



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

**A Comparative Study of the Coverage of COVID-19 Pandemic in the Ethiopian Herald
and the Reporter (English Version)**

By
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June, 2021
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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the Reporter (English Version)**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Yibekal Misganaw, entitled: A Comparative Study of the Coverage of COVID-19 pandemic in the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter Newspapers (English Version) and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in journalism and communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the study is to see how much the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter English newspapers covered the COVID-19 outbreak. The quantitative portion of the study is based on counting the frequency of categorical analysis in newspapers, while the qualitative portion is based on interviews with journalists and editors who work in newsrooms. To assess the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Ethiopian Herald (government) and Reporter (private) publications from the beginning of February 2020 to the end of March 2021, using newspapers with a 28-day publication, a total of 150 stories were identified for analysis. The analysis focused on the COVID-19 pandemic issues, which were grouped into five key categories: theme, type, sources, by-line, and story origins. The study's key theoretical frameworks were agenda setting and social learning (cognitive) theories. According to the findings, Ethiopian Herald have paid greater attention to COVID-19 pandemic issues than Reporter newspaper, and both newspapers have covered prevention and economic aspects of the pandemic more frequently, with government officials serving as major sources and most stories originate locally. Recoveries and survivors are totally ignored in the news and other forms of articles. Relevant recommendations were forwarded based on the findings: the newspapers should provide related and background information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic issues; the Ethiopian newspapers, both government and private, should also cover public health issues besides the pandemic. Because public health is complicated, it necessitates extensive explanation and clarification in order to be fully comprehended.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| AST: | Agenda Setting Theory |
| COVID-19: | Novel Corona Virus Disease |
| EMA: | Ethiopian Media Authority |
| EPA: | Ethiopian Press Agency |
| JHU: | John Hopkins University |
| MOH: | Ministry of Health |
| SLT: | Social Learning Theory |
| WHO: | World Health Organization |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) is a lethal and extremely contagious respiratory illness caused by the novel corona virus, now named as severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Rothan, 2020). It has become the current global health threat and an international public health emergency (Wang, 2020). The novel coronavirus was first detected in late December 2019 and believed to be originated from bats, snakes, and different raw sea foods in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China (Valencia, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic disease on March 11, 2020. Currently, COVID-19 is reported to have expanded to almost all countries of the world, raising great public health concerns globally, and since the start of the outbreak, the global pandemic surpasses 191, 549, 981 cases worldwide and the death toll is more than 4,121,042 (JHU, 2021).

Since the first COVID-19 case in Africa was recorded on February 14, 2020, in Egypt, followed by Algeria on February 25, 2020 (WHO, 2020). COVID-19 cases continued to be reported along the southern and eastern regions of Africa with varying numbers mainly due to economic vulnerability and inadequate access to personal protective equipment (Chaib, 2021).

In Ethiopia, the first case of COVID-19 was reported on 13th March 2020 (MOH, 2020). Currently, the infection rate is rapidly increasing, with more than 277,877 total cases and over 4,359 deaths were reported in Ethiopia (JHU, 2021). In developing countries such as Ethiopia, primarily due to insufficient testing capacity, the total number of cases might be underestimated and expected to be more than what is being reported.

In a developing country like Ethiopia, where trained human resources and equipment for the treatment of COVID-19 are scarce, working on prevention of the viral spread should be a prioritized and feasible intervention. The government of Ethiopia has declared a state of emergency to minimize and stop the spread of this evil disease, COVID 19. The state of emergencies includes staying home as much as possible, avoiding close contact with others, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol (Casella, et al., 2020).

At both the federal and regional levels, the Ethiopian government has been highly active in broadcasting prevention messages via radio and television, and there are significant initiatives and acknowledgement of COVID-19's public health value (screening, quarantine, and treatment centers). However, there is still a pressing need to raise knowledge and practices in order to prevent the virus from spreading across the country (MOH, 2020).

One question here is whether Ethiopian media covers critical health issues, such as COVID-19, frequently and consistently enough for people to know what they need to know in a timely manner. Unfortunately, only a limited amount of research has been conducted in the country on this topic, making it difficult to provide a straightforward answer. Thus, the purpose of this study is to shed light on the contribution of the country's print media, the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter newspapers, to covering health issues, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, and their contribution to a healthy society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As a new public health emergency, the COVID-19 has received extensive media coverage globally. It has been much more prominent in the media than the recent pandemics, including Ebola (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic; millions of people throughout the world are looking for trustworthy, fact-based journalism to assist them in navigating the greatest struggle of their lives. As a result, the demand for reliable data has never been larger or more pressing than it is right now. During a global health catastrophe like the COVID-19 pandemic, timely, high-quality information is critical for slowing the virus's transmission, mitigating its effects, and motivating society to respond appropriately (Higgins, 2020).

Hence, a significant benefit of good media and medical journalism is that it is one of the most effective means of combating erroneous information that may be prevalent in society. Journalists have played a significant role in lowering the risks connected with COVID-19 since the virus's introduction in China was first revealed. They've discovered new hotspots, shared information on precautionary measures, debunked myths, and held governments accountable for their policies (Hettiarachchi, 2020).

As a result, examining the media's coverage of COVID-19 concerns helps in comprehending the current emphasis and contribution that the media is making in

addressing this issue. The research primarily aims to examine the coverage that the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter newspapers give to the pandemic. This research has made an effort to study the coverage of COVID-19 pandemic in government and private newspapers in Ethiopia. Its focus was on a comparative analysis of the coverage of COVID-19 pandemic in the Ethiopian Herald (owned by the government) and the Reporter (the privately owned newspaper). To obtain extensive information from the research participants, the researcher employed a mixed research strategy, which contributed to a broad description of the outcomes. To that purpose, the level of coverage of COVID-19 pandemic issues, the components of the COVID-19 pandemic that were in focus, the sources of news about the pandemic, and the newspaper bylines were all meticulously examined.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess how the two newspapers have covered the COVID-19 pandemic and to compare the extent of their coverage.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- assess the coverage of COVID-19 issues in the selected newspapers;
- identify the aspects of COVID-19 issues that are focused more (prevention and control, medication and vaccination, social and economic impact)in the two newspapers;
- explain the most common sources the two newspapers use in covering the COVID-19 pandemic;
- assess the challenges associated with reporting COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopian Herald and Reporter English newspapers' in Ethiopia. Accordingly, it aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the selected newspapers cover the issue of COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What aspect(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic did the two newspapers give more emphasis?
3. What sources did the newspapers use in covering the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. What are the challenges associated with reporting COVID-19 pandemic?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The fundamental significance of this study is that it may contribute to a better understanding of the extent to which the news covers health-related issues. It can also help scholars who want to look into how the Ethiopian government and commercial media handle health concerns. It could also aid in deciphering the relationships between media owners and evaluating their coverage tactics. Newspapers play an important part in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, despite being limited to a well-educated audience. As a result, determining the extent to which newspapers covered the COVID-19 epidemic will add significantly to the available knowledge base for media and policymakers. As a result, the findings of this study could aid journalists and media organizations in determining if they are giving COVID-19 pandemic-related issues the attention they deserve. It may also alert media organizations, press associations, and concerned governmental and nonprofit organizations to the issues that journalists and the media face in communicating the epidemic in general. Furthermore, it may assist various COVID-19-related groups in determining the value of the media in disseminating information about COVID-19-related concerns. Finally, to fill a vacuum in in-depth studies about COVID-19-related issues in Ethiopian news media and other researchers as a point of reference in future media and COVID-19 studies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Only the "Ethiopian Herald" and "the Reporter" were examined in this study (the English version). The ownership and control of the newspapers are used to choose these publications. They were chosen on purpose since the researcher is looking for the newspaper that has covered the COVID-19 outbreak in Ethiopia the best. The study considers 28 editions, from The Ethiopian Herald and The Reporter English newspaper of publications from February 2020 to March of 2021. The contents of the newspapers investigated were those that were published within a year after the outbreak of the pandemic. Hence, it should be noted that the study did not examine the coverage of COVID-19 in other media like television, radio, internet, magazines or pamphlets.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study could have included all Ethiopian media outlets, both print and electronic. However, due to a lack of time, money, and logistical considerations, the research was limited to the "Ethiopian Herald" and "the Reporter" newspapers. Even though the researcher looked for relevant books in a number of health-related organizations, obtaining sufficient and diverse materials proved difficult. To solve the problem thus the researcher used some accredited reports, journals and materials from the internet. The study's weaknesses, on the other hand, are that it does not address the quality of reporting, the framing of reporting, the impact of the pandemic on journalism, or the constraints of reporting.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The thesis is divided into five chapters and follows the University's normal format. The first chapter covers the study's general background, issue statement, research aims, and research questions, as well as the study's significance, scope, and limitations. The second chapter, using theoretical frameworks, focuses on the essence and notion of health education and promotion. The third chapter discusses the research's methods, processes, and sampling strategies. The fourth chapter focuses fully on the data gathered through the study's quantitative and qualitative analysis. The outcomes of the data are also presented in this chapter. The conclusion and recommendations based on the research findings are discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Overview of Health Communication

According to Ratzan (1994), within the academic community, health communication is often viewed as "the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individual, institutional, and public audiences about important health issues." Its scope includes disease prevention, health promotion, health care policy, and business, as well as quality improvement.

"Health communication, like health education, is a strategy for changing a set of behaviors in a large-scale target audience about a specific condition over a given period of time," (Clift and Freimuth, 1995). By emphasizing basic characteristics of health campaigns, Backer and Rogers (1993) argue that health communication plays an important role in health communication campaigns.

Health communication contexts vary, such as information flow through individual influence, disease prevention through behavior modification, exchange, interchange information, two-way dialogue, scientific development, strategic dissemination, and critical evaluation of relevant, accurate, accessible, and understandable. Health communication is a disease prevention method that entails changing one's behavior (Freimuth, et al., 2000).

