



**THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF FACEBOOK,
TELEGRAM AND YOUTUBE ON JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE:
WALTA MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION CORPORATE IN FOCUS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM**

SEPTEMBER, 2021

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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SEPTEMBER, 2021

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Solomon Aynishet, entitled: “The Opportunities and Challenges of Facebook, Telegram and YouTube on Journalistic Practice: Walta Media and Communication Corporate in Focus” and Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Art in Journalism and Communication complies with the Regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality. Signed by the examining committee.

Signature of Board of Examiner`s:

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Chair of Department of Graduate Program Coordinator

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this study is my original work and has not been presented in any universities, and that all the sources of materials used for the study have been dully acknowledged.

Declared by: Solomon Aynishet Bahita

Signature: _____

Date: September, 2021

Place: Addis Ababa

In my view, the work is an original effort of the candidate and all materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to assess The Opportunities and Challenges of Facebook, telegram and YouTube on Journalistic Practice: Walta Media and Communication Corporate in Focus. The study examined journalists' social media utilization for their day to day journalistic practice, how social media is changing the ways in which journalists' information gathering and reporting process, and what are the opportunities and the challenges for journalistic practice in social media era. The participants for this study were a total of 40 which had been selected using purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires were distributed to 40 journalists. In addition, five senior journalists were interviewed for triangulation purpose. The finding reveals that the role of the social media in the traditional media setting is considered both as challenge and opportunity. Of the total 40 respondents, 89.6% are considering it only as an opportunity, but 89.9% sees it as a challenge. The rest consider it neither as an opportunity, nor as a challenge. The study finds out, despite recognizing the significance of the social media, both journalists and the media houses have not been exploiting the potential of the social media to the best of their interest. Therefore, it needs proper training, attention and leadership both from the media houses, journalists, researchers, educational institutions as well as policy makers at large.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Pages
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	2
1.3. Objectives of the Study	3
1.3.1 Specific objectives	4
1.3.2 Research Questions.....	4
1.4. Significance of the Study	4
1.5. Scope of the Study.....	5
1.6. Limitations of the Study.....	5
1.7. Organization of the Study	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2. Understanding Social Media	7
2.2.1 Social Media: Definitions	7

2.2.2	Social Media: Types.....	8
2.3.	Social Media and Journalism	11
2.3.1.	News and Social Media.....	12
2.3.2.	Social Media in Ethiopia.....	13
2.3.3	Walta’s Social Media Department Overview	13
2.4.	Social Media and Journalistic Practice	15
2.4.1.	Opportunities of Social Media	15
2.4.1.1.	Social Media as Sources of Information	15
2.4.1.2	Social Media as Sources of News Sources and Knowledge	16
2.4.1.3	Social Media as Source of Feedback	17
2.4.1.4	Social Media for Professional Skills (for Reporters and Editors).....	18
2.4.2.	Challenges of Social Media: as Challenges of Mainstream Media.....	19
2.4.2.1.	Challenges in News Gathering, Reporting and Getting Audience.....	19
2.4.2.2.	Challenges in News Verification, Credibility and Trust.....	20
2.5	Theoretical Framework	22
2.5.1	Agenda Setting.....	22
2.5.1.1.	Social Media and Agenda Setting.....	23
2.5.2	Technology Determinism.....	25
2.6	Review of Empirical Studies.....	26
CHAPTER THREE.....		27
3.	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
3. 1	Introduction	27
3.2.	Research Method.....	27

3.3.	Participants of the Study	28
3.4.	Sampling Techniques and Procedures.....	29
3.5	Questionnaire	30
3.6	In-depth Interviews	30
3.7	Validity and Reliability of the Instruments of the Study	31
3.8	Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	31
3.9	Thematic and Analytical Focus.....	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....		33
4.	DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	33
4.1	Introduction	33
4.2.	Respondents' Demographic Background	34
4.3.	Respondents' Social Media Preference	35
4.4.	Respondents' Experience in Using Social Media.....	36
4.5.	Respondents' Purpose for Using Social Media	37
4.6.	Respondents' Social Media Profile Name Usage.....	38
4.7.	Social Media Opportunities for Journalistic Practice	40
4.7.1.	Agenda Setting Opportunities.....	43
4.7.2.	Information Gathering and Reporting Opportunities.....	44
4.7.3.	Alternative Media Platform Opportunities	45
4.7.4.	Professional Networking and Networked Reporting Opportunities	47
4.7.5.	Social Media as a Promoter of Press Freedom	48
4.8	Social Media Challenges for Journalistic Practice.....	49
4.8.1.	Challenges in Agenda Setting.....	50

4.8.2. Challenges on Credibility and Trust	51
4.8.3. Challenges on Hate Speech.....	51
4.8.4. Challenges on Verification.....	52
4.8.5. Challenges on Audience Sharing	53
4.8.6. Challenges of Defamation on Social Media	53
4.8.7. Challenges on Professionalism	54
CHAPTER FIVE.....	55
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	55
5.1. Summary	55
5.2. Conclusion	57
5.3. Recommendations	59
REFERENCES.....	60
Appendixes.....	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Demographical distribution of respondents	34
Table 4.2: Journalists Social Media Preference	35
Table 4.3: Respondents experience in using social media.....	36
Table 4.4: Respondents purpose for using social media.....	37
Table 4.5: Respondents profile name in social media	38
Table 4.6, respondents' views about social media's opportunities	40
Table 4.7, respondents' views about social media challenges.....	41
Table 4.8: Summary of the respondents' views about social media's opportunities	42
Table 4.9: Summary of the respondents' views about social media challenges.....	49

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAU - Addis Ababa University

BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN - Cable News Network

Walta - Walta Media and Communication Corporate

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

News consumption today is not the same as pre-satellite news when people waited for their morning papers or sat down at an appointed time for the evening news on television. News consumption today is not the same as pre-internet news when people tune into events happening around the world through 24-hour television news channels. More recently, a growing number of readers, viewers and listeners are going online for their news. Television, newspapers and radio are still here but there is a growing competition from interactive social media (Alejandro, 2010).

New media platforms are also great opportunities if the media houses develop new sets of skills and strategies that enable them exploit these new found technologies as best as possible. According to Thomas (2013), the social media have particularly transformed the gathering, processing and dissemination of information. It also allows citizens to report on events happening around them given they have smart phone and strong internet connection.

Citizen journalism is challenging the traditional media in the country. In fact the traditional media here are playing a great role in addressing public information even though they already are suffering from a trust deficit because of the emergence of social media. On the other hand, the social media also offers great opportunities to gather news tips and public agendas from a range of sources on the social media. It also makes life easier for media houses as it provides multiple platforms for reporting and dissemination.

This study examined the challenges and opportunities in the Ethiopian media context focusing on Walta Media and Communication Corporate. Despite some researchers earlier tried to study the opportunities and challenges of social media in generically, this study differs from the formers with its specific focus due the Facebook, Telegram and You Tube plat forms of the social media.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

New-media technology has impacted on established journalism. The vast bulk of public and commercial media are changing, as the new media fluxes its new found power in the media landscape. The new media offer the opportunity to transform the news media into a more open, interactive and useful forum for information and debate (Shirky, 2008). As news becomes nonlinear and open-sourced, journalism is changing in many ways. The new media are more than posting comment on a blog or sending out photo to a website.

According to Demeke, (2017), in the old days, a reporter was given a lead or went out to find a story. Today, many stories are received third hand (sometimes even fourth or fifth hand) through Facebook and telegram posts or Tweets so that by the time a story is assigned to the reporter, the story in some form or another is already out there in the social media universe. The reporter now has to take that into consideration and find different angle to the story that is not yet being talked about. As to the notion of scoops and breaking news, a lot of tips or leads these days are from the web or what's "trending" in social networks like Twitter,

People want the information as soon as the journalist or the media outlet receives it. So to sit on a story until it is complete is to risk being out-scooped by competitors or even worse to be dubbed slow by the public (Shirky, 2008). It is now a necessity to give the audience bits of information at a time, as soon as the information is available, added Shirky. In this era of 21st century journalism, no media outlet can afford to wait. Why? Traditionally, media outlets compete to out-scoop each other but today if they hold on to a story too long, they run the risk of being out-scooped by amateurs such as bloggers, citizen journalists and twitters.

Generally, the media and communication scientists agree that, the current technological landscape show tremendous promise and present numerous opportunities for news and its practitioners. Opposite to their opportunities, social media causes a serious challenge. The fake news which circulates in social media erodes public trust and credibility. These pose critical impact on the traditional media in Ethiopia as is the case elsewhere.

In a country like Ethiopia, where the media has no effective power of serving as a watchdog to the government the role of Social Media in breaking this swamp and using as an alternative means of information has a considerable significance (Tesfaye, 2013). These social media rooms host various political news and views including patriotism, democratic system, good governance, election, and opinion regarding public policies. In Ethiopia, the social media has become a viable option and people started to turn onto it. It implies that, social media can be a challenge on audience share to Ethiopian Media.

According to the information from Ethiopian Media Authority, there are twenty two radio stations in the country. Ten of them are public and the remaining twelve are commercial stations. Similarly, there are nine public and twenty commercial television stations which are serving the society at national level. The Ethio Telecom also noted that Ethiopia's Internet penetration reaches 45.4 million and Facebook users in Ethiopia have reached over six million in 2020. Therefore, it is outwardly possible to say that, using social media for alternative means to disseminate news and programs to audiences can give media houses and journalists enormous advantages.

The researcher tries to see how Walta Media and Communication Corporate's journalists understand the new media, what challenges they are facing and how equipped to exploit the opportunities in their practices.

One more thing, the fake news that was published on Walta's Facebook account without Walta's consent and the consequences following this fake news has triggered the researcher to study this thesis.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this thesis is to assess, the opportunities and challenges of Facebook, telegram and YouTube in journalistic practices focused on Walta Media and Communication Corporate.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

Specific objectives of the study include:

- To examine attitudes on the use of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalistic practice at Walta Media and Communication Corporate
- To examine the opportunities of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalistic practice at Walta Media and Communication Corporate
- To examine the challenges of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalistic practice at Walta Media and Communication Corporate
- To examine how Facebook, telegram and YouTube is changing at Walta Media and Communication Corporate's Journalists information gathering and reporting process

1.3.2 Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following questions:

- How do journalists perceive use of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalistic purpose at Walta Media and Communication Corporate?
- What are the opportunities of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalistic practice at Walta Media and Communication Corporate?
- What are the challenges of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalistic practice at Walta Media and Communication Corporate?
- How Facebook, telegram and YouTube are shifting the information gathering and reporting process at Walta Media and Communication Corporate?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study is significant to contribute to fill the knowledge gap in understanding the general characteristics of the use of social media utilization in journalistic practice. It is also important to point up the opportunities social media asserts and the challenges of social media which affects the day to day practice of media professionals.

