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College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication
School of Journalism and Communication

**Alternative Pathways to Professional Development: A Narrative Analysis of
the Lived Experiences of Senior Ethiopian Journalists**

By Ilamu Dejene Alemu

May, 2024

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Declaration

I hereby declare this thesis is my original work and has not offered for a degree in any university and all the sources of the materials used in this thesis have been accordingly recognized.

Ilamu Dejene -----

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EBC - Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

ETV- Ethiopian Television

ERTA- Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

EMA- Ethiopian Media Authority

EMMTI – Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute

EPA- Ethiopian Press Agency

EC- Ethiopian Calander

FBC- Fana Broadcasting corporate

FM- Frequency Modulation

Abstract

This study utilized a narrative research design to explore the experiences of four senior Ethiopian journalists who have developed their professional skills without formal journalism education. The primary aim is to illuminate the pathways to success for journalists operating outside traditional training frameworks, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of their professional journeys. Four participants were purposefully selected based on their seniority, sustained success in journalism over an extended period, and affiliations with diverse media organizations, including radio, television, and print. Findings are organized around key themes that emerge from the participants' narratives, encompassing early experiences, reflections on formal journalism education, factors promoting success in journalism, the development of personal qualities and skills, and definitions of success within the profession. The narratives reveal the significance of passion, mentorship, practical experience, continuous learning, cultural values, and professionalism in the field of journalism. The results indicate that social values, personal experiences, and on-the-job training represent viable alternative pathways for acquiring essential journalistic skills. Key attributes such as passion, motivation, and commitment are identified as critical for achieving success. While participants acknowledged the value of formal education, they also emphasized various effective methods of skill acquisition beyond conventional forms of training. Success in journalism is demonstrated through audience engagement, professional standing, and mentorship opportunities, reflecting the dynamic nature of the industry. In light of these findings, the study advocates for the promotion of alternative learning pathways, the recruitment of individuals based on passion and motivation, the facilitation of continuous professional development, and the integration of indigenous knowledge into journalism education. These recommendations seek to foster a more inclusive and relevant educational framework that aligns with the diverse experiences of journalists.

Key Terms: senior Ethiopian journalists, formal journalism education, professionalism, alternative pathways, indigenous knowledge

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Justification

In today's society, education is widely recognized as crucial for success in various professions, with fields like law and medicine placing a strong emphasis on formal training. However, the role of journalism education remains a subject of debate. Some argue that formal training is essential for acquiring the necessary skills, values, and ethics, while others emphasize the importance of practical experience and on-the-job learning. This ongoing debate, often framed as "journalists made or born," highlights the complex interplay between formal education, individual talent, and the realities of the media landscape.

The debate is particularly relevant in Ethiopia, where journalism education has a relatively recent history. While formal journalism education has become increasingly prevalent in many African countries since 1960's, it is a relatively recent development in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University began offering undergraduate and postgraduate programs in journalism and communication in 2003, following the establishment of EMMTI in 1996 (Woldegiorgis, 2010). Thus, many senior journalists have achieved prominence in their field without formal training. Their stories offer valuable insights into the motivations that drive individuals towards a journalism career, the unique skills and qualities they develop through their experiences, and their perspectives on the role of formal education.

Scholars like Ritzer and Walczak (1972) have identified formal education as a crucial element of professional socialization, shaping journalists' values and professional identities. Gans (1979) emphasizes the dual purpose of journalism education: to cultivate compelling storytellers and to develop journalists adept at gathering and presenting news effectively. Boyd (2001) argues that a liberal arts background equips journalists with the knowledge and skills needed to serve the public by upholding the truth.

However, others, like Bovee (1999), argue that formal education provides only a partial foundation, and that a significant portion of a journalist's education is acquired through practical experience and

on-the-job training. They emphasize the importance of real-world exposure, hands-on learning, and the development of an individual's voice in shaping a journalist's critical thinking, storytelling abilities, and understanding of the context in which they operate.

This study aims to explore the motivations and experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists who have achieved prominence in the field without formal journalism education. By understanding their unique journeys, this study aims to illuminate the diverse pathways to success in journalism by exploring the experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists who achieved prominence without formal education, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the skills and qualities essential for journalistic excellence and informing the development of more inclusive and effective approaches to journalism education.

This research is crucial because it will offer a nuanced understanding of the factors that shape journalistic excellence in Ethiopia, contributing to a more comprehensive and informed approach to journalism education and professional development in the country and beyond.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The profession of journalism is characterized by ongoing debates regarding its nature—specifically, whether it should be viewed primarily as a science, learned through formal education, or as an art that can be cultivated through natural talent and practical experience. While the necessity for education in journalism is recognized, scholars diverge on the type and delivery of that education. Dressel (cited in Holten, 2010) identifies two main types of journalism education: professional and liberal. Professional education focuses on preparing individuals for specific careers, while also aiming to equip citizens to engage thoughtfully in a democratic society. In contrast, liberal education provides a broad knowledge base, fostering critical skills and attitudes associated with a well-rounded individual. However, this approach faces practical challenges, as most graduates need to acquire specific skills for employment after college (Holten, 2010, p. 40).

Scholars have identified various qualities and competencies deemed necessary for journalistic excellence, many of which are believed to be taught and reinforced through formal education. Nevertheless, a significant number of successful journalists have gained prominence in the field without attending formal journalism programs. Their achievements raise questions about the

effectiveness and sufficiency of conventional educational pathways in preparing individuals for careers in journalism.

In the Ethiopian context, Abdissa and Getachew (2024) underscore the ambiguity surrounding the definition of a journalist as established by the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA) and the Ethiopian Media Council. These institutions do not clearly define qualifications, often stating that an individual is considered a journalist simply by working for a media institution formally registered with the lawful government body.

This lack of clarity complicates the professional landscape, particularly in a country where formal journalism education has a history of less than three decades, having only gained a foothold in the late 1990's (Woldegiorgis, 2010). Notably, several prominent journalists established their careers prior to the introduction of formal journalism education (Abdissa & Getachew, 2024). This indicates the existence of alternative paths to professional success in the field.

Despite the increasing prevalence of formal journalism education as a pathway to professional development, there remains a notable gap in understanding the factors that enable individuals to thrive in journalism without such training, particularly within the Ethiopian context.

While existing literature often examines journalism education and success through formal pathways, it frequently overlooks the narratives and lived experiences of those who have flourished without formal training. This study aims to bridge that gap by exploring the stories of senior Ethiopian journalists who have achieved prominence and success despite lacking formal education in journalism.

1.2 Objective of the Study

1.2.1 General Objective

This study aims to undertake an in-depth narrative analysis of the motivations and experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists who have achieved prominence in journalism without formal education. Through rich narratives, the study seeks to identify and analyze the key factors that drove these

individuals to a journalism career and the specific elements that contributed to their significant contributions to the field.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The study has the following specific objectives

- To explore the motivating factors for Ethiopian journalists who lack formal education, identifying the key elements that contribute to their professional development and impact in the field.
- To elucidate the personal qualities and experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists who have gained prominence in the industry without formal training.
- To analyze the strategies employed by these journalists to cultivate essential skills and competencies.
- To narrate the success stories of senior Ethiopian journalists who have navigated their careers without formal journalism education, highlighting their unique journeys.
- To assess the perspectives of these journalists on the role of formal journalism education and training in professional development.

1.3 Significance of the study

This study aims to shed light on the experiences of senior journalists who have achieved success without formal journalism education, potentially offering valuable insights for a variety of stakeholders. The findings can inform the design of more inclusive and effective journalism education programs and professional development initiatives, encouraging institutions to recognize and support diverse pathways to success. This recognition includes valuing experience, self-directed learning, and community-based training.

Additionally, the insights gained from this research will provide guidance for professional development initiatives aimed at practicing journalists. By highlighting essential skills and knowledge that extend beyond traditional education, this study will better equip journalists to thrive in their careers.

Furthermore, the research has the potential to empower aspiring journalists who lack formal training, offering them practical lessons and strategies for navigating alternative career paths in the media industry.

Ultimately, this study will contribute to a broader understanding of journalism education and its myriad pathways to success, providing valuable lessons that are applicable across various cultural and media contexts.

1.4 Scope of the study

This study has focused on understanding what drives and sustains journalistic excellence without formal journalism education among senior Ethiopian journalists. Since the practice of journalism is broad and complex, the study has only focused on exploring experiences of journalists and how journalistic qualities and skills could be developed without formal journalism education.

The study involved those senior journalists who are assumed to be successful without formal journalism education and those who have worked for long times in Ethiopia's media industry.

For this reason, the selected journalists are those worked for Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, Fana Broadcasting Corporate and Ethiopian Press Agency.

Methodology wise, this research espoused a qualitative narrative approach to collect data on lived experiences of journalist through in-depth interview to understand what drives and enhanced their journalistic excellence.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited by the scarcity of existing literature specifically focused on the experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists who achieved prominence without formal journalism education. This scarcity hindered the ability to provide in-depth data about these unconventional career paths. Additionally, some potential participants were unavailable for data collection, necessitating the inclusion of alternative participants with similar experiences.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is organized in five chapters. Background and justification of the study, including the statement of the problem, research objectives, method of the study, and significance of the study, are discussed in the first chapter. The second chapter deals with a review of literature about journalism, the background of journalism education, the importance of journalism education and training versus the life experiences of journalists, the qualities and skills of a journalist, and related literature. While chapter three focuses on the methodology of the study, chapter four deals with the presentation and discussion of the data driven by the study. Finally, chapter five has the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Literature

This qualitative study tries to understand what drives and enhance journalistic excellence without formal journalism education. It also tries to explore experiences and personal qualities and skills of journalist assumed to successful, without formal journalism education through the following research questions: How do journalist assumed to be successful, describe their experiences and the factors drove them to journalism profession without formal journalism education? What is the nature of success as per senior Ethiopian journalists? What are personal qualities and skills assumed to bring success in journalism practices? How did senior journalists have developed such qualities and skills? What is the importance of formal journalism education as per senior journalists of Ethiopia? What do experiences of journalist assumed to be successful without formal journalism education imply for journalism education?

This chapter presents literature on overview of journalism education and training, concepts of journalism, importance of journalism education and life experiences of journalists, personal qualities and skills of journalists, and the nature of success in journalism which it may put foundations for analysis of collected data in the next chapters. Life experiences of journalists, the role and functions of journalists and nature of success will be brought with due attention.

2.2 Overview of Media in Ethiopia

In the early 1900s, the introduction of Aemiro Newspaper, which was handwritten at its inception, marked the dawn of journalism in Ethiopia, according to Berhanu Olana (2009). Since then, the media landscape has expanded, encompassing diverse forms and technologies (Brhanu, 2009). Tadese Zinaye's cited in (Abeje, 2004) presentation further illuminates the rich history of the media sector in Ethiopia, dating back more than a century.

Le Semeur d'Ethiopie (1905-1911) and Aimerio (1902-1903) are widely recognized as the pioneering newspapers in Ethiopia, as per Tadese Zinaye's account. However, historical evidence suggests that the handwritten sheet produced by Blata Gebre Egziabhere around 1900 may have preceded these early publications.

The establishment of modern Ethiopia by Emperor Minilik played a significant role in facilitating diplomatic relations with European states, which in turn enabled many foreigners to set up printing presses in the capital city, Addis Ababa. Furthermore, the inception of Minilik II School, the first of its kind in the country, contributed to increasing literacy among the populace, allowing them to engage with the printed word and stay informed about their surroundings.

Tadese Zinaye's presentation also highlights Haile Selassie I's keen interest in the establishment of printing presses and the publication of newspapers, as well as educational materials, further solidifying Ethiopia's growing media landscape.

