



**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM  
AND COMMUNICATION**

**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & COMMUNICATION**

**INVESTIGATING JOURNALISTIC FREEDOM IN THE NEWSROOM:  
THE CASE OF ETV NEWS CHANNEL**

**BY**

**RAHEL BELACHEW**

**A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM  
AND COMMUNICATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION (BROADCAST)**

**ADVISOR**

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**OCTOBER, 2024**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby affirm that the thesis presented herein is solely my own original work. I have meticulously cited and acknowledged all sources and materials utilized in the development of this thesis. While I received guidance and suggestions from my research advisor, the research and writing process was conducted out independently by myself.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Rahel Belachew entitled '*Investigating Journalistic Freedom in the Newsroom: The Case of ETV News Channel*' is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Journalism and Communication, complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Journalistic freedom is crucial for shaping public discourse and fostering an informed society. As a prominent state-owned media organization in Ethiopia, ETV News Channel holds significant influence over information dissemination. However, concerns regarding journalists' ability to exercise their freedom within the ETV newsroom necessitate a closer examination. This thesis examines the issue of journalistic freedom within ETV, exploring the current state of journalistic independence, identifying challenges faced by journalists, and assessing the implications for media autonomy in Ethiopia. A mixed-methods research design was utilized, encompassing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews with journalists, Editors and Manager, as well as quantitative methods through a survey questionnaire administered to ETV journalists. The sample size for the survey included 70 journalists, while 7 in-depth interviews were conducted with editors, producers, and manager. The findings indicate that journalistic freedom is significantly constrained within the ETV newsroom. Various factors contribute to these limitations, including government interference, pervasive self-censorship among journalists, and professional restrictions. Furthermore, the study highlights the disparity in levels of journalistic freedom across different news segments, with hard news experiencing more constraints compared to soft news. To address these concerns and enhance journalistic freedom, several key recommendations are proposed. First, ETV should establish a conducive and empowering work environment that encourages journalists to express their opinions without fear of censorship or retribution. Second, promoting a culture of independent journalism within the organization is imperative. This can be achieved by ensuring transparent and inclusive guidelines for content monitoring and decision-making processes.*

## **LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

<b>ACHPR</b>	African Charter on Human and Peoples Right
<b>CIPESA</b>	Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa
<b>CPJ</b>	Committee to Protect Journalists
<b>EBC</b>	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
<b>ETV</b>	Ethiopian Television
<b>ERTA</b>	Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency
<b>EPRDF</b>	Ethiopians People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
<b>FDREC</b>	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nation
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>TPLF</b>	Tigray People Liberation Front

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Journalistic freedom is a cornerstone of democracy and the ability of journalists to operate without undue interference or censorship are crucial in safeguarding the public's right to information, promoting transparency, and fostering well-informed decision-making (Liberties, 2021). Journalistic freedom empowers reporters to investigate and cover issues of public interest, such as corruption, human rights violations, and government misconduct, holding authorities accountable and serving as guardians of democracy. However, the extent to which this fundamental principle of press freedom is upheld and defended varies significantly across different countries and contexts. Press freedom is facing unprecedented global challenges, as evidenced by alarming ratings in international press freedom indices.

According to recent reports by Reporters Without Borders (RSF, 2023) and Freedom House (2023), journalists around the world are still facing major challenges, including restrictions, censorship, violence, and legal pressures. The reports also highlight the ongoing problems with press freedom globally (RSF, 2023; Freedom House, 2023). Notably, even countries traditionally considered strongholds of press freedom, such as Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, are now dealing with issues like polarized media landscapes and the spread of disinformation (RSF, 2023).

The African continent exhibits a diverse and multifaceted landscape of journalistic freedom. While some countries, such as Namibia, Ghana, and South Africa, have made strides in safeguarding media independence, others continue to struggle with censorship, intimidation, and outright repression of journalists (CIPESA, 2022; RSF, 2023). Eritrea stands as the worst-ranked nation globally, with journalists facing severe repression, arbitrary arrests, and prolonged detentions (RSF, 2023).

Ethiopia, a nation with a rich cultural heritage and turbulent political history, has seen a tumultuous journey regarding journalistic freedom in recent years. Following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's rise to power in 2018 and the initial optimism surrounding media freedom reforms, the country experienced a concerning regression.

Despite the government's claims of promoting a free press, reports from organizations like RSF and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) have highlighted the challenges faced by media

professionals in Ethiopia. In its 2023 World Press Freedom Index, RSF ranked Ethiopia 114th out of 180 countries, citing concerns such as censorship, harassment, and intimidation of journalists (RSF, 2023). Likewise, the CPJ's annual report highlighted instances of journalists facing legal charges, arrests, and physical attacks, often in connection with reporting on sensitive political or social issues (CPJ, 2022).

In the complex political landscape of Ethiopia, marked by tensions, ethnic conflicts, and a transition towards democracy, the importance of a free and independent media in shaping public discourse and holding authorities accountable is paramount (Gagliardone, 2021). Within this context, the state of journalistic freedom within the ETV News Channel, a prominent national media institution, has come under scrutiny.

This study has investigated the complexities surrounding journalistic freedom within the ETV newsroom. By examining the specific dynamics, constraints, and opportunities shaping media independence within this organization, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges and prospects for journalistic freedom in Ethiopia. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on upholding the fundamental democratic principle of a free press.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Journalistic freedom is a vital component in shaping public discourse and fostering an informed society. The Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation's (EBC) ETV News Channel, a prominent state-owned media organization, wields significant influence in disseminating information to a large population in Ethiopia. However, concerns have been raised about the ability of journalists within the ETV News Channel newsroom to exercise their freedom in pitching, writing, and editing news stories without undue interference or censorship. Scholars and practitioners agree that freedom is the lifeblood of journalism, and the level of journalist freedom varies greatly depending on a nation's political, social, and economic factors (Norris, 2006).

Even though that there are existing reports and studies on media in Ethiopia, there has been no specific investigation into the freedom of journalists within the ETV News Channel newsroom in recent times. While existing studies explored aspects like journalistic ethics (Fisseha, 2021) and media ownership's impact on freedom (Elsabet, 2019), they have not delved into the specific experiences and challenges faced by journalists regarding their freedom at the ETV News Channel

newsroom. Fisseha (2021) study on ethics at the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation newsroom identified challenges related to objectivity, responsibility, and conflicts of interest, emphasizing the need for media independence, ethics advocacy, training, and responsible journalism. However, it did not examine the experiences and challenges journalists face regarding freedom at the ETV News Channel. Another study by Elsabet (2019) argued that the concentration of media ownership in the hands of the state and a few private individuals harms media freedom, and the legal framework for media freedom in Ethiopia is not strong enough to protect journalists from harassment and intimidation. Nevertheless, this study also failed to provide a clear context in which to understand the status of journalists' freedom in the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation newsroom, merely focusing on the media ownership aspect.

Previous research has raised concerns about the independence and impartiality of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, suggesting that the organization has been used as a propaganda tool by the government (Fisseha, 2021). Skjerdal's (2012) study, in particular, focused on the issue of self-censorship among journalists. However, this study was conducted over ten years ago, and there is a need for a more current investigation into the state of journalistic freedom within the ETV News Channel newsroom, considering the potential changes in the political, social, and economic landscape of the country.

Svernlöv's (2020) study, focused on the private Ethiopian media sphere, aimed to portray the professional challenges for journalists during a time of political change. It found that while liberal reforms under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed led to increased media freedom and decreased government threats for private media, new challenges emerged. These included difficulties in accessing government information, uncertainty about the transition's continuity due to lack of new media laws, and a shift in perceived threats from government intervention to public unrest and intimidation, making some areas unsafe for reporting. However, the study was limited to private media institutions and did not explore the state of journalistic freedom within state-owned media like the ETV News Channel newsroom of the EBC.

Studies have found that journalists often faced pressure to align their reporting with the government's narrative and faced consequences for challenging the status quo (Skjerdal, 2012).