The process of developing and disseminating messages to specific audiences with the goal of influencing their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs in favor of healthy behavioral choices is known as health communication (Hansen et al., 1998). The use of communication strategies and technologies to (positively) influence individuals, populations, and organizations in order to promote human and environmental health conditions is known as health communication (Maibach and Holtgrave, 1995).

The purpose of health communication is to improve the intended audience's health by expanding their knowledge and awareness of health-related topics (Muturi, 2005). Communication refers to the process of gaining understanding as the foundation for growth, with an emphasis on interpersonal interaction (Agunga, 1997).

Health communication, according to Renata (2007), involves the interchange of information and two-way interaction. A two-way dialogue-based partnership and participation process in which senders and receivers of information exchange information, ideas, techniques, and knowledge on an equal footing, resulting in improved understanding, shared knowledge, greater consensus, and the identification of possible effective action.

2.1.2. Components of Health Communication

Feleseta (2006) illustrates the importance of audience, message, source, and channel in a health communication activity. The public targeted in the campaign is referred to as the audience. To be effective, a health communication campaign must first have a better understanding of the audience. The message should be presented in a good and clear manner to the audience.

“An effectively crafted and disseminated preventative message is the key control measure and potentially boosts the effectiveness of the message and improves public health,” states Freimuth, et al, (2000) in an attempt to emphasize the importance of the message component in health communication.

As a component of health communication, source refers to the communicators who deliver the message. As much as possible, the source of a specific health message should satisfy the intended public's credibility. The channel, on the other hand, is described as a means of transmitting a message. Using multiple channels is usually recommended to ensure greater accessibility (Freimuth, et al., 2000).

2.1.3. Barriers to Health Communication

A communication breakdown can occur at any point during the process. Barriers (obstacles) to communication can lead to misunderstanding, a lack of response or motivation, and message distortion. This can lead to disagreements, insecurity, and an inability to make sound decisions. Barriers can also prevent us from meeting project or program objectives if we are unaware of them or are unprepared for them. Accuracy, availability, balance, consistency, cultural competence, evidence-based, within reach,

reliable, repetitive, timely, and understandable are the fundamental tenants of effective health communication (Frehiwot, 2008).

Individual and community health can be improved through health communication that contains these features. Effective health communication raises people's awareness of health risks and provides them with the skills and motivation they need to avoid them by influencing or reinforcing their attitudes. Successful health communication can also inform society about various programs, policies, services, and changes in the social, economic, or physical environments that will benefit the health of the communities (Frehiwot, 2008).

Individual and public health can be promoted through the media, resulting in a favorable health policy in a country. However, for a variety of reasons, people may not be able to fulfill or even fail to fulfill these tasks at times. One of these issues is a lack of coverage consistency. Health issues must be publicized as frequently as possible for the media to have an impact in bringing about a healthy society. According to Frehiwot (2008), one of the concerns that media institutions regularly detect is a lack of persistent coverage of health topics.

Another issue that frequently arises in health reporting is the preference that some health conditions receive over others. As a result, the selection of some health issues is subjective. Media companies cover what the agency as a whole and media experts believe is relevant and urgent. Furthermore, journalists' lack of specialized training and expertise in health reporting is a common obstacle for news organizations. One of the biggest challenges that affect health reports in media outlets, according to Frehiwot (2008), is journalists' lack of skills and well-rounded information on many areas of health. As a result, journalists must possess the essential skills to examine and explain such health issues from a broad viewpoint.

Another issue that media companies frequently encounter is the amount and variety of sources used in health reports. "Reporting on all of the complexities surrounding these diseases necessitates a broader range of tales and perspectives, not simply the government's" (Frehiwot, 2008).

Aside from the aforementioned professional difficulties, there are numerous difficulties and challenges that surround the working environment of journalists. Limited material resources, time pressure, and highly politicized work environments where journalists are required to cover and prioritize from a government standpoint are just a few of them. Furthermore, the frequent departure of experienced staff members to higher positions or out of media houses in general for a better wage is another difficulty that is affecting the quality of health reporting, as less experienced reporters are substituted in their place (Frehiwot, 2008).

2.1.4. Characteristics of Effective Health Communication

Health communication is “audience – centered” because it aims to improve health outcomes through behavior modification and social change. As a result, it is dependent on the target audience's complete comprehension and participation. It is also “a long-term process that begins and ends with the desires and needs of the audience” (Schiavo, 2007).

If a health communication program is to be successful, it must be founded on a thorough understanding of both the audience and the situational environment. This can only be accomplished if the communication strategies used are based on research. Schiavo (2007), makes a nearly identical statement about the research–based nature of health communication.

Health communication must be strategic in order to demonstrate a sound strategy and a workable plan. As a result, in order to meet the previous requirement – reaching the audience's heart – the communication strategies, or the overall approach used to achieve the goal of the health communication program, must be research-based and well-planned (Schiavo, 2007). Strategic communications is the program's steering wheel, guiding it to its desired destination. It is also the glue that holds the program together or the creative vision that integrates the multifaceted activities of a program.

As it attempts to influence people and their behaviors, communication, particularly health communication, is a long-term process. According to Schiavo (2007), in health communication, conveying specific health messages to target audiences is "only the first step of a long-term, audience-centered process." This is due to the fact that the framework of the behavior change process recognizes that behavioral change – and thus communication intended to influence behavioral change – is a long process.

According to Engdawork (2013), they can be broadly classified as follows, depending on the stage they are in: a) Pre-knowledgeable: those who are unaware of the problems or their personal risk. b) Knowledgeable: those who are aware of the issue and are knowledgeable about the desired behaviors. c) Approvers: those who support the desired behavior. d) Intentional: those who intend to take the desired actions personally. e) Practicing: those who put the desired behaviors into practice. f) Advocating: those who engage in desired behaviors and advocate for them to others. From the preceding discussion, it is clear that health communication is process oriented.

Another feature of health communication is the requirement for cost-effectiveness. Strategic health communication is expected to result in healthier outcomes that are more efficient and cost effective. This refers to solutions that enable communicators to achieve their objectives while using as few human and economic resources as possible. However, this does not imply that significant cuts should be made while there are sufficient resources to support all programs. Communicators should spend their funds wisely and advance their research-based strategy(Schiavo, 2007).

In addition, health communication should be creative in order to support strategy. Creativity will undoubtedly enable communicators to employ a variety of communication methods, taking into account different channels and formats in order to reach the target audience. Effective strategic communication can combine interpersonal communication, community-based channels, and diverse media to produce a dynamic, two-way exchange of information and ideas in this respect. By designing the most appropriate and culturally compatible methods to engage intended groups in the process of changing their behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes toward the disease and prevention, the communicator's creativity should be put to use. Apart from these, creativity enables to identify the settings (times, places, and states of mind) in which the target audiences are more receptive to and act upon the message (Engdawork, 2013).

Health communication must be tailored to the medium and audience. Making messages audience-specific and channel-specific maximizes the chances of the messages being received most effectively. The research-based nature of health communication facilitates this by allowing the use of local advocates' and community representatives' contributions to increase the likelihood that the message will be heard, understood, and trusted by the target audience (Schiavo, 2007).

The ultimate proof of a strategic health communication's effectiveness is found in the health outcomes achieved as a result of behavioral change. As a result, health communication must be outcome-oriented, or aim for behavioral and social change. According to Schiavo (2007), the nature of health communication is as follows: Although influencing behaviors and social norms has always been the ultimate goal of health communication, there is a renewed emphasis on the importance of establishing behavioral and social objectives early in the design of health communication interactions.

2.1.5. Roles of Health Communication

During a public health emergency, communication with the public, stakeholders, within the health system, schools, and numerous others is critical to crisis management. Communication prior to an outbreak is aimed at educating, informing, advocating, preparing, and preventing. Furthermore, during an outbreak, communication serves to communicate with the public in ways that build, maintain, or restore trust. This is true across cultures, political systems, and country development levels (Engedawork, 2013).

Whether it is during an outbreak or before, there are things that health communication can and cannot do. According to Schiavo (2007), health communication can help raise awareness of health issues in order to drive policy or practice changes; influence perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes that may change social norms; promote data and emerging issues in order to establish new standards of care; increase demand for health services and products; demonstrate the benefits of behavior change; demonstrate healthy skills; and provoke public debate; build constituencies to support health-care reforms; advocate for more funding for medical and scientific research; foster a climate of openness to new health-care services or products and strengthen third-party relationships.

According to Engedawork (2013), health communication can convey at least the three types of messages in relation to disease prevention and control if it possesses all of the aforementioned capabilities. First, there is precautionary advocacy, which is the process of alerting people to serious hazards when they are likely to occur. Second, outrage management entails reassuring people about minor crises when they are alarmed. Third, crisis communication entails advocating for and guiding people through extremely dangerous epidemics.

2.1.6. The Role of Mass Media in Health Communication

The term "mass media" refers to the various media channels or paths by which a message reaches a receiver, whether visually, audibly, or in writing. "The term as used here encompasses both mass broadcast media, such as network television and national newspapers, and smaller narrow cast media, such as specialized cable television, magazines, and local newsletters" (Bracht, 1990).

The media serves several functions, including informing, educating, entertaining, and acting as a watchdog for society. According to (Efroymsen, 2001), the media can be a voice for the voiceless and a power for the powerless, among other things, and explains this as follows: The media is a tremendously effective tool for persuading governments to work for change. Government officials watch television, listen to the radio, and read newspapers. The media helps government officials understand what issues are "hot" and need to be addressed; the media can shape government officials' behavior and provide information on problems and solutions that would otherwise go unnoticed. Of course in the process, this information will reach not only government officials but the general population as well, further strengthening our advocacy work.