In the early 20th century, Ethiopians took steps to counter German propaganda by establishing Amharic newspapers. The "Yetor Wore" or "War News" was one such publication, disseminating information to the public. Additionally, the Amharic newspaper "Berhanena Selam" was founded in 1923, with a circulation of 500 copies.

A European language monthly magazine, including an Amharic section, was also established by Mr. Weizinger. Prior to the Italian invasion, small hand presses continued to be imported from various European countries. In 1932, a French business weekly called "L' Ethiopie Commerciale" was established. During the years 1935-1936, two newspapers, "Kasate Birhan" (The Light Giver) and "Atibiya Kokeb" (The Morning Star), were briefly published, but did not last long. The Italian invasion disrupted printing facilities, and it took time to restart operations after liberation.

However, a number of weeklies, monthlies, and other periodicals began to be published in Addis Ababa and Asmara. In 1941, newspapers such as "Addis Zemen" and "Sendek Alamachen" were launched. In the following years, the publication of "Ethiopian Herald" and "Ye zareyito Ethiopia" commenced. Tadese noted that the traditional methods of message dissemination, such as drum beating and verbal shouting, were replaced by the emergence of these newspapers. In 1942, an official "Negarit Gazetha" was founded.

2.3 Overview of Journalism Education

In most of the cases, referring to western experiences is important to look at history of journalism education. Some evidences shows that journalism education had been thought in different schools during 19th century, though not opened at the level of independent school like other departments. However, Missouri University, which is the first journalism school in United States was opened in 1908. Through time, several universities from around the world begun to give journalism education and trainings for future journalists. United Kingdom had opened the first postgraduate courses in 1970s while undergraduate programs arrived at 1990s. But, industry-run trainings had been given widely in United Kingdom to empower employees (Greenberg, 2007).

The history of journalism education is crucial to understand the divide between academic institutions and the professional newsroom. Journalism education has evolved through four distinct eras: 1700s-1860s, 1860s-1920s, 1920s-1940s, and 1940s to the present. The need for trained newspaper staff in the 1800s led to the rise of journalism education. As the industry has evolved, so too has the approach to journalism education. In 1869, General Robert E. Lee introduced "press scholarships" at Washington College. In the 1870s, Cornell University initiated the first university-level instruction in journalism, awarding a certificate in 1876. The Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania offered the first formal journalism curriculum in 1893. In 1903, Joseph Pulitzer donated two million dollars to Columbia University in New York. The first official U.S. journalism school was established in 1908 at the University of Missouri. These early journalism education programs were heavily focused on practical skills, such as reporting, copy editing, feature writing, and editorial writing (Lindley, 1975). Some schools also included instruction in history, comparative journalism, and ethics.

The early journalism training programs were criticized for their narrow focus on specific technical skills, which could be better acquired within newsrooms. Critics advocated for journalists to develop into competent judges of public affairs, rather than mere experts in

machinery and tricks. Over time, journalism education began to incorporate more liberal arts and social sciences, shifting towards an "applied social science" approach by the 1940s.

The field of journalism subsequently split from communication departments, though maintaining alliances with related disciplines such as English and the social sciences. In the mid-1900s, a trend emerged to merge journalism under the broader umbrella of mass communication and societal courses, stemming from the view that both endeavors aim to enhance the media's usefulness to society.

According to Dressel, two distinct types of journalism education exist: professional and liberal. The professional approach focuses on preparing practitioners for the occupation, but grapples with the challenge of also equipping citizens to act intelligently in the broader contexts of their lives and to function effectively in a democratic society. In contrast, a liberal education offers students a broad knowledge base and cultivates the skills, attitudes, and traits associated with a liberally-educated mind. However, the intrinsic problem with this type of education is that it may not be justifiable for purely practical reasons. After completing their studies, most, if not all, graduates need to join the working world. This transition demands a particular set of abilities tailored to their chosen career path.

The objective of journalism education is to prepare individuals for the profession. Journalists acquire the necessary skills, attitudes, and tasks during their on-the-job socialization process. Over the years, the number of four-year journalism programs in the U.S. has grown significantly, reflecting the broader trend of increased educational training for various professions. However, some critics argue that journalism education should take a more comprehensive approach, integrating with the wider university culture and systematically teaching the fundamental elements of journalism, rather than relying solely on internships.

Africa has also emerged in training journalists and communicators in 1960s, where mass media's had technical problems and lack of trained journalists. In early 1960s, different organizations, including UNESCO had highlighted lack of trained journalists in Africa as a critical problem

(Ibid). To solve these problems, foreigners have been involved on giving on-job trainings in Africa and some people had also travelled abroad to get training. But, in 1960s and 1970s many universities in Africa had started to incorporate journalism training in their curriculum with the exception of two Egyptian universities which began training journalists in 1930s (Ibid).

According to Katzen (1975) cited in Woldegiorgis (2010,p.32), it is in 1960s that journalism education has been widely accepted and schools has been opened in different parts of the world. Mass communication, journalism and media studies were courses thought at different Universities, Woldegiorgis (2010,p.32). A Study on the Nature of Journalism and Communication Curriculum at Mekelle University [[Master's thesis, Addis Ababa University](#): P.32).

Although many African countries have begun providing journalism education in 1960s and 1970s, Ethiopia only started teaching journalism and communication in 1996 at EMMTI, which later incorporated under Addis Ababa University in 2003. Since then, several public universities and private colleges have opened schools or departments to teach journalism and communication at undergraduate level. Addis Ababa University, which have begun offering journalism and communication education earlier than other universities in Ethiopia, is providing it both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Woldegiorgis, 2010:p.33).

For decades, critics have argued that graduates of journalism-related programs are not adequately prepared for success in the profession (Bales, 1992; Becker, Fruit, & Caudill, 1987; Bullard & McLeary, 1994; Dennis, 1990; Dickson & Brandon, 2000; Dickson, 1996; Lindley, 1988; Medsger, 1996; Porter, 2004). Gardner, Czikszenmihalyi, and Damon (2001) also proposed that the long-term future of the industry relies on improving educational practices. They and other critics suggest that journalism educators examine the effective practices of successful journalists to bridge the divide between education and practice, or risk further criticism and ultimately obsolescence.

2.4 The Role of Prior Journalism Education

While research suggests dissatisfaction with current journalism education, journalistic training is still considered the most crucial factor in shaping news judgment and defining newsworthiness (Weaver et al., 2007). This paradox highlights that despite news managers' discontent with the skills of new graduates, they continue to rely on them to fill entry-level positions.

Although literature suggests the need for changes in the educational preparation of journalists (Bales, 1992; Bullard & McLeary, 1994; Dennis, 1990; Dickson & Brandon, 2000; Dickson, 1996; Lindley, 1988; Medsger, 1996; Porter, 2004), education serves an important role for journalism students. Ritzer and Walczak (1972) identify educational preparation as a means of formal socialization into the profession. As students' progress through their studies, they discern which values and skills are most relevant for them at that time, shaping their professional identity.

The purposes of journalism should, in part, be reflected in the educational preparation of journalists. Journalism education programs serve two primary functions: (a) to produce journalists who can write compelling stories, and (b) to develop journalists who can effectively gather and present news (Richardson & Ryder, 2019).

The academic background in liberal arts equips individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to serve the public by upholding the truth (Crawford, 1969). However, graduates from this educational path may struggle in the real-world newsroom, as their commitment to the greater good may clash with the commercial aspects of journalism.

Meyer (2004) asserted that the next generation of journalists will thrive only if trust and social responsibility outweigh business interests. Understanding this debate and the broader context surrounding the journalism industry can help recognize how external and internal factors may shape the perceptions of practicing journalists regarding success in this field.

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2.5 Importance of Journalism Education and Training Versus Life Experiences Journalists

2.5.1 Importance of journalism education and Training

Scholars agree on importance of education for all human kind. Not only this, they also argue that, one can liberate from materialism and acquire the ability to analyze things through education. Even though the type of education needed for journalists is still debatable among the scholars, the importance of education is unquestionable. According to Dressel cited in (Holten, 2010), two types of journalism education (professional and liberal) exist:

The professional education intends to prepare practitioners of an occupation but grapples with how to also prepare citizens to act intelligently in broader contexts of their lives and to function in a democratic society. A liberal education offers students a broad knowledge base and cultivates the skills, attitudes, and traits that mark a liberally-educated mind. The intrinsic problem with this type of education, however, is that it is not justifiable in itself for practical reasons. Realistically, most-if not all-graduates must enter the workforce after college, which requires a specific skill set for a vocation (Holten, 2010). P.40

According to (Bovee, 1999) journalist need not only education but also liberal arts. The arts necessary to write news cannot be gained through education, but need to be developed through practices like other artistic works. The works of a journalist like news writing and presenting requires more to be artistic ability.

What stories to be told and how to tell stories also requires to know moral principles. So, a journalist should better to learn ethics or moral principles that can prevent him from presenting stories that might be immoral. From educations needed for journalists, only small portions are given at university

level and much are obtained on job through experience (Ibid). Bovee (1999,p.181) also recommends courses for those who intends to be professional journalist:

“..general theory of journalism...journalism history, law, and ethics. In addition, courses in audio and visual communications could be made available for those students who wish to make a career in broadcast journalism.” (Bovee, 1999).

Bovee (1999) also argues that, the society needs to have some people to leaders and spokespersons that could entertain ideas on the realities that exist among the community. To make this possible, “a new level of education is needed. Just as law, medicine, dentistry, and other professionals found it necessary to develop professional education on the graduate level, so also must journalism”.

2.5.2 Life Experience of Journalists

According to (Bull, 2007, p. 7) journalist not only undergo formal education and it does not mean, brilliance in education makes perfect on job. There are also journalists who took on the job training. Even some journalists regret pursuing journalism education prior to joining the media. Noth Somer-Times reporter Astra Norton describes his experiences:

“The one thing I wish someone had told me when I was younger was your degree does not need to be linked to journalism. The people I worked with have studied everything from Chinese and Economics to English. If I could turn back time I would do my degree in something completely unrelated, and I don't think it would change where I'm working now.”

Simon Bucks, associate editor at Sky News questions the importance of journalism education to practice the profession. “At college you really don't learn much about the practicalities of the job. Working on a news agency has taught him a lot ...” says Simon (Bull, 2007). Ethiopian Media Authority. There are also 5 government owned print medias registered under the authority.

2.6 The Role of Education as a Pathway to the Profession

The primary purpose of journalism education is to equip practitioners with the ability to apply the insights and understandings developed in academia to address the immediate challenges and

problems they face in their work. However, this educational approach may not be the sole or predominant pathway to becoming a professional journalist.

Throughout the history of journalism, many prominent journalists have attained their status through alternative educational routes, rather than solely through formal journalism programs. As Josephi observes, journalism education is one among several viable means of entering the profession, rather than the exclusive or necessary path.

Even in countries where journalism education is thriving, such as Ethiopia and the former Soviet states, it can be difficult to discern the direct impact of this education on actual journalistic practices. Additionally, Deuze notes that despite the global proliferation of journalism studies and education, a shared understanding of the profession and its underlying philosophy remains elusive.

Journalism education alone cannot guarantee the development of the philosophies that form the foundation of the profession. While certain "criteria" can lend a professional legitimacy to the practice, it is challenging to assert that journalism education alone is sufficient to instill the principles that define the field. The philosophies that underpin the profession require more than just educational qualifications (Hanusch 2013; Motlagh et al.).

Numerous scholars contend that journalism education is a crucial element in shaping professional journalists. Elliott, for instance, asserts that it significantly "molds the norms and values of professional journalists" (as cited in Motlagh et al., 2013, 1821). Furthermore, Josephi's analysis of Splichal and Sparks' study suggests that journalism education can serve as an agent of change, particularly in "semi-democratic or autocratic nations," as the values and norms instilled in these contexts align with those of democratic nations, instilling a desire for "independence and autonomy" in students (2009, 47).