Additionally, scholars have noted significant government influence and control over media, impacting journalists' ability to freely report on sensitive issues. (Skjerdal, 2012)

Considering the fundamental importance of role of the Etv News Channel in shaping public discourse and the concerns raised about the ability of its journalists to exercise their freedom, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive and up-to-date investigation into the state of journalistic freedom within this newsroom. Studying the daily experiences and working conditions of journalists would help us understand the current challenges they face. This study looked at the specific obstacles, limitations, and opportunities journalists encounter in their work.

## **1.3 Objectives**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to examine the state of journalistic freedom and independence within the newsroom of the Etv News Channel.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To assess the level of freedom experienced by journalists within the newsroom of Etv News Channel.
2. To identify the factors, both internal and external, that influenced the extent of journalistic freedom within the newsroom of Etv News Channel.
3. To analyze the EBC's management's content monitoring and control mechanisms, and their impact on journalists' ability to freely produce news content at the Etv News Channel.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- ✚ What was the level of journalistic freedom experienced by reporters, editors, and producers within the newsroom of Etv News Channel?
- ✚ What were the internal and external factors that influenced or limited journalists' freedom of expression within the newsroom of Etv News Channel?
- ✚ How did the EBC's management's content monitoring and control mechanisms impact the ability of journalists at the Etv News Channel to freely produce news content without editorial constraints or imposed narratives?

## 1.5 Scope of the Study

This study investigated the practice of journalistic freedom within the Etv News Channel newsroom of the EBC, specifically focusing on the Amharic language news broadcasts. By exploring the perspectives and experiences of journalists and editors involved in the production of Etv's Amharic news content, the research aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the internal dynamics and constraints surrounding journalistic freedom within this particular newsroom environment.

The Methodological scope of the study encompassed both survey and in-depth interview methods to gather comprehensive data from the media professionals working at the Etv News Channel newsroom. The survey component allowed for the collection of quantitative data, while the in-depth interviews provided rich, qualitative insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of the journalists and editors regarding journalistic freedom in their workplace.

Through this multi-method approach, the study generated a holistic understanding of the various factors, including editorial processes, decision-making mechanisms, content management practices, and organizational policies and guidelines, that influenced or constrained the exercise of journalistic freedom within the Etv News Channel newsroom.

It is important to note that the scope of this research was limited to the ETV News Channel newsroom and its Amharic language news broadcasts. The data collection phase of the study took place between January and March 2024, allowing sufficient time to gather comprehensive data and ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study titled *"Investigating Journalistic Freedom in the Newsroom: Case Study of the ETV News Channel"* holds significance for diverse stakeholders. Journalists and editors within the ETV News Channel newsroom stand to gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities surrounding journalistic freedom, potentially enhancing their professional autonomy and informing best practices. The findings can assist the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) in refining internal policies to foster a conducive environment that upholds journalistic expression and ethical standards.

Besides, this research contributes to the academic discourse on press freedom and media ethics, offering a valuable case study for scholars and researchers in the field. It resonates with broader beneficiaries, including media organizations seeking to implement ethical practices, civil society groups advocating for freedom of expression, and the general public relying on information disseminated by media institutions.

This work generates fresh insight into the Ethiopia's media landscape by informing policy improvements, empowering journalists, and nurturing a more transparent and democratic society.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of journalistic freedom within the ETV News Channel newsroom, this study prioritized analyzing specific aspects of this complex phenomenon. While ethical considerations and journalist responsibility are undeniably important, time constraints necessitated a focus on freedom alone. Future research could build upon this foundation by exploring the interplay between freedom, ethics, and responsibility, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the journalist's experience within the ETV News Channel newsroom.

Another potential limitation is the dynamic nature of the media landscape in Ethiopia. Given the rapidly evolving political, social, and economic factors that can influence journalistic freedom, the findings of this study may have a limited temporal relevance. As such, future research should consider conducting longitudinal studies to capture the changing dynamics over time.

Despite these limitations, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the state of journalistic freedom within the ETV News Channel newsroom, contributing to the broader discourse on media freedom and serving as a foundation for further exploration in this crucial area.

## **1.8 Organizational of the study**

The overall structure of the study takes the form of five chapters, including Chapter one begins with laying out the foundation by providing the background of the study, examining the context of journalistic freedom within the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). It outlines the statement of the problem, highlighting the need for investigating the state of journalistic freedom within the ETV News Channel newsroom. Additionally, this chapter presents the research objectives, both general and specific, and the corresponding research questions that guide the inquiry. The scope, significance, limitations, and overall organization of the study are also delineated in this introductory chapter.

Chapter two offers a comprehensive review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks pertaining to the study. It commences by defining key terms and providing a historical overview of press freedom in Ethiopia, tracing its evolution from the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie to the present day. This chapter presents background of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) and the ETV News Channel, on the newsroom structure and editorial policies. Furthermore, it examines the legal frameworks, both international and national, that govern journalistic freedom. The chapter also explores the various factors that influence journalistic freedom, such as political factors, media ownership, and management structures. Lastly, it presents the guiding theoretical frameworks, including the four theories of the press, which serve as the foundation for analyzing and interpreting the study's findings.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology and design employed in the study. It provides a detailed explanation of the descriptive research design and the rationale behind the mixed-methods

approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. This chapter presents the sampling techniques utilized, including purposive sampling, and specifies the sample sizes for the qualitative and quantitative components. Additionally, it describes the data collection instruments, encompassing in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires, and outlines the data analysis procedures, such as thematic analysis for qualitative data and statistical analysis for quantitative data.

Chapter four presents a comprehensive analysis and discussion of the collected data. It begins with an introduction and a demographic profile of the respondents, then into the analysis of the questionnaire responses, divided into three main sections: journalist freedom in the newsroom, perceived internal and external influences on journalistic freedom, and management content monitoring and control. This chapter integrates both quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter five presents the conclusions, and recommendations of the study based on the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature in the field of study and the theoretical frameworks that guide the research. It begins by defining key terms, including journalist, journalistic freedom, editorial, and newsroom. Subsequently, the historical overview of Ethiopian press freedom and the specific history of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) and the Etv News Channel are presented, encompassing the newsroom structure and editorial policies of Etv News.

This chapter also discusses the legal frameworks, both international and national, regarding journalistic freedom and the media policy proclamation of 2021. It examines the various factors that influence journalistic freedom, such as political factors, and the role of media ownership and management structures. And also, the chapter presents the guiding theoretical frameworks that inform the current study, such as the four theories of the press that are the foundation for press freedom. These frameworks provide a solid foundation for analyzing and interpreting the findings of the research.

#### 2.2 Definitions of terms

**Journalist:** is an individual who gathers, analyzes, verifies, and disseminates news and information to the public through various media like print, broadcast, or online platforms (Deuze, 2005). Journalism plays a crucial role in society by providing verified information, investigating stories, and facilitating the flow of news.

Journalists dedicate themselves to pursuing truth and informing the public. They bridge events and audiences, conveying news stories via print, broadcast, and online medium (Franklin, 2006). Their role goes beyond reporting facts - they analyze, interpret, and contextualize events to provide comprehensive understanding.

While technologies enable anyone to produce and share information, a journalist's role remains vital in our complex world of abundant information (Potter, 2010). Unlike propagandists or gossipers, journalists thoroughly vet available information to determine reliability before disseminating to the public.

Although anyone can communicate with diverse groups from home nowadays, journalists are set apart by their pursuit of truth, verification practices, and ability to analyze and contextualize information before public dissemination across media channels.

**Journalistic Freedom:** refers to the right of journalists to freely pursue and communicate information without censorship, interference, or intimidation. Journalistic freedom is a fundamental principle that ensures the independence and integrity of journalists in their work. It empowers journalists to express diverse perspectives, hold power accountable, and serve as a watchdog for society. Also, journalistic freedom is a fundamental principle that upholds the rights of journalists to operate independently and without interference or censorship (Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013).