Besides, the study can help policy makers to have a better insight on how social media is changing the process of information flow. It helps them to understand that, how the social media agenda are raised and processed as well as expand by opinion leaders. Therefore, they can understand how the country's media landscape is using social media in setting public agenda that have a greater impact to the nations.

The result can also be used as a framework for other researchers to have ground information about the study target media houses and journalists. It can help them to heighten their research in the area, especially the challenges and opportunities social media in contrary to Ethiopian mainstream media context.

1.5. Scope of the Study

According to the data found from Ethiopian Media Authority, there are a total of 51 radio stations and Television stations which are broadcasting regional and nationwide, levels. Walta Media and Communication Corporate is a huge media house in Ethiopia which has a total of about 300 employees.

Above all, the researcher observed that Walta has a wide range of geographical coverage, broadcasts its stories and has a variety of platforms, i.e. is television and website as well as social media accounts.

Due to the above reasons, the research is generally designed to analyze the opportunities and major challenges of Facebook, telegram and YouTube for journalists working in Walta Media and Communication Corporate. The study does not include other media professionals and their practices to make the research manageable.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Social media are new technologies and the researcher couldn't found enough researches and materials in accordance with Ethiopian mainstream media context, as per the need. No study has also been conceded out with regard to the level of journalist's use of the social media too. Therefore, lack of secondary sources has somehow limited the opportunity to cross triangulate the findings of various researches outputs.

In addition, since social media technologies are new phenomena, there was confusion on the selection of theoretical framework which best suits to social media research.

Besides, the study will not be included all journalists Walta as well as other Media Professionals as the sampled group because of the financial and time constraints.

During data collection, some of targeted journalists expected to be at field work and it will made difficult to gather more data. In addition COVID-19 outbreak could have been considered as a significant impact in data collection works. The interviewees had felt risk virus transmission while conducting interview. Due to this major challenge the sample was made to be 40.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction on background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study.

The second Chapter reviews the literatures, i.e. the theoretical framework of the study and issues that are related to journalists and social media utilization for their journalistic practice.

The third Chapter presents discussions on the methodology employed to conduct this study and the reasons why the researcher has chosen quantitative and qualitative methodology.

The fourth Chapter discusses the analysis and presentation of the data. This chapter discusses all the data collected from respondents.

Finally, chapter five provides the summary of major findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the overview of scholarly works on the social media, global media, the role of the social media in the processes of journalistic practice, historical development of the social media, the internet industry in comparison with other media, the common application area of the social media, and associated opportunities and challenges. An introduction to the arguments of relevant theories to the theme of the study would also be discussed and it is written under American Psychological Association (APA) style.

2.2. Understanding Social Media

2.2.1 Social Media: Definitions

According to online journalism lecturer, McAdams, (2012), social media can be defined as digital systems that enable people, identified by profiles, to share information. In fact, consumer-generated content – including popular social network sites such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter – have recently become one of the foremost online communication channels.

From the definitions above, we can understand that, social media applications are web-based applications that allow people to create online profiles to share and receive content often generated by users themselves. Also, the information shared through social media is two-way communication as compared to traditional media, which is described as a one-way flow of information. Social media would not be social media without profiles. Profiles allow to friend/unfriend, follow/unfollow and include or exclude people from conversations (Abdool, 2015).

"Over the last five years, social media has gained popularity all over the world. Almost everyone uses Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, You Tube and other forms of social media both for social and professional purposes. Although not everyone has gotten on board with the

social media giant, it has shaped how people around the world communicate with one another", Kenya's Journalism professor, Erneo Nyakundi Nyamboga.

2.2.2 Social Media: Types

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

i. Facebook

Facebook is a popular, free, social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends or contacts, family and colleagues.

Facebook sprung from its roots as a school-based social network to become the most popular social networking site in the world with more than 2.89 Billion Users. (Social Media Today. As of 2nd quarter of 2021). In the beginning of 2009, Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, equated Facebook to a nation; he said Facebook would be the eighth largest country in the world.

A few keys to Facebook's success are: its ability to appeal to both people and businesses; the success of Facebook's developers network, which has turned Facebook into a thriving platform; and Facebook Connects ability to reach out to the rest of the web and provide a single login that works across multiple sites (Nyamboga, 2014:89).

Abdool also says, within each member's personal profile, there are several key networking functions. The most popular is called the Wall, which is a virtual bulletin board. Messages left on a member's Wall can be text, video or photos. Another popular component is the virtual Photo Album. Photos can be uploaded from the desktop or directly from a smart-

phone camera (Abdool, 2015). There is no limitation on quantity; however, Facebook can remove inappropriate or copyrighted images. An interactive album feature allows the member's contacts known as “friends” to comment on each other's photos and identify and tag people in the photos.

Another popular profile component is “status updates”, a micro blogging feature that allows members to broadcast short announcements to their friends. All interactions are published in news feed, which is distributed in real-time to the member's friends. Facebook also provides its users with a “Check in” feature from a smart phone. This allows users to post their location from where they are and can see their friends’ new post any time (Abdool, 2015).

ii Telegram

Telegram was launched in 2013 by the brothers Nikolai and Pavel Durov. The Telegram states that its end goal is not to bring profit, but it is not currently structured as a non-profit organization. As of April 2021, Telegram has 500 million monthly active users with at least 1.5 million new users signing up every day. The announcement included a promise to implement group video calls in 2020. The Telegram team is currently based in Dubai.

iii. YouTube

YouTube is an American online video-sharing platform headquartered in San Bruno, California. Three former PayPal employees—Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim—created the service in February 2005. Google bought the site in November 2006 for US\$1.65 billion; YouTube now operates as one of Google's subsidiaries.

iv. Twitter

In 2006 three college dropouts developed Twitter, a new medium that combines elements of mobile text messaging, online instant messaging, and a good dose of blogging. Twitter is a free, social networking micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts. These short messages are called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices (Abdool, 2015).

Micro-blogging allows people to publish short messages to other subscribers of a specific web service. According to Nyamboga (2014), the most famous micro-blogging service is Twitter.

The writer of a book called Mass Communication, Ralph E. Hanson, elaborates how twitter evolution is impactful in communication. “Twitter is designed to let people communicate with their friends, family, and coworkers using messages, known as ‘tweets’ (E.Hanson, 2011)”. He added that, the 140 characters limit of tweets is essential to its success.

Twitter is a key new communication technology because it bridges up the gap between mobile phones, mobile Internet, and traditional computer-based Internet access.

Twitter has quickly become an important tool for journalists. When breaking news occurs in any part of the world, Twitter users quickly agree on a tag that organizes the material comprising a hash mark and a short word. Once you have the “hashtag”, you can then use Twitter’s search engine to filter out everything but those tweets that are intending to comment on or report on a news event (Alejandro, 2010).

v. Blogs

One of the easiest ways that journalists can pass information and express their thoughts is to have a personal blog. Journalists also have blogs, which they use to dialogue and get feedback. Journalists can also use blogs to write about something that they are passionate about (Nyamboga, 2014).

The integral element of a blog is dialogue and actively encourages feedback and comments. Journalistic blogs tend to have a personal flavor and informal writing style where someone can express their own opinions (Schaefer, 2012).

vi. Google+

Google+ aims to make sharing on the web more like sharing in real life (Schaefer, 2012). Google+ has joined the big leagues registering nearly four billion active users as of 2019.

vii. LinkedIn

Founded on December 14, 2002, and launched on May 5, 2003, LinkedIn is one of the most popular social media site for professional networking.

Currently, <https://kinsta.com/blog/linkedin-statistics/>, (2021), reports LinkedIn has over 740+ million users, with more than 260 million monthly active users. Of those LinkedIn users who are engaging with the platform monthly, 40% access it on a daily basis.

Facebook may be the largest social networking site in the world today, but LinkedIn has been supporting its users for a longer time period. And more importantly for those looking to network and develop business connections, LinkedIn users know the platform as the “professional social networking site.”

In a world where technology is rapidly changing, the longevity of the tech company, which was founded in 2002, is a tribute to its utility and dominance within its niche in social media.

In fact, the search intent of the term “LinkedIn” has more than doubled in the last 10 years. And, when it comes to interesting LinkedIn statistics and LinkedIn facts, there is a surprising abundance.

viii. Instagram

Instagram is a visual social media platform. In June 2018, Instagram had reached one billion monthly active users, up from 800 million in September 2017. The app is one of the most popular social networks worldwide.

Many of its users use it to post information about travel, fashion, food, art and similar subjects. The platform is also distinguished by its unique filters together with video and photo editing features. Almost 95 percent of Instagram users also use Facebook.

2.3. Social Media and Journalism

For many years the media evolution from print to radio, to TV and now online media has continued to influence mass opinions and perceptions. However, the emergence of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube has taken this very concept a step further, with some arguing that social media now shape the opinions, perception and actions

of the majority whose opinions were previously shaped by information from traditional and mainstream media houses (Thomas, 2013).

In what we refer to as the “information age” or “digital age” our technological advancements in the area of ICT have helped overcome limitations of time and space in communication, information sharing and networking.

The emergence of social media has made it possible for anyone with access to technologies, such as a smart phone and/or any mediated technology to gather, process and disseminate information to others. In the electronic media world, anyone with such facilities can make their own broadcasts, thus doing the work of conventional journalists. The Internet, so central to the effectiveness of social media, has brought the world and its inhabitants closer together. The field of news, where there was such notable distance between broadcaster or journalist and reader, has also found itself more familiar.

To sum up, what makes social media of particular interest to journalism is how it has become influential as a communication and news-breaking tool (Alejandro, 2010).

2.3.1. News and Social Media

According to Newman (2009), there are three key reasons for the growth of news and information in social networks:

The first one is Facebook created news and activity feed in September 2006, which has become a default setting on a user’s homepage. This has encouraged more linking to mainstream news sites. It has since made it easier to include links and recommendations from other news- related sites.

The second reason is mainstream audiences are now using social networks and they have brought their interests and preoccupations, including the sharing of news. Facebook’s dramatic growth in global audience (December 2007 – December 2008) came from people aged 35-49.

And the third reason is websites have provided icons or buttons to allow easy sharing and linking. Audio-video integration with YouTube has proved a huge boom because of the younger demographic; now news sites are doing the same.

The above justifications can convince that broadcasting the news through social media is becoming popular and is viable for all mediums, including live broadcasting.