Despite various criticisms regarding the significance of journalism education in improving professional journalism practices, many scholars maintain that it is an indispensable attribute in solidifying the prominence of journalists as professional practitioners (Josephi, 2009; Hanusch &

Mellado, 2014). Adam (2001) argues that journalists and journalism require distinct identities, which are fortified through comprehensive education. Accordingly, universities can be viewed as "domains through which journalistic professionals develop capacities and attributes that enable them to act as public subjects" (Nolan, 2008, 743).

According to Benti (2012), a survey conducted by the former the Ethiopian Government Communication Affairs Office on journalism and communication education indicates that a significant number of respondents shared this perspective.

In Ethiopia's media landscape, young journalists often discover a discrepancy between their academic training and the realities of professional journalism. A recent study reveals that 37% of respondents perceive a total disconnect between their classroom knowledge and on-the-job practices. Furthermore, 30% of these aspiring journalists feel that the skills and insights gained during their studies are only partially implemented in the field.

According to a study by Benti (2012), many Ethiopian journalists believe that their commitment to the job, rather than their educational background, is the driving force behind their professionalism. The study suggests that while formal education and training can contribute to journalism professionalism, consistent and efficient practice can also lead to the development of professional skills. Similarly, Ashenafi (2013) notes that journalism in Ethiopia was previously viewed as a profession that did not require any specific educational qualifications. However, Birhanu's (2006) research indicates that a significant number of journalists believe that attending journalism education is crucial for practicing the profession effectively. Furthermore, Birhanu's (2014) study suggests that journalism education is increasingly seen as relevant, not only for entry-level journalists but also for mid-career professionals seeking to enhance their qualifications.

Despite these positive developments, Ethiopian journalism practice is still perceived to be plagued by issues such as unprofessionalism and low levels of journalistic skills and ethics (Hallelujah 2008; Woldegiorgis 2010). However, there are few journalists who outshined Ethiopian media industry without prior journalism education. This study, therefore, aims to understand how those

journalists assumed to successful have developed personal qualities and journalistic skills to sustain in the profession.

2.7 Definition of News

Before describing the concept of journalism, it is important to look at what it means 'NEWS'. Different scholars and media practitioners defined news in many ways. Sometime NEWS is used to refer new happenings that could be told for its importance or its impact on the society. Robert E. Park defined news as if it is an event which holds knowledge. He puts the definition as "An event ceases to be news...." and "the event under discussion soon ceases to be news" as cited in (Bovee, 1999).

Richard Bestic, parliamentary correspondent defined news as "news is what happened five minutes ago and its impact on what is going to happen in the next five minutes." cited in (Boyd, 2001). There also a definition of news widely used by scholars that grabs more attentions. It is a definition of news by Charles Dana which says 'when a dog bites a man, that is not news, but when a man bites a dog, that is news' cited in (Bovee, 1999).

Examining the nature of News and Journalism Gans (1979) conducted a content analysis to understand the elements that shape news - what is included, what is excluded, and how the news content is determined. He concluded that news reflects the "economic, political, social, and cultural hierarchies we call nation and society" (p.284). Fishman (1980) further defined news as the "result of the methods news workers employ" (p. 14), suggesting that different approaches by journalists would yield distinct versions of the news, ultimately shaping the public's understanding of the world. Expanding on this, Fishman (1980) noted that journalists often rely on standard operating procedures within their organization and profession.

2.8 Description of the concept of Journalism

To understand the concepts of journalism, it is important to look at definition of the term. Different scholars have defined journalism in different ways throughout its developments. The definitions given at different time might be affected by technological advancements. But it is important to

look at some definitions to understand the goals and purposes of journalism, which helps to grasp its concept (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001).

Adam (1993) provided a preliminary definition of journalism as "an invention or a form of expression used to report and comment in the public media on the events and ideas of the here and now" (p. 11). This includes elements such as reporting, judging, a public voice, and a focus on the present. Moreover, Adam (1993) asserted that the values and judgments of journalists are reflected in the selection and framing of news subjects, ultimately shaping the public's understanding.

According to Schudson cited in (Holten, 2010), journalism can be defined as analyzing and presenting current information assumed to be important for the public. This definition shows the responsibility uphold on the media in selecting information which is considered important for the society. The author also offers broad definition which touches more issues:

Journalism is the business or practice of regularly producing and disseminating information about contemporary affairs of public interest and importance. It is a set of institutions that publicizes periodically (usually daily but now with outline updates continuously) information and commentary on contemporary affairs, normally presented as true and sincere, to a dispersed and usually anonymous audience so as to publicly include that audience in a discourse taken to be publicly important. Schudson (2012:3) (Holten, 2010) Auletta (2005) defined journalism as “sifting information, finding different voices, trying to get at the complex truth, offering context” (p.15). This definition also hints out that, journalism is a process in searching, selecting, balancing, finding the truth and presenting it to the public.

Stuart (1993) defined journalism as follows:

Journalism is an invention or a form of expression used to report and comment in the public media on the events and ideas of the here and now. There are at least five elements in such a

definition: 1) a form of expression that is an invention; 2) reports of ideas and events; 3) comments on them; 4) the public circulation of them; and 5) the here and now. (p. 11) (Holten, 2010)

2.9 The Concept of Professionalism

The concept of professionalism has been extensively explored and debated in sociological literature, despite disagreements over its precise definition and categorization. Defining professionalism is a complex and challenging task, as it encompasses various occupational groups and their unique characteristics.

Researchers have analyzed professionalism from different perspectives, some viewing it as a specific type of occupation, while others consider it an institutional arrangement with distinct features. (Evetts, 2013) Some scholars have opted to avoid providing a definitive definition of professionalism, instead presenting a list of relevant occupational groups. (Crompton, 1990 as cited in Evetts, 2013) This reflects the paradox and contradictions inherent in the sociological understanding of professionalism.

Scholars have identified certain requirements for being considered a professional, such as a period of tertiary education, vocational training, and extensive knowledge-based expertise. (Ibid) Additionally, professions can be categorized based on their structural, occupational, and institutional arrangements, which are associated with the uncertainties of modern life in risk societies. Professionals are deeply engaged in managing and accessing risk, utilizing their specialized knowledge to help clients and customers navigate uncertainty.

Upholding professional principles is a collaborative effort, benefiting both workers and the community they serve. Trust between clients and practitioners is vital, as professionalism represents a distinct form of decentralized occupational governance and regulation – an integral component of a thriving civil society.

Professionals cultivate and preserve unique professional values and moral obligations, such as codes of ethics, which curb excessive competition by encouraging cooperation. This fosters a sense of pride and satisfaction in work performance, a form of individualized self-regulation.

The journalistic notion of professionalism shares striking parallels with this perspective. However, interpreting and encompassing the entirety of professionalism is challenging, as it is a dynamic and evolving concept.

Journalism, as a profession, grapples with the increasing difficulty of maintaining occupational control and autonomous decision-making. While it is unnecessary to analyze all professional and professionalism concepts, understanding the professionalism of broadcast media is crucial.

Professionalism, as outlined by Pollard and Johansen (1998), is about serving societal interests, not self-serving consequences of work. This principle lies at the heart of journalism and other esteemed professions.

Competence acts as a beacon, showcasing the pinnacle of social responsibility and ethical conduct. It harmonizes ideas and actions, prioritizing the greater good of the community. This accomplishment signifies the attainment of the highest standards, where thought and deed seamlessly converge for the primary benefit of society.

2.10 Journalism as a Profession

Profession of Enlightenment Extensive research has delved into the details of journalistic professionalism, the nature of journalism as a vocation, and related topics, such as journalists' role perceptions, the ideals and norms of the field, and the professional practices employed (Örnebring, 2009).

Contrary to the debate surrounding whether journalism truly qualifies as a profession, many sociologists of the field have argued that the historical differences between American and non-American perspectives have influenced the relationship between journalistic objectivity (impartiality in reporting) and professionalism (Anderson, P. 3907).

The notion of journalism as a distinct profession likely emerged following the establishment of other technical professions, such as medicine and law (Janowitz, 1975; Örnebring, 2009; Tumber & Prentoulis, 2005). Interestingly, journalism has been recognized as a unique profession for centuries, and when compared to the social sciences, the new journalism is seen as an expert in uncovering the meaning of social life, while also questioning and reflecting on its role in observing, reporting, and analyzing social reality, much like social scientists.

According to the observations of Tumber and Prentoulis (2005), there are certain requirements that must be met for journalism to be considered a true profession. Ultimately, journalism is viewed as fulfilling the essential human need to be informed, allowing individuals to actively participate in social and political processes.

Journalism's responsibility to serve the public good is at the heart of its professional identity, yet it can be tempted to prioritize particular interests over its ethical obligations. While journalism's objectivity, neutrality, and social responsibilities have historically defined its unique role in public life, changes in information needs and socio-political transformations have altered perceptions of this role.

The absence of a strong theoretical and scientific framework to support journalism's claims to truth and social responsibility poses a significant challenge.

Unlike sociologists, who draw on a clear theoretical foundation, journalists have traditionally relied more on practical experience and skills rather than formal knowledge.

Compared to professions like medicine and law, which base their legitimacy on established scientific and legal theories, journalism is a blend of abstract principles and technical requirements. Furthermore, the subjective nature of tasks like news writing and editing makes journalism particularly vulnerable to potential deviations from its core responsibilities.

Journalism's place within the craft/profession divide can be best understood by examining the central ideas proposed by Evetts's framework. This model offers a valuable means to re-

examine journalism as a distinct occupation, shedding light on its nuanced position within the broader landscape of professions and skilled trades.

2.11 Definitions of a Journalist

It is not simple to put some words together for the purpose of defining a journalist. The practice of journalism had begun before the establishment of institutes and no license is required to engage on it unlike other professions, like law or medicine. According to Calvert cited in (Abdissa & Getachew, 2024), studying journalism is not mandatory to be a journalist in United States. Though people who works in TV, Radio, magazine or in a newspaper were described as journalist in the past time, this time it is difficult to define a journalist. This is a modern age where separating people engaged in presenting news from that of entertainments which hinders to identify journalists from celebrities (Ibid).

The nature of media in the era of technology has brought different mediums which affects providing a single definition for the term journalist. From descriptions given to a journalist, that of Gans (1979) cited in (Holten, 2010) which says “defenders of a set of values, they are more than technicians who transmit information from sources to audiences” (p.28), is more generalized expression and tried to emphasize the qualities that may be associated with journalists.

2.12 Personal Qualities and Skills of a Journalist

Journalists in the media industry are expected to possess specific skills and personal attributes to excel. According to Boyd (2001), the skills BBC prioritizes for journalists include a strong interest in news and current affairs, sound news judgment, effective writing ability, strong communication skills, the capacity to generate and develop ideas, the capability to work collaboratively in various roles, and confident IT skills, including proficiency in word processing. Additionally, personal qualities such as initiative, commitment, motivation, energy, resilience under pressure, flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to be a well-rounded editorial contributor are highly valued. Journalists play pivotal roles in the process of social development, not merely reporting stories but also fulfilling functions like testing and recruiting elected leaders, providing feedback on public sentiment, distributing symbolic power, and acting as moral guardians, as outlined by Gans (1979).

British journalist Nicholas Tomalin describes the personal qualities of a journalist as ‘*The only qualities for real success in journalism are ratlike cunning, a plausible manner and a little literary ability. The capacity to steal other peoples’ ideas and phrases ...is also invaluable*’ (Boyd, 2001).

One of the qualities of a journalist that could help in reality judgments and values come from lifestyle in which he/she passes through. From family background to the community, he/she raised in, there are many factors that could affect his/her reality judgements (Gans, 1979).

Credibility and authority are also the most important qualities of a journalist, specifically of broadcast journalist. These qualities emanate from personal confidences of a journalist (Boyd, 2001).