Freedom is the major important concept in a journalist's work environment. Journalistic freedom refers to the notions of independence and autonomy that allow journalists to freely pursue and disseminate information (Whitten-Woodring & Van Belle, 2015). The notion of independence implies that editorial decisions are made without external influence (Nerone, 2013), while autonomy is defined as a set of normative discourses and reporting practices aimed at ensuring freedom from both external and internal influences (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

Moreover, journalistic freedom is a crucial aspect of a democratic society, as it allows journalists to report on matters of public interest without fear of reprisal or retribution. Journalistic freedom is essential for the functioning of a democratic society, as it allows journalists to investigate and report on issues of public concern without fear or constraint from external sources.

Newsroom is a central hub where professionals collaborate to produce news content, encompassing news gathering, writing, editing, production, and management processes (Moos & Zerhusen, 2021). Key personnel include:

1. Journalists who collect information and write stories.
2. Editors who review for accuracy and adherence to standards.
3. Producers who handle technical formatting and publishing across platforms.
4. News managers who coordinate operations and allocate resources.
5. Support staff like researchers and fact-checkers (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

These roles leverage technologies like content management systems and social media strategies to foster collaboration and deliver timely, accurate news (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008).

The newsroom facilitates a cohesive news production process, including news gathering, writing, editing, production, and management (Moos & Zerhusen, 2021). It serves as a hub integrating technological tools, audience engagement strategies, and coordination among professionals to produce and disseminate accurate, relevant news content.

Newsrooms typically follow a hierarchical structure, with a news director or editor-in-chief overseeing operations and setting editorial direction, managing editors supervising specific sections or departments, reporters gathering information and writing stories, and editors reviewing and refining content for accuracy and adherence to standards (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). Specialized roles like photographers, videographers, designers, and social media specialists may also be involved in producing and disseminating news across platforms (Usher, 2014). However, while this hierarchical model is common, some newsrooms may adopt more flexible or collaborative approaches, particularly in the digital age with faster news cycles and an emphasis on audience engagement (Usher, 2014). Ultimately, the structure of a newsroom can be modified or adapted to meet the unique needs and challenges of the specific news organization.

**Editorial Policies:** are a collection of rules and values that influence how decisions are made in a newsroom (Rosenthal & Kovacek, 2007). They set the norms for journalistic conduct, ethics, and

editorial priorities, serving as a guide for journalists. Editorial policies cover matters such as handling conflicts of interest, ensuring accuracy, fairness, and transparency. These policies act as a compass, guaranteeing that journalism maintains the highest standards of ethics and accountability to the public. Essentially, editorial policies play a crucial role in enabling the media to effectively address public concerns and maintain credibility (Rosenthal & Kovacek, 2007).

**Media ownership:** refers to the commercial and legal control exercised over interpersonal and mass communication technologies by individuals, corporations, and/or governments (Schlosberg, 2016). It encompasses not only the allocation of resources but also the political dimension of this control, which can impact the pluralism within democratic societies.

Various forms of media ownership exist, such as state ownership, family ownership, party ownership, trust ownership, and public or corporate ownership. The potential impact of media ownership on news and journalists depends on the relationship between media, state, and other industries. Debates often arise around issues of media concentration versus pluralism and the acceptable connotations of control versus regulated stewardship.

In developing countries, including African nations, media ownership is often dominated by state media. Although there are some corporate-owned media outlets, their ability to practice professionalism and fulfill the public interest is frequently under threat due to fears of persecution and arbitrary detentions by authorities (Mano & El Mkaouar, 2022).

In Ethiopia, independent news media has existed since the 1990s, experiencing both favorable and unfavorable developments. After an initial phase of democratization and expansion from 1992 to 1996, the media faced increased control from 1996 to 1999. Following the 2005 national election, hostility towards the media reemerged, leading to a decline in its growth in the early 2000s (Internews, 2023).

Currently, there are five formally acknowledged and licensed media sectors under the Ethiopian Media Authority: public media, privately owned media, community media, religious media, and internet media. The public media consists of 9 radio stations, 10 television stations, and 9 publications, while the commercial media comprises 14 radio stations, 25 television stations, and 17 publications. Additionally, there are 54 radio stations and 7 television stations registered on the

community media platforms, and an increase in the number of acknowledged Christian media channels, with 37 television stations in operation as of June 2023 (Internews, 2023).

## **2.3 Historical Overview of Press Freedom in Ethiopia**

The emergence of modern media in Ethiopia has a relatively brief history, crossing just over a century (Biruk, 2020). However, the roots of mass communication in Ethiopia can be traced back to ancient times when *Awaj Negari*, or news announcers, were employed by the ruling kings as part of the state communication system (Nigussie, 2014; Menychle, 2020). These early forms of mass communication put the foundation for the development of a structured communication system within the Ethiopian state.

Around the year 1900, the first Ethiopian newspaper came into existence, marking a significant landmark in the country media landscape (Skjerdal, 2012). Unfortunately, the exact name and date of publication of this pioneering newspaper remain unknown, adding an air of mystery to its origins. Nonetheless, its establishment marked a crucial step towards the dissemination of information and the development of a more formalized media sector in Ethiopia.

### **2.3.1. Press Freedom During Emperor Haile Selassie's Reign (1941-1974)**

During Emperor Haile Selassie's rule from 1941 to 1974, the media in Ethiopia faced stringent restrictions and limitations on freedom of expression, with the government exercising tight control over the press through a series of legal and administrative measures aimed at stifling dissenting voices and maintaining political stability (Meseret, 2013). The post-occupation period saw the implementation of a system of pre-publication censorship, where editors were required to submit their editorials for review, and military personnel appointed as acting directors had the authority to revise or omit editorials without consulting the editors (Meseret, 2013). Additionally, the government imposed a list of prohibited topics for media coverage, including student movements, land reform, unemployment, and workers' strikes, intensifying censorship as concerns about public protests and demonstrations grew (Meseret, 2013). Most of the newspapers and magazines during this period were either government-owned or affiliated with pro-government organizations, further limiting press freedom, and the flow of information was primarily top-down and centralized, serving the interests of the emperor and his government rather than the public (Meseret, 2013).

The press was used as an instrument of propaganda and modernization, but efforts to broaden the circulation of newspapers were limited, with distribution largely confined to Addis Ababa and provincial capitals (Meseret, 2013).

The Ethiopian government established a comprehensive set of legal and administrative frameworks to control the media, as documented by Daniel (2019). This included the supervision of state media, the establishment of the official gazette for publishing proclamations and regulations, the requirement for permits and registration for printing presses, and the enforcement of censorship laws for films and theatrical works. Additionally, the Revised Constitution of 1955 granted free speech and press but within the confines of the law, while the Civil Code and Penal Code codified restrictions such as defamation charges and insult provisions. The Ministry of Information in the 1960s possessed broad censorship powers and required printers' approval for materials, and in 1972, a directive secretly banned reporting on 26 sensitive topics. Despite these measures, punishments for violations were relatively light, with journalists having the option to appeal for forgiveness, and senior officials facing temporary exile.

The formation of the Ethiopian Journalists' Association (EJA) in 1969 aimed to enhance professionalism and advocate for rights, albeit challenging under the prevailing restrictions (Meseret, 2013). In conclusion, the media operated under significant constraints and strict government control during this period, with legal measures limiting free expression, imposing censorship, and ensuring the press served government interests rather than the public (Meseret, 2013).

### **2.3.2 Press freedom During the Era of Revolution in Ethiopia (1974-1991)**

Under Derg's rule, all media organizations in Ethiopia were state-owned and operated under the Ministry of Information (Meseret, 2013; Daniel, 2019). Initially, the ministry was responsible for national guidance, shaping public opinion, and promoting government policies and programs. However, the media were not allowed to provide a platform for free expression of public views. The government maintained strict control over the media and employed a strong censorship department, which imposed restrictions on political dissent (Meseret, 2013).