On the one hand, the health of a society is heavily influenced by the government's commitment and dedication to facilitating and providing the necessary infrastructures and services to a society. Failure to provide such facilities may jeopardize the well-being of the majority of society. According to Bracht (1990), media messages can be used to change a community's health promotion programs and to promote existing health services. In public health interventions, four media messages are used: a) a primary change agent, b) a supplement to other interventions, c) a means of recruiting and promoting services and programs, and d) a provider of lifestyle support (health) changes.

After realizing the significance of media in health communication, Bracht (1990) stated, "Health professionals frequently use media alone to achieve health promotion goals." The media can also be used in conjunction with other interventions to educate and encourage audiences to participate in health-related issues and programs. Similarly, (Matamoros, 2006,) stated that there is a greater demand and need for accurate, relevant, timely, and impartial public health information by technical and non-technical audiences, as well as a growing reliance on mass media as the primary source of information. Therefore, they are

a primary source of health and science information, even for health professionals. The public health community usually looks to the media for support, attention and endorsement, and they are also seen as an important tool to disseminate health information to the population.

2.1.7. The role of Newspapers in Health Communication

The press may not be great in convincing people what to believe most of the time, but it is spectacularly good in telling people what to think about most of the time. When discussing the influencing power of newspapers, stated that while both television and newspapers provide news coverage that influences the public's agenda, newspapers are more effective in setting these agendas than television. Similarly, print media is a valuable asset in a country because it connects health issues with communication, which is one of the most important aspects of public health. Furthermore, it can improve community health by informing and influencing decisions that result in a country's favorable health policy (Matamoros, 2006).

Print media, particularly newspapers, can address health issues in a variety of ways, including articles, editorials, advertisements, visual references, graphics, and the like (Efroymson, 2001). According to Matamoros (2006), Newspapers are possible communication resources that individuals, families, and organizations can employ to satisfy critical requirements such as health care. The delivery of health information through newspapers is a very successful technique of reaching the general public. Newspapers are one of the key sources from which individuals learn about risk. The analysis of the space related to health in newspapers possibly can show how health information is being delivered, and may be also how the public receives health messages.

In Ethiopia, a number of government newspapers and various private newspapers are undoubtedly contributing to the country's political, economic, and social development. However, these two types of print media have distinct primary interests. Because the private press is primarily concerned with commercial interests, the emphasis of such stories is based on the story's potential for profit. On the other hand, because public newspapers are funded by the government, it is assumed that they are primarily concerned with meeting public needs and necessities, of which health is one (Frehiwot, 2008).

2.2. Theoretical Frameworks

2.2.1 Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory suggests that the issue priority of the mass media may subsequently become the issue priority of newspaper readers. The audience may assign the same relative weight to each issue that the media does. According to agenda setting theory, the priorities of the press become, to some extent, the priorities of the public (McCombs & Shaw 1978).

According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), agenda setting is the result of the emphasis that the mass media places on certain issues and topics, which correlates strongly with the importance that the public places on these issues and topics. They also state that agenda setting is the process by which an audience is exposed to news about past issues.

Agenda setting, according to Lal and Arnold (2012), is an important democratic function of the media. According to them, the media can draw attention to societal problems by debating them and putting them on the public agenda. They also talk about how agenda setting is accomplished through a cognitive process known as accessibility. The term "accessibility" implies that the more frequently and prominently a topic is covered in the news media, the more instances of that topic become accessible in the audience's memories.

The concept of second level agenda setting is common in most discussions of the media's agenda-setting role. This level, also known as attribute setting, specifies that each object on the agenda has more than one attribute characteristic or properly describing the object. The characteristics of the object that journalists choose to highlight can influence how audience members react when they think about it (Mc combs and Reynolds, 2009).

Individual differences, media differences, issue differences, and silence differences are among the limitations. Four theoretical cues, on the other hand, influence the agenda setting process by drawing audience attention to the importance of specific news items. These include the frequency with which items are repeated, the prominence with which they are displayed, the degree of conflict in the news item, and the framing of the news item in what context and when it appears (Mc combs and Reynolds, 2009).

The media agenda is usually measured by the number of stories about a topic in a content analysis. Dearing and Rogers state (1996) "Audiences individuals presumably judge the relative importance of issues on the basis of the number of media messages about the issue to which they are exposed.

Decisions about which stories to cover are critical indicators of a journalist's ability to understand, assess, and reflect public opinion. According to Schultz (1998), it is in this agenda setting function that journalists and the news media are observed to wield significant influence in shaping public opinion. The public not only learns about the social realities of events around the world, but it also learns how much importance to place on an event or issue based on the emphasis placed on it by the media.

Most Agenda setting studies have combined content analysis of news media with interviews with media audiences to assess how well media priorities and audience priorities overlap (Graber, 1990). Some research findings suggest that the media agenda is the cause, while the public agenda is a somewhat delayed effect (Griffin, 2006). However, some argue that correlation does not always imply causation. The media, as agenda setters, have a responsibility to raise awareness of pervasive social problems such as corruption, directing public attention to issues of common interest and informing governing officials about social needs and development challenges (Norris, 2010)

As a result, the media as agenda setters wield enormous and well-documented power in setting nations' agendas by focusing public attention on critical public health issues. In this regard, the media can draw attention to public issues. In this regard, the media can draw public attention to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby creating an atmosphere for the audience, as well as inform governing officials about the pandemic and the necessary steps to prevent it from spreading.

2.2.2. Social Learning (Cognitive) Theory

We've seen tremendous shifts in the way people think about human health and illness in recent years, from a disease model to a health model. As a result, the health model emphasizes both health promotion and disease prevention. Lifestyle habits have a significant impact on the quality of human health. Current health practices primarily focus on the supply side, reducing, rationing, and restricting access to health care services in order to control health costs. On the demand side, the social cognitive approach assists

people in staying healthy through good self-management of health habits. People can live longer, be healthier, and slow the process of biological aging by exercising control over several habits (Bandura, 1997; Fries, et al., 1993). Medical care cannot replace healthy habits or environmental conditions, as health economists have demonstrated numerous times. Nowadays, it is commonly accepted that self-management of behaviors improves health and that reducing those that harm it is beneficial medicine. Indeed, if the immense health advantages of a few key lifestyle practices were encapsulated in a pill, it would be hailed as a miraculous cure.

According to Bandura (1998), the proliferation of conceptual models of health behavior leads to cafeteria-style research. In the name of theoretical integration, constructs are selected from various theories and strung together. In several ways, this practice multiplies predictors unnecessarily. Similar factors with different names are grouped together in new conglomerates as if they were entirely different determinants. When different types of anticipated outcomes of behavioral change are included as separate constructs under the names of attitudes, normative influences, and outcome expectations, facets of a higher-order construct are split into seemingly different determinants. Following the timeless dictum that, the more the better, some researchers overload their studies with a host of factors that contribute only trivially to health habits because of redundancy. There is a marked difference between expanding the scope of an integrative theory and creating conglomerates from different theories with problems of redundancy and fractionation of predictors and theoretical disconnectedness.

As per Bandura (1997), the SLT in reaction to his unhappiness with the principles of behaviorism and psychoanalysis, because these two theories generally disregard the role of cognition in motivation and the importance of the circumstances. According to Nevid & Mahon (2009), SLT demonstrates how people actively seek and analyze information rather than merely reacting to external forces. Individuals "contribute to their own motivation, behavior, and growth through a network of reciprocally interacting influences," according to the study (Bandura, 1999). Although SLT covers a wide range of themes, including moral judgment and psychological arousal, the majority of studies focus on self-efficacy, or beliefs about one's ability to complete tasks or achieve goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). SLT, according to Bandura (2005), takes a genetic approach to change, development, and adaptation. According to him, "humans are self-organizing,

proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflective.” They are not passive recipients of their circumstances; they actively participate in them.”

SLT emphasizes the interaction of personal (such as cognitive, affective, or biological events), behavioral, and environmental factors in determining motivation and behavior (Crothers, Hughes, & Morine, 2008). According to the same authors, Bandura contends that human functioning is the result of the interaction of all three of these factors, as embodied in his Triadic Reciprocal Determinism model. Employee performance (behavioral factors) is influenced, for example, by how organizational strategies affect the workers themselves personal factors (environmental factors).

In the context of health communication, the theories reviewed here are the most common ones used in the health and medical fields and most of them acknowledge that the media can play some role in influencing human behavior. These theories can be used to understand how health information in the media affects the public's health, whether the information is received from deliberate media programming or from day-to-day behavior.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Methodology of the Study

3.1.1. Research Design

Research design refers to the program that directs the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This section discusses research methodologies such as data collection methods, research design, data source, and sample strategy. Descriptive research attempts to explain a scenario, problem, occurrence, service, or program in a systematic manner, or to provide information on the living conditions of a community, or to characterize people's attitudes toward a topic. As a result, carrying out descriptive research is a prerequisite for carrying out exploratory research (de Vaus, 2001).

Using an exploratory technique, this study seeks to determine the newspapers coverage of COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter newspapers' coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic were compared. The researcher used a mixed research approach to obtain precise information from research participants that adds to a broad description.

3.1.2 Research Instruments

3.1.2 .1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is defined in a variety of ways by various writers. It is defined as any systematic approach designed to assess the substance of recorded material by Gunter (2000); Walizer and Wienir (1978); Krippendorff (2004), defines it as a research technique for creating reproducible and valid references from data to their context. Systematic, objective, and quantitative are three concepts included in Kerlinger's (2000) definition. By systematic, it mean that sample selection, coding and analysis techniques, as well as the length of time coders are exposed to the material, should all be given an equal opportunity and adhere to the same set of criteria. Objectivity is the second quality of content analysis. The researcher's prejudice should do not be replicated in the findings.