Regarding personal qualities and skills needed for a journalist, scholars mention different skills that are assumed to be important for the profession. Most of those skills fall under the following personal qualities and skills summarized by Reva University (University, 2022).

Writing and Reporting Skills.

The skills to identifying what is to be a news story, gathering information assessing, producing and presenting it is considered very important. It also includes the skill of playing with words in writing factual and grammatically correct story.

Interview and Investigative Skills

This requires the skill of searching facts and evidence while avoiding personal feelings and emotions from the story being produced. It also requires observing the information critically to make sure the credibility of the story. Making a good rapport for the interview and being curious of what and how to ask for the intended story production is crucial.

Effective Communication Skills

To get the information you need, it is important to understand your sources. Being good at language and ability to manage communication with the interviewee is very helpful. These all could make someone to have a good communication skill.

Professionalism and Confidence

Even if you are a fresher and in your internship phase, you should consider yourself a professional. What professionalism means in the journalism field is meeting deadlines, ready to take up work before regular working hours and have the courage to accept criticism from the editors. Also, journalists should reflect confidence in order to succeed. However, you should always be eager to learn from your limitations and enhance your skills.

Persistence and Discipline

The profession of journalism requires hard work and persistence. Sometimes you might be chasing a story for months to get a lead and hit the newspapers. During such times, an ideal journalist should not give up following on a story and must remain disciplined. The ultimate motive of any journalist should be to find the truth and seek justice in all matters even if he or she has received recognition for their efforts.

Ethics

With so much of competition to move ahead in the race, sometimes journalists abandon their ethics for money and fame. A good journalist should always behave ethically and never follow illegal measures even if it helps in uncovering the secrets behind a story. Accuracy and honest should be more important while writing a new piece.

2.13 Functions and Roles of Journalists.

Journalists are expected to have roles/functions that could contribute in the process of social developments. They don't only tell the stories, but also plays roles including what is traditionally expected from them by the community.

The media play various essential functions in society. They serve as a barometer, shedding light on emerging social disruptions while simultaneously reassuring the public through narratives of order restoration. Journalists also act as agents of social control, deterring people from engaging in behaviors deemed unacceptable by those in power. Furthermore, they construct our understanding of the nation and society, reporting on the actions and statements of those claiming to represent these concepts, thereby reinforcing their reality and influence.

Additionally, the media manage the symbolic arena, controlling the public stage upon which national, societal, and other messages are disseminated to the audience.

Researchers have identified four distinct roles that journalists can assume. Some serve as disseminators, quickly informing the public of information. Others adopt an adversarial stance, gravitating toward divisive hard news topics. Interpretive journalists analyze public issues and convey their implications. Lastly, some journalists believe in mobilizing public discourse and guiding the public towards solutions to significant concerns. Interestingly, a journalist's preferred role often correlates with the type of work they consider to be their best (Weaver et al., 2007).

News is the end result, the actual report itself, while journalism is the process involved in creating that final piece. Journalism is a craft, a skill, or a profession. A journalist can be seen as the person who takes on the role of telling the story that becomes the news.

2.14 The Nature of Success

According to (Davies, 1970; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004) defining success in any field is intricate but can be confined to professional rank, salary though it cannot fully indicate it. Even though there is literature gap on definition and measurement tool of success, comparing “good work” and individual achievements could be possible. Success is relative and could happen at any level of career. It can be moving forward and being accurate for a journalist. Journalists need being passionate, being ethical, and being hard worker to succeed in the profession (Holten, 2010).

2.15 Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is a dynamic and comprehensive approach to human learning and development, drawing insights from prominent 20th-century scholars. This model emphasizes

the central role of experience in the process of learning and growth, recognizing the dual interplay between action and reflection, as well as the integration of concrete experiences and abstract conceptualization.

As a holistic theory, experiential learning encompasses the whole person and is applicable across a wide range of settings, from formal educational contexts to various spheres of life. The learning process is ubiquitous, present in all human activities and permeating different levels of society, from the individual to the collective.

Research conducted globally has demonstrated the cross-cultural applicability of this model, underscoring its relevance and adaptability in diverse cultural and educational landscapes.

Learning is a dynamic and ongoing process where individuals transform their experiences into knowledge. The experiential learning cycle is central to this process, involving a recurring cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and actively testing new ideas.

This approach contrasts with the traditional "banking" model of education, where information is simply deposited into passive learners. Instead, the experiential learning cycle encourages learners to engage with their experiences, reflect on them, and then apply their newfound insights to create new experiences. This iterative process allows individuals to continuously expand their knowledge and understanding, tailored to their unique learning needs and situations.

Whether in the context of school, university, or national curricular policies, the focus remains on the individual learner and how they can harness the power of experiential learning to enhance their lifelong learning journey.

Individuals have the power to shape reality through a two-step process. First, they must internalize and ponder the world around them, allowing new ideas to form. Then, they must translate these thoughts into tangible actions, using their agency to alter the course of events.

In this way, people are not merely passive observers, but active participants in the ongoing transformation of their environment. They are both receptors and generators of knowledge, wielding the ability to reflect, reimagine, and ultimately, remake the world.

2.16 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is increasingly recognized as a decisive component in promoting sustainable natural resource management and desirable behavioral changes, Muro & Jeffrey cited in (Bandura, 2016).

This theory is based on the idea that individuals learn through their interactions within a social context. Separately, people develop similar behaviors by observing the actions of others. After observing the behaviors of others, people assimilate and imitate those behaviors, especially if their observations are positive or involve rewards.

As Bandura stated, imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory has become one of the most influential theories of learning and development. It is rooted in the fundamental concepts of traditional learning theory.

This theory is often referred to as a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories, as it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation (Ibid).

However, Bandura believes that direct reinforcement cannot fully account for all types of learning. For this reason, his theory incorporates a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by observing others.

According to the elements of this theory, there are three general principles for learning from one another. Observing the actions of others is a key aspect of how people acquire knowledge. Moreover, understanding human thought processes is central to unraveling the complexities of personality.

By the mid-1980s, Bandura's research had evolved into a more comprehensive approach, delving deeper into the role of human cognition within the context of social learning.

This expanded theoretical framework soon became known as social cognitive theory, providing a valuable lens for comprehending, forecasting, and modifying human behavior. Social cognitive learning theory places a strong emphasis on cognitive concepts, exploring how individuals, both young and old, cognitively process their social experiences and how these cognitive processes subsequently influence their behavior and development.

2.17 Competency Theory

Exploring the Foundations the concept of competence, first introduced by psychologist Robert White in 1959, has been viewed as a more reliable indicator of an employee's future job performance compared to traditional IQ and personality tests (McClelland, 1973). Since then, scholars have identified three primary approaches to understanding this concept (Mulder et al., 2007).

The behavioralist approach considers competence as a set of observables, measurable, and assessable desired behaviors (Guerrero & De los Ríos, 2012). The cognitive approach defines competence as a deep cognitive structure encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and other mental resources that have the potential to develop into desired behavior and performance at work (Messick, 1984). In contrast, the generic approach defines competence as "broad clusters" of skills, abilities, and characteristics associated with expert performers in a particular profession (Norris, 1991).

Building upon these three approaches, researchers have developed various typologies of competency. Much of the existing literature in this field originates from business management and leadership, focusing on identifying core behavioral competencies desired in specific professions. Drawing on this literature, researchers have examined the competencies required in the journalism profession, such as the personal qualities, motives, and behavioral characteristics that contribute to effective job performance, as emphasized by Boyatzis (1982).

The examination of job postings offers a distinctive opportunity to gather and assess details concerning work-related factors or employee qualifications (Wilson, 1974). Analyzing job announcements is considered an effective strategy to pinpoint the core competencies associated with a particular profession, while providing insights into the expectations employers have for new hires (Ritzhaupt et al., 2010).

Over the past two decades, the scope and complexity of such analysis have significantly expanded, with applications extending to journalism studies (e.g., Massey, 2010; Young & Carson, 2018). Journalism job analysis not only helps identify emerging changes within the news industry, but also informs journalism educators and students about the desired qualifications for frontline journalists.

Carpenter's (2009) study is perhaps the first substantial job analysis in journalism, revealing that the most sought-after expertise was nontechnical routine skills, such as writing, editing, and interviewing, followed by adaptive expertise, including creativity, independent thinking, and leadership abilities. Other studies have also attempted to identify specific requirements for journalists working in different media formats.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Methodology

This study employed a clear set of procedures essential for its successful completion from the selection of a specific research approach to the identification of ethical considerations undertaken throughout the research process.

3.2 Research approach

There are three primary approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2008). For this study, the exclusive approach employed was qualitative.

Qualitative research emphasizes individuals' own interpretations of their experiences, allowing for an in-depth exploration of what they say and do (Kalof et al., 2008). This unique approach enables researchers to delve deeply into human experiences and aims to uncover the lived experiences of participants by focusing on how they interpret their lives and make sense of the surrounding world. Key features of qualitative research include: (a) the researcher's goal of understanding personal perspectives; (b) the researcher acting as the primary data collector; (c) an inductive process for analyzing data; and (d) a rich, descriptive outcome (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative researchers strive to interpret phenomena from the participants' viewpoints, prioritizing their experiences and insights (Merriam, 2002).

Considering the current study's aim to identify the factors that foster and maintain journalistic excellence among individuals lacking formal journalism education, alongside an exploration of the experiences of senior journalists and the development of their personal qualities and skills, an interpretive and descriptive qualitative approach was determined to be the most suitable.

3.3 Narrative Research

Within the qualitative tradition, narrative research focuses on how individuals perceive and make sense of their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). This method provides valuable insights into phenomena and is especially beneficial for journalists seeking to understand their personal experiences within the media landscape (Creswell, 2012). The focus of this narrative inquiry is on the experiences of four participants selected from the oldest Ethiopian media outlets.

By exploring senior journalists' personal qualities, skills development, and their perceptions of the importance of journalism education and occupational success, narrative research allows for the gathering of individual stories, organizing them objectively (Creswell, 2013).

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

A researcher must clearly identify the types of data that will effectively address their research questions. This study aimed to understand the factors that drive and sustain journalistic excellence among individuals without formal journalism education. To achieve this objective, a narrative design

was selected as the most appropriate approach, as it facilitated the collection of personal reflections on the participants' journalistic experiences through in-depth interviews.

Conducting interviews with senior journalists can present sensitive issues, and participants may be reluctant to fully disclose their thoughts and experiences if they feel apprehensive (Creswell, 2012). To mitigate this challenge, this study exclusively employed one-on-one personal interviews instead of group discussions, thereby creating a more comfortable and confidential environment for participants to share their insights openly.

3.5 In-Depth Interview

Interviews serve to get insight into things that cannot be observed directly such as peoples experience, knowledge, feeling, attitude, perspectives, activities that happened in at some point of time, how people organize and define their activities or the world through questioning them (Patton, 2002).

For this research inquiry, the interview method was identified as the most suitable approach, allowing the researcher to capture participants' thoughts, feelings, intentions, perspectives, experiences, and underlying meanings—elements that are not easily observable (Patton, 1990). The interview process involves more than just crafting the questions; it includes several important steps such as selecting appropriate interviewees, deciding on the most effective format (telephone, focus group, or one-on-one), establishing a method for recording responses, and developing an interview protocol (Creswell, 2013).

During the interviews, the researcher must pay attention to three levels of listening: focusing on the

explicit content, tuning into the participants' "inner voice," and filtering out irrelevant responses while remaining aware of the overall interaction and sensitive to nonverbal cues (Seidman, 2006). Based on the participants' availability and preferences, one-on-one interviews were arranged, lasting between 40 and 90 minutes. The participants expressed a preference for in-person interviews, and the researcher conducted them accordingly.