Despite Derg's emphasis on recognizing the role of minorities in nation-building, the media primarily served as a tool for implementing the government's socialist goals. Different political groups oversaw the media and the Ministry of Information at various times. Self-censorship

became prevalent among journalists, writers, and artists due to fears of imprisonment or harm (Meseret, 2013; Daniel, 2019).

The print media, along with radio and television, functioned as instruments of government propaganda, promoting political, economic, and social agendas. Newspapers and magazines featured columns dedicated to various societal groups and cultural topics, while also highlighting the government's literacy program. Derg's efforts in promoting literacy were recognized by UNESCO, which awarded the National Literacy Campaign a gold medal in the early 1980s (Meseret, 2013).

Addis Zemen, as the official organ, was responsible for informing the public about government activities and serving as a forum for public discussion. However, it lacked editorial independence, particularly in political and economic matters. Derg centralized the administration of the print media under a press division within the Ministry of Information, stripping them of autonomy (Meseret, 2013).

In 1987, Derg introduced its own constitution, which guaranteed freedoms of expression, press, assembly, demonstration, and association. However, these guarantees were largely disregarded by the regime, which continued to suppress civil liberties and maintain control over the media. The constitution was seen as an attempt to portray Derg as a democratic regime, despite its ongoing violation of citizens' rights (Daniel, 2019).

Article 47 of Derg's constitution, citizens were granted freedoms of expression and association.

The article states:

1. Ethiopians are guaranteed freedom of speech, press, assembly, peaceful demonstration, and association.
2. The state shall provide the necessary material and moral support for the exercise of these freedoms.

### **2.3.3 Press freedom During the Era of EPRDF in Ethiopia (1991-2017)**

Subsequently, in 1991, with the rise of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power, there was a notable shift towards press liberalization, leading to exceptional levels of freedom of expression (Stremlau, 2011; Skjerdal, 2012). However, Anteneh (2018) presents a thought-provoking argument, suggesting that despite these liberalization efforts, the Ethiopian media landscape has been largely dominated by the government, serving as a powerful tool for the ruling elites. Throughout its history, the national media has faced substantial criticism for being perceived as a propaganda tool for various governments (Anteneh, 2018). To halt and inhibit the media, the previous government led by the TPLF implemented a series of legal measures designed to restrain freedom of expression and restrict the press (Meseret, 2013).

In October 1991, the transitional government of EPRDF enacted a law guaranteeing all political organizations "free and equal access" to state-run media, in line with the principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The law aimed to provide airtime and newspaper space to all political organizations without discrimination, allowing them to communicate their platforms to the public. However, access to state media was largely restricted to parties affiliated with EPRDF, and opposition parties were denied equal access. The 1995 Constitution guaranteed freedom of the press and access to information of public interest, but in practice, state-run media faced censorship and limitations on reporting (Daniel, 2019).

The period from 1991 to 2017 witnessed a decline in press freedom, with the EPRDF enacting laws that restricted freedom of expression and weakened civil society. The situation began to change in mid-2018 when the reformist leadership of EPRDF took over power and released all political prisoners. Overall, the developmental press in Ethiopia experienced a significant decline in press freedom and freedom of expression from 1991 to 2017, characterized by a pattern of repression, arrests, and limitations on media content and activities (Daniel, 2019).

#### **2.3.4 Press freedom post 2017**

In 2019, the new administration of PM Abiy Ahmed submitted the third cycle report under UPR, acknowledging popular demands for human rights and democracy, leading to significant political reforms centered on enhancing the protection and promotion of human rights, widening the democratic space, and recognizing the universality of all human rights (Daniel, 2019).

The report highlighted ongoing efforts to amend controversial proclamations and focused on amending the Mass Media law to remove impediments to freedom of expression and media freedom. Following Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's rise to power in April 2018, there has been a significant shift in the Ethiopian media landscape, marked by unprecedented levels of media freedom and notable advancements in both the media sector and the political sphere. This has led to an increase in the number of print and broadcast media outlets, diversifying voices and perspectives, and the repeal of repressive media laws, fostering a more open and inclusive media environment.

Despite these positive developments, there are concerns about the stability of Ethiopia's transition towards a democratic system of governance, prompting a critical examination of the existing political framework and its potential implications for the media landscape and the country's democratic aspirations (Menychle, 2020; Mulatu, 2019).

#### **2.4 Background of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation**

As a leading public media company, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) boasts extensive access to programming and news content covering a wide range of social, political, and economic issues. EBC has been a long-standing public media outlet on radio since 1935, and over the years, it has stood as the sole media organization to comprehensively cover and organize historical events across various domains, including politics, economics, social affairs, culture, art, and more, both nationally and internationally.

Historically, Ethiopian Radio launched its regular news and programs in 1935 E.C., while Ethiopia Television (ETV) made its debut during the historic assembly of the Organization of African Unity held in Addis Ababa in 1963. In 1995, Ethiopian Radio and Ethiopian Television merged to form the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA), which later evolved into the EBC in 2006, directly accountable to the House of People's Representatives.

Throughout its long history, EBC has produced numerous professionals who have left an indelible mark on the public consciousness. Furthermore, the corporation has significantly contributed to the development of newly formed private and regional media organizations, in addition to its own operations. Regarding technology adoption, EBC owns and maintains a diverse range of historic television and radio technologies, and the corporation is unparalleled in its accumulation of visual and audio resources across various technological platforms.

As a national media institution, EBC has prioritized broadcast messages to the public through various channels. The corporation has identified and redefined existing channels while also exploring new platforms to provide better options for its audience. As a result, EBC now offers several dedicated channels, including:

- **ETV News Channel:** A 24-hour news channel featuring newscasts, news programs, and documentaries, leveraging EBC's extensive network of over 74 terrestrial transmitters and satellite coverage.
- **ETV Entertainment Channel:** is dedicated to entertainment and sports.
- **ETV Languages Channel:** news and programs in various domestic and foreign languages, including Tigrigna, Afarigna, Somaligna, English, French, Arabic, and sign language.
- **Etv Afaan Oromoo:** is a channel that specializes in broadcasting news and programs in Afaan Oromoo.
- **ETV Lijoch:** children's channel hosting a variety of educational, question-and-answer, and entertaining programs.

On the radio, Radio Ethiopia remains the most popular "Ethiopian Radio" station, accessible through more than 11 medium-wave transmitters and over 15 FM transmitters throughout the country. Radio Ethiopia offers a diverse range of programs in various local languages, including Amharic. Additionally, FM 97.1 is the first and foremost 24-hour live radio service for listeners in Addis Ababa and its surroundings.

Considering Addis Ababa's status as the seat of the African Union, international organizations, and the diplomatic corps, EBC has established FM 104.7 radio station to serve these communities, broadcasting in French, English, and Arabic. EBC also operates new media platforms, including

its website, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages, to reach audiences and viewers through alternative channels.

#### **2.4.1 ETV News Channel**

ETV News Channel, operated by the EBC, is the primary news channel in Ethiopia, providing round-the-clock coverage in the Amharic language. It offers a comprehensive range of programming, including news, current affairs, documentaries, and entertainment shows. With a strong online presence through its website and active social media accounts, ETV News ensures that Ethiopians worldwide have access to up-to-date news and information.

One of the channel's flagship programs is ETV Arat Meazen, a daily news segment airing from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM local time. The name "Arat Meazen" translates to "four squares," reflecting the program's dedication to delivering comprehensive news coverage from all four corners of Ethiopia, as well as regional and international stories. ETV Arat Meazen exemplifies on-the-ground journalism, with at least three reporters stationed at the heart of unfolding events. These reporters deliver live reports, providing invaluable context and real-time analysis to the audience.