2.3.2. Social Media in Ethiopia

Since the Internet has revolutionized the way most people in the world live, Ethiopia is no exception. According to Ali (2012) in Alemayehu, (2013) the internet has become the integral part of our economic, political, and social life. It alters the way we purchase goods, the way we bank, and the way we communicate with one another. Thus, the emergence of internet not only changes the way we live, it also offers the platform for the rising of different social media and social networking sites (Bisset, 2019).

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

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

2.3.3 Walta's Social Media Department Overview

Walta Media and Communication Corporate formerly known Walta Information Center was established in 1994 locating its headquarters in Addis Ababa. Walta has been re-organized under the ownership of the four Regional Endowments. The major shareholders of the company are: EFFORT, TIRET, TUMSA and Wondo."

Walta provides media as well as communication services, commercial and public service values and advocates developmental journalism to foster nation building and fight against poverty to serve both domestic and international audiences via news, documentaries, research, and advertisement technologies and other media and communication services, acting as liaison between the public and the media.

In 2017 Walta has established its own Television Station as an additional outlet to address audiences. In addition, recently Walta has owned the formerly known radio station FM 105.3. Besides its well-known website i.e. waltainfo.com and other additional social media outlets like Facebook, twitter, you tube and telegram.

Walta's Website and Social Media Department has seven staffs. The main duty of the department is sharing news and programs to the audience via website, Facebook with more than 600,000 likers, Twitter with over 50,000 followers and You Tube with over 145,000 subscribers and telegram over 35,000 followers.

The researcher also discussed with staff members of the Website and Social Media Directorate at Walta. One of their staff, who is senior social media journalist a Producer at Walta's Website and Social Media Department, Tewodros Kore, said that Walta is applying the social media platforms as means of news and program dissemination. Walta has a website and other social media pages which are managed by its own directorate, he added. (Personal Interview)

Nesredin Nuru An assistant Producer at Walta Website and Social Media Department said that Walta's leadership doesn't provide proper and timely guidance in material and human resources; as a result the directorate could not meet its number of targeted audiences and could not generate big deal of money from the social media as per the potential of the company.

2.4. Social Media and Journalistic Practice

2.4.1. Opportunities of Social Media

Traditional media players are yet to fully recognize social media information as “news”. While it remains debatable whether digital technology has weakened or strengthened journalism, what is for sure is that social media has shaken up the media business model and ushered it into a new age – one where journalists are not simply responsible for storytelling but also engaging with their audiences through social media, blog posts and other mediums Kamp, (2016).

As Mathias Kamp (2016) clearly elaborates, the biggest change impacting the industry today is how consumers are getting their news. Outside newspapers or desktop news, consumers are looking to their mobile devices for the latest updates.

It is better to see some of the opportunities of Social Media for Journalistic practice, especially in news processing. Here are, below, discussed.

2.4.1.1. Social Media as Sources of Information

As we have discussed above with the findings of Nyamboga (2014), Social media has various advantages including speed of accessing and disseminating information, ease of updating unfolding stories, providing a forum for discussions, among others.

Another researcher, Abdool (2015), also added that, Social media applications and the networks that are created by users could provide opportunities to investigative journalists by providing access to further information and sources.

Off course social media is becoming the source of information or agenda for media practitioners. That is why an interviewee (journalist) told to Thomas (2013) in his research interview, “we use twitter to see what people are talking about, to see what other people are writing about.”

According to Abdool (2015), journalists are using social media applications for crowd sourcing for information. There is a minority among the journalists she interviewed regarding social media applications in the newsgathering process. The use of social media applications are encouraged but not forced upon by news editors at the respective

publications. Further expands on this by stating that news editors themselves are on social media and keep abreast of events and news occurring outside of the newsroom.

Lavrusik (2015), also strengthened Abdool's arguments on how investigative journalism is prospering in the age of social media. He briefly stated that in a society that is more connected than ever, journalists that were once shrouded in mystery are now taking advantage of their online community relationships to help scour documents and uncover potential wrongs. The tools and information now available to journalists are making the jobs of investigative outlets more efficient. The socialization of the web is revolutionizing the traditional story format.

This says a lot about the advantages of socialization on new media to gather data, evidence and news tip from acquaintances of the social media.

2.4.1.2 Social Media as Sources of News Sources and Knowledge

It is evident that social media applications, specifically Facebook and Twitter, are changing the newsgathering culture.

Lavrusik (2010:24) says that “reporters are now capturing content shared in the social space to enrich their stories, enabling tomorrow's reporters to create contextualized social story streams that reference not only interviewed sources, but embedded tweets, Facebook postings and more. Journalists are also leveraging the vast reach of social networks in unprecedented ways. In many respects, social media is enabling watchdog journalism to prosper.”

Social media applications are providing for reporters, especially for investigative journalists, with an added platform to search for evidence and documents, which enable them to gain more content to add further value and credibility to their investigations. Lavrusik (2010) is of the opinion that the use of social media applications in investigative journalism is allowing investigative journalism to develop and assist journalists in being better positioned to expose wrongdoings in society.

According to Thomas (2013), the first of the two most popular ways in which social media is used according to the journalists is the ability to share knowledge through it. Though this

can of course be done with one's peers, it can also be a general channel in which to push and understand relevant material that is of interest.

Thomas's interviewee told him, "I see it more as sharing links and stories, not that personal stuff, I use them to look up trending things or check additional information about a happening" Thomas, (2013).

As Thomas (2013) says in his summary of findings, social media itself has become a major means to get access to sources, as well as a source in itself, with several participants indicating they often find worthwhile stories by using trending hashtags, seeing what politicians, company leaders and individuals are writing about and discussing. And then, articles have been born of twitter conversations.

2.4.1.3 Social Media as Source of Feedback

In 21st century, the contemporary journalism allows its audiences to participate actively in the production of news and allows the sending of their personalized feedback to key writers or producers from the industry.

Thomas (2013) strengthen that, the online newspapers follow the choices of interactivity, rapidity and selectivity, with users being able to select their favorite topics through the aid of hyperlinks or newsletters. In this way, newspapers, and broadcast media too, open an ongoing communication channel between them and readers, which permits a live flow in conversations and in opportunities to give feedback to stories. This creates the basis for personalized journalism.

According to Hermida and Thurman (2008:73), "the Internet in this new media culture [allows that] the public is no longer a passive consumer of media, but an active participant in the creation of the media landscape".

In light of a general belief in journalism becoming two-way communication, the questions focused on the interviewee's attitude to comments being made on their own, and general articles. Thomas added that it's interesting how comments can become part of the news, it could almost be a dinner discussion of informed individuals, probably more interaction now because you can just tweet (about your news story) to someone and say, 'how dare you?'

(Then feedback follows) I agree, I disagree, I have information on your story, etc (Thomas, 2013)

The social media makes feedback on a story very quick and spot on. It also offers opportunities to refute the facts in the story. That's what makes media houses and journalists vulnerable if they get their facts wrong. Yet it also offers them more on their new, prompting them for follow up stories or further investigation.

2.4.1.4 Social Media for Professional Skills (for Reporters and Editors)

For the journalist, the new equation is about doing a lot more with a lot less. Reporters are now required to submit stories for multiple platforms – television, radio, print and online. For a journalist in today's media landscape, it is essential to be multi-skilled (Alejandro, 2010).

In addition to the development of their day-to-day practice and general professional skill, social media is now playing a great role in different aspects. Reporters are now encouraged to become more entrepreneurial in how they make their stories available, whether it be through their Twitter, Facebook, YouTube account or podcasts.

Tayebwa (2016) notes that, considerations are being made with the knowledge that news consumers on social media have a limited attention span because news content now competes for attention with other non-news-related content. An issue that could easily tempt reporters into dramatizing their news content in an effort to compete for attention with other social media content.

With or without social media, traditional or conventional journalism must remain the practice of gathering, processing and distributing news and information through various mass media channels and formats based on established and sacrosanct norms such as balance and fairness, truthfulness and accuracy, objectivity and impartiality, neutrality and detachment (Tayebwa, 2016).

Recognizing the above idea, (Meyers at al., 2012), social media is playing significantly to improve the reporters and editors skills. As journalism is a practice that is grounded in the

ability and passion of individuals to recount stories that have an impact on the wellbeing of society, which is their social responsibility role.

With the intention of social media, the practical skills of gathering, processing and disseminating information are practicing and being developing without any formal journalism training.

2.4.2. Challenges of Social Media: as Challenges of Mainstream Media

Even though, Social Media have multiple opportunities for the contemporary journalistic practice, they have also undeniable challenges. The following are some of the challenges for traditional or mainstream media face globally.

2.4.2.1. Challenges in News Gathering, Reporting and Getting Audience

According to Garrison (1996), the advent of New Communication Technology (NCT) has brought forth a set of opportunities and challenges for conventional media. Domingo & Heinonen (2008) added, the presence of new media and the Internet in particular, has posed a challenge to conventional media, especially the printed newspaper.

As Tayeebwa (2016) describes, the issue of lack of training in journalism or skilled individuals to process information for distribution online is compounded with the low literacy levels of audiences. For instance, Unwin (2012) notes how the divide between the information-rich and the information-poor becomes wider between richer individuals and countries that are able to access ever-faster Internet, thus enabling them to use ever-creative social media. Such differences in access to social media apply 'not only between countries, but also between urban and rural areas, between those who have more disabilities and those who have fewer, and very often between men and women'. Tayeebwa (2016) develops the Unwin's idea. He says, such cyber-illiteracy across the board disadvantages the journalism enterprise.

In addition, Thomas describes, going by the concept that one of the principal effects that media houses have on governance is their ability to provide information relevant in the voting booth, social media's undoubted influence in shaping the standards, opinions and

perceptions of the people – especially the middle class and urban elite - must be considered in shaping governance (Thomas, 2013).

Whereas, Tayeebwa (2016) said that there is mechanisms for traditional journalism to gate-keep the content for distribution, the instantaneous nature of sharing information as accorded by social media makes it harder to exercise the requisite quality controls. In the competitive moments between media houses, it is easier for false and defamatory information to be disseminated via social media platforms. At the extreme, social media has been cited in cyber-crime i.e. stalking, hacking, cyber- bullying and cyber-terrorism.

Therefore, the role of the journalist in the new cyberspace era as related to the freedom of the reader and viewer in choosing what to read or watch and when to participate in the construction of news. The traditional top-down (one way) model of communicating with readers does not apply any more to the online spaces.

The interaction between journalists and sources can be skipped, with information being spread directly by sources on online pages. Thus, the role of the journalist as a mediator between the external world and the audiences is withdrawn from the professional world of journalism.