Before starting the interviews, the researcher gently reminded participants about the consent form regarding the recording of the conversations and asked for their permission to digitally record the discussion using a mobile app. Additionally, participants were reassured that they could request to pause or stop the interview at any time.

Interview questions may be structured or unstructured (Merriam, 2009). Structured interviews consist of predetermined questions with little opportunity for variation in responses, while unstructured interviews contain open-ended questions, often employed when the researcher is not well-versed in the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). In this study, a semi-structured format was utilized for the interview questions, allowing for both guided and exploratory responses.

3.6 Inclusion Criteria

To gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the study focused on senior journalists of Ethiopia. The primary criteria for selecting participants were that they had to be senior and assumed successful in working as a journalist for comparably longer years. Their social background, and their organizational and medium backgrounds (different media organizations and different media outlets like radio, TV and print media) are considered while selecting them.

3.7 Sampling Techniques and Size

This study utilized a non-probability sampling technique for data collection. The primary objective was not to achieve representativeness among all senior journalists lacking formal journalism education, but rather to identify patterns that illuminate the shared experiences of participants concerning their career trajectories in journalism.

Qualitative research prioritizes an in-depth understanding of phenomena over the generalization of findings, resulting in smaller sample sizes compared to quantitative studies (Ritchie et al., 2003). The collection and analysis of qualitative data are inherently labor-intensive, rendering large sample sizes impractical and costly.

Researchers have proposed various guidelines for determining appropriate sample sizes in qualitative research (Bertaux, 1981; Creswell, 2013; Morse, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989). In particular, Creswell suggests that for phenomenological research, an appropriate sample size typically ranges from 3 to 10 participants (Creswell, 2014).

For this study, four senior journalists were purposefully selected based on the specified criteria in the selection process, ensuring a rich exploration of their lived experiences in the field of journalism.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

In the context of narrative inquiry, data analysis is primarily concerned with exploring individuals' stories. This involves examining significant statements and the contextual framework in which they are expressed to derive meaningful insights (Creswell, 2014). For this study, a narrative analysis approach was espoused, which is particularly advantageous for interpreting interview data (Jugder, 2016). This method allows researchers to immerse themselves in the narratives, uncovering how participants construct meaning and navigate their experiences through storytelling. Throughout the analysis, the researcher focused on both the content and structure of the narratives, interpreting the core elements of the research issue through rich and contextually informed readings of the data. Consequently, the researcher employed narrative analysis procedures to extract and scrutinize each segment of the narratives in alignment with my research objectives, placing a strong emphasis on the participants' lived experiences.

The analysis was carried out through the following steps:

- **Transcription:** Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy.
- **Identifying Significant Statements:** Each line of the transcriptions was reviewed to highlight phrases that captured participants' experiences, allowing for an understanding of their underlying meanings, which were annotated with margin notes or codes.

- Coding: The highlighted segments were manually coded according to their relevance to the research questions, ensuring each code was contextually grounded.
- Theme Development: The organized data yielded emerging themes that aligned with the research objectives. Themes were described and structured into topics and subtopics, illustrated with narrative passages and relevant quotations to convey participants' experiences cohesively.
- Interpretation of Findings: Finally, the findings were interpreted by examining overarching themes related to participants' experiences. These findings were compared with existing literature to identify alignments or discrepancies, enriching the analysis and providing insights for future research and practice.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, several ethical considerations were carefully addressed. Ethical clearance was obtained from Addis Ababa University, and verbal informed consent was secured from the participants. They were asked for permission to participate and were briefed about the relevant issues concerning the study. Once the purpose and significance of the research were explained and participants confirmed their agreement, data collection commenced. Participation was entirely voluntary, and individuals were assured that their involvement was free of any coercion.

The participants were also informed that their identities would remain confidential, ensuring their privacy. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, pseudo names were used instead of their real names. Additionally, to maintain confidentiality, the information provided by participants was narrated without specifically linking their identities to their responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents analysis and discusses findings of the study. Accordingly, the findings are categorized based on key themes that arise from the participants' stories. These themes include early experiences, reflections on formal journalism education, factors that drive journalistic excellence, development of personal qualities and skills, and defining success in journalism. The narratives underscore the significance of passion, mentorship, practical experience, continuous learning, cultural values, and professionalism in the field of journalism.

4.1 Description of Participants' Demographics and Professional Experiences

The study involved four senior journalists, each with extensive experience in Ethiopia's media landscape. The interviews, which lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, provided a deep dive into their social and professional backgrounds, as well as their insights into the field of journalism. Table 1 outlines the participants' backgrounds, categorizing their education, years of media experience, and the types of media they specialized in. A brief profile for each participant follows the table.

Table 4.1: Participants' Background Profile

| Pseudonym | Years of job on media | Type of media worked on | Education | Place of birth |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tsehay | 28 | TV and Radio | BA degree in Political Science | East Gojam, Dejene Town |
| Mohammed | 29 | Radio and Newspaper | Diploma in Teaching | Arsi, Etaya Town |
| Tolasa | 38 | Newspaper | 12 complete | Arsi, Sire |

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|-------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Indashawu | 30 | Radio | 12+1 Diploma in accounting | Addis Ababa |
|-----------|----|-------|----------------------------|-------------|

As one can see from the above table, each participant has a unique educational background: one holds a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science, another has a diploma in Teaching, the third has completed grade 12, and the fourth possesses a 12+1 diploma in accounting.

Tsehay

Tsehay is a veteran journalist born in Dejen Town, East Gojam Zone. She has aspired to be a journalist or diplomat since childhood, influenced greatly by her family. Although her father was a businessman, he had a strong connection to information and media, which fostered her love for journalism.

From a young age, Tsehay was actively engaged in school activities related to journalism. She recalls that in the first, second, and third grades, when her teachers asked students to write about their future aspirations or personal biographies, she consistently expressed her desire to become a journalist or diplomat. Furthermore, during school assemblies, she would read the main news of the week to her classmates while they hoisted the national flag. She also participated in a radio question-and-answer contest, where she wrote the questions and answers and presented them to her peers. Tsehay's affinity for media was evident as she frequently listened to Ethiopian radio, watched Ethiopian television, and read newspapers. However, at the time, journalism was not offered as a major at the university level, so she pursued her second choice: political science.

In February 1983, she began her career at Ethiopian Radio as a journalist. She recounts that upon being hired as a junior reporter, she was surrounded by strong leadership and experienced journalists. Through professional training and her personal dedication, she developed into a proficient journalist. Over nearly 28 years, she progressed from a junior reporter to the head of the newsroom at Ethiopian radio and television. Currently, she works at a private company, focusing on journalism and media training and consulting.

Mohammed

Mohammed is the head of the media content programs at Fana Broadcasting Corporate. He was born in Etay Town, located in the Arsi Zone, where he grew up. Before entering the field of journalism, he worked as a teacher and often read newspapers available in his village. One of his influences was his cousin, who worked at a government press agency for a newspaper called Bariisaa. Mohammed shared with the researcher that his cousin's work inspired his passion for reading, particularly Bariisaa.

Encouraged by this influence, he began writing stories reflecting the cultural values of his community and submitted them to the press agency. His articles were edited and published in the newspaper, which fueled his desire to pursue a career in journalism. Although he had an interest in the field prior to this, seeing his work published in Bariisaa was a significant motivation for him to join the media. In 1987 EC, Fana Broadcasting Corporate invited him to join their team after reviewing his articles in Bariisaa. They provided him with on-the-job journalistic training, which set him on the path to becoming a professional journalist.

Later on, he participated in short training sessions and workshops on journalism, which he believes are crucial for developing the skills needed in the practice. Mohammed, who transitioned from being a teacher to contributing articles for Bariisaa and joining Fana Broadcasting 29 years ago, has excelled in his career, progressing from a junior reporter to the head of his department.

Tolasa

Tolasa is a senior print journalist born in Arsi. During his childhood, he moved to Addis Ababa, where he grew up. In 1978 EC, he joined the Ethiopian Press Agency, where he has worked for a total of 38 years. After retiring from the organization, he rejoined as a freelancer and continues to contribute to the field.

Before embarking on his journalistic career, Tolasa started by collecting newspapers for the editors. After nine months, he joined the “Bariisaa” newspaper as a proofreader, which he describes as the springboard for his professional career. Alongside this role, he worked as a sports news reporter in the Amharic language.

Since then, Tolasa has progressed through various positions at the Ethiopian Press Agency, from junior reporter to producer. He has established himself as a successful journalist, covering numerous significant national, continental, and international events.

Indashawu

Indashawu is a senior radio journalist born in Addis Ababa. From elementary school, he practiced story writing and presenting on stage, a passion that ultimately led him to a career in journalism, despite not having formal journalism education. He graduated with a 12+1 diploma in a field unrelated to journalism.

In 1979 EC, Indashawu joined the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency, which is now known as the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. He later worked at Fana Broadcasting Corporate from 1987 until he left for Israel in 2009 EC. Over nearly three decades as a radio journalist, he built a significant reputation and garnered respect in the industry.

During his elementary school years, encouragement from his fellow students and neighbors motivated him to pursue his passion for journalism.

4.2 Early journalism Experiences of the participants' and their Reflections on the Value of Formal Journalism Education

From Childhood Passion to Professional Career: Tsehaye's Evolution as a Journalist

Tsehaye is a senior journalist who has worked at the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, formerly known as Ethiopian Radio and Television, for almost 28 years. Influenced by her family, especially her father, who was keen on new information, she was exposed to news and radio programs from a young age. During her elementary school years, she often listened to the radio, read newspapers, and presented news to her classmates.

Tsehaye engaged in presenting morning news to students as they raised the national flag each day, a practice that sparked her interest and passion for becoming a journalist or a diplomat. She studied political science before joining Ethiopian Radio in 1983 EC.

Once at the media station, Tsehaye received on-the-job training in journalistic skills, including reading, writing, and technical abilities. She regularly read newspapers and watched various international television channels to stay informed about current affairs and to enhance her journalistic skills. She recognizes the invaluable training she received from her editors.

Tsehaye strongly believes in the importance of education; however, she asserts that what makes a journalist truly effective is personal effort through reading and practical experience in the profession. This perspective aligns with the existing literature on journalism. According to Bovee (1999), journalists require not only formal education but also a foundation in liberal arts. The necessary skills to write news cannot be solely acquired through education but must also be developed through practice, similar to other artistic disciplines.

Tsehaye's journey illustrates the interplay between formal education and personal dedication in the realm of journalism. While she acknowledges the significance of formal learning, her experience underscores the necessity of continuous self-improvement and hands-on practice to excel in the field. This synthesis of formal education and individual effort serves as a guiding principle for aspiring journalists in Ethiopia and beyond.

The Role of Mentorship and self-learning in Journalism: Indashawu's Story

Indashawu, who has built a significant reputation as a journalist, shares similar experiences to Tsehaye regarding what drives him to pursue a career in journalism. He developed a love for reading newspapers and magazines from an early age and was well-known for presenting stories in school while he was only in the sixth grade. His stories were crafted not only from what he read in newspapers or heard on the radio but also from his observations of events in his community.

Meseret Bekele, one of Indashawu's schoolmates who admired his articulation and reading style, gifted him a novel, appreciating his storytelling ability. This marked the beginning of Indashawu's practice of translating from English to Amharic using local dictionaries, enabling him to understand the material better and present it to his classmates.

Indashawu often read newspapers aloud, regardless of their contents, to satisfy his passion for storytelling. This habit caught the attention of an elderly neighbor, known as “50 Aleka” Mersha, who consistently praised him. Living in Addis Ababa around the ‘Faransayi Legasiyon’ area, Mersha introduced Indashawu to a journalist at a newspaper called ‘Yezareitu Ethiopia.’ “It felt like a miracle to me, like those who return from the moon,” Indashawu recalls, reflecting on the inspiration that drove him further toward a journalism career.