The program's coverage encompasses a wide range of topics, including economic, political, diplomatic, social, and financial affairs, ensuring that viewers remain well-informed about the latest developments shaping the nation and the world. Going beyond mere news reporting, ETV Arat Meazen frequently invites guests to join live discussions, offering in-depth insights, analysis, and diverse perspectives on significant events and happenings. These interactive segments provide a platform for experts, policymakers, and influential figures to share their views, fostering a well-rounded understanding of complex issues.

ETV News Channel offers a variety of other programs. News Bulletins provide regular updates throughout the day covering local, national, and international news, with segments like "ETV Zena" and "ETV 57" broadcasted at different times. The "ETV 57" program, named after the first Ethiopian broadcast in 1957, airs from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM local time and also invites guests for discussions on various topics.

The Morning Show "Tena Yistilign Ethiopia" is a comprehensive program featuring news, sports highlights, short videos, live guest interviews, and discussions on trending social media topics.

Topical Programs engage in discussions on politics, social issues, cultural matters, and more, including specific programs for youth empowerment (Yenege), family-oriented shows like "Yebetseb Wog," dedicated women's programs, and health programs (Tenaw Bebetow). The channel also offers Documentaries with in-depth investigative reports shedding light on important issues and events, as well as Interviews with newsmakers, experts, and individuals of interest. Investigative Shows like "Ayinachin" and "Berut Wege" provide investigative journalism and critical analysis on various issues, with "Berut Wege" inviting individuals responsible for matters of public interest to answer critical questions and be held accountable.

#### **2.4.2 ETV News Channel Newsroom Structure**

The ETV News Channel's Amharic News room is set up in a carefully planned way to deliver top-quality journalism to viewers in Ethiopia and beyond. This well-organized system makes sure that news gathering, production, and sharing are done efficiently, so that accurate and interesting content is delivered on time.

The newsroom is a lively and effective place where skilled professionals work together smoothly to bring the latest news to the public. Each role, from the top editorial leaders to the dedicated reporters, has a clear definition, which helps create a smooth workflow that focuses on doing great work, being honest, and being responsive.

By clearly outlining responsibilities and having a structured hierarchy, the newsroom ensures that editorial decisions are made carefully, stories are given to the most capable people, and content is thoroughly checked before it's shared with the audience.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Reports To</b>
<b>Content Editing &amp; Writing</b>	Editor-in-Chief (EIC)	Sets editorial direction, style, finalizes major stories	News Department Head
	Senior Editor	Manages editors, assigns stories, oversees editing process (sections/beats)	Editor-in-Chief
	Deputy Editor	Supports EIC, handles day-to-day editorial operations, fills in for EIC	Editor-in-Chief
	Senior Reporter	Conducts in-depth investigations, writes high-profile stories, may specialize in an area	Senior Editor/Deputy Editor
	Reporter	Gathers news, conducts interviews, writes stories, may contribute to investigations	Senior Editor/Deputy Editor
<b>Content Production</b>	Content Production Manager	Oversees multimedia creation, infographic design, video editing	News Department Head
	Senior Editor (Video)	Manages video editors, oversees video editing process, ensures video content meets standards	Content Production Manager
	Director	Directs/plans video shoots, coordinates with camera/editors, contributes to creative vision	Content Production Manager
	Camera Person	Operates video cameras during shoots, captures visuals, assists with lighting/sound	Director
	Video Editor	Edits video footage, adds sound/music, creates	Senior Editor (Video)

## **2.5 Legal Framework of Journalistic Freedom**

The fundamental right to freedom of expression has its roots in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While not legally binding, the UDHR established international norms that have become customary law over time since its adaptation by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), 1 guarantees the right to freedom of expression in the following terms; ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers’.

This Article 19 guarantees this right, acknowledging that opinions should be free from interference and that information and ideas can be imparted through any medium across borders. This set an important early standard for an open exchange of thought worldwide (United Nations, 1948).

Building on the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights formalized legal commitments for member states like Ethiopia in 1993. Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of expression in the following terms:

- (1) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of opinion.
- (2) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any other media of his choice.

Building upon the principles enshrined in the UDHR, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), ratified in 1981, serves as a regional instrument that upholds the rights and freedoms of individuals within the African continent. Article 9 of the ACHPR affirms, "Every individual shall have the right to receive information" and "Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law" (African Union, 1981). The ACHPR, which Ethiopia ratified on June 15, 1998, guarantees the right to freedom of expression in Article

9. This right includes the right to receive information and the right to express and disseminate one's opinions within the law. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, at its 32nd Ordinary Session in October 2002, adopted the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. This Declaration emphasizes the fundamental importance of freedom of expression as a human right, as a cornerstone of democracy, and as a means of ensuring respect for all human rights and freedoms. The Declaration outlines several principles and standards related to freedom of expression and states that countries that have ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights should make every effort to put these principles into practice.

At the national level, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Article 29, 1995) asserts that everyone has the right to hold opinions and express themselves without interference. This right includes the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of borders, through various media such as oral, written, or artistic expression. Furthermore, the right to freedom of the press and other mass media, as well as artistic creativity, is guaranteed. The specific elements of freedom of the press are as follows: (a) the prohibition of any form of censorship, and (b) access to information of public interest.

The principles of journalistic freedom are firmly grounded in various international and national legal instruments, including the UDHR, the ACHPR, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the ICCPR. These sources collectively affirm the fundamental right to freedom of expression, access to information, and the dissemination of ideas through various media platforms, thereby serving as the bedrock for the protection and promotion of a free and independent press.

## **2.6 Theoretical frameworks**

The four theories of the press provide a valuable theoretical framework for analyzing journalistic freedom in the newsroom (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 1956) presented the book "Four Theories of the Press," which serves as the foundation for the press system in modern society. The four theories outlined in the book are the Authoritarian theory, Liberal theory, Communist theory, and the theory of social responsibility. These theories provide a theoretical basis for understanding press freedom and its role in the development of subsequent theories. These theories offer diverse perspectives on the operations of the press and its interactions with the public and the government, providing valuable insights into the media's role and its relationship with society. Understanding these theories enables us to analyze and critique the media landscape and its societal impact more effectively.

### **2.6.1 Authoritarian Theory**

The Authoritarian Theory emphasizes the use of media as an instrument of power and control by the authoritarian state (Siebert et al., 1956). Under this model, the press is regarded as a tool for disseminating information that aligns with the government's policies and interests. Journalistic freedom is heavily restricted, and the media is expected to serve as a mouthpiece for the ruling authorities (McQuail, 2010). The authoritarian theory of the press is a perspective that views the press as being controlled by the government or organized society. According to this theory, the state plays a crucial role in guiding individuals towards societal progress and civilization. It emphasizes the idea that individuals can only fulfill their potential within society, and the state acts as a guiding force in achieving common goals.

The authoritarian theory is rooted in certain philosophical assumptions about human nature, society, the state, knowledge, and truth. It suggests that knowledge can be discovered through effort, and wise individuals or leaders are responsible for guiding society towards common objectives. Unity of thought is considered essential for the functioning of society, and it can be achieved either through voluntary contribution or through surveillance and control (Siebert et al., 1956).

Historically, influential philosophers such as Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, and Treitschke have supported authoritarian principles in government. Plato, for example, idealized an aristocratic government led by wise individuals to prevent societal degradation, advocating for strict control of opinion and discussion to maintain unity of goals. Machiavelli focused on securing political power through pragmatic means, prioritizing state security over moral considerations and advocating for limited public discourse if it threatened state stability (Baran, Davis, 2015; Siebert et al., 1956).

In the modern world, the authoritarian theory of the press continues to exist in various forms. While many countries have embraced libertarian principles in theory, authoritarian practices persist under the guise of supporting freedom of expression. Governments often practice control, censorship, and restrictions on the press, citing national security concerns or societal harmony as justifications (McQuail, 2010).

Baran, Davis, 2015 authoritarian theory of the press has influenced press systems and government practices in numerous countries, both historically and in contemporary times. It has shaped the control and regulation of mass media in nations across Western Europe, Japan, Russia, Germany, Spain, Asia, and South America. Despite the global ascendancy of libertarian principles, the authoritarian view still exerts influence, leading to restrictions on freedom of expression and press freedom in many parts of the world.