Operational principles and definitions, as well as guidelines for the classification of variables, should be clear and understandable, according to Gunter (2000), so that other researchers repeating the process arrive at the same conclusions. For a study to be objective, it must first create standards and procedures that adequately explain the sample and categorizing processes.

Quantitative analysis is the third type of content analysis. Quantification, according to Gunter (2000), enables researchers to precisely place a group of signals. It eliminates equivocal remarks and guesses in favor of precise figures. It also aids researchers in summarizing and reporting findings succinctly, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2014). Researchers can use quantification to have access to more statistical techniques that can help with interpretation and analysis.

Therefore this study attempted to assess the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in The Ethiopian Herald and The Reporter English newspapers. The study has used mixed approach to collect and analyze the data. Quantitative approach (content analysis) was applied to determine the frequency of the COVID-19 pandemic coverage in the selected newspapers. Because content analysis is a method of analyzing communication texts (Berlson, 1952) defines content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication, the quantitative approach has been well established in similar media research undertakings that focus on the text of media content.

3.1. 2.2. Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research excels in capturing people's perspectives, which is perhaps its most important purpose. Instead of assumptions made by researchers, the events and ideas that emerge from qualitative research capture reality. Qualitative research also aids in the investigation of the social, institutional, and environmental circumstances in which reality/life occurs (Yin, 2011). Qualitative research also aims to acquire data from a range of sources. When the data is analyzed, the study will become more reputable and trustworthy (Creswell, 2007).

Brenner (2006) and McCracken (1988) state that describing one's own experience is critical in qualitative interviews. As a research method, this study used qualitative analysis to incorporate the reporter's explanation of the challenges associated with reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic. Reporters and editors from the news publication were chosen from the general staff of the two newspapers based on their direct and indirect involvement in news production.

3.1.3. Data Collection

The Ethiopian Media Authority was able to secure hard copies of The Ethiopian Herald and The Reporter newspapers. At the newspaper's office, interviews with the editors and reporters of The Reporter English and The Ethiopian Herald were conducted and taped.

3.1. 4. Data Sampling

For this study, constructed week sampling and systematic random sampling were employed to choose samples from The Ethiopian Herald and The Reporter English newspapers, which were published between February 2020 and March 2021. The Ethiopian Herald samples were chosen using constructed week sampling. A sample of 14 editions of The Ethiopian Herald newspaper was chosen. Constructed week sampling is a form of stratified random sampling (SRS) technique used in media studies in which the final sample reflects all seven days of the week in order to account for cyclic fluctuation in news content (Riffe, Aust, and Lacy, 1993).

When selecting a sample for The Reporter English newspaper, which is published once a week on Saturdays, the entire year's publication, which is 52, was taken into account. The sampling interval was calculated by dividing the total number of publication 52, by the number of publications who wished to be analyzed, 14. This results in a 3.7-second sample interval. Because a sampling interval of 3.7 is difficult to obtain, a sampling interval of 4 was chosen. Then, between 1 and the sampling interval 4, a random integer between 1 and 4 was chosen. Because the number four was picked, the first sample will be the fourth publishing in February 2020. After the first publication is chosen for analysis, the fourth publication is chosen. A total of 28 samples were picked from both newspapers. The data acquired from content analysis was supplemented with interviews with journalists and editors. An interview with eight respondents was done in general.

3.1.5. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was a mix of items and their themes that represented the entire units of COVID-19 pandemic-related news stories in the newspapers. As a result, during data collection, the study unit of analysis includes types of stories, themes of stories, sources of stories, by-lines of stories, and origins of stories. Furthermore, the frequency was calculated or checked by tallying each of the primary categories of COVID-19 pandemic topics in the newspaper.

3.1.6 Coding Categories

- **Theme of story:** Refers to the central message or the dominant theme of the stories. The categories under theme of story includes; prevention and control, medication and vaccination, economic (impact and support) and social (impact and support)
- **Source of story:** Refers to the dominant source of the story.
- **Origin of Story:** Refers to the basis of the story. Two categories will be used: local and foreign.
- **Type of story:** The categories under type of story are defined as follows:
- **News:** Stories which highlight new happenings or events.
- **Features:** Stories which are descriptive, often to the point of painting a picture for the reader.
- **Commentaries:** Any article which is a criticism, discussion or explanation of ideas, opinions or facts.
- **Editorials:** Commentary article which shows the stand of the newspaper regarding the pandemic.
- **Viewpoints:** articles which shows the stand and views of different scholars and policy makers regarding the pandemic.
- **Multiple:** This category will be used if a source could not be classified as any of the above. Multi-sourced articles will also be coded under this category.

3.1.7. Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder (or inter-rater) agreement, according to Tinsley and Weiss (2000), is a more particular word for the type of consistency necessary in content analysis. In content

analysis, inter-coder agreement is required because it assesses the amount to which different judges tend to award the same rating to each object.

Two or more coders categorize units (programs, scenes, articles, tales, words, etc.) and use these categorizations to create a numerical index of the amount of agreement between or among the coders. There are numerous ways to undertake this process, but at the very least, the researcher must produce a representative collection of units for evaluating dependability, and coding selections must be made independently under the same conditions (Lombard et al, 2002).

The coding was done by two coders: the researcher and a master's student from the department of Journalism and Communications. Prior to coding, the student received rigorous training. The inter-coder reliability test was carried out on all 150 stories. The Holist approach, which is one of the most extensively used in communication research, was employed to determine inter-coder reliability (Lombard et al, 2005). A total of 150 stories were published in the 28 editions. There were 9 disputes among the 750 decisions issued. For stories coded by two coders, the inter-coder reliability coefficient varies from 96 % to 100 % across all categories.

3.2. Data analysis and Interpretation

Mixed methods research, according to Creswell (2006), entails gathering and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis of qualitative data (words, text, or images) usually takes the form of grouping words or images into information categories and displaying the diversity of ideas acquired during data gathering. As a result, categorical analysis was performed utilizing mixed data analysis methods after classifying all COVID-19-related articles using the aforementioned categories. Data were tallied and converted to frequencies and percentages in order to assess the quantitative data and examine the quantitative difference in coverage between the two publications. The results that answered the study questions were emphasized and discussed using frequencies and comparisons between categories. The qualitative data received from the editors and reporters during the interviews was evaluated. The qualitative data was transcribed, and comparable responses were grouped and studied in depth. After classifying all COVID-19-related articles using the aforementioned categories for this investigation, categorical analysis was performed utilizing mixed data analysis methods. The data were tallied and

converted to frequencies and percentages in order to assess the quantitative data and examine the quantitative difference in coverage between the two publications. The findings that respond to the research questions were highlighted and explained utilizing frequencies and cross-examination of one category with another. The qualitative data acquired from the editors through the interviews was evaluated. The qualitative data was transcribed, and comparable responses were grouped and studied in depth.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this study is to investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic was covered in Ethiopian Herald and Reporter English media. To describe the relationship between the coverage of pandemic issues by the government (Ethiopian Herald) and private (Reporter) publications from the beginning of February 2020 to the end of March 2021, using newspapers with a 28-day publication, a total of 150 stories were identified for analysis. The analysis focused on the COVID-19 pandemic issues, which were grouped into five key categories: theme, type, sources, by-line, and story origins. As a consequence, all 150 stories in the selected newspapers were subjected to content analysis.

The major goal of this research was to see how much publicity the COVID-19 pandemic received in government versus commercial newspapers. The data was rigorously analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and the results are provided in this chapter; the study's findings and discussions are presented. Tables are used to present the study's main findings. The information gathered was utilized to conduct a comparative analysis of Ethiopian newspapers' coverage of the COVID-19 outbreak.

4.1. Presentation of Findings

4.1.1 Extent of the selected newspapers coverage on COVID-19 pandemic issues

During the study's time period, the newspapers published a variety of articles. Between February 2020 and March 2021, a total of 150 stories dealing with COVID-19 pandemic-related topics were found from a total of 28 newspaper editions; 14 editions from each of the two chosen newspapers. As a result, reports about the COVID-19 epidemic covered by the two newspapers during the study period were studied using research questions and analytical categories. Following is a summary of the data analysis:

Table 4.1. Number of Stories covered on COVID-19 pandemic issue

| Type of Newspapers | Stories that are Covered | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| The Ethiopian Herald | 80 | 53% |
| The Reporter | 70 | 47% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

The entire coverage of concerns associated to the COVID-19 pandemic in the selected newspapers is revealed in Table 4.1.1. As can be observed, the Ethiopian Herald Newspaper generated 80 stories representing 53 percent of the total stories created by the two newspapers, while the reporter newspaper published 70 stories representing 47 percent of the total tales of COVID-19 pandemic-related topics. This indicates that the Ethiopian Herald, a government-owned daily, paid more attention to COVID-19 pandemic-related stories during the study period than the Reporter. Clearly, the Ethiopian Herald newspaper published more COVID-19 pandemic-related pieces than the Reporter, as shown in the table. The Ethiopian Herald, a daily newspaper, has given the pandemic issues a considerable amount of coverage.

4.1.2 Themes of Stories

Table 4.1.2.1. Overall Themes of Story in the sample Newspapers

| Themes of Story | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Prevention (control) | 50 | 33% |
| Medication (vaccination) | 21 | 14 % |
| Economy (impact and support) | 39 | 26% |
| Social (impact and support) | 40 | 27% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

In terms of story themes, the study intended to identify the most prevalent themes that appeared in both newspapers' coverage of the COVID-19 outbreak. The data shows that

when covering the COVID-19 epidemic, the selected newspapers concentrated on distinct subjects.