One of the most significant moments in Indashawu's life occurred when his story was narrated on Bistrate Radio. This opportunity arose after the media reviewed an article he had submitted. At that time, Indashawu was still a high school student.

Regarding the importance of journalism education, Indashawu firmly believes in the necessity of being educated, but he questions the type of knowledge deemed important and the methods through which it is acquired. Research supports his concerns, revealing that news managers express dissatisfaction with current journalism education, emphasizing that journalistic training is crucial in shaping news judgment and defining newsworthiness (Weaver et al., 2007). Although Indashawu holds a 10+3 diploma, he believes he has learned significantly through reading and engaging with various media outlets.

He received on-the-job training when he joined the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, then known as the Ethiopian Radio and Television, in 1979 EC. According to Indashawu, this training added value to his skills, but he believes that his love, passion, and commitment to journalism have been the keys to his career success. After joining Fana Broadcasting Corporate in 1987 EC, Indashawu became one of the prominent figures in radio news and programs until he left for Israel in 2009 EC.

Passion and on the job training; Mohamed’s journey from elementary school teacher to senior journalist

Another journalist with related experiences who has inspired numerous audiences throughout his career is Mohammed. He was an elementary school teacher when he began reading the 'Bariisaa' newspaper, where his cousin worked. Inspired by the stories written by his cousin, Mohammed started composing articles about the cultural values of his community. His enthusiasm for the profession grew after 'Bariisaa' published an article he had written and submitted to the press while he was still teaching

in Arsi. This opportunity allowed him to contribute articles to the newspaper regularly, fulfilling his passion for journalism. Additionally, it opened the door for him to join Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) in 1987 EC. Mohammed recalls that FBC invited him to join after reviewing his articles in 'Bariisaa.'

Regarding the importance of journalism education and training, Mohammed states, "I cannot deny the significance of formal education, but on-the-job training and learning from societal values are even more beneficial." He believes that his natural talent, strong interests, and passion for media work significantly contribute to his career success.

Mohammed also asserts that the on-the-job training he received after joining FBC added valuable technical skills to his repertoire. He has attended several training sessions and workshops, which he considers crucial for developing journalistic qualities and skills. As noted by Bull (2007, p. 7), formal education alone does not guarantee excellence in journalism; there are journalists who successfully master their craft through practical training.

At FBC, the media system encourages everyone to provide comments and suggestions during daily morning briefings, playing a significant role in his development as a journalist. This environment has helped him critically evaluate news content and understand production processes. During his time at FBC from 2005 to 2008, the researcher also experienced this media briefing system, where content was either critiqued or praised based on the insights of senior journalists.

Mohammed's journey underscores the vital interplay between formal education and practical experience in shaping successful journalists. While he recognizes the foundation that formal education provides, he strongly advocates for the importance of continuous learning through professional practice and community engagement. His experiences highlight the essential role of mentorship and collaborative feedback in fostering the development of journalistic skills, contributing to the ongoing evolution of media in Ethiopia.

The Importance of Practical Experience and on the job trainings in mastering journalism:

Tolosa's journey

Tolasa, a senior press journalist, has a unique story that drove him to the profession of journalism. He has always been passionate about sports, including athletics and football, and he competed in various athletic events and football matches organized within school communities. These experiences inadvertently paved the way for his journalism career while he was working in an unrelated job at the Ethiopian Press Agency.

Out of his love for sports, Tolasa began sending reports on significant football matches he attended in Addis Ababa. Although the press agency published these reports without crediting him, he felt a sense of happiness in seeing his work in print. After he showed one of the newspapers to Ibrahim HajiAli Boru, a distinguished senior journalist, Tolasa received the opportunity to work as his assistant. Ibrahim HajiAli, who is also a researcher of language and music, worked for 'Bariisaa' newspaper under the press agency at that time. He arranged this opportunity after recognizing Tolasa's passion for sports in 1978 EC.

Once Tolasa joined the team at 'Bariisaa,' he began gathering facts and writing stories, using the styles of his senior colleagues as his benchmark. He learned a wealth of skills and journalistic qualities from his colleagues and editors. Specifically, Tolasa refers to Ibrahim HajiAli as "an ocean," illustrating the depth of knowledge and journalistic skills he gained from his mentor. Tolasa noted that most senior journalists, including Pawulos Nyonyo and himself, do not have educational backgrounds that exceed the 12th grade. He emphasizes the importance of education for a journalism career but believes that it cannot solely be acquired through formal education. As he sees it, individuals have valuable opportunities to learn from societal values. Tolasa asserts that one can master journalistic skills and qualities through practical experience on the job. Similarly, reporter Astra Norton supports this view, stating that studying journalism alone does not enable mastery of the profession; rather, it is through practical experience that one truly learns (Bull, 2007).

Tolasa's experiences underscore the significance of mentorship and the value of on-the-job training in developing a journalist's abilities. As he reflects on his career, Tolasa advocates for a more holistic approach to journalism education—one that incorporates both formal learning and practical

experiences rooted in societal engagement. This dual approach may serve as a valuable pathway for aspiring journalists in Ethiopia and beyond. Key factors driving and enhancing journalistic excellence beyond the formal journalism education.

The experiences of the participants reveal that various personal motivations and qualities significantly contribute to journalistic excellence, even in the absence of formal journalism education. The following table summarizes what drives these journalists to their profession and the qualities that enhance their success.

Table 4.2. Factors that drive and enhances journalistic excellence beyond formal journalism education.

| Name of a participant | Factors that drive to the profession | Qualities enhanced in the profession |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Tsehay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childhood passion to be a journalist • family influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passionate to read newspapers, listen radio and watch television to be informed of any update news • interest of reading to develop qualities and skills necessary to the profession. • love of the profession and commitment to it. • Being always learner, learning from others including editors • confidence |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohammed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family influence- the name of his cousin being in a newspaper impressed him to follow his footsteps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passionate to read newspapers, listen radio and watch television to be informed of any update news and also to learn how to write and present news and programs • interest of reading to develop qualities and skills necessary to the profession. • love of the profession and commitment to it. • Being always learner, learning from others including editors • applying his knowledge, he gets from social values like investigative reporting skills • confidence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolasa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his passion for sport activities accidentally introduced him to sport journalist working at the same organization that later helped him to be his assistant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his passion for sport (which is very important for sport journalists) learning from editors and others • applying his knowledge, he gets from social values like communication skills confidence on stage • |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indashawu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childhood passion to be a journalist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passionate to read newspapers, listen radio and watch television to be informed of any update news • interest of reading to develop qualities and skills necessary to the profession. • love of the profession and commitment to it. • • Being always learner, learning from others including editors |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence |
|--|--|--|

The findings highlight key themes concerning the motivations and qualities that contribute to journalistic excellence among the participants.

Passion and Interest: A recurring theme of passion for journalism, reading, and specific areas such as sports has been a strong driving force for their careers.

Family Influence: The significant impact of family members involved in the media emerged as a motivating factor for several participants, providing inspiration and encouragement.

Continuous Learning: All participants emphasize the importance of being lifelong learners, indicating that learning from peers, mentors, and the community is vital for developing essential journalistic skills.

Practical Experience: Engagement in relevant activities before joining the profession was instrumental in shaping their skills, demonstrating that practical experience is critical in developing journalistic qualities.

Confidence: The ability to present news and communicate effectively, reflected in their preprofessional activities, is recognized as a crucial quality for success in journalism.

Social Context: The participants acknowledged the importance of drawing from societal values, suggesting that contextual understanding and community engagement significantly enhance their journalistic abilities.

In general, these insights illustrate a broad perspective on how passion, practical experience, and continuous learning collectively foster journalistic excellence, independent of conventional educational paths. The participants' stories highlight the dynamic nature of the profession and the possibilities for aspiring journalists from diverse backgrounds and experiences. **Table 3: Participant Activities before Joining the Profession**

| Name | Activities related to career | Qualities related to Journalism |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Tsehay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate on reading newspapers and books, listening radio • presenting news at stage during elementary and high school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passion • writing and reading/presenting • confidence |
| Mohammed Gudato | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interested on reading newspaper on which his cousin works on • writing stories on cultural values of the community while • teaching at elementary school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interest/passion • writing and reading • confidence |
| Tolasa Qadida | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passionate on sport activities and participating on both athletics and football competitions at woreda and zone level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passion on sport (which is assumed to be very important for sport journalists) • confidence on stage |
| Indashawu Wase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate on reading newspapers and books, listening radio presenting news at stage during elementary and high school • • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passion • writing and reading/presenting • confidence |

4.3 Development of Personal Qualities and Journalistic Skills

4.3.1 The Influence of Cultural Values on Journalistic Qualities and Skills

The following section presented the participants' experiences and beliefs regarding the influences of cultural values on personal qualities and skills, especially on ethical behavior, communication skills, and investigative reporting abilities.

Tolasa's perspective on the influence of "Jaarsummaa" on personal qualities and communication skills

Tolasa believes the values of the society are cornerstones of his personal qualities and skills. He praises "Jaarsummaa", which has different types and purpose in Oromo culture. Tolasa argues no school can make someone more ethical than this culture. Not only this, he has also mastered communication skills through actively attending different type of "Jaarsummaa" where elders communicate in different and effective ways based on situations, cultures, norms and purposes of the issue at hand. Tolasa believes on the skills to ask someone, for what purpose to ask and the quality of raising follow up questions are very important for a journalist. He developed all these qualities from the society, specifically from culture of "jaarsummaa".

Mohammed's experience with "Abbaa Gadaa" and the importance of understanding cultural norms

Mohammed who shares the same view with Tolasa on values of the society in teaching personal qualities and skills, cements the thought by providing his experience. He remembers the day he went to Arsi around Kofale to conduct an interview with "Abbaa Gadaa". After sending someone to call them for him, "Abbaa Gadaa came and asked him "Ani Abbaa Gadaati. Nakuulteetu nabaastemoo? Nafuulteetu nabaaste?". Even though the word usage, the expression and the meanings of this question is critical and complex to understand, it was a test to identify whether Mohammed knows the culture. It is important to know how to talk to "Abbaa Gadaa". They are highly respected among the community and there is a norm on communicating with them. Mohammed was lucky to know the culture which helped him to answered the question saying " Abbaa Gadaa fuulanii hinbaasanii, kuuleen isin baase.". It means, "Abbaa Gadaa cannot be called as an ordinary person for inquiry but can be asked to talk to with due cultural respect". That is why "Abbaa Gadaa" immediately kissed on his forehead and sat for the interview. Mohammed believes personal qualities and skills like, ethics, communication skills and interview skills are found in this culture and cultivated him throughout his life.

Investigative reporting skills which Mohammed has mastered it is also found in cultural values of the community he raised in. He cannot stop talking about it unless someone interrupts to do so. The culture is called "Qora-Lamaan". It is all about investigation.

‘Arsii keessa aadaa Qoralamaan (kuuttu-dhufee) jedhamutu jira. Manguddoonni ni jiru, kan maanguddootti karaa agarsiisu jira, kan walhimatan nijiru. Guungume, jedhanii kan waan dabe sirreessan, kan waan hanqate itti guutan njiru. Qoralamaan kanaan dubbi jallatte, badii raawwate, qoratanii waan bade barbaadu. Dhugaa barbaadu. Ani waan aadaa, kana keessattin guddadhe. Kanumatu hojii gaazexeessummaa investigative skill salphaatti akkan itti milkaa’u nataasise.’

‘When something bad happens in a society or if someone suspects the other one of stealing his Ox for example, elders from the community will call people from the community to conduct “QoraLamaa”, where people from both sides are being investigated to find the truth. The group of investigators also have a group that follows up the case and make some corrections if any mistake made through. They give overall guidance for them. There is also a group that is determined to bring peace among the disputed people following the findings of the investigation. The researcher has also experienced the culture of investigation in western part of Oromia called ‘Afarsaataa’, which is the same to ‘Qoralamaa’.’