In summary, the authoritarian theory of the press sees the press as controlled by the government or organized society, with the state playing a crucial role in guiding individuals towards societal progress. It is rooted in certain philosophical assumptions and has historical and contemporary influence on press systems and government practices worldwide.

### **2.6.2 Libertarian Theory**

Libertarian Theory advocates for a free and independent press, free from government control or censorship (Siebert et al., 1956). This theory emphasizes the importance of a free marketplace of ideas, where the press acts as a watchdog against government overreach and serves the public interest (Baran & Davis, 2015). Journalistic freedom is highly valued, enabling the media to fulfill its role in facilitating public discourse and holding authorities accountable.

The Libertarian Theory of the Press, developed by Fred S. Siebert, is deeply rooted in the philosophical principles that shape the social and political structures in which the media operates. This theory, influenced by liberalism, emphasizes individual rights, freedom of speech, and press. Historical figures such as John Milton, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Jefferson contributed to the foundation of this theory, advocating for intellectual freedom, individual rights, and the role of the press in educating the public and serving as a check on government actions (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956).

The emergence of the middle class, scientific discoveries, and the Enlightenment period further propagated libertarian principles, advocating for individual reason and rationality as tools for progress. The application of the libertarian theory to the challenges faced by mass media in the twentieth century, including the impact of world wars and the emergence of new forms of communication like motion pictures and broadcasting, led to the need for adaptation and adjustments to the original democratic solutions based on the political contributions of the printed media (Siebert et al., 1956).

The practical application of libertarian theories in different countries has varied significantly, leading to diverse approaches in how mass media, including broadcasting, operate. The theoretical framework of the libertarian theory of the press has also faced challenges and criticisms, particularly regarding its underlying axioms, such as natural law, imprescriptible rights, and liberty. Despite its theoretical and practical advantages, the theory has been criticized for its failure to provide rigorous standards for the day-to-day operations of the mass media, leading to vagueness, inconclusiveness, and inconsistency (Baran & Davis, 2015).

Moving on from the theory emphasized by Norris (2006) regarding the role of the press in advancing democratization, good governance, and human development, it is important to consider the contrasting perspectives on media and governance in different ideological contexts.

According to (Norris, 2006), a long tradition of liberal theorists, from Milton to Locke, Madison, and John Stuart Mill, has advocated for the presence of an unrestricted and independent press within each nation as crucial for the democratization process. This includes contributing to the right of freedom of expression, thought, and conscience, as well as enhancing government

responsiveness and accountability to all citizens, and offering a platform for diverse political expression for various groups and interests.

Specifically, the initial phase involves media liberalization, where the media is liberated from official censorship and state control is transferred to private ownership. This enables the public to access diverse information, cultural products, and ideas through multiple media channels such as radio, television, newspapers, the internet, and even smartphones. Subsequently, after achieving media freedom, the second stage focuses on strengthening democratic consolidation and human development. Journalists act as watchdogs, and with independent mass media, transparency and accountability in governance are promoted. Furthermore, the highlighting of social issues through public debate informs the policy agenda (Norris, 2006).

### **2.6.3 Social Responsibility Theory**

The Social Responsibility Theory highlights the significant impact of the media on shaping public opinion and emphasizes the ethical and social responsibilities that come with this influence (Siebert et al., 1956). It advocates for a delicate balance between press freedom and accountability. The theory underscores the importance of upholding professional standards, accuracy, and objectivity in media operations, while also recognizing the public's right to information and the moral obligations of media publishers. Moreover, it acknowledges that freedom entails obligations, with the press playing crucial roles in serving the political system, enlightening the public, safeguarding individual liberties, supporting the economic system, providing entertainment, and maintaining financial independence (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947).

In terms of historical context and origins, the Social Responsibility Theory marks a departure from traditional libertarianism towards a more nuanced view of press freedom. Influenced by Enlightenment ideals of individual liberty and the press as a check against governmental overreach, there has been a shift towards recognizing responsibilities in exchange for freedom, with contributions from entities like the Commission on Freedom of the Press shaping this integrated theory (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947).

Various factors have contributed to the emergence of the Social Responsibility Theory, such as technological and industrial revolutions altering the media landscape, the increasing size and significance of the media leading to heightened scrutiny and potential government oversight, shifts in intellectual climates challenging Enlightenment assumptions, and the development of a sense of social responsibility within journalism and American business circles (Siebert et al., 1956).

The theory also challenges traditional views on freedom by highlighting both negative (liberty from interference) and positive (freedom to achieve goals) aspects. It stresses not only press freedom from external influences but also press freedom for fulfilling ethical purposes and societal needs, advocating for governmental intervention when necessary to protect citizens' freedoms while balancing free expression with private rights and social interests

The Social Responsibility Theory signifies a notable evolution in understanding press freedom and the accompanying responsibilities. It reflects an increasing acknowledgment of the media's role in promoting the public good and underscores the necessity for ethical and accountable media practices (Siebert et al., 1956).

#### **2.6.4 Communist Theory**

Andrei Vyshinsky emphasized the significant impact of Marxism on social science, highlighting its comprehensive approach to studying societal processes. Despite Marx's reservations about the interpretation of his ideas, his foundational concepts have formed the basis of Soviet ideology. Marxism seeks to encompass all aspects of society, eliminate subjectivity in idea formation, and identify common roots of diverse viewpoints. In contrast to democracy's emphasis on individual rights and freedom of expression, Marxism prioritizes unity and adherence to a singular ideology, influencing Soviet governance and media practices significantly (Siebert et al., 1956).

After the 1917 revolution, the Soviet Union restructured its political system based on Marxist-Leninist principles. The newly formed communist party, led by Lenin, showed great interest in the media serving the working class and their welfare. This led to the development of "Soviet Media Theory," also known as "The Communist Media Theory," which was influenced by Marxist, Leninist, and Stalinist thoughts, as well as Hegel's ideology. The theory emphasizes state control of the media to serve the working classes, putting an end to private ownership of the press and

other media. It aims to provide positive thoughts to create a strong socialized society, along with information, education, entertainment, motivation, and mobilization. The theory also encourages public feedback to generate interest in the media.

The mass media in a communist society perpetuates and expands the socialist system and transmits social policy, rather than searching for truth. According to this theory, the mass media is controlled by the state and directed by the Communist Party or its agencies. While criticism is permitted, criticism of the basic ideology is forbidden. Additionally, the Communist theory assumes that the masses are unstable and pay less attention to the government, making it difficult to trust them with governmental responsibilities (Siebert et al., 1956).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains why a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative elements, was chosen. It describes the sampling methods and sample sizes. It also outlines the primary data collection tools: in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The data analysis processes for both qualitative and quantitative data are elaborated. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in interview transcripts for qualitative data, while statistical software was employed to produce descriptive statistics for quantitative data.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive research design to present an accurate and valid representation of the factors influencing journalistic freedom within the newsroom. Descriptive research aimed to portray the relevant variables pertaining to the research question and allowed for a detailed exploration of the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2009). This design was appropriate for the study as it facilitated an in-depth understanding of the complex phenomenon of journalistic freedom within the specific context of the newsroom environment. By utilizing a descriptive approach, the research sought to provide a comprehensive depiction and analysis of the various factors that shaped journalists' ability to exercise professional autonomy and freedom within their workplace.

##### **3.2.1 Research Approach**

The methodological approach incorporated a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. The integration of these two methodological approaches allowed for a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, capitalizing on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The qualitative aspect involved conducting in-depth interviews with editors, producers, Reporters and managers from the Ethiopian Television News Channel News Department. In-depth

interviews were valuable for interpreting subjective meanings, describing social contexts, and prioritizing lay knowledge (Fossey, 2002; Kothari, 2004). By examining the perspectives of these key stakeholders, the research sought to obtain an insider's understanding of the newsroom environment and the practice of journalistic freedom. Through open-ended questioning and probing, the interviews aimed to elicit rich, detailed accounts of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and understandings of the factors that influenced journalistic freedom within their organization.