2.4.2.2. Challenges in News Verification, Credibility and Trust

News credibility represents one of the contemporary issues, which became apparent with the engagement of journalism in online platforms. While online journalism is developing into a web practice adopted by all newspapers, the concept of interactivity arises naturally from the news industry. This quality of new media platforms promotes the endorsement of a two-way communication model, challenging the traditional practices of journalism that are based on one-way communication (Tayeebwa, 2016).

Hovland and Weiss (1951 - 1952), as cited by (Gangadharbatla, et al., 2014). suggested that consumers view some communicators as more credible than others. They determined that the “credibility” of a communicator reflects the public perception of the communicator’s fairness and factualness. In their early research, Hovland and Weiss (1951-52) were particularly concerned with the credibility attributed to different sources of information such

as specific scholarly journals, popular magazines, gossip columnists, and political analysts. Their findings indicated that the credibility of a source had a significant impact regarding the initial acceptance of information.

Consumers have general beliefs regarding the credibility of various kinds of information sources such as television news, newspaper reports, Internet blogs, and advertising. These beliefs are based on their cumulative experience regarding the fairness and factualness of specific sources of information (Gangadharbatla, et al., 2014).

Depending on the early work of Hovland and Weiss (1951-52), certain types of information sources are viewed as credible, or trustworthy, and other sources are viewed as untrustworthy. Therefore, consumers' acceptance of information is mitigated by the credibility of the source.

The study done by (Gangadharbatla, et al., 2014) confirmed the popular notions in trade press that young adults are increasingly turning to social media for news rather than using traditional media such as print newspapers, magazines, television and radio. Interestingly, however, despite their preference for using social media for newsgathering, young adults still perceive traditional media as more credible news sources than social media. And it is becoming a big challenge for being credible because of the fake news that is posted on social media.

As per explanation of Mudhai (2009), just like traditional journalism channels, social media can be excellent avenues for dissemination of credible and useful information for decision-making as well as excellent for imparting knowledge and skills to the citizenry. He added, the challenge remains to ensure that credible information is provided through social media as in traditional ones so that debate is not based on opinion rather than fact, or on prejudice rather than knowledge.

The other issue, which challenges the mainstream media by social media, is accuracy. In journalism practice, accuracy is the disposition to take the necessary care to ensure so far as possible that what one says is not false, sincerity the disposition to make sure that what one says is what one actually believes. But it is challenging by social media, because they don't give much attention to it.

Nyamboga (2014) on his part says, Social media provides a platform for accessing information about anything one can think of. He added, the other key disadvantage of social technology especially social networking is that most people do not know how to network effectively and safely. The usual forms of censorship: violence, prison, harassment and raids on editorial offices are equally damaging to professional journalists as well. Assaults on online journalists and social media activists are direct attacks on all media (Nyamboga, 2014:92).

In fact, says Thomas (2013), such is the impact of social media on journalism. Steensen argues that, the only thing that separates journalists from the other news bringers (social media news writers) in the public eye is their professional identity. This identity is therefore of growing importance to the journalist and his/her success (Steensen, 2011).

The challenge is however, how to get compelling stories from noise as there are millions of tweets, stories, pictures, links, name them, posted on the internet every second. Although new technologies have effected changes on the amount of information available and the rate of reception, it is not clear whether these have had any significant effect on the quality of information and news. In fact, there are claims that rising competition and the obsession to provide exclusive news fast using social media may have negatively affected the quality, reliability, and validity of information. This is especially true of the breaking news facility.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is one of the best-substantiated theories in media and communication research (McCombs, 2005). Its original formulation assumed the existence of a more or less monolithic news media whose decisions about story salience would be reflected in perceptions of issue importance among audience members. Recent work on agenda setting in the digital age has continued to treat news media as central (Newman, Guggenheim, Jang, & Bae, 2014). Less explored has been the potential for politicians to set their constituents' agendas without the participation of the media.

In 2015 an international workshop was held to discuss about Social Media and agenda setting prospects. During that, Deen Freelon from School of Communication at American University describes, “Audience members may to varying degrees follow along the agenda path set by their leaders, or attempt to inject their own pet concerns onto the agenda. Digital media have given them unprecedented opportunities for such agenda injection, but few studies have investigated how often they actually do so.”

He added, still, recent research has recognized that agenda-setting power is dispersed among a much greater diversity of parties than at any time in history. Journalists now jockey for audience attention with influential social media users and writers like bloggers, celebrities, activists, corporations, and academics, among others (Freelon, 2015). The distinction between “horizontal” (general-interest) and “vertical” (niche) media categorizes outlets according to their intended audiences, but in the process elides critical distinctions within the categories (Ragas & Roberts, 2009; Vargo et al., 2014).

2.5.1.1. Social Media and Agenda Setting

For journalists, social media have become news beats for picking up stories, contacting and getting access to sources informally or formally (Skogerbø, et al., 2016:191). For sources social media have become alternative channels both for addressing and talking to citizens directly and for “dodging the gatekeepers” of mainstream media by publishing stories and material that can be picked up by journalists or citizens.

In addition to that, online and social media have added to the number of potential outlets that sources can use to get their stories out, thereby reducing the value of access to journalists and mainstream news media channels, and increasing source power. Either way, the integration of social media and journalism may alter the power of sources and journalists to set the agenda for the news media.

On the other hand, (Salman, et al., 2016) says, the advent of the Internet and its related application, especially web 2.0 has tremendously changed the way we interact and do things. The dawn of social media has brought challenges to the way news is diffused in a social system.

Since the 2008 General Election, the social media has been at the forefront of setting the political agenda. News reported or shared via the social media have become the talking point of the day and this made some observers to believe that the social media is no longer an alternative media as it used to be, but rather mainstream media by way making news headlines. This is obvious in the way social media, especially Facebook, is used to share political news among the public (Salman, et al., 2016).

Meanwhile social media is a new phenomenon of our time, scholars have and being long discussed the ability of the mainstream media to shape that issues the public considers to be salient, based on the relative attention provided to some issues over others. As the fathers of agenda-setting theory put it, “Readers learn not only about a given issue; but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position” (McCombs and Shaw 1993).

The ascendance of digital media has the potential to alter this function in three distinct ways, each of which has dramatically different consequences, say McCombs and Shaw.

First, it is possible that alternatives to the mainstream media considerably lessen traditional media’s ability to set the nation’s political agenda. We know that most people consuming digital media continue to use Agenda Setting in a Digital Age more traditional media sources as well. If the cues available across these sources differ, the strength and influence of any one is likely to be diminished.

On the other hand, it is possible that the advancement of new media has slightly modified the nature of the mainstream media’s ability to set the agenda, rather than eliminating it entirely. If new media are following the cues of traditional media, then the agenda-setting power has not diminished but has instead simply gained another channel. Mainstream media could set the agenda of blogs, social networking sites, video sharing sites, and others, which then deliver those cues to the general public in a modern version of the two-step flow. The role of traditional media would remain unchanged, and new media outlets such as YouTube would essentially take the place of opinion leaders in years past. Moreover, it seems likely that the end result in this scenario—which issue is discussed by the public and how—would remain the same.

As the relationship between old and new media develops, it is important that we learn the nature of that relationship, and particularly its effects on the classic agenda-setting power of the media.

Generally, because of the above scholarly views, reporters and editors are influencing (positively or negatively) by social media on their day-to-day journalistic practice especially in agenda setting, news sourcing or newsgathering process. So, the researcher believes agenda setting theory is suitable for this study in accordance with the next one.

2.5.2 Technology Determinism

The news cycle has moved from a passive news cycle (in which the journalists finds news, reports it and the audience consumes it) to interactive applications of news. Initially, when the story went live, that was the end. But now, it's the beginning. The audience can comment, share, add or even change information. The period of I write, you read, you're welcome is long gone (Didiugwu, et al., 2015:13).

According to them, when stories are moved to open space like Twitter, Facebook, it means interesting stories will be read more often than they would have been if they were published in the middle of a newspaper or mainstream media.

Based the above view and because of social media is a new technological media outlet, this study supposes to include on technology determination theory in addition to agenda setting theory. Technological determinism states that media technology shapes how individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how society operates as they move from one technological age to another.

Therefore, this theory for the above reasons is very relevant to this study since it describes human nature in its society in the digital era. Wherever the media exert forceful influence, they also cause change. And, as clearly stated in the specific objectives of this study, the researcher aims to assess the perception of Editors and Journalists about the use of social media in their journalistic practice.

2.6 Review of Empirical Studies

In this study the researcher used Empirical research to find out conclusions of the study is strictly drawn from concretely empirical evidence, and therefore “verifiable” evidence. In this regard the empirical evidence is gathered using quantitative research and qualitative research methods.

In addition, data is collected through questioners and interviews. All of them have one thing in common which is dependence of observation and experiments to collect data and test them to come up with conclusions. By using this, the researcher has answered empirical questions which have to be clearly defined and answerable with the findings.

The researcher had conducted how social media significantly played as an opportunity or challenge in journalistic practices on 40 questionnaires and interviews. The result derived from the research is empirically conducted.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study. Methodology deals with how we can go about acquiring knowledge in the research whereas method deals with which precise procedures we use to acquire the knowledge. As the methodology can refer the scientific study of the research method, Participants of the Study, Sampling Techniques and Procedures, Questionnaire, In-depth Interviews, Validity and Reliability of the Instruments of the Study, Data Analysis and Interpretation and Thematic and Analytical Focus have been conducted is discussed in this chapter.

3.2. Research Method

The methodology employed in this study is mixed method. A quantitative method, on the other hand, is the second method used in the study.

Quantitative and qualitative methods have a nature of supporting one another when they are used in one study. Carrasco and Lukas (2015) say, “Qualitative methods can be useful as a part of the whole empirical process, i.e. in the initial framing of concepts, to understand the issues and to design appropriate measurements. They can also be used to validate and interpret our quantitative analytical results and to communicate them in meaningful ways.” As Mann, et al., (2002:265) pronounced the significances of the combined effects of the two approaches as “the different methodological perspectives complement each other as the complementary compensation of the weaknesses and blind spots of each single design.” As a result, the researcher had employed both quantitative and qualitative methods.

In this quantitative part of the research, the method helped the researcher to evaluate the journalists' social media preference and reasons of selection among the sample respondents by generating statistics which are important to generalize about the subject of the study. It also helped the researcher to show the total journalists who are using different social media information for their practice and which type of information they are using. The quantitative research is also important to give a rank for many comparable things in a group. As a result,

this method helps the researcher to rate the social media utilization of journalists for their practice as per the number of utilization. Since the research is focused to identify the opportunities and challenges, this method helped the researcher to have higher sample size. This is also an important method to rate the items in relation to the research goal.