Regarding, frequency of distribution of themes in the sample newspapers, there exists some kind of diversity. Out of the total 150 (100%) stories, 50 (33%) were dominantly about the prevention (control) of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was the second most common theme of stories, with 40 (27 %) and 39 (26 %) of the identified stories dealing with social (impact and support). Finally, stories with a medication (vaccination) theme account for 21 (14%) of the total stories discovered for the study.

Table 4.1.2.2. Themes of Story in the sample Newspapers

| Theme of the story | The Ethiopian Herald | | The Reporter | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) |
| Prevention (control) | 32 | 40% | 18 | 25% |
| Medication (vaccination) | 12 | 15% | 9 | 13% |
| Economy(impact and support) | 16 | 20% | 23 | 33% |
| Social (impact and support) | 20 | 25% | 20 | 29% |
| Total | 80 | 100% | 70 | 100% |

The selected newspapers have concentrated on diverse themes in their coverage of COVID-19 pandemic-related stories, as shown in the table above. The Ethiopian Herald published 80 stories, accounting for 53% of the total, while the Reporter published 70 stories, accounting for 47%. The Ethiopian Herald covered the COVID-19 pandemic prevention (control) stories more extensively, with 32 pieces accounting for 40% of total coverage. 20 social stories (impact and support) account for 25% of the total. Economy (impact and support) accounted for 16 (20%) of the stories in the government-owned publication, while Medication (vaccination) accounted for 12 (15%) of the stories (the Ethiopian Herald). This indicates that during the study period, the newspaper concentrated on COVID-19 pandemic prevention (control) issues.

The major focus of the COVID-19 pandemic-related pieces for the Reporter newspaper, on the other hand, was economic (impact and support). The findings indicate that, out of a total of 70 (100%) pieces, 23 (33%) articles were primarily concerned with economic issues. As shown in table 4.1.2.2, the Reporter newspaper highlighted themes related to the social (impact and support) aspects of the COVID-19 epidemic, accounting for 20 (29%) of the stories. Preventing (controlling) the COVID-19 pandemic is represented by 18 (25%) stories, whereas medication (vaccination) is represented by 9 (13%) stories.

According to the findings, the most prevalent theme of COVID-19 pandemic stories for the Ethiopian Herald daily was prevention (control), but the economy (impact and support) was the dominant issue for the Reporter newspaper.

4.1.3 Type of the Stories covered by the newspapers

Table 4.1.3.1 Overall Types of the Story in the in the sample Newspapers

| Types of Story | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Viewpoints | 28 | 19% |
| Editorials | 11 | 7 % |
| News | 55 | 37% |
| Interviews | 7 | 5% |
| Feature | 23 | 15% |
| Opinion | 26 | 17% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

When looking at the overall types of stories in the sample, we can observe that the COVID-19 pandemic-related pieces were mostly provided in news style, with some commentaries, opinions, features, and editorials thrown in for good measure. For example, out of 150 items published by the two publications, 55 tales, or 37%, were news pieces. This could indicate that both newspapers prefer to publish articles about current events and planned events above other types of articles.

The preceding table (4.1.3.1) clearly reveals that in terms of the aggregated frequency of sorts of stories that covered the pandemic news stories, 55(37%) is the most common, while perspectives (28%) and opinion (26%) are the second and third most common types of articles, respectively. On the other side, feature articles made up 23 (15%) of the total stories found, while editorials made up 11 (7%), and interviews made up 5% of the total.

Table 4.1.3.2. Type of Story in the sample newspapers

| Story Types | The Ethiopian Herald | | The Reporter | |
|-------------------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) |
| Viewpoints | 14 | 18% | 14 | 20% |
| Editorials | 5 | 6% | 6 | 9% |
| News | 38 | 48% | 17 | 24% |
| Interviews | 3 | 4% | 4 | 6% |
| Feature | 9 | 11% | 14 | 20% |
| Opinion | 11 | 13% | 15 | 21% |
| Total | 80 | 100% | 70 | 100% |

The frequency distribution of items according to the type of stories that appeared in the newspapers is shown in table 4.1.3.2. The Ethiopian Herald had 38 news stories, accounting for 48 percent of the total, and 9 feature stories, accounting for 11 percent of the total, according to the type of article it published. The Ethiopian Herald also published 5 editorials on COVID-19 pandemic-related themes, accounting for 6% of the total. While 14 (18%) of the stories were classified as viewpoints, 11 (13%) of the stories were classified as opinions. Interviews made up only 4% of the stories. This plainly indicates that the publication places little emphasis on providing information, context, and expert explanations on the subject.

The Reporter newspaper published 17 news items, accounting for 24% of the total, 15 opinion pieces, 14 feature articles, and the same 14 opinions, accounting for 20% of each

variable, 6 editorials, and 4 interviews. In comparison to the Ethiopian Herald daily, the Reporter paid substantially greater attention to the subject in the form of features and opinion. Also, both newspapers have a poor amount of coverage of editorials and interviews, according to the findings.

4. 1.4. Sources used in the Stories

Table 4.1.4.1. Overall Types of Sources of Story in the sample Newspapers

| Source of Story | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Government (Officials) | 53 | 35% |
| Contributors | 58 | 39 % |
| Staff reporters | 19 | 12% |
| Multiple | 20 | 14% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

Table 4.1.4.1 displays the many sources used in the sample newspapers. According to the data, the two most common sources of information used in producing COVID-19 pandemic-related stories in the selected newspapers are contributors (58%) and government (officials) (53%). Multiple sources (20% of the time) (i.e. when more than one dominant source presented) Staff reporters were employed as sources in 19 of the stories (12%).

Table 4.1.4.2. Types of Sources used in the Stories in the sample Newspapers

| Source of Story | The Ethiopian Herald | | The Reporter | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) |
| Government (Officials) | 33 | 42% | 20 | 28% |
| Contributors | 21 | 27% | 37 | 53% |
| Staff reporters | 15 | 19% | 4 | 6% |
| Multiple | 11 | 14% | 9 | 13% |
| Total | 80 | 100% | 70 | 100% |

The Ethiopia Herald, a government-owned publication, cited government (officials) as sources in 33 (42%) stories, according to table 4.1.4.2. Contributors and staff reporters were the newspaper's second and third most reliable sources, accounting for 21 (27%) and 15 (12%) of the total. The newspaper, which shares 11 (14 %) of the article, used the multiple sources (i.e. when more than one dominant source is supplied). This suggests that the Ethiopian Herald newspaper relied heavily on government personnel as a source of information.

Contributors were cited as important sources by the private newspaper the Reporter in writing COVID-19 pandemic tales, which accounted for 37 (53 %) of the total stories published. The newspaper that quoted multiple sources, which accounted for 9 (13%) of the stories, and staff reporters as sources, which accounted for 4 (6%).

Both newspapers did not cite survivors or recoveries as sources. This demonstrates that the target newspapers failed to cover stories about COVID-19 pandemic issues depending on how sick patients are supported (if at all). It is critical for the media to listen to the voices of the survivors, as it is believed that there would be a need for first-hand information exchange.

4.1.5. By-lines in the Stories

Table 4.1.5.1 Types of By-lines in the sample Newspapers

| Types of By-lines | The Ethiopian Herald | | The Reporter | |
|---------------------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) |
| Reporters | 37 | 46% | 32 | 45% |
| News Editors | 5 | 6% | 6 | 10% |
| Contributors | 8 | 10% | 32 | 45% |
| Undisclosed | 30 | 38% | - | - |
| Total | 80 | 100% | 70 | 100% |

Table 4.1.5.1 depicts the different types of bylines used by the two newspapers for pandemic-related items. According to the figure above, half of the stories in the Ethiopian Herald daily (47%) were written by the newspaper's journalists. This shows that the publication used its own journalists to cover parts of the COVID-19 pandemic articles. However, as can be seen from the findings, the newspaper fails to mention over half of the stories that are published. Contributors also pay less attention to the COVID-19 epidemic, which amounts for 8 % of the total (10 %). As a result, the Ethiopian Herald's diversity of writers was limited in comparison to the Reporter.

In the case of the Reporter newspaper, however, journalists and contributors contributed equally to the tales. The research revealed that 32 (45%) of the stories were written independently by journalists and writers. Unlike the Ethiopian Herald, where all stories were authored by a few people, news editors wrote 6 (10%) of the pieces. This indicates that journalists of the Reporter newspaper are actively writing stories of COVID-19 pandemic.

When comparing the bylines of the two newspapers, the Ethiopian Herald newspaper paid more attention since it used its journalists to cover COVID-19 pandemic-related concerns, whilst the Reporter newspaper did not. The Reporter relies on contributors, foreigners, and other outside specialists for 46 % of its reports. According to the data, the Ethiopian

Herald daily used more journalists from its own media organization than the Reporter newspaper.

4.1.6. Origin of the Stories

Table 4.1.6.1. Overall Origin of the Stories in the sample Newspapers

| Origin of the Stories | Frequency | %age (%) |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| Local | 106 | 71% |
| Foreign | 44 | 29% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

The origins of stories utilized were classified in the above table (4.1.6.1) based on the stories. Local 106 (71%) and foreign 44 (29%) are the two main sources of information used in producing COVID-19 pandemic-related stories in the selected publications, according to the data. The majority of pandemic-related stories in the press come from local sources, accounting for 150 (100%) of the total. The following table (Table 4.1.6.2) included a full explanation of the stories' origin in the selected newspapers.

Table 4.1.6.2. Origin of the Stories in the sample Newspapers

| Origin of the Stories | The Ethiopian Herald | | The Reporter | | Total | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) | Frequency | (%) |
| Local | 65 | 81% | 41 | 59% | 106 | 71% |
| Foreign | 15 | 19% | 29 | 41% | 44 | 29% |
| Total | 80 | 19% | 70 | 100% | 150 | 100 |

The Ethiopia Herald, a government-owned newspaper, used locally originated sources in 65 (81 %) of its total published stories, according to an analysis of the total number of pieces published separately. The newspaper also credits 15 (or 19 %) of the stories it

publishes as having come from foreign sources. This demonstrates that the Ethiopian Herald relies heavily on locally available sources while composing stories.

