached through the social media the number of followers of the Office on the social media is minimal. But since it is a new trend the Office's page and channel reach is not that bad because and it requires time and better training for effectiveness.

The simplistic and easy to use nature that the social media features; the less amount of time that it takes compared to the traditional media to accomplish a given task; added to its popularity among the society are the driving forces that made the Office to use the social media as a tool to communicate with its publics. The facilities which can enable to engage on the social media are somehow fulfilled at the Office. There are materials, access to the Internet at the Office and professionals to work on the materials and deliver the desired message on the social media. These, added to the wider audience on the social media, can be regarded as opportunities for the Office to engage in the social media. While the vulnerability of the social media to entertain information from unverified sources which deliberately or not disseminate false information is one of the challenges faced by the Office. Hatred comments given under posts made by the Office are also among constrains on the activities of the Office on the social media

There is a clear indication that the human resource assigned to accomplish the tasks on the social media is minimal which can be seen directly on the output of the activities of the Office on the social media. Sometimes the Office appears frequently on the social media and shares many posts per day and some other time no activities at all up to three consecutive days. This is

another challenge faced by the Office. The other challenge emanates from the skill gap among the professionals who are responsible to work closely with the Office.

5.1.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are given

- The social media has more potential than serving as a tool for news sharing only. The Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office needs to consider this potential of the social media and develop a strategy to use the platform to enhance the participation and engagement of the public on the decision making process. In this regard the Office needs to share information, other than mere news, with the purpose of engaging the society more.
- Unlike the traditional media, the social media has a potential to reach a wide range of the public these days. The office needs to boost its number of followers so that it can engage a wider public by advertising its appearance on the social media.
- The vulnerability of the social media to entertain false information is a global challenge that the online media faced. Thus, the Office needs to develop a better strategy that can help to deal with the dissemination of fake information. The Office should reinforce its human resources in number and quality as well. Follow up and evaluation of the activities on the social media is also required so that a better activity is to be done in the future.

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List of Appendixes

Appendix 1

English version of the interview questions

In accordance with the main objective of this research these questions are meant to explore and understand how the Addis Ababa City Government Mayor's Office has been using the social media to communicate with its publics.

1. What is your understanding regarding the use of social media as a platform for government communication?

2. How do you describe the importance of using social media for a government to communicate with its publics?

3. Can you tell me the factors that make your Office to choose the social media as a tool to communicate with its publics?

4. What government communication activities are carried out by the use of social media in your Office and how often?

5. Do you get inquiries or feedback through social media from your publics? If yes how often do you respond? If not what is the reason?

6. What are the opportunities and challenges for using the social media as a government communication tool at your Office?

7. How much of your time a day do you spend on social media? Why?

8. Is there any relationship between the social media use and effectiveness on your job? Describe it?

9. Do you think that the social media negative sides? Explain?

10. What do you suggest for the social media usage to bring a better result at your office?

Appendix 2

Amharic version of the interview questions

የጥናቱን ዋንኛ አላማ መሰረት በማድረግ እነዚህ ጥያቄዎች የአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ከንቲባ ጽህፈት ቤት የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያን እንዴት ባለ መልኩ ለመንግስት ኮሙኒኬሽን ስራ እየተገለገለበት እንዳለ ለመዳሰስና ለመረዳት በሚል የተዘጋጁ ናቸው።

1. የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያዎችን ለመንግስት ኮሙኒኬሽን ስራ መጠቀምን በተመለከተ ያለዎት አሳቤ ምን ይመስላል?

2. መንግስትን ከህብረሰቡ ጋር ለማገናኘት የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያ የሚሰጠውን ጥቅም እንዴት ይገልጹታል?

3. ጽህፈት ቤቱ ከህበረተሰቡ ጋር ለመገናኘት የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያን መርጦ እንዲጠቀም ያደረጉትን ምክንያቶች ይነግሩኛል?

4. በጽህፈት ቤቱ ውስጥ የትኞቹ የመንግስት ኮሙኒኬሽን ስራዎች ናቸው የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያን በመጠቀም የሚሰሩት? በምን ያክል መጠን?

5. በማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲዎች ጥያቄዎች ወይም ግብረመልሶች ይደርሱዎታል? ምላሽዎት አዎ ከሆነ ለቀረቡልዎት ጥያቄዎች ወይም ግብረመልሶች ምላሽ ይሰጣሉ? ምላሽዎት አይደረሰኝም ከሆነ ምክንያቱ ምንድነው?

6. በጽህፈት ቤቱ ውስጥ የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያን ለመንግስት ኮሙኒኬሽን ስራ ለመጠቀም ያሉ እድሎችና ተግዳሮቶች ምን ምንድን ናቸው?

7. የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያን በመጠቀም በቀን ምን ያክል ጊዜ ያጠፋሉ? ለምን?

8. በስራዎት ላይ ውጤታማ መሆንንና የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያን የሚያዛምዳቸው ነገር አለ? ያብራሩት?

9. የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያ አሉታዊ ጎኖች አሉት ብለው ያስባሉ? ያብራሩት?

10. በጽህፈት ቤቱ የማህበራዊ ትስስር ሚዲያ አጠቃቀምን ይበልጥ ውጤታማ ለማድረግ ምን ሊደረግ ይገባል ይላሉ?