Quantitative data was also collected through a survey distributed to a representative sample of journalists. The survey design aligned with the quantitative research approach, which involved collecting, analyzing, and displaying numerical data (Muijs, 2010). The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on journalists' attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, experiences, and understanding of the factors influencing journalistic freedom. This component aimed to provide statistical insights into the prevalence and patterns of journalistic freedom within the media organization. By collecting data from a larger sample of journalists, the survey allowed for the identification of trends, relationships, and potential causal factors that may not have been readily apparent through qualitative methods alone.

### **3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

#### **3.3.1 Sampling Technique**

This study utilized a purposive sampling technique to select participants with deep insight into the ETV Newsroom. The focus was on journalists working in the news department and experienced journalists as Reporters. Their rich historical knowledge, combined with their understanding of the current situation, provided valuable longitudinal perspectives on journalistic freedom within the ETV. This approach offered a comprehensive understanding of both the historical context and the present-day challenges faced by journalists.

#### **3.3.2 Sample Size**

As for the qualitative data collection, a sample size of 7 participants, including editors, Reporters, and managers from the EBC newsroom, was selected for in-depth interviews. This sample size was consistent with recommendations for qualitative studies, which typically involved smaller

samples to allow for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal was to reach data saturation, where no new significant information was emerging from additional interviews.

Turning to the quantitative, a sample size of 70 journalists from the Ethiopian Television Newsroom was selected to participate in the survey. The selection of participants was done through purposive sampling to ensure that the sample was representative of the target population and included journalists with diverse backgrounds and experiences (Fink, 2003). The 70 journalists for the questionnaire represented the total staff working in the Amharic News Desk.

### **3.4 Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher utilized a primary and secondary data collection method.

#### **3.4.1 In-depth Interview**

In-depth interviews were conducted to allow individuals to share their experiences and perspectives. These interviews aimed to generate data by prompting participants to discuss their daily lives. The primary goal was to create a platform for respondents to articulate their thoughts in their own words. This method was particularly favored by qualitative researchers seeking to understand how individuals perceive and interpret their own experiences. By interviewing various individuals regarding the same event or phenomenon, a range of perspectives was inevitably obtained. It was essential, based on the research question, to gather viewpoints from different groups such as clients, workers, teachers, students, and parents (Darlington and Scott 2002). Therefore, conducting in-depth interviews was deemed the most suitable approach to exploring journalistic freedom within the ETV Newsroom. In this context, 7 Editors, Producers, and Managers with extensive experience in the ETV Newsroom were interviewed to gain insights into their exercise of professional freedom. Participant selection was carried out through purposive sampling.

### **3.4.2 Survey**

Surveys were employed as a cost-effective and efficient method to collect substantial information from a limited sample. Questionnaires enabled quick data collection without the direct presence of the researcher, ensuring respondent anonymity and proving particularly beneficial for studying sensitive topics (Muijs, 2010). The study utilized surveys as a data collection tool, involving 70 journalists from the Ethiopian Television Newsroom. The survey included a variety of Likert Scale and open-ended questions to fulfill the research objectives.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, facilitating the emergence of themes related to journalistic freedom (Creswell, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process included familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, and producing a comprehensive report of the findings.

The quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using statistical software to generate descriptive statistics. This encompassed frequency distributions, measures of variability to identify patterns, relationships, and associations within the data, as recommended by Muijs (2010) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). The statistical analyses provided insights into the prevalence of various factors influencing journalistic freedom.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the perceptions and experiences of journalists at the ETV News Channel regarding journalistic freedom within their newsroom environment. The analysis draws upon both quantitative and qualitative data collected from a total of 77 respondents.

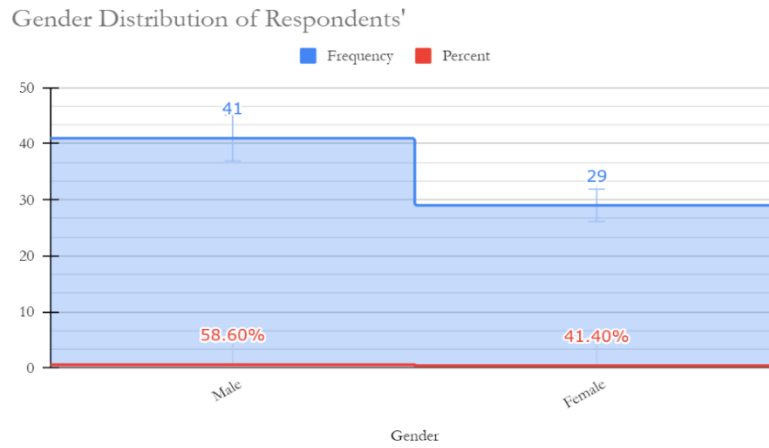
The quantitative data was obtained through a questionnaire administered to 70 journalists working at ETV News Channel. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to gauge respondents' agreement or disagreement with various statements related to journalistic freedom, internal and external influences, management control, and other relevant factors. The quantitative analysis provides valuable insights into the prevailing sentiments and perceptions among the surveyed journalists.

To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews with 1 Department Head, 1 Editor in chief, 2 Senior Editors and 3 reporters. These interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of the respondents' personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives on journalistic freedom within their newsroom. The qualitative analysis offers rich, contextual insights and nuanced understandings of the complex dynamics at play.

#### **4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

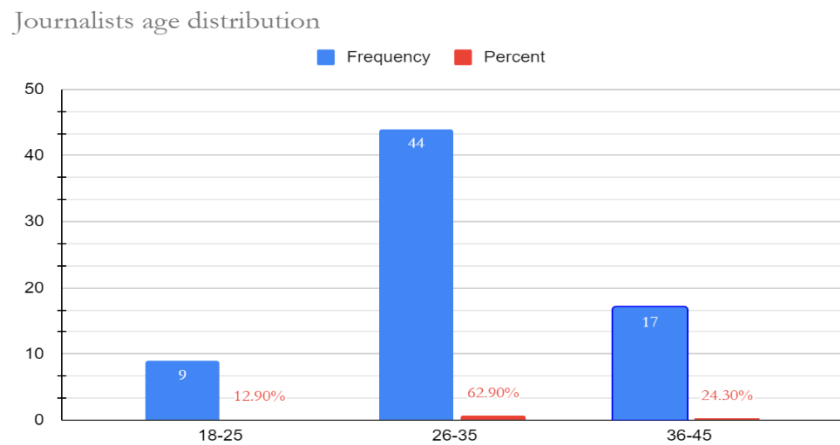
This section presents the personal and professional demographic characteristics of the respondents, including sex, age, academic qualification, years of experience in the ETV newsroom, and position held, through an analysis integrating quantitative survey data.

The figure below shows the gender distribution of the respondents included in this study.



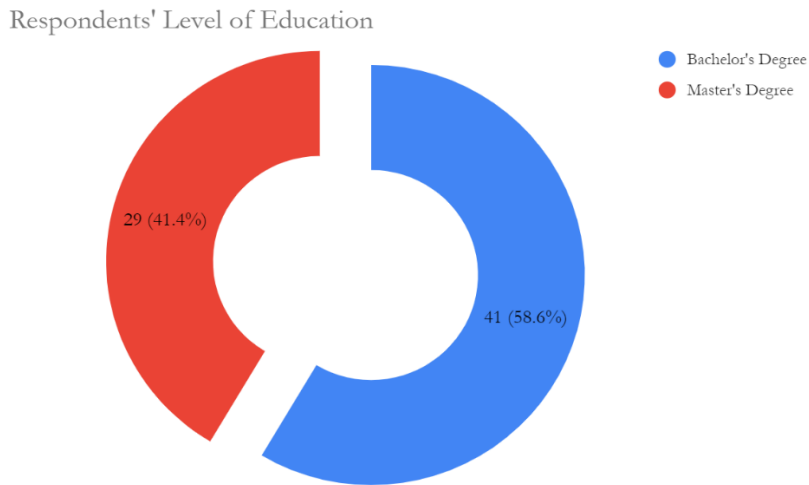
**Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

The above data presents the gender distribution of respondents in the study on journalistic freedom in the newsroom. The findings indicate that 41 (58.6%) of the respondents were male, while 29 (41.4%) were female. This distribution suggests a higher representation of male respondents in the study compared to female participants.