On the other hand, qualitative method helped to get information about the personal preference and social media using experience for their journalistic practice. It also used to get the detailed information about the challenges and opportunities of social media towards their practice. This method helps to explore the level of challenges and opportunity of social media on journalistic practice for Walta Media and Communication Corporate journalists through in depth interview and focus group discussion.

As a result, by using this method, the researcher gathered information through questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion from Journalists Walta about their current experience in using social media, the challenges they are facing and the opportunities they had gained from social media. In addition to this, Editors, Editor-in-chiefs, and Media Managers are also participated in the study to get detailed information and professional comments towards the research goal.

Generally, this mixed method helped the researcher to identify the study goal, which could lead for a better findings (conclusions) and recommendations or suggestions.

3.3. Participants of the Study

In this research the participants were Journalists who are working at Walta Media and Communication Corporate headquarters.

The research is generally designed to analyze the opportunities and major challenges of social media for journalists working in Walta Media and Communication Corporate. The study does not include other Ethiopian media's professionals and their practice in order to make the research manageable. Therefore, the participants of the study are journalists whom are working only at the headquarters, Addis Ababa, operational surroundings of Walta.

3.4. Sampling Techniques and Procedures

In this research, for the qualitative method, purposive sampling technique was employed. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys.

This survey sampling method requires researchers to have prior knowledge about the purpose of their studies so that they can properly choose and approach eligible participants for surveys conducted using online survey platforms.

Researchers use purposive sampling when they want to access a particular subset of people, as all participants of a survey are selected because they fit a particular profile.

Since the study aimed to assess the new technology, journalists should have high educational level and understanding of social media. Therefore, the researcher should rely on the insider sources about the participants experience about social media. Then, the researcher examined the data gained from the Human Resource Departments about respondents' educational level and Editors' information about journalists' experience on social media use.

The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable us to answer our research questions (Ibid). Therefore, the researcher purposely selected 5 Interviewees from different departments of the media houses.

For quantitative method, on the other hand, simple random sampling was employed. Because the study targeted journalists working at Walta are a total of close to 160 journalists, based in Addis Ababa. As per Dominic and Wimmer (2011), simple random sampling with replacement involves returning the subject, element, or unit to the population. So that it has a chance of being chosen another time.

After having the total population, the researcher selected the targeted participants by simple random system. Therefore, 40 journalists were selected as sample of the study from the total 120 population.

Therefore, after identifying the targeted samples, the questionnaire was distributed; In-depth interviews were held to explore details on issues pertinent to the study.

3.5 Questionnaire

To gather the required quantitative data for the study, a questionnaire was employed. The questionnaire had four parts. The first aimed at finding out demographic information of respondents while the second part was designed to get information that helped to know the social media preference of journalists. It also helped to know their experience in using social media to get their job done. The third part, a psychometric scale, was basically focused to find out their agreement and disagreement levels on the challenges and opportunities of social media to their practice and other questions related to social media and journalism practice. The last part was an open ended question about their general view towards social media to their practice and media houses. Since the reporters were assumed educated or can read and understand the language well, the questionnaire was designed in English by choice.

The questionnaire is distributed during data collection schedule on May 2021 to a total of 40 journalists at Walta.

Some of the questions are adopted in a contextualized manner from questionnaires in a way to reflect the realistic situations of the social media usage in journalistic practice.

3.6 In-depth Interviews

Individual in-depth interviews are characterized by extensive questioning and open-ended questions, and used to collect qualitative information. Individual in-depth interviews are important as a follow-up to focus group interviews in order to take forward the issues raised in the focus groups (Ritchie & Lewis 2003).

The in-depth interview played a vital role in this research to present the opportunities and challenges of social media on the journalistic practices for Walta journalists. Hence, the interviewer conducted individual in-depth interviews on a one-to-one basis with respondent.

In-depth interviews were conducted with five interviewees until the interview points had gained saturated. The interviewees were reporters, Senior Journalists, Editors, Editor-in-chiefs and Media Program Managers. All are selected based on their staff and bosses recommendation in accordance their experience on social media practice or use. In fact, the researcher also considered the variety in department representation gender equity as well.

The researcher, as in the focus group discussions, used an interview guide, and since the aim is to achieve a breadth and depth of coverage across their use of social media and journalistic practice. Smart Phone recording has also been applied with the consents of the interviewees.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments of the Study

Reliable questionnaires and interviews yield consistent results from repeated samples and different researchers over time. Scholars strengthen this idea. Differences in results come from differences between participants, not from inconsistencies in how the items are understood or how different observers interpret the responses (Boynton and Greenhalgh, 2004). In the same way, agreeing with Wimmer and Dominick (2011), validity is usually defined as the degree to which an instrument actually measures what it sets out to measure.

The reliability and validity of the instruments are checked in different ways. In order to assure the reliability of the methods used in the study the researcher had employed a pilot study before the actual data collection. Therefore, the data collection instruments were primarily applied to selected journalists as a pilot test and appropriate feedback taken, for the validity of the data and instruments used. Journalists who participated in the pilot study did not participate in the actual data providers.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation

As discussed briefly, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data was analyzed based on appropriate quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Quantitative data that were collected using questionnaires were entered into the computer using SPSS software and Excel program. Coding and analyzing of these data were carried out using this software package.

In addition, information through qualitative instruments (in-depth-interviews, and focus group discussions) were analyzed qualitatively. The interview was conducted in Amharic language to make the respondents feel comfortable and express the issues in better ways. Then, the data was transcribed and translated into English.

The research is generally designed to analyze the opportunities and major challenges of social media for journalists working in Walta Media and Communication Corporate. The

study does not include other Ethiopian media's professionals to make the research manageable. Therefore, the participants of the study are journalists whom are working only at the headquarters, Addis Ababa, operational surroundings Walta.

3.9 Thematic and Analytical Focus

Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. The researcher tries to find out something about people’s views, opinions, knowledge, experiences or values from a set of qualitative data like: interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey responses. Thematic focus of this study is on establishing a background for understanding on how Walta Media and Communication Corporate is using social media as an alternative platform other than the television transmissions. It also focuses on the major opportunities they gained and the challenges they faced to measure their reality in the global context. Besides, it shows challenges and opportunities of social media in contrary to Ethiopian mainstream media context.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the presentation, analysis and discussion of data obtained from questionnaire respondents and in-depth interview. As it was stated before, the study targeted on journalists in Addis Ababa. The main purpose of the study was to assess *The Opportunities and Challenges of Facebook, telegram and YouTube on Journalistic Practice: Walta Media and Communication Corporate in Focus*). To gather the required data for the study, questionnaire and in-depth interview were applied as major tools and the researcher used table and graph to analyze the data.

The collected data with the objectives and thorough review of relevant literature were encrypted, entered and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The questionnaires and in-depth interviews of the findings were classified in to different major themes.

Accordingly, the first category was assessing journalists' and their social media experience: mainly their personal use and choice of the social media form or type. This helped to find out whether Walta journalists were using the potential of social media by practically putting their stories and getting exposure to world of information that the social media provides. It also includes the challenges they are facing from social media.

The second category focused on social media use for journalistic purpose. Here the analysis and discussions were pointed out what type of social media information and sources were used for journalistic practice.

The other category was journalistic practice and social media. It was more focused on how social media was changing the ways of agenda setting, information gathering, reporting, editing and disseminating process at Walta. The discussion was up to read the minds of journalists and media managers determine their general outlook about social media opportunities and challenges. The journalists' attachments to social media as well as major challenges in using social media for journalistic practice were discussed. Further in the

discussion was about their suggestions and reflections to solve or minimize the challenges of social media.

4.2. Respondents' Demographic Background

The table below shows cross tabulation of journalists' general demographic background of Sample informants by educational qualification, work experience, working language of their journalistic practice, and the medium for which they are working for are given.

Table 4.1. Demographical distribution of respondents

	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
Education		
First Degree	24	60%
Second Degree	16	40%
Total	40	100%
Work Experience		
less than 5 years	13	32.5%
6-10 years	13	32.5%
More than 10 years	10	25%
NA	4	10%
Total	164	100%
Medium working for:		
Radio	10	25%
Television	25	62.5%
Online	8	20%
Both (Radio & Tv)	0	0%
Total	40	100%

(Organized by the researcher)

As can be seen in the above table that 24 of the 40 journalists (60%) have bachelor degree, while only 16 (40%) have got second degrees. Additionally, most of the journalists 13 (32.5%) have less than five year work experience in the media industry. But contrary to these 13(32.5%) of the respondents have been working between 6-10 years at Walta.

10(25%) had more than 10 years of experience in the media houses. The remaining respondents 4(10%) did not indicate their number of experiences in years.

Amongst the respondents, the majority are broadcast journalists. As shown in the table, 25(62.5%) and 10(25%) working for Television and Radio respectively. The rest 8 are working for online medium.

4.3. Respondents' Social Media Preference

As can be clearly seen in the table below, all respondents have Facebook accounts. Most of them use more than 2 social media platforms. As it is clearly seen in the table, Telegram is the second most (31 or 77.5%) preferable social medium next to Facebook for Walta journalists. Figures from the questionnaire shows YouTube, Twitter and Google+ take the next rank in social media preference of the selected journalists from Walta. Instagram, LinkedIn, Blogs, Flickers are ranked to least levels of rank by journalists at Walta, According to the data found from the questionnaire, only one (2.5%) user is indicated for using other social medias.

Table 4.2: Journalists Social Media Preference

Social Media Platform	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	39	97.5%
Twitter	13	32.5%
You Tube	26	65%
Telegram	31	77.5
LinkedIn	6	15%
Flicker	1	2.5%
Instagram	11	27.5%
Blogs	4	10%
Google+	13	32.5%
Others	1	2.5%

(Organized by the researcher)

Therefore, the findings above lead to conclude that journalists of Walta took Facebook as their first choice, Telegram second, YouTube as a third choice.

They choose Facebook as their first choice, maybe, because it allows them to upload and post texts or video in any size. Besides, the billions of members Facebook have cumulative over the years offers journalists new, unlimited medium for unfiltered reporting.

4.4. Respondents' Experience in Using Social Media

As the table indicates below, of the total candidates who returned the questionnaires, 7 (17.5) said they used social media for 5-6 years. 9 (22.5%) of the total respondents, were on the social media for 7-8 years. 21 journalists stayed on the social media for over 8 years, and 3 (7.5%) used social media for 3-4 years.

Table 4.3: Respondents experience in using social media

Experience	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 Years	0	0%
3-4 Years	3	7.5%
5-6 Years	7	17.5%
7-8 Years	9	22.5%
Above 8 years	21	52.5%
Total	40	100%

(Organized by the researcher)

This indicates that the respondents are more experienced in using the social media particularly Facebook. Given the number of journalists on Facebook the two media houses do have the potential to exploit the social media to their interest.