The Reporter, on the other hand, used locally sourced sources as major sources in reporting on the COVID-19 outbreak, accounting for 41 (59%) of the total pieces published. The publication relied on foreign sources for 29 % of its content (41 %). This suggests that the Reporter used a wide range of outside sources to report on the pandemic.

4.2. Interview Analysis

Interviews with journalists and editors from the selected newspapers were performed to further the study's aims and to clarify the newspapers' portrayal of COVID-19 pandemic issues. In order to react to the study's aims and corroborate the conclusions of the content analysis, the interviewees' comments were transcribed and comparable responses were grouped together.

4.2.1 Response to the extent of coverage for the COVID-19 pandemic

Regarding the degree of newspaper coverage on COVID-19 pandemic issues, an editor from the Ethiopian Herald underlines the following points:

I can say that the COVID-19 pandemic was regularly covered in our publication. We have extensive coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the areas of prevention (control) and social (impact and support), as well as general information on newly infected person data across the country. For the public, we set an agenda on the COVID-19 pandemic. We also cover COVID-19 pandemic issues on a daily basis. We've dedicated a column and a whole page to the pandemic. [Thursday's issue] (Interview, 2021)

The thoughts of another editor (informant) from the same newspaper are similar. He noted that the COVID-19 epidemic has received special attention because it is a big concern in the country's economic and health aspects. A reporter from the Herald newspaper (the third source) reported that the pandemic of COVID-19 received comparatively little coverage in the publication. He went on to say that current events in the country [war, politics] are getting more attention, and that the COVID-19 outbreak has become a common topic over time, making it impossible to cover it as regularly and thoroughly as before. According to the interview findings, the Herald was concerned about the COVID-19 epidemic.

Journalists and editors at the Reporter agree that the publication paid less attention to the COVID-19 outbreak. COVID-19 pandemic issues were not reported as frequently as they could have been in the Reporter, according to one of the informants (an editor). According to him, the matter received some coverage. Journalists say that because the paper is published weekly, it has paid less attention to issues like the COVID-19 outbreak. Journalists reported on topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic in a timely manner. The fact that other media outlets have covered the problem, particularly from the government's perspective, appears to be obstructing the newspaper's coverage of the pandemic. The Ethiopian Herald editorial standard clearly stated that news developments indicating Ethiopia's significance in the globe, particularly in the Horn of Africa, should be given significant attention. According to another Ethiopian Herald source (reporter):

The Ethiopian Herald is dedicated to improving Ethiopia's image. The paper ignores topics that have an impact on the country's image. As a result, the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic on the country's image has been assessed. The Prime Minister's office and Ethiopian Airlines' participation to fighting the pandemic in the country and on the continent as a whole receive extensive coverage in the media, with the newspaper focusing on subjects such as government measures to avoid the pandemic (interview, 2021).

According to the conclusions of the interview, Ethiopian Herald newspapers prefer to focus more on COVID-19 pandemic issues in order to improve the country's image.

4.2.2. Response to the types and themes of stories of the COVID-19 pandemic

When asked about the types of reports published on COVID-19 pandemic issues, an editor from the Reporter said,

It's necessary to mobilize resources in order to write a feature piece. As a group, we must be present at all times [at hospitals and quarantine centers]. As a result, it is impossible for us to do so; there is a risk, and the safety of our journalists and support personnel [driver and cameraperson] must be ensured. As you may be aware, traveling to quarantine centers across the country without the necessary safety gear and the cooperation of government personnel is impossible. As a result,

we are attempting to focus on producing hard news pieces utilizing government officials as sources (2021 interview).

She also stated that the newspaper has never ignored COVID-19 pandemic tales in its editorials, but that the topic may be obscured or incorporated with other concerns such as politics, economy, social difficulties, and so on. This viewpoint is shared by others as well. One of the interviewees (a reporter) mentions that the pandemic issue is becoming a common occurrence in the country. Every day, people get the virus, and a significant number of people die every week. We are attempting to cope with the pandemic by providing a weekly report of new cases for our readers.

The Ethiopian Herald's informants, on the other hand, stated that they focused on generating COVID-19 pandemic stories in news style because the issues surrounding the pandemic could not be adequately addressed in a newspaper. When reporting on the pandemic, the Ethiopian Herald highlighted planned activities and government measures. The majority of news articles and reports concentrated on the government's efforts and failed to provide an in-depth report on the pandemic's economic and sociological repercussions, as well as the aspects of the pandemic that the public had to endure.

The Ethiopian Herald focused on the government's efforts to avoid and contain the COVID-19 outbreak, according to informants. The interviewees tended to agree with the conclusions of the newspaper study, which revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control, medication and vaccine, economy, and social (impact and support) are the most frequently covered concerns.

4.2.3. Response on sources of stories of the COVID-19 pandemic

According to Ethiopian Herald informants, government officials are mostly responsible for reporting on COVID-19 pandemic stories. According to one of the Ethiopian Herald's editors, the publication receives practically all of its information from government officials. He stated that they place a premium on news items that originate from government insiders. He stated that they place a premium on news items that originate from government insiders. He went on to say that government representatives are accessible, accurate, and assigned as a source for such sensitive issues.

On the other hand, one of the Reporter newspaper's informants (editor) stated that the main sources are contributors and reports followed by government officials. She went on to say that they search for official declarations and data since they need to report on COVID-19 pandemic issues, and their reporting needs to be accurate as a result. As a result, they relied heavily on government sources when reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, as it is a delicate subject.

Another insider from the Reporter newspaper agrees with the foregoing assertions. They also wanted to include recoveries and survivors in their news pieces, he said. It needs to examine the actual recovery situations on the ground. However, there are insufficient PPE [personal protective equipment] issues around the country, particularly near hospitals and quarantine centers, to accomplish this.

4.2.4. Response to the placement of reports about the COVID-19 epidemic.

The placement of COVID-19 pandemic-related stories was queried of the informants from the two publications. One of the sources (an Ethiopian Herald editor) responded that these pieces were placed on the front and inside pages of the Ethiopian Herald at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic because of their importance. It is placed on the front pages if the problem is new and hot. The COVID-19 pandemic reports haven't gotten as much attention as they used to owing to other factors [the conflict and the forthcoming election], according to the informant. According to the second source, the newspaper [Herald] had dedicated a full page to significant epidemic themes, therefore most pandemic stories appear on that page.

The COVID-19 outbreak was viewed as a big issue in the press, according to an insider from the Reporter newspaper. He explained that we put news based on editors' editorial decisions and because distinct issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have their own

pages. The second informant from the same publication stated that it was not the news of the COVID-19 epidemic that caused it to be featured on the front page or elsewhere in the newspaper. We might place an article on the top page if it's new, important, and draws readers in.

4.2.5. Response regarding treatment of stories as main or secondary story

When asked whether stories used in the COVID-19 pandemic were treated as main or secondary stories, an Ethiopian Herald informant (editor) said that the newspaper used to treat stories as main stories initially [onset of the pandemic], but that other stories [war, politics] are now main stories, especially after October and November. Furthermore, he added that people desire stories that focus on bringing attention to problems and finding answers, as the epidemic has yet to produce a breakthrough in terms of medication, and that storytelling repetition makes it a secondary story over time.

On the other hand, an informant from the Reporter (editor) stated that the epidemic was a major story when it became out of control in various regions of the world, including our own country. However, upon the outbreak of the war in the north, the paper's focus switched away from the pandemic and onto the fighting and other topics.

Most pandemic stories are viewed as secondary stories, according to an Ethiopian Herald (editor) informant, because they are not new and because other news originate from the political and social arena. The majority of our COVID-19 pandemic-related pieces, according to one Reporter editor, come from contributors and are considered as secondary stories, which are then placed inside.

4.2.6 Response on the attention given on reporting COVID-19 pandemic Issue

One informant (editor) from the Ethiopian Herald asserted the following views regarding to the attention given on reporting about COVID-19 pandemic issues;

Our newspaper gave the COVID-19 epidemic its full attention, especially in the early days of the pandemic when it was still a new thing. Because it is still a developing topic [as of today], we are making every effort to cover everything from disease prevention to societal consequences. In fact, we decided to devote so much attention to the pandemic that we created a page dedicated only to the pandemic's advances (interview, 2021)

He also stated that the newspaper has published COVID-19 pandemic items ranging from editorials to viewpoints depending on multiple sources. Another source (reporter) from the same media stated that because it is a major problem for the entire world, we pay close attention to every detail because it also concerns us.

On the other side, a senior editor at the Reporter says that, compared to when the epidemic first broke out, interest to the pandemic is waning owing to a variety of factors [the war, the election]. Another source from the same paper agrees, saying, "The paper is not giving the epidemic the necessary attention it needs primarily because it's a weekly publication and the present condition of the country [Ethiopian politics] has overshadowed the coverage of the pandemic."

4.2.7 Response on the coverage of COVID-19 pandemic compared to other major health Issues

"No problem is covered like the COVID-19 pandemic, even though it has surpassed the attention given to HIV/AIDS or malaria," one Herald informant (editor) claimed. He went on to say that because of the high rate of transmission, as a media house, we gave [and continue to give] this pandemic a lot more publicity than other infectious diseases.

According to one informant (reporter), the Reporter's "coverage is arguably excessive, too," but "it's doing a valuable service by giving people the information they want compared to other diseases [communicable or not], our newspaper gives due attention in providing the society with information like how to protect themselves and other precautionary methods. "He went on to say that because the COVID-19 is brand new, no one knows how the story will conclude and everyone is eager to learn more about what to do. Then, in comparison to other pandemics, the coverage looked excessive.