Mohammed believes that this culture of investigation has helped him not only to develop investigative reporting skills, but also most of personal qualities and skills, except the writing one.

Even though this study did not incorporated theories to test the findings’, social cognitive learning theory has emerged supporting findings of this research specifically on learning from social values. According to social cognitive learning theory which is developed by Bandura (Bijandi, 2011), people learn by watching what others do which supports the idea of Mohammed and Tolasa on the values of the society on developing journalistic qualities. Literature also indicated that, one of the qualities of a journalist that could help in reality judgments and values come from lifestyle in which he/she passes through. From family background to the community, he/she raised in, there are many factors that could affect his/her reality judgements (Gans, 1979).

Tsehay's emphasis on the role of editors and media organizations in journalist development. On developing personal qualities and skills, Tsehay emphasizes on-job trainings, the role of media organizations and personal efforts.:

“Editors at your institution have an important role to play. Editors providing professional assistance to a reporter has a significant role in the professional development. The help they gave about reporting, interviewing, and news writing will make a journalist to be matured enough. In addition, it would be good for universities to give space for practitioners. It is useful to invite working journalists to share their experiences.”

She also believes her childhood tendency and dreams. As well as family’s upbringing has helped her to be passionate on journalist which directly or indirectly helps to develop personal qualities and journalistic skills. On-job trainings has also helped her to develop technical skills. On ethical issues, Tsehay has developed from social makeup of her early childhood.

On the other hand Indashawu believes his skill of learning different language in short time has helped him to develop communication skills. Naturally he likes to play, joke and fun with everyone which he believes have contributed a lot on his communication skills.

The development of journalistic abilities and the importance of passion, experience, and continuous learning in the journalism profession.

The participates narrated how they developed their abilities through passion and learning from experience. They emphasize the significance of passion and continuous learning in pursuing a career in journalism.

Indashawu is a skilled journalist known for his descriptive storytelling and reporting. He credits his language skills and passion for the profession for his ability to captivate audiences. His exposure to international media, positive competition with other journalists, and long-time experience in the industry have all contributed to his development as a journalist.

Indashawu is a journalist famed for his description and presentation of unfolding events. He has developed such skills through practice. More than that, he believes his language skills have helped him to master playing with words to create or visualize the content of the story in the minds of the listeners. He believes he is a good radio journalist who can catch the attention of his audience by the descriptive writing and reporting skills, as well as his presentation style of his own. Beginning from his time at elementary school, he has the quality to present stories in impressive ways. He can create clear images of the stories.

The story of removing the statue of Lenin in Addis Ababa was one of the works that Indashawu mentioned to the researcher. Indashawu's description of the place, the process of removing the statue of Lenin, the people surrounding there, the feelings of the people at the event, and others have created some kind of an impressive image even in the mind of the researcher while conducting an interview.

Positive competition among the then journalists like Negash Mohammed and himself has also helped him to be a more creative and always learning journalist to gain fame and praise among the audience as well as to succeed in the profession. The passion he has towards the profession has also had a great impact on his development of journalistic skills, including writing style. Above all, the descriptive quality of him was just the result of exposure to Rioters, an international media that Indashawu loves the most. The media is a school where he has gained a lot of knowledge and skills for his life too.

Long-time exposure to media contents, including newspapers and broadcast media, and experiences, which he believes are driven from his passion for the profession, has also helped him develop writing and reporting skills.

Indashawu believes he has a good sense of the news, and that quality has also helped him develop the skills of writing stories as fast as possible to break to the media, though it is not easy. He remembers a moment that confused his thought of the news.

"I remember what happened during Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's speech to members of parliament about OLF leaving the Camp. It was shocking for the country but an interesting story.

Meles Zenawi said, 'your excellency members of Parliament, OLF left the camp...'. Can you believe it? Would you remember the time? There was an election. There were 40, 000 OLF soldiers located at Hawassa camp. Everybody was shocked. I was listening carefully. This is real news. 'OLF left the camp and started fighting in the South command or order. The commander of that regiment, Ayelom Areaya, told me that my army is dying. But I told them not to fire a single shot,' said Meles. Whether it was true or not, it was not my business at that time. Immediately, I left the Parliament and went to the office to present breaking news. I was running to reach the mass audience, because the medium is radio. But my boss has not allowed me to do that. My boss said to me, 'Go and eat your lunch.'

Regardless of the situation he mentioned, Indashawu's view on what it means news agrees with the thought of Richard Bestic, parliamentary correspondent, who defined news as "news is what happened five minutes ago and its impact on what is going to happen in the next five minutes," cited in (Boyd, 2001).

Indashawu's journey illustrates the multifaceted nature of developing writing, reporting, and editing skills in journalism. His experiences highlight the importance of practice, passion, and competition in refining one's craft. By leveraging language skills, engaging storytelling techniques, and a keen sense of newsworthiness, Indashawu not only captivates his audience but also exemplifies the essential qualities needed for effective journalism. His commitment to continuous learning and adaptation in the ever-evolving media landscape serves as an inspiring model for aspiring journalists.

Tsehay, on the other hand, developed her journalistic abilities through a passion for story writing and reporting since her elementary school days. She emphasizes the importance of learning from experience and the impact of passion in pursuing a career in journalism.

For Tsehay, these qualities were developed through long-time experiences and from the passion for the profession. She began writing and reporting stories while she was at elementary school. She mentions the culture of teaching basic writing and reading skills followed by the quality writings that include poems which she experienced in her early childhood in a community she was raised in has put a cornerstone. One of the theories emerged with this finding to support the thought of learning from experience is the experiential theory which defines learning as 'the process of transforming experience (Kolb, 2015). The theory explains the process of learning from experience by putting the case of Oprah Winfrey as an example where she managed to be a talk show host, media entrepreneur, and actress by learning through experiences.

Driven by the passion, she was engaged in writing and presenting stories to students at elementary school that helped her not only practice writing for the audience but also the confidence to present it.

Reading newspapers, magazines, listening to the radio, and watching TV in search of the news has also greatly contributed to developing the skills of writing and reporting, which she believes doing

this on a daily basis cannot be done without having the passion for it. She remembers her career time when she was reading newspapers every morning before getting back to the office. Without the passion for reading, listening, and watching for stories, one cannot do this to fulfill the requirement just to be a journalist as she thought.

The other quality of Tsehay is the ability to identify news from unfolding events or somewhere to be available. This quality is part of reporting skills, as she believes. A good example of her ability to identify the news and further investigate the facts to report the story is her experiences of obtaining information from social activities like 'Edir'.

There was a time when I was engaged in 'Edir' and heard a nurse from Zewuditu Hospital talking to a friend there. She was discussing the renovation of the hospital. She mentioned that there is a toilet above the cooking room at the top of the roof, and it drips from above. She said it is better for patients not to eat from that hospital. I was shocked and asked how could this happen. She said it happened after the renovation of the hospital and would not have occurred if it had not been renovated. I used this information as a point of reference to produce a big investigative story which exposed the corruption scandal there. So, being curious about happenings anywhere and identifying the story is crucial to writing and reporting stories.

Both Indashawu and Tsehay stress the significance of passion, experience, and continuous learning in their profession.

Mohammed believes that the passion he has for reading newspapers and listening to the radio has helped him to learn writing and reporting skills from it. Even after joining FBC, he spends time every Sunday reading newspapers and magazines at cafes around Piazza. Mohammed used to read newspapers not only to grasp the information there but also to understand the ways of writing different types of stories, including hard news and entertainment stories. This quality of his helped in his career in developing the skills of writing and reporting from the works of journalists.

Mohammed also recognizes the importance of on-the-job trainings and workshops to develop journalistic skills. He used to compare the reality on the ground with what he has gained from those trainings to mold himself in the right way of developing journalistic qualities and skills. Mohammed agrees with Simon Bucks, associate editor at Sky News, who questions the importance of journalism

education to practice the profession. "At college, you really don't learn much about the practicalities of the job. Working in a news agency has taught him a lot..." says Simon (Bull, 2007).

The narratives of Tsehay and Mohammed illustrate that the development of writing, reporting, and editing skills in journalism is deeply rooted in experience, passion, and continuous learning. Tsehay's ability to identify and pursue stories, combined with her commitment to mastering the craft from a young age, highlights the importance of foundational skills and cultural context. Meanwhile, Mohammed's dedication to reading and learning from established journalists underscores the value of ongoing professional development. Together, their experiences provide a comprehensive understanding of how personal qualities and journalistic skills are shaped through a blend of formal and experiential learning, fostering growth in a dynamic and demanding field.

Professionalism, Confidence, Persistence and Discipline

The development of professionalism, confidence, persistence, and discipline among journalists is significantly influenced by personal values, community experiences, and mentors. Tsehay, Mohammed, and Tolasa exemplify how these attributes can shape a journalist's career and interactions within their professional landscape.

Tsehay has also got values from her family which is directly related to the journalism profession. One of the professionalism and discipline expected from a journalist is the value given to time. She says if the time to announce news is 2:00 o'clock, it is mandatory to be at the studio prior to the present time. From her experiences, she mentioned her time of reporting the news of diplomatic relations of Ethiopia and the USA, where Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and President George W. Bush met at the White House. The time zone between the countries differs and is mostly opposite to each other. Following the discussion of the leaders, Tsehay had already produced the story but, when she looked at the time, it was midnight in Ethiopia, though it was midday. Till early morning, Tsehay sat down and waited to address the audience at the prime time. She believes in developing these qualities of professionalism from the values of her family. Her father was not tolerant with regard to time management and reveals the experience:

“If you have an appointment with him at 8:00, for example, he will not wait for you there had you not been there 15 minutes ahead at least”.

This has helped Tsehay to be at her office earlier than the normal working hours. She has also learned a lot from on-job training by her editors.

“Personal dressing codes and even the lipstick and make-up to use have to be with care to avoid attracting attention of the interviewee from the story to other contexts.”

Scientific knowledge on the foods and drinks not to consume earlier to getting to the studio is also another important element that Tsehay has got through on-job trainings.

Mohammed has strong beliefs in being professional and disciplined. He gave more attention to this, assuming the work of journalism is just for the sake of public interests. For this reason, a journalist has to be open to any comments from everywhere. Mohammed has experiences of accepting comments not only from his editors but also from audiences. He remembers a day when an audience came to his office from the town of Dukam and gave him a comment. It was a politically hot time when Mohammed invited a guest and entertained the topic related to problems the community was complaining about. That was the reason for the audience to come to the studio and give him a comment. The comment was an appreciation of the work as well as a concern for his security following what he has presented on the radio. They love the programs for hearing the truth they were seeking but also have got a fear which they thought of as a big risk for the life of Mohammed. Mohammed has accepted the comment and has got the opportunity to look at himself and his works carefully.

Mohammed also mentioned the value in the community that helped him develop discipline and being persistent. As an example, Mohammed explains a court case story he has got from a friend of his. The story was about a man who was accused by someone of stealing 5 birr. The man did not get a fair decision and went on until the Oromia supreme court. After a long time and process, the man got satisfied with the decision that confirmed his accusation. The result was amazing. The accusation for 5 birr costed the man more than 5,000 birr. But he was happy for getting a fair decision, the truth.

Mohammed believes these are the values in a society that taught him to be persistent until he finds the truth regardless of the challenges. The social practice has more power in shaping these values, as he argues.

Tolasa also values what he has learned from the society. Being disciplined and professional needs to have the guts to love all human beings regardless of the difference in language, color, and physical appearance. Regarding meeting the deadlines and the courage to take criticism, Tolasa has learned a lot from his editor Ibrahim HajiAli. Since he loves sports, he is always ahead in searching for sports stories and writing articles to be published. It is just a hobby for him.