4.5. Respondents' Purpose for Using Social Media

The world of internet gives for everybody to have the chance for global thinking or knowledge. Wherever he/she lived, one can understand how the global phenomenon is going on, the only thing she/he needs is the internet and the device which can operate in the cyber world.

The reason for being active in social media varies from person to person. The issues he/she loves or the matter to which he/she gives attention to depend on the reality of that person. Understanding the purpose for using the social media can lead the researcher to identify what the journalists are focusing on.

Table 4.4: Respondents purpose for using social media

Purpose	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
For information and knowledge sharing	35	87.5%
For social relation	24	60%
For entertainment	22	55%

(Organized by the researcher)

The table above clearly shows ranks the respondents gives to different purposes for using the social media. Over 24 (60%) of the total respondents use the social media for information and knowledge sharing. The second biggest purpose to get into the social media is the want for entertainment with 22 (55%) respondents. 60% uses the social media for social relations.

The researcher also tried to check whether the interviewees are also using social media, for purposes mentioned above or not. All 35 of the interviewees agreed that as they are using social media for information purpose in most cases. And they told to the researcher that they rarely login to social media for social relations and entertainment purposes.

The fact that 87.5% of the respondents go to the social media for information and knowledge sharing confirm the belief that the social media has already established itself as a powerful news dissemination medium. That's why the journalists go for tips and share their stories on Facebook hoping thousands will join the conversation.

4.6. Respondents' Social Media Profile Name Usage

The world of social media gives freedom as one can use his/her page as per his/her choice. The chance of anonymity in profile naming is among the freedoms in offer over the social media.

There are different reasons to be anonymous in the social media. The researcher asked the respondents about their profile name, challenges and reason of anonymity in using social media as a journalist.

Table 4.5: Respondents profile name in social media

Profile Name	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
Real Name	36	90%
Fake or Nick Name	4	10%
Total	40	100%

(Organized by the researcher)

As can be seen in the table above, 36 (90%) of the total respondents use their real name for their social media profile. Only 4(10%) use fake or nick names for their profiles.

According to the findings, those who use fake names do so as they feel insecurity to go public on the social media with their real name. And 4 respondents also have another

reason in mind when they go for fake name; they believe fake name gives them the freedom "to express their thoughts freely".

The ones who involve in the social media with their real name pay the price though. According to respondents, Walta journalists face stern criticism and political marginalization by activists just for their reports on the media. According to the respondents, being journalists who work for Walta leads to face political marginalization by political activists and extremists. They face abuses for reports they do for mere reason that they are assumed to serve the interest of the ruling party.

The researcher talked to individual interviewees from Walta, especially editors and editor-in-chiefs. They argued that some political activists particularly some among the Diaspora took "journalists as propaganda tools for the government" and not as serving the public. Such kind of blaming and defamation often frustrated journalists. Sometimes, "our families and friends advise us to quit the media work as they are victims of hate speech."

4.7. Social Media Opportunities for Journalistic Practice

Table 4.6, respondents' views about social media's opportunities

It helps to get and/or improve:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total Respondents
Agenda Setting	17	9	10	1	0	3	40
Information gathering and reporting skills as well as observations and perspectives	15	15	8	2	0	0	40
Getting sources/evidences for investigation	8	12	11	5	1	3	40
Professional Networking	13	12	6	6	2	1	40
Can be considered as another media platform for Information disseminating	15	11	11	3	0	0	40
Getting feedback from the audience/ interaction	17	16	6	1	0	0	40
Promotes press freedom and expression	15	14	10	1	0	0	40

(Organized by the researcher)

Table 4.7, respondents' views about social media challenges

In journalistic Practice Social Media disadvantages:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total Respondents
Diverting audience attention from national agendas to trivial issues	18	11	7	1	1	2	40
Lacks credibility and trust	15	16	8	0	0	1	40
Mostly, promotes conflicts and hate speeches in Ethiopia	19	8	10	2	0	1	40
Mostly disseminate Fake news and distorted Information / or Lacks detailed, investigated and verified reports/	19	11	8	1	0	1	40
Challenges the mainstream media in audience sharing	10	20	7	2	0	1	40
Libeling, marginalization, and defamation	8	21	6	1	1	3	40
Challenges journalists' professional confidence	8	6	16	7	2	1	40

(Organized by the researcher)

The researcher classified the results (concerning whether the social media is viewed as an opportunity) into two groups for the analysis; those who strongly agree, agree and partially agree as "Agree", whereas respondents who strongly disagree and disagree as "disagree". Table 10 shows the summary of the opportunities of social media.

Table 4.8: Summary of the respondents' views about social media's opportunities

It helps to get and/or improve:	Agree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%
Agenda Setting	36	90%	1	2.5%
Information gathering and reporting skills as well as observations and perspectives	38	95%	2	5%
Getting sources/evidences for investigation	31	77.5%	6	15%
Professional Networking	31	77.5%	8	20%
Can be considered as another/alternative media platform for Information disseminating	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
Getting feedback from the audience/ interaction	39	97.5%	1	2.5%
Promotes press freedom and expression	39	97.5%	1	2.5%

(Organized by the researcher)

Based on the findings from the above summary table 10, the discussion of the advantages stated as follows.

4.7.1. Agenda Setting Opportunities

Out of the total 40 respondents, 36 (90%) journalists answered that social media is an opportunity to set agenda and get agenda for journalists while 1 (2.5%) disagree. According to some of the interviewee, social media gives them an agenda to begin with. It gives them unidentified facts and to work to strengthen the fact and to dig and get the truth. Social media is significantly helpful in setting agenda and preparing journalists for further investigation.

Social media can have an important role in agenda setting and getting an idea to set. Usually they had tried to set public agenda depending on the government plans and events. But, now days, social media is becoming another means to address agenda of their media and to get the agenda from the social media users.

Social media helps us to have an ability of magnifying national agendas.

Social media gives us not only a chance to access the public agendas, but also helps us to reach out young and adult audiences with our agendas.

(Personal Interview, B2, July 22, 2021).

According to interviewee, the social media can have a great role in entertaining national agendas in collaboration or opposition of the mainstream media: "I believe the media can take and pick such public agendas from the social media. If the agenda is well thought out, the social media users can hop on it for active discussion," (Personal Interview, B3, on June, 2021).

As clearly discussed in chapter two of this research, social media is becoming the source of information or agenda for media practitioners. Thomas (2013) wrote, "Journalists use twitter to see what people are talking about, to see what other people are writing about."

According to Abdool (2015), journalists are using social media applications for crowd sourcing. The use of social media applications are encouraged but not forced upon by news editors at the respective publications. He further expands on this by stating that news editors themselves are on the social media to keep abreast of events and news occurring outside of the newsroom.

It is crucial to note that the social media is changing the way agenda is used to be set.

One of the most critical aspects in the concept of agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media in the age of social media (Personal Interview, B2, July 22, 2021).

Unwin (2012) discerns that new media technologies establish a new balance of distribution power of information through means of co-creation of content between ‘peers’, what he refers to as a ‘sharing liberty’. As a result, reporters can set the agenda and discuss with their followers. It is feasible for the media houses too.

Therefore, as the above findings approves, it is true and applicable that social media have become a means of agenda setting as well as a source of agenda.

4.7.2. Information Gathering and Reporting Opportunities

According to the above summary table, of 40 respondents, 38 (95%) agreed social media offers good opportunity for information gathering and reporting skills of journalists. It leads to say almost all journalists get access to information gathering and reporting over social media.

According to interview participants they get fast and up-to-date information that help them to do their job. "since the information is supported by photos and videos, it is also possible to say social media is an archive in which we can get holistic information that can be as an additional resources."

In addition, social media is so helpful in facilitating interview schedules and other data gathering ways, through it before going to the actual places for reporting. They need to open television every time to get breaking news alert. Rather, she gets access to new information on their cell phone being everywhere with availability of internet. On the other hand, they feel as if they hold information in their pocket everywhere and the society that is well informed is being created by social media.

Almost all interviewees told to the researcher that social media have brought them a big opportunity in information gathering and reporting process.

Tayeewa, (2016) said, the spread of social media platforms provides an opportunity for enhanced access to information and a diversification of sources and opinions.

Today, many stories are received from third hand through Facebook posts or Tweets so that by the time a story is assigned to the reporter, the story in some form or another is already out there in the social media universe. The reporter now has to take that into consideration and find some angle to the story that is not yet being talked about. (Personal Interview, B4, July 28, 2021).

With or without social media, traditional or conventional journalism must maintain the practice of gathering, processing and distributing news and information through various mass media channels and formats based on established and sacrosanct norms such as balance and fairness, truthfulness and accuracy, objectivity and impartiality, neutrality and detachment (Tayeewa, 2016:12).

Recognizing the above, social media is playing significantly to improve reporters and editors information gathering and reporting skills. As journalism is a practice that is grounded in the ability and passion of individuals to recount stories, it has an impact on the wellbeing of society, which is their social responsibility role.

Therefore, one can say through social media the practical skills of news gathering, processing and dissemination are practiced and being developed as respondents indicate in the discussions.

4.7.3. Alternative Media Platform Opportunities

Over the last decades, social media has gained popularity all over the world. Almost everyone uses Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, You Tube and other forms of social media both for social and professional purposes. Although not everyone has gotten on board with the social media giant, it has shaped how people around the world communicate with one another.” (Nyamboga, 2014)

In addition to that, he added information that was once considered off limits and inaccessible by an “average” person is now disseminated within shortest period possible. Because internet/new media outlets like Twitter, You Tube and Facebook are easily accessible to millions of people globally, they have become effective platforms to disseminate headline news to mass audience.

The researcher has inquired to see if this idea applies in the media context here.

Of 40 respondents, 37(92.5%) agreed that the social media offers opportunity for journalistic practice as alternative media platform.

During the discussion, the power of social media reaches societies in remote areas that normally do not have access to mainstream media. The opportunity, as for him, is also creating citizen journalism or mobile journalism. It directly helps journalists to get another platform to disseminate any information for their audience.

According to them, social media is not only an alternative, but also an additional platform for their media when it comes to information dissemination and flow, therefore, Walta have given attention to use the social media as an alternative medium.

It is possible to sum up this issue with the following scholarly view: Social media have changed the way information travels within and between networks of consumers. Individuals are no longer restricted to a one-way search for information online. Instead, social media allows information to find the users as well (Qualman, 2009). It also helps the media to have an alternative and additional outlet for their productions or news.

On the other hand, Thomas (2013) said, from Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and a collection of blogs, a news statement can advance from zero to 20 million viewers overnight. The viral nature of this highly social, user- driven environment enables complete strangers to connect over common beliefs, desires or interests and together creates winners and losers.