According to an analysis of the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to other major health issues, respondents from both publications offered nearly identical responses, which is owing to the pandemic's greater transmission rate. On the other hand, the disease's nature, as it is extensively distributed throughout all nations, making it a global issue. According to the responses, the fact that there is no treatment despite our technical advances [making it terrifying] and the ever-increasing number of victims along with newsworthiness were among the reasons for giving the epidemic greater coverage.

4.2.8. Response on assignment of journalists COVID-19 pandemic-related stories

Every journalist, according to one informant (editor) from the Reporter newspaper, is accountable for covering any problem. “Journalists cover a wide range of subjects, including news, politics, culture, sport, science, local and national events, entertainment, lifestyle, and 'human interest' stories,” she said.

Another source from the same outlet stated that reporters may be asked to interview people in a variety of situations, including those in distress, survivors (such as grieving family), and those affected or involved in the issue (e.g. in relation to hospital administration).

On the other hand, one Ethiopian Herald informant (editor) stated that it is the responsibility of every journalist to cover such problems. He also mentioned that certain journalists have access to on-the-job training. Another source (reporter) from the same publication stated that the newspaper does not have a dedicated health beat correspondent.

4.2.9. Response on major challenges of journalists to report on COVID-19 pandemic-related stories

“Our journalists lacked knowledge and specialized training for distribution of health news,” an Ethiopian Herald (editor) informant said. This has resulted in significant difficulties. To combat this lethal illness, brief training courses must be developed and implemented in close conjunction with the government and other relevant bodies.”

Journalists experience various obstacles in writing high-quality health stories, according to the informant (reporter) from the Reporter newspaper, including a lack of time and space, trouble understanding complex figures and medical terminology, and difficulty acquiring expert viewpoints. Another source (editor) from the same publication added that the changing format of reporting, in which stories are used for both traditional and online media, means journalists must adhere to new timelines, as news websites are updated as news breaks, rather than the traditional weekly printing deadline.

The informant from the Ethiopian Herald (editor) asserted that COVID-19, along with the ensuing quarantines, poses challenges to existing journalistic practices that typically require fieldwork, but it also encourages journalists to re-imagine news production. He further added that journalists have been coping with the challenge of limited access to information by interviewing sources through phones and attending webinars with experts to learn more about the pandemic.

In general, informants from both media emphasize that there is an information gap, which results in a breach of the right to information access. As a result, most of the stories that appear in newspapers are secondary, as other media outlets are given first choice on transmitting and publishing first-hand information.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

The goal of this research was to compare how Ethiopian Herald (80) and Reporter (70) newspapers covered the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 150 stories were selected and studied in terms of story kinds, topics, sources used in the stories, by-lines, and story origins. Reporters and editors from newspapers were also interviewed. Hence, the results of the study are interpreted and discussed as follows:

4.3.1. Level of the Newspapers Coverage on COVID-19 pandemic Stories

The findings reveal that the extent of coverage of the COVID-19 epidemic in the selected newspapers differs. According to the findings, the Ethiopian Herald published more pieces about the COVID-19 epidemic, with 80 items accounting for 53% of the total, while the Reporter newspaper produced 70 stories accounting for 47% over the study period. It should be noted that both media provided adequate coverage of COVID-19 pandemic-related topics. It can be stated that Ethiopian Herald covered a greater number of stories during the study period.

When comparing the two newspapers, the Ethiopian Herald, which is owned by the government, paid more attention to COVID-19 epidemic issues than the Reporter. For example, the newspaper covered the time when Ethiopia had the highest number of COVID-19 surges, which was during the study period. According to basic agenda setting, issues that get a lot of attention in the media are considered more important by the public (McCombs and Shaw, 2014).

As a result, the Ethiopian Herald drew attention to the problem by putting it on the front page of the newspaper. Government officials were most of the time the sources to report COVID-19 pandemic issues, according to findings from interviews with Ethiopian Herald journalists and editors. According to the agenda setting idea, the media's pervasiveness and audiences' passivity enable the media to mold public opinion. The findings from interviews with journalists and editors revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic is covered as news, which is in accordance with the ministry of health's policy of disease prevention.

The newspaper prioritized news stories with themes centered on pandemic prevention and control. As a result, the Ethiopian Herald devotes sufficient coverage to the COVID-19 pandemic. The private newspaper, on the other hand, has a low profile when it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3.2. Themes of Stories covered in the Newspapers on COVID-19 pandemic Issue

When it comes to coverage of the major issues of current events, every media outlet differs. As a result, categorizing the topics allows the researcher to learn more about the types of articles that are gaining traction and which issues are receiving more attention than others. The outcomes of this study show that the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic received a lot of coverage in the newspapers. For example, the Ethiopian Herald produced 32 stories, or 40% of its total, on COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control.

These findings may be consistent with Bandura's (1977) social learning (cognitive) theory model, which asserted that the first of four critical components for behavioral change is an information component, which is required to raise awareness and knowledge and persuade people that they have the ability to change behavior.

The Ethiopian Herald used the social impact and support associated to the epidemic as the second common theme in reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. Articles about social values and aiding one another were discussed in this regard. The Ethiopian Herald also covered the economic consequences and international assistance for the COVID-19 pandemic. The articles discuss the pandemic's economic impact as well as international assistance provided to the country and the region as a whole to combat the COVID-19 outbreak. Meanwhile, the newspaper paid minimal attention to the COVID-19 pandemic's treatment and immunization themes, as well as recoveries and survivors and updates on the number of new COVID-19 cases. The Reporter newspaper, on the other hand, focused on the social impact and support, as well as the economic impact and international support, for the COVID-19 pandemic. This suggests that the private daily devoted greater attention to the COVID-19 pandemic's social, economic, and international aspects than the government-owned media. Obviously, this theme is important in emphasizing the overwhelming need for the support and rehabilitation of various economic damages due to the pandemic.

Other topics, such as prevention and control, medication, vaccination, and support for the COVID-19 pandemic, were less commonly seen in newspapers throughout pandemic reportage. The articles detailed the help provided by local governments and international organizations in the fight against the epidemic, as well as the government's efforts to safeguard its own citizens from contracting the virus.

The findings of the study show that the Reporter newspaper ignored themes relevant to the updating of new COVID-19 cases. Obviously, the numbers may indicate the number of people who have infected the virus, and this message may serve as a warning to the public about the pandemic's spread.

In general, the findings show that when reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic, the Reporter newspaper devoted less attention to prevention and medication topics than the Ethiopian Herald newspaper.

4.3.3. Type of Stories used in the Newspapers

In the two newspapers studied, the pieces on the COVID-19 epidemic were classified as news, viewpoints, editorial, features, commentaries, and interviews. As a result, the findings of this study show that the selected publications paid close attention to news. As can be seen from the results, the majority of the news reports (55%) were from events and press conferences related to the COVID-19 epidemic.

It was also discovered that the news story type is the primary focus of both newspapers' coverage. The two newspapers to cover COVID-19 pandemic stories as news format that both newspapers mostly reflect on COVID-19 pandemic reports through planned events, without providing detailed interpretation of the issues. Unlike feature stories, news story reports do not include interpretations, forecasts, or any information other than what happened and how it happened, with the exception of the opinions of people interviewed during the course of gathering facts for the story.

Following the news, some stories were viewpoints that had an equal number of frequencies in both newspapers. Viewpoints have more flexibility to develop the reason and procedure for something happening, explaining in greater detail what is happening, how it is happening, or even why it is happening. It also provides more context, as well as background information and news.

Compared to the Ethiopian Herald, the Reporter newspaper produced more feature articles on the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, the study discovered that feature pieces

on the COVID-19 epidemic received little attention in newspapers. The editors of the Reporter said it was difficult to create feature pieces about the COVID-19 epidemic since going to report on survivors was dangerous due to the risk of contamination. They also claimed that they were pushed to focus on news reports regarding the COVID-19 epidemic that included government officials and press conferences.

The two newspapers published a number of editorials about the COVID-19 outbreak. A newspaper's editorial is its leader or voice. The clearest representation of the publication's identity, moral attitude, and heart and soul is the leader. It is a media organization's corporate voice or viewpoint on any particular public-interest topic. It's the magazine speaking for itself. The explanatory words, as well as the newspaper's comments on any topic, indicate the publication's attitude toward the world and its objectives. a method of presenting facts and opinions in a clear, logical, and appealing order for the purpose of entertainment or understanding important news in a way that the common reader can understand.. According to the findings of this study, both publications only print a small number of editorials. As a result, it can be inferred that the COVID-19 pandemic concern did not receive sufficient attention in the newspaper's editorial.

4.3.4. Source of Stories used in the Newspapers

When comparing the sources utilized by the two publications to cover the COVID-19 pandemic, there were several discrepancies. The results show that when reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, the selected newspapers largely relied on government officials. The majority of the reports were ascribed to government officials, according to the Ethiopian Herald. However, several government officials were employed as sources by the Reporter newspaper in reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the data, privately held newspapers rely on officials less than government-owned newspapers. As a result, the findings of this study demonstrate that the Reporter newspaper relied on government officials as sources in stories less frequently than the Herald. Official sources are favored by journalists, according to Ethiopian Herald sources, because they are readily available and editors believe that official sources have meaningful things to say. As a result, it's understandable that journalists prefer to rely on official sources to establish credibility. On the other hand, presenting just official voices may result in prejudice toward a topic, particularly one that has a significant impact on the majority of people.

The Reporter newspaper quoted contributors as a major source and government officials as second common sources for the Ethiopian Herald. This suggests that the newspapers rely on outside sources to report about the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the sources journalists utilize are unlikely to be political leaders, they are likely to represent the government's intentions on such a sensitive matter. It is also critical for the media to focus on the recoveries in order to teach the public how to protect themselves. Framing theory implies that the way information is presented can have a substantial impact on how people perceive information and their subsequent actions, as stated by Kinder and Berinsky (1999).