For Indashawu, professionalism is being credible among the audience. He has also developed the confidence to talk to a large number of people being on the stage during his time at elementary and high school. He used to present the stories on the stage for students. Regarding the importance of credibility in the profession, the thought of Indashawu is similar to what scholars argue for. Credibility and authority are also the most important qualities of a journalist, specifically of a broadcast journalist. These qualities emanate from the personal confidences of a journalist (Boyd, 2001).

Table 4.4: personal qualities and skills of journalists and how they developed them.

| Name | How participants have developed personal qualities and skills assumed to be important for journalists | | |
|--------|---|--|---|
| | Ethics, Communication skills, Interviewing and Investigative reporting skills | Writing and Reporting skills, Editing skills | Confidence, professionalism, persistence and discipline |
| Tsehay | -through experiences -from on-job trainings | -through experiences and practices -from on-job trainings | -from family (value of time (professionalism))through experiences and practices |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| Mohammed | -from social values like ‘Qoralamaa’/‘Koottu-Dhufee’ in which the society investigates to find the truth in any wrongdoings happening in the community. | -through experiences -from workshops - from on-job trainings | -from social values -through experiences - from workshops -from on-job trainings |
| Tolasa | -from social values like ‘Jaarsummaa’, which he has involved in, he internalized the quality of being ‘Ethical’, developed communication skills and how to ask different people in different situations for a different purpose. | -through practice and experiences, being guided by editors and co-workers -on-job trainings | -through experiences |
| Indashawu | -through experiences | -through practices and experiences | -through experiences and practices -from family (confidence) |

4.4 Defining Success: Insights and Reflections from Senior Journalists on Achieving Excellence in Journalism

The reflections of senior journalists such as Indashawu, Tolasa, Tsehay, and Mohammed offer rich insights into the multifaceted nature of success within the field of journalism. Each journalist articulates their perspectives based on personal experiences, industry standards, and the impact of their work on audiences, indicating that success is not solely defined by traditional metrics like salary or position, but also by the broader influence of their contributions.

Indashawu counts the popularity that he has secured in his journalism career as one of the indicators of his success. He believes he became popular for his descriptive way of presentation that perfectly creates an image of the events or stories told to radio audiences. To show the indicator of his popularity, he mentioned the day he was sent to report about the demolition of Lenin’s statue in Addis Ababa as a good example.

"One of the men from the crowd watching the demolition of the statue called my name, and everyone surrounded me to give a hug. But I was shy, and beads of sweat broke out on my body. Thanks to the police man there, who helped me to get out of the crowd and to be on the top of the bus so that I can do my job. It was an unforgettable day in my life."

Indashawu believes this popularity and love comes from his positive impact on the audience through his attractive presentation and impressive expression of events or happenings in the stories he has been producing.

His popularity has also brought him to the market of documentary productions and advertising that enables him to earn a large sum of money in a short time. This can also be considered success as per Indashawu's thought. The perception of Indashawu on the concepts of success looks similar to some literatures. According to (Davies, 1970; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2004) defining success in any field is intricate but can be confined to professional rank, salary though it cannot fully indicate it. Even though there is a literature gap on the definition and measurement tool of success, comparing "good work" and individual achievements could be possible (Holten, 2010).

Tolasa counts his contribution in covering sport stories including international athletics events in different countries. After many years of services, Tolasa was one of those retired from work. But he is the only one that the press agency invited to get back to work at a time when this research is being conducted. Tolasa believes that it's because of his quality that could be taken as a success.

Tsehaye, who inspired many journalists including the researcher, has a belief to have a huge positive impact across the audience. She believes the profession duty accomplished as a success.

"I have fulfilled my journalistic responsibilities. The media institution I was working for has also got a huge advantage from my journalistic career. The other could be, the admiration I got from journalists. They said that I'm their role model."

During her tenure at ETV, Tsehay has coached many journalists that became popular in their journalistic career which satisfies her the most. This is also an indicator of success for Tsehay.

Some literature also agrees with the beliefs of Tsehay on indicators of success. Success is relative and could happen at any level of a career. It can be moving forward and being accurate for a journalist. Journalists need to be passionate, ethical, and hard-working to succeed in the profession (Holten, 2010).

Mohammed was very impressed talking about the positive impact of his radio programs on the audience that he believes is a success. The radio programs that he and his former colleague Ibrahim HajiAli have been producing on FBC radio have inspired students to join a university to study about it. Good examples of those programs are those focused on music content analysis and language education. He was happy when a student from a university told him that being raised listening to the programs made him join the university. He took this as one of his successes.

He also considered the popularity and the love that he has got from the society as one of the indicators of his success. The radio programs he has been producing might have not been loved by the audience, had it been not quality productions as he believes. Mohammed explains one incident of his career that supports his idea:

“Some years ago, I went to Bale with someone else and saw a guy sitting in the shade listening to the radio. Someone next to me asked which radio channel he was listening to, and the guy said that he was listening to radio Fana (FBC). Fortunately, the program was the one I had produced. The man next to me asked several questions about the programs and journalists he loves. The guy's response was very positive, showing admiration for me. My radio programs were also among the favorites of the guy. Until he was told, the guy had not known that I was the one standing in front of him. The guy, who felt happy, warmly hugged me and ran to call the people around to tell them their idol was there. They brought a sheep to slaughter it to show their love and respect for me. But I apologized in a respectful manner, using their cultural values, and left for his journalistic duty”.

The reflections of Indashawu, Tolasa, Tsehay, and Mohammed collectively illustrate that success in journalism transcends traditional metrics such as salary or title. Instead, it encompasses elements such as popularity, the ability to inspire, contributions to the community, and the enduring effects of one’s work on audiences. Their insights resonate with scholarly perspectives on success, reinforcing the notion that it is both intricate and multifaceted. Success is often defined not just by personal achievements but by the profound impact journalists have on their communities and the legacies they create within the media landscape.

Each participants’ narrative serves as a powerful reminder that true success lies in the seamless integration of professional accomplishments with a genuine commitment to ethical practice, integrity, and the betterment of society through their craft. By nurturing connections with audiences, mentoring future journalists, and upholding the responsibility that comes with their roles, these journalists exemplify that success is ultimately measured by the positive change one brings to the world—not solely through accolades but through meaningful contributions that resonate far beyond their immediate professional environments. Their experiences highlight the transformative power of journalism as a beacon for public awareness, education, and community empowerment.

Table 4: reflection of journalists on the nature of success

| Name | Indicators of success |
|--------|--|
| Tsehay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -fulfilling journalistic responsibilities -being a role model for other journalists |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -couching other journalists -positive impact on others -prominence, being loved and respected by audiences |

| | |
|----------|---|
| Mohammed | -Prominence, being loved and respected by audiences -positive impact on others -job position |
| Tolasa | - Prominence, being loved and respected by audiences |
| Indashwu | --positive impact on others -prominence, being loved and respected by audiences -money earned |

CHAPTER FIVE

5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study presents a narrative analysis of the professional development experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists who have succeeded without formal journalism education. The findings reveal that key factors contributing to their success include personal passion, early engagement in journalism-related activities, family influence, and practical learning derived from social values as well as on-the-job experiences. These elements underscore the importance of practical experience, mentorship, and community-based learning in cultivating journalistic excellence, demonstrating that alternative pathways to proficiency are both viable and valuable in the current media landscape.

Furthermore, the research highlights that passion, motivation, and commitment are critical components alongside formal education in the field of journalism. The narratives of senior Ethiopian journalists illustrate that practical experience and active community participation are fundamental to developing essential journalistic skills. Influences such as familial support and early exposure to writing and storytelling have proven to be significant motivators for individuals pursuing careers in journalism. The study identifies several alternative learning methodologies, including social norms, on-the-job training, and workshops, all of which contribute to the enhancement of both personal attributes and professional competencies.

Generally, the experiences of senior journalists indicate that successful career trajectories are not solely contingent upon formal education. Rather, personal commitment and intrinsic motivation play pivotal roles in achieving professional milestones. While participants acknowledged the importance of formal education, they also recognized various effective means of skill acquisition outside traditional educational frameworks. Success in journalism is quantified through various metrics, including audience engagement, popularity, professional positions, and opportunities for mentorship, all of which reflect the dynamic realities of the industry.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the narrative analysis of the lived experiences of senior Ethiopian journalists, it is evident that while formal journalism education can play a significant role in shaping professional development, alternative pathways and community-oriented learning practices are equally crucial. The experiences of these senior journalists underscore the importance of practical skills, social values, and personal motivation in fostering journalistic excellence. In light of these insights, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance journalism education and support the professional development of journalists in Ethiopia:

- **Support Alternative Learning Pathways:** Media organizations and educational institutions should embrace and promote alternative pathways to journalism that reflect the lived experiences of senior journalists. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, workshops, and on-the-job training can provide aspiring journalists with practical skills that align with industry needs and personal narratives.
- **Promote Passion and Early Engagement:** It is crucial to inspire young individuals with a passion for journalism by facilitating their engagement in related activities from an early age. Schools and community programs can play pivotal roles in nurturing this interest by providing platforms for writing, storytelling, and public speaking, allowing these individuals to craft their own narratives.
- **Facilitate Continuous Professional Development:** Provide opportunities for ongoing professional development through regular training sessions, seminars, and resources tailored to the unique experiences of journalists lacking formal education. This will empower them to adapt to industry trends while drawing on their lived experiences.

- Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and Social Values: Establish a curriculum that integrates indigenous knowledge and social values, showcasing the rich tapestry of experiences brought by senior journalists. This integration will prepare future journalists to be culturally competent and reflective of local narratives.
- Emphasis on Practical Experience: Given the proven success of journalists who have gained skills through on-the-job training, journalism education should prioritize practical experience. This includes hands-on training, real-world reporting assignments, and partnerships with media organizations that provide meaningful, applicable experiences.
- Conduct Large-Scale Quantitative Surveys: Undertake comprehensive quantitative research to evaluate the contributions of indigenous knowledge, social values, and the autobiographical experiences of senior journalists. Such studies can illuminate valuable insights into effective education policies, curriculum development, and practical journalism practices.

By implementing these recommendations, the journalism industry in Ethiopia can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that recognizes and values the diverse pathways of professional excellence. This approach will help foster the growth of talented journalists whose development narratives reflect their unique experiences, regardless of their educational backgrounds.

5.3 Implications

This study underscored the importance of alternative learning pathways, such as mentorship and on-the-job training, in developing skilled journalists. It highlights the necessity of early engagement and passion for journalism, suggesting that schools and community programs should actively nurture young talent. Continuous professional development emerges as crucial, with regular training sessions and resources needed to keep journalists informed about industry trends.

Recognizing diverse success indicators, such as community impact and mentorship contributions, can significantly enhance job satisfaction for journalists. Furthermore, integrating indigenous knowledge and social values into journalism education makes the curriculum more relevant and culturally sensitive. Recruiting students based on their passion and motivation can foster a more dedicated cohort of future journalists.

Additionally, conducting large-scale quantitative research on the experiences of senior journalists can provide valuable insights that inform education policies. Prioritizing practical experience within journalism education will better prepare students for the realities of the profession.

Overall, adopting a more inclusive and practical approach to journalism education—one that values diverse experiences and promotes continuous learning—can significantly enhance the field of journalism in Ethiopia.

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Semi structured Interview Questions Prepared for selected Informants of successful

Ethiopian Senior Journalists Research Questions/Checklist

7 APPENDIX

1. How do you describe your experiences?
2. What are the factors that drove you to journalism career?
3. What are personal qualities and skills assumed to bring success in journalism practices?
4. Do you have such qualities? If so, how did you develop such qualities and skills?
5. What is the importance of formal journalism education?
6. What is success in journalism career? If you think you are successful, what are the indicators?