Currently, audiences can have not only Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, WhatsApp and other social networking sites to source news content, but also connect with their virtual audiences. That is why journalists and their media house are able to potentially use social

media as alternative to address their news and programs easily and directly, regardless of network problem. The other additional opportunity to this regard is that social media can offer access to recheck stories at any time. This enables audiences to see the programs or news that come out during their working hour or sleeping time.

Therefore, the researcher can conclude that the social media has brought alternatives both to journalists and the media houses. That is why Walta as well as their staff have accounts or pages over Facebook, Telegram, Twitter and YouTube and other social media platforms.

4.7.4. Professional Networking and Networked Reporting Opportunities

Out of the total 40 respondents, 31 (77.5%) journalists agreed that the social media helps to make professional networking.

Social media is changing their professional network in advance as interviewees explained,

Social media created an opportunity of positive competition for journalists within and outside their media house. It also helps professionals to engage in workshops and meetings to share knowledge from seniors and experienced journalists as well as experts of journalism and communication. As a result, journalists always try to disseminate information to the best of their potential.

(Personal Interview, B4, July 26, 2021).

Scholars argued that the contemporary journalism can be considered, due to strong connection between the audience and professions, as a networked journalism.

Curran, (2011:241) strengthens the above idea. He said in some cases, volunteer journalists will produce their own websites; in others, they will constitute a diverse feed chain, with professionals at the center. The key to understanding the future of journalism is to substitute the word 'journalism' (which is a vertical, gatekeeper institutions) with the phrase 'journalistic activity', based on the open-ended, reciprocal, horizontal, collaborative, self-generating, extensive, and inclusive reporting and a comment of a kind never experienced before. As he concluded, social media is helping to make professionals as well as the society more networked.

Social media offer opportunities to form new ways of networking and forming communities through online discussion forums. This is clearly attested by much of the respondents who agree that they are getting more networked than ever before helping them practice their journalistic profession even better.

4.7.5. Social Media as a Promoter of Press Freedom

Since social media helps everyone to be part of citizen journalism; every citizen has chance to express or share their information with the public (Tayeebwa, 2016). Similarly, Participants explained, the journalist, who could not normally exercise freedom of expression because of editorial policy, can have chance to freely post or share his/her views on social media.

Most of the respondents of the questionnaire, 39 (97.5%) believed that the social media has an opportunity in promoting press freedom and expression for journalists and societies in general.

According to interviewee social media has brought about free flow of information for journalists and the larger public:

Since social media is easily accessible and doesn't have any gate keeper, it gives me an opportunity of free sharing of ideas. Social media is an opportunity in making a significant shift making journalistic practice an enterprise for every citizen. (Personal Interview, B5, July 21, 2021).

Therefore, we can summarize with this Tayeebwa's (2016:78) scholarly view: "Social media have greatly advanced the possibilities of 'citizen journalism'. They provide channels for everyone to reach out to the public, to share information and to express opinions without formal requirements and with a minimum interference in form of regulation and censorship". Even though it has been agreed by fewer respondents compared to other opportunities, it is possible to say that social media is helping journalists to exercise their freedom of expression.

4.8 Social Media Challenges for Journalistic Practice

Table 4.9: Summary of the respondents' views about social media challenges

In journalistic Practice Social Media disadvantages:	Agree		Disagree		Total Respondents
	F	%	F	%	
Diverting audience attention from national agendas to trivial issues	36	90%	2	5%	38
Lacks credibility and trust	39	97.5%	0	0%	39
Mostly, promotes conflicts and hate speeches in Ethiopia	37	92.5%	2	5%	39
Mostly disseminate Fake news and distorted Information / or Lacks detailed, investigated and verified reports/	37	92.5%	1	2.5%	39
Challenges the mainstream media in audience sharing	37	92.5%	2	5%	39
Libeling, marginalization, and defamation	35	87.5%	2	5%	37
Challenges journalists' professional confidence	30	75%	9	22.5%	39

(Organized by the researcher)

As mentioned above, the researcher classified the results (which indicates the agreement level of the opportunities of social media) in to two groups for this analysis. Those who

replied strongly agree, agree and partially agree are termed as "Agree", whereas respondents who strongly disagree and disagree are grouped as "Disagree". The above table shows the summary of the opportunities in the social media.

4.8.1. Challenges in Agenda Setting

Out of 38 respondents, 36 (90%) replied social media is challenging to them when it comes to agenda setting. They believed, it is diverting audience's attention from big and national agendas to trivial issues.

The remaining 2 of the respondents disagree and they said it couldn't challenge them to set agenda. It is because, social media is not reachable for vast audience here in Ethiopia.

On the other hand, all the interviewees agreed social media is challenging the mainstream media in agenda setting.

As we have discussed on theoretical frame work, it is possible that the advancement of new media has slightly modified the nature of the mainstream media's ability to set agenda, rather than eliminating it entirely. It is well understood that if new media are following the cues of traditional media, then the agenda-setting power has not diminished but has instead simply gained another channel.

Off course, mainstream media could set the agenda of blogs, social networking sites, video sharing sites, and others, which then deliver those cues to the general public in a modern version of the two-step flow. The role of traditional media would remain unchanged, and new media outlets such as YouTube would essentially take the place of opinion leaders in years past. Moreover, it seems likely that the end result in this scenario (which issues are discussed by the public and how) would remain the same.

Even though social media had an advantage of addressing the mainstream media agenda by sharing and posting, it remains a challenge in shifting or changing the agenda into another horizon. Global researches confirmed that the conventional media is no longer having full control on agenda setting over the masses. This is due to the pervasiveness of the social media, which provides access to the masses and makes it easier for anyone to create and share news (Salman, et al., 2016).

Hence, the mainstream media is losing its grip and getting a big challenge as far as agenda setting is concerned especially political agenda, as respondents confirmed above.

4.8.2. Challenges on Credibility and Trust

Depending on the early work of Hovland and Weiss (1951), certain types of information sources are viewed as credible, or trustworthy, and other sources are viewed as untrustworthy. Therefore, consumers' acceptance of information is mitigated by the credibility of the source.

As per the challenges summary table, of 39 respondents, 39 (97.5%) answered the social media is a challenge on their credibility and trust. They believed, due to many reasons, social media shared non-trusted and non-credible information.

As per the respondents' beliefs, the young adults are increasingly turning to social media for news rather than going to the traditional media. Interestingly, however, despite their preference for using social media for newsgathering, young adults still perceive traditional media as more credible news sources than social media. But, in most cases, especially in national agendas, that duly have impact on the public, the reports still remain not credible and trustworthy.

Therefore, it is possible to say that social media is becoming a big challenge for credibility and trust. As the discussion above shows, almost all respondents are facing the credibility and trust issues on their practice.

4.8.3. Challenges on Hate Speech

Hate speeches appear to push journalists off the social media limiting them just to use it for journalistic practice.

It is true for questionnaire respondents that hate speech on the social media is challenging their journalistic practice. According to the data found from the respondents, 37 (92.5%) of the total journalists, believed hate speech is a challenge for their work and social media usage.

Interviewees also agreed on the idea. More of them told the researcher that they are facing hate speeches despite difference among journalists in the amount and degree each face on their stay on the social media.

As one can understand from the above discussions, it is likely to say that, regardless of the difference on the degree and amount of hate speech each journalist facing, respondents take it as a challenge.

4.8.4. Challenges on Verification

Social media mostly disseminate "Fake news" and "distorted information or Lacks detailed, investigated and verified reports", said 37 (92.5%) respondent. As a result, the public is expected to verify these kinds of information even though it was not included in their media plan. It tends to mainstream media for extra resource, budget and time.

This is a highly discussed issue in the individual interview too. Most of them put it that fake news and a timely report of the spot makes the verification or investigation process difficult.

It is clear that Walta journalists are facing this difficult process of verification as it is the case with the global media that are also challenged by the social media in their process of verifying reported posts on the social media.

Nyamboga (2014) said social media provides a platform for accessing information about anything one can think of. The challenge is however, how to get compelling stories from noise as there are millions of tweets, stories, pictures, links, name them, posted on the internet every second.

Although new technologies have affected changes on the amount of information available and the rate of reception, it is not clear whether these have had any significant effect on the quality of information and news. In fact, there are claims that rising competition and the obsession to provide exclusive news fast using social media may have negatively affected the quality, reliability, and validity of information. This is especially true of the breaking news facility.

Therefore, it can be put as a challenge for respondents since most of them agreed that they are having challenges due to the issues discussed above.

4.8.5. Challenges on Audience Sharing

Out of the total 39 respondents, 37 (92.5%) answered that the social media is taking away audience especially for newsrooms. News followers had multiple choices over the social media. The mainstream media are facing these challenges in all ways; this is because the social media has the freedom to comment on any topic in anyway; besides the social media has that power to get out with any breaking news at any moment in time.

The trend, as Tayeebwa (2016) explained, especially among the youth, the elite, and urban dwellers who are the majority social media users, is increasingly turning away from traditional media houses to social media sites for news updates consequently allowing users to share news stories, images or videos, and to discuss a news issue or event.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that, almost all participants in the research believed that social media is most likely taking the share of the audiences from Walta.

4.8.6. Challenges of Defamation on Social Media

The big test that happens on the social media for journalists is the humiliating insult they often experience whenever they post or share information of their choice.

The results gained from questionnaire respondents further strengthen the position held above. As one can see on the challenge summary table, almost all the respondents, 35 (87.5%) agreed social media is not easy to them as it tends to humiliate or politically marginalize their personality and their standing as journalist.

We can conclude that, defamation and libel has gathered steam to keep abusing some of the social media users particularly journalists. It is better to put Nyamboga's explanation as a summary of the above position:

The other key disadvantage of social technology especially social networking is that most people do not know how to network effectively and safely. Assaults on online journalists and social media activists are direct attacks on all media. (Personal Interview, B6, July 11, 2021).

Based on the findings, it is possible to say that journalists are facing challenges on libeling and defamation.

4.8.7. Challenges on Professionalism

The contemporary media practitioners are facing lots of challenges due to social media as discussed. But, compared to the other challenges, the social media's challenge on professionalism seems to have lesser effect. Only 30 (75%) believed that it has impact on their professional confidence, and development of professionalism.

According to the interviewees, The need for more 'like', 'share' or 'comment' on the social media is eroding journalists' credibility. An event is somehow over exaggerated and posted by some journalists, which is unethical for them, and this could potentially lead the public to ignore their reports.

To this regard, Tayeebwa (2016) clarifies, “In our digital age, anyone can do what journalists traditionally have done”. It leads the journalist to ask themselves how best and different they can serve while they add value on what is out on the social media.