4.3.5 By-lines of the Stories the Newspapers

A byline is the name of a writer, along with his or her staff position, that appears before news or an article. It's possible that the byline has the same font face and size as the body text, or it could be different. Many publications have recently begun including an e-mail address in their bylines. Because the source of the information can be tracked, readers connect bylines with neutral reporting. It also plays a critical role in analyses that have been writing and reporting on certain situations, such as the COVID-19 epidemic, in their media outlets. It allows readers to identify the authors of an article on the subject.

The Ethiopian Herald depended significantly on media house reporters to produce the majority of its pieces, according to the findings. On the contrary, The Reporter newspaper depended heavily on its contributions to cover the COVID-19 outbreak. This suggests that Ethiopian Herald used its journalists to cover the COVID-19 pandemic. To report the COVID-19 outbreak, the Reporter largely relied on contributors.

4.3.6. Origins of Sources Stories in the Newspapers

The origins of stories utilized as sources were classified based on the findings from the stories. The findings show that the two main sources of information used in producing COVID-19 pandemic-related stories in the selected newspapers are local and foreign. The bulk of pandemic-related stories in both newspapers come from local sources, according to the total number of pandemic-related items in both publications.

When the total number of articles published separately was examined, the Ethiopia Herald, a government-owned newspaper, used locally originated sources in the majority of its total published stories. A tiny number of stories whose sources came from international reports were also attributed by the newspaper. This suggests that the

Ethiopian Herald newspaper relied heavily on locally sourced information. This shows that the Ethiopian Herald didn't use outside sources in writing the stories and mostly dependent on locally available sources.

On the other hand, while creating COVID-19 pandemic articles, the Reporter newspaper depended on locally sourced information. The majority of the stories in the publication were based on foreign-sourced information. As a result, the Reporter employed a variety of outside sources to report on the pandemic.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has put the world and Ethiopia in particular, in a dire situation. Hundreds of millions of people have been infected with the virus, the world's economic might is in jeopardy, and there is still no treatment. As a result, the media, particularly print media, must provide sufficient attention to the COVID-19 pandemic's prevention (control) during this dreadful period. Although there were some discrepancies in the level of coverage of pandemic issues, the COVID-19 pandemic received significant attention in both the government and private owned publications studied.

Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic epidemic is spreading at an alarming rate in Ethiopia, it is likely that the subject has been well covered in Ethiopian newspapers on a regular basis. The critical aspects of the COVID-19 epidemic have been addressed in Ethiopian media in general. Nevertheless, this study found that the two newspapers under investigation gave sufficient attention to the pandemic; especially the government owned newspaper gave a relatively more attention compared to private newspaper during the span of the study. The government newspaper preferred to cover the COVID-19 pandemic issues from its agenda and mostly focused on the government efforts. In general, the private newspaper gave relatively less attention to the COVID-19 pandemic issue and tried to set agenda on the economic aspect of the pandemic.

Prevention (control), economic impact, and support for the COVID-19 pandemic were also discovered to be the most prevalent topics, although medicine (vaccination) stories were fewer reported themes, and human interest stories were also neglected in both newspapers during the study period. The newspapers were unable to provide comprehensive details on the recoveries (survivors). Rather than seeking instructional and moving stories, the Ethiopian Herald focused on the government's initiatives. On the one side, the Reporter focused on the economic impact and support for the COVID-19 epidemic, while the social impact and support were only mentioned in passing. Medication (vaccination) was the least discussed topic during the COVID-19 pandemic's coverage.

On the other hand, the selected newspapers' news items about the COVID-19 pandemic issue did not include in-depth interpretations of the issue, which would have aided in obtaining detailed information about the pandemic's true impact. The majority of the stories were presented in a news manner, with a focus on events, press conferences, government statistics, and economic aid to the country. The newspapers also failed to use editorial format to underline the COVID-19 pandemic issue. Furthermore, government officials and outside contributors were prominent figures in COVID-19 pandemic stories published in the designated newspapers. The newspapers, on the other hand, did not cite any recoveries or survivors who had lost loved ones to the illness as sources. The media should portray the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of those who are touched by the problem.

5.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in light of the study's findings:

- ✓ By focusing on the general characteristics of the pandemic, the press should provide related and background information on the COVID-19 pandemic issues.
- ✓ The Ethiopian Herald and Reporter media should employ as many recoveries and survivors as possible as sources to describe the humane side of the issue.
- ✓ Both publications should focus on diverse facets of the pandemic, particularly human interest tales, as these stories educate, entertain, and give readers hope.
- ✓ In covering pandemic events, the content to be supplied in both government and private newspapers should be current, impartial, and interest provoking.
- ✓ Both newspapers should devote greater attention to in-depth articles rather than merely publishing statistics, press releases, and official statements as news.
- ✓ Beyond epidemic issues, government and private journalists, both, should report all aspects of public health. Because public health is complicated, it necessitates extensive explanation and clarification in order for the audience to comprehend it.
- ✓ Future research should focus on a comparison of coverage of COVID-19 pandemic issues in different newspapers and other media.

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Appendices A

Interview Questions

For Reporters and Editors stationed at the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter

The purpose of this interview is to gather information for the study a comparative analysis of the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopian Herald and Reporter English newspapers' in Ethiopia.

PART 1

1. Name.....
2. Educational Background.....
3. Position in the Organization.....

PART 2

1. Do you often cover issues of the COVID-19 pandemic in your newspaper?
2. What are the major types of stories covered on the COVID-19 pandemic in your newspaper? (statistics, prevention, medication)
3. Who are your sources during the coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic issues? (government officials, public health officers, international media)
4. How do you manage the majority of the COVID-19 pandemic stories? Is it better to tell a main story or a secondary story?
5. Do often you place the COVID-19 pandemic stories in the newspaper? (In front page, or inside pages)
6. Do you think that the media has given the COVID-19 pandemic issues adequate coverage? If not, what is the reason?
7. How do you evaluate your media organization's coverage of the COVID-19 epidemic in comparison to other major health issues?
8. How will journalists be assigned to cover the COVID-19 pandemic? (event or planned)
9. What are the newspaper's main challenges in covering the COVID-19 pandemic?

Appendices B

A coding Sheet for the study

A Comparative Study of the Coverage of COVID-19 pandemic

In the Ethiopian Herald and the Reporter Newspapers

Name of Coder: _____

Newspaper: _____

| Date of publication | Themes of the Story | Type of the Story | Sources of the Story | By-lines of the Story | Origin of the Story |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| Main Category | Sub categories to be coded |
|-------------------|--|
| Theme of Story | Prevention (control), economy(impact and support), social (impact and support), medication (vaccination) |
| Type of Story | news, features, viewpoints, editorials, interviews and opinions |
| Source of Story | Government (officials), contributors, staff reporters and multiple (more than one dominant source) |
| By-lines of Story | Reporters, News Editors, contributors, undisclosed |
| Origin of Story | Local, foreign |

Appendices C

Coding Guide

Name of Coder: _____

News Paper: _____

Date of Publication: _____

1. The core message of the story is referred to as the story's theme.
 - ❖ **Prevention and control:** refers to the articles focused on the controlling mechanisms or measures taken by different bodies to prevent the pandemic.
 - ❖ **Medication (vaccination):** relates to articles about the epidemiology of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as studies on vaccination, medication, and therapy.
 - ❖ **Economic (impact and support):** Stories about the economic crisis, debt reduction, and monetary and material donations to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ❖ **Social (impact and support):** This category includes articles on social issues, education, and other societal concerns.
2. **Type of Source:** This is the type of source that was used in the story.
 - ❖ **Government (officials):** refers government authorities(officials) used in the story
 - ❖ **By staff reporters:** refers to articles produced by page editor, news editor or and managing editor.
 - ❖ **Contributors:** refers to professionals or scholars who produce the stories.
 - ❖ **Multiple:** refers to sources which are more than one dominant source.
3. **Type of the Story:** refers to the type of the story.
 - ❖ **Hard news:** Stories which highlight new events.
 - ❖ **Features:** In-depth stories which are descriptive, with background information.
 - ❖ **Viewpoints:** refers to article written by any professionals or scholars.
 - ❖ **Opinions:** refers to opinions or facts, criticism, discussion or explanation of ideas.
 - ❖ **Editorials:** refers to article which shows the stand of the newspaper.
 - ❖ **Interviews:** refers to article which is written using question and answer format.
4. **By-lines of the Story:** refers to the writer of the stories.
 - ❖ **Reporters:** this refers to staff journalists who wrote the stories.
 - ❖ **Contributor:** refers to professionals or scholars who produce the stories.

❖ **Undisclosed:** this refers to stories without byline that are identified as coming from the newspaper.

5. Origin of Story: Refers to the basis of the story.

❖ **Local:** refers to the story which originated locally.

❖ **Foreign:** refers to the story which originated from outside of the country.

Appendices D
Inter-coder Reliability

| Categories | No. of Coding Decision | Decision that Coders Agree | Decision that Coders Disagree | Reliability | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| | | | | Ratio | % |
| Themes of the Story | 150 | 145 | 5 | 0.96 | 96.66 |
| Type of the Story | 150 | 146 | 4 | 0.97 | 97.33 |
| Sources of the Story | 150 | 150 | - | 1 | 100 |
| By-lines of the Story | 150 | 150 | - | 1 | 100 |
| Origin of the Story | 150 | 150 | - | 1 | 100 |
| Total | 750 | 741 | 9 | 0.98 | 98.8 |

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

$$N1 + N2$$

Where M is the total number of coding decisions reached by the first and second coders, and N1 and N2 are the total numbers of coding decisions reached by the first and second coders, respectively.