The interaction between journalists and sources can be skipped, with information being spread directly by sources on online pages. Thus, the role of the journalist as a mediator between the external world and the audiences is shifted from the traditional professional approach to newly developed options on the social media.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study identified the types and levels of opportunities and challenges of social media on journalistic practice, and how Walta journalists view the potential of new media in the role of newsgathering, reporting and agenda setting process. Therefore, the conclusions drawn and recommendations made hereunder are based on the findings obtained from the analysis of questionnaires and interviews.

5.1. Summary

The study assessed the “Opportunities and Challenges of Facebook, Telegram and YouTube on Journalistic practice” on journalists in Walta Media and Communication Corporate. The research examined the journalists' experience and preference of social media to their practice and the opportunities they have gained as well as the challenges they are facing in using social media.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches (mixed method) were applied. Questionnaires and Interviews were the instruments used to collect data from journalists, who were the focus of this study.

The data were analyzed using SPSS and Excel spreadsheet. And the following are the major findings:

The findings of the study showed that when it comes to particular social media preference almost all respondents (39- 97.5%) prefer Facebook. Telegram is the most (77.5%) preferable social medium next to Facebook. And YouTube and Twitter are the 3rd and 4th, respectively (65%, 32.5%) preferred platforms. On the other hand, Flickr is the least, only 1 (2.5%) of the total 40 respondents.

Among the respondents, 36 (90%) normally use their real name. The rest only 4 (10%), are using fake names for their social media profile. Some 2.5% suffer from defamation, libel and other offences from political activists, their bosses as well as from family and friends.

According to the finding, 3(7.5%) respondents have used the social media for less than 5 years; 17.5% have used it for 5-6 years. The other 22.5% have been on the social media for 7-8 years. Most of the respondents have been using the social media for below eight years and above.

As mentioned above, the study was about the use of social media, its opportunities and challenges for journalistic practice. The journalists at Walta use the social media for different purposes with prime emphasis on searching for information and knowledge. The findings show 35 (87.5%) are into the social media for information purpose. Next to information comes social relations (60%) and entertainment (55%).

The finding also reveals that the role of the social media in the traditional media setting is considered both as challenge and opportunity. Of the total 40 respondents, 89.6% are considering it only as an opportunity, but 89.9% sees it as a challenge. The rest consider it neither as an opportunity, nor as a challenge.

And most journalists are aware of the opportunities and the importance of the social media to contribute to the practice. According to the findings from questionnaire respondents and interviewees, it is learned that they are trying to apply the opportunities available to the best of their practice. Of the total respondents, most agree that social media have become a means for agenda dissemination and source of agenda. Information gathering and reporting is another advantage according to the respondents. It helps to develop their practical skills during information gathering, reporting and editing process. In addition, social media is becoming an alternative platform for the journalists themselves as well as their media organizations.

On the one hand, the majority of the respondents agree that they come across various challenges due to the emergence of the social media. The findings show that the social

media is challenging big agenda that the traditional media design to dominate the public. Hate speeches, libel and defamations as well as biased political activism in social media limit journalists to join few of the conversations that don't politically corner them. The social media makes verification and investigation of news stories easy and difficult at the same time. The bulk of information running on the platform and the scale of fake news circulating on the social media take the media houses and journalists to extra time to accurately establish facts. Since it gives audiences variety of information right on the spot, it provides much needed time freedom. That is why they tend to follow more social media than mainstream media.

Finally, the study finds out that there is a strong need to use social media for journalistic practice both by the journalists and the two media houses. But, the utilization of the social media potential has been at its infancy so far, even though there is a high demand to do further.

5.2. Conclusion

The findings show that the idea of technological determinism is that technology and technological innovation force social, cultural, economic and political changes. Therefore, accessing and practicing the social media technology is crucial for media professionals because the use of this technology can determine what is going on among the urban youth and elite.

On the other hand, the findings indicate journalists are facing many challenges while they are using social media. All the challenges directly or indirectly have negatively impacted their choices and involvement in conversations. According to the findings like, the social media's challenge on agenda setting, verification, credibility and trust as well as defamation and libels have big effect on the practice of the journalists and the media houses. The universal goal of journalism basically is changing the lives of the public

through information. But, it appears the social media might affect lives due to the massive misinformation it has allowed to circulate.

One of the big reasons which can lead the media to loss trust, credibility and impact is the way they set agenda, the way they gather information and the timeliness of reports. Therefore, in the engagement of media houses in the social media, the challenges are mostly related to the kinds of agenda they choose to the social media or the kinds of agendas they pick from the social media platforms.

As briefly discussed in the literature review, the mainstream media could set the agenda on blogs, social networking sites, video sharing sites, and others, which then deliver those cues to the general public in a modern version of the two-step flow. The role of traditional media, some assume, would remain unchanged, and new media outlets such as Facebook, Telegram and YouTube would essentially take the place of opinion leaders in years to come. Moreover, it seems likely that the end result in this scenario would remain the same i.e which issues are discussed by the public and how.

But, as the findings confirmed, the capacity as well as ability of agenda setting of respondents and their media houses are considerably challenged by the social media, and needs due focus since the global phenomenon is fast changing due to intensive use of high tech tools in the media.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended to effectively utilize the social media for journalistic practices:

- The media houses should pay proper attention and provide robust leadership to the online and social media department so that the departments can effectively utilize all the advantages that the social media have in offer.
- It is so fundamental to raise the awareness of journalists about the use of the social media for journalistic purpose. This is because the right attitude will have the power to change the performance of the media houses in exploiting the social media whichever way possible.
- Quality education and trainings need to be designed and offered to help institutionalize best social media integration with the traditional media.
- There should be concerted efforts to regulate the social media and help discern fake news from factual stories.
- Journalists who are regularly using the social media to run their duties should be encouraged.
- Media houses should effectively use all the alternative platforms of the social media as best as they can.
- Relevant researches should be conducted to show the way out and to devise mechanisms that help to fill in the skill and knowledge gaps.
- National workshops should be organized to help raise the awareness of practitioners and online users in a bid to facilitate smooth ride in the effort to install the best possible solutions for challenges that may happen in the social media platforms.

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Appendixes

Dear Respondent:

I am a postgraduate student at Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communications Department. I am doing my thesis on the title "**The Opportunities and Challenges of Facebook, Telegram and YouTube on Journalistic Practice: Walta Media and Communication Corporate in Focus**". This questionnaire aims to get your opinion and say, which makes my study alive and complete.

Hence, you are kindly requested to give your honest answers to all the questions listed below. I assure you that the information you give to this questionnaire will only be used for the research purpose and will be kept anonymous.

Thank you very much for your time and considerations in advance, Solomon Aynishet.

You can reach me via soulayn12@gmail.com / Mobile +251 911 115528

Part One:

Personal Information (Please circle or underline your answers)

- **Education:** A) Certificate B) Diploma C) First Degree D) Second Degree E) PhD
- **Work Experience:** A) less than 5 years B) 6-10 years C) above 10 years
- **Medium you work for:** A) Television B) Radio C) Web/Online D) All

Part Two:

Please circle your answer from alternatives provided below

1. Do you have a Social Media account?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
2. If “Yes” for how many years have you used?
 - A. 1- 2 years
 - B. 3 - 4 years
 - C. 5 – 6 years
 - D. 7 – 8 years
 - E. 8 years and above
3. Which Social Media do you use mostly? (You can circle more than one answer)
 - A. Facebook
 - B. Twitter
 - C. You Tube
 - D. Telegram

- E. LinkedIn
- F. Flickr
- G. Instagram
- H. Blogs
- I. Google+
- J. Others

4. Why do you use Social Media? (You can choose more than one answer)

- A. For social relations
- B. For information and knowledge sharing
- C. For entertainment
- D. If any other, please specify -----

5. Have you ever used social media for journalistic purpose?

- A. Yes
- B. No

6. If yes, what is your main purpose? (You can circle more than one answer)

- A. To disseminate information/news
- B. To gather information and search sources or evidences
- C. To share knowledge
- D. To build professional network
- E. If any others, please specify-----

7. How often do you use Social Media information for journalistic works?

- A. Always
- B. Sometimes

- C. Rarely
- D. No

8. What type of information do you use, read or follow from Social Media? (You can circle more than one answer)

- A. Political and current affairs News
- B. Entertainment News
- C. Sports
- D. Business and Economy
- E. Others

9. Which one is true about you?

- A. I am using my real name and photo for my social media page/account
- B. I use fake or nick names

10. If you are using fake or nick names, why?

- A. Because, I believe using Social Media is not ethically correct for journalists.
- B. Because, I am afraid of insecurity both from the government and the public.
- C. Because, it gives me freedom to express my thought.
- D. Because, I am not confident in my professional capability.
- E. If any other, please specify-----

11. If you are using your real name, did you face any challenge as a journalist?

- A. Yes
- B. No

12. If yes, what is that?
- A. I have been immortalized by my media bosses
 - B. I have defamed by social media users
 - C. I have been politically marginalized by social media activists
 - D. I have faced anger from family and friends
 - E. If any other, please specify-----
13. If no, why? -----

Part Three: Please mark or tick (✓) your choice in the table below

Table A: Social Media advantages for Journalistic Practice:

It helps to get and/or improve:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Agenda Setting and Agenda Getting					
Information gathering and reporting skills as well as observations and perspectives					
Getting sources/evidences for investigation					
Professional Networking					
Can be considered as another media platform for information disseminating					
Getting feedback from the audience/ interactions					
Promotes press freedom and expression					

Table B: Social Media disadvantages for Journalistic Practice:

It has a challenge or disadvantage of:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Diverting audience attention from national agendas to trivial issues					
Lacks credibility					
Mostly, promotes conflicts in Ethiopia					
Mostly disseminate fake news and distorted Information					
Challenges the mainstream media in audience sharing					
Marginalization					
Challenges journalists' professional confidence					

I thank you for your time and honesty!

Interview Questions

Part One: Reporters, Editors and Editor-In-Chiefs

1. When did you start using social media? And which platform is your choice?
2. How often do you post, update or comment on social media?
3. What is your purpose to use social media?
4. What are the opportunities?
5. What are the challenges?
6. What are benefits that you got from social media, which helps to improve your journalistic role?
7. Do you think social media be preferred as alternative platform for journalists? Why?
8. Have you ever used social media agendas for your media purpose? Why?

Part Two: Media Managers

1. Do you have a social media team as a structure? If yes, why?
2. How do you evaluate your media house performance before and after the rise of social media?
3. What are the challenges you are facing because of social media?
4. What are the opportunities?
5. What should be done for the future of Mainstream Media at the age of Social Media?