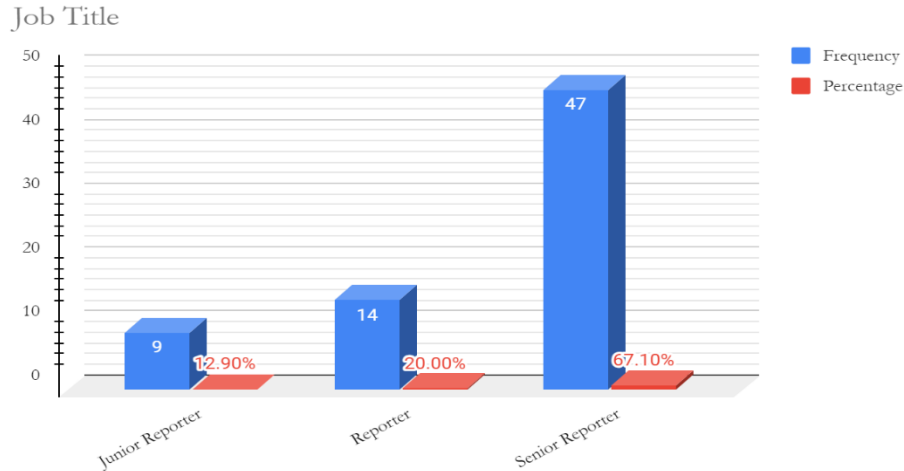
**Figure 2: Journalists age distribution**  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

The data on journalist age distribution reveals a concentration of experienced staff within the newsroom. The majority of respondents, 44 (62.9%), fall within the age range of 26-35 years old. This is followed by 17 (24.3%) of journalists in the 36-45 age bracket. Younger journalists, aged 18-25, make up a smaller portion of the sample at 9 (12.9%).



**Figure 3:** Education level of Respondents'  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

The data on the educational qualifications of the 70 journalists surveyed showcases a well-educated workforce within the ETV newsroom. The majority of journalists, constituting 60.9% of the total, held Bachelor's degrees, indicating a strong academic foundation among participants. Additionally, 39.1% of journalists possessed Master's degrees, demonstrating a significant proportion of individuals with advanced education. Interestingly, the absence of journalists reporting diploma certificates or Ph.D. qualifications suggests a concentration of qualifications at the Bachelor's and Master's levels within the surveyed group.



**Figure 4:** Job title of the respondents in the Newsroom

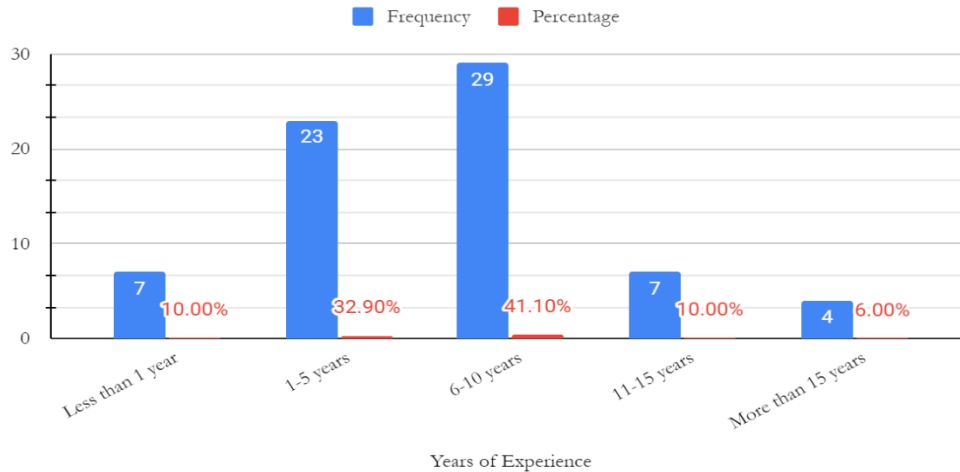
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Figure 4 shows the distribution of journalist responsibilities based on different job titles, including Junior Reporter, Reporter, and Senior Reporter.

Among the respondents, Senior Reporters account for the largest share of the sample, representing 67.1% (47 individuals). Reporters make up 20% (14 individuals), while Junior Reporters constitute 12.9% (9 individuals) of the sample. It is worth mentioning that within the newsroom, due to human resource shortages or organizational requirements, Senior Reporters may also take on the roles of deputy editors and producers. This could explain the larger number of Senior Reporters in the sample.

The job titles assigned to journalists are based on their specific roles, level of experience, and other relevant factors determined by media managers. It's important to note that these job titles may vary across different media organizations based on their unique structures and hierarchies.

## Journalist Work Experience



**Figure 5: Work Experience**

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

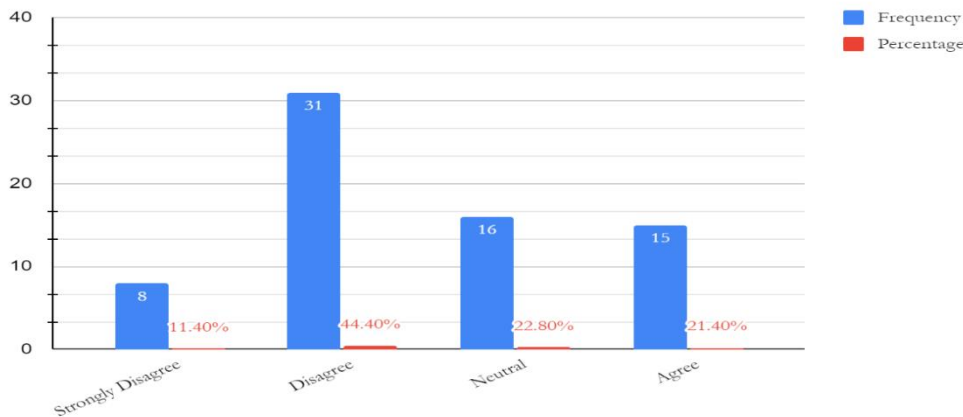
The analysis of work experience distribution among the survey respondents reveals a varied landscape. The largest group of respondents, constituting 29 respondents and accounting for 41.1%, falls within the 6–10 year range. A total of 32.9% (23 individuals) have 1–5 years of work experience, while 10% (7 individuals) of the respondents have less than 1 year of experience. The 11–15 year bracket is represented by 7 individuals, comprising 10% of the total sample, while those older than 15 years are the smallest group with 4 respondents, totaling 6%.

Overall, the data highlights that a substantial proportion of the respondents have work experience spanning 1 to 10 years. Specifically, 32.9% fall within the 1-5 years category, and a dominant 41.1% have accumulated 6-10 years of work experience. This indicates that a majority of the journalists surveyed possess between 1 to 10 years of experience in the field, reflecting a significant trend in the workforce composition.

### 4.3 Analysis of Major Issues

#### 4.3.1 Journalist Freedom in the Newsroom

This section presents the descriptive statistics results regarding journalist freedom in the newsroom at an Ethiopian television news channel. The respondents' perceptions of how freely journalists operate in the newsroom were assessed using a five-point Likert scale in questionnaires. The quantitative data for this study was gathered from primary sources through the use of a questionnaire that utilized a scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree. The scale allowed the respondents to express their agreement or disagreement regarding the level of journalist freedom in the Ethiopian television news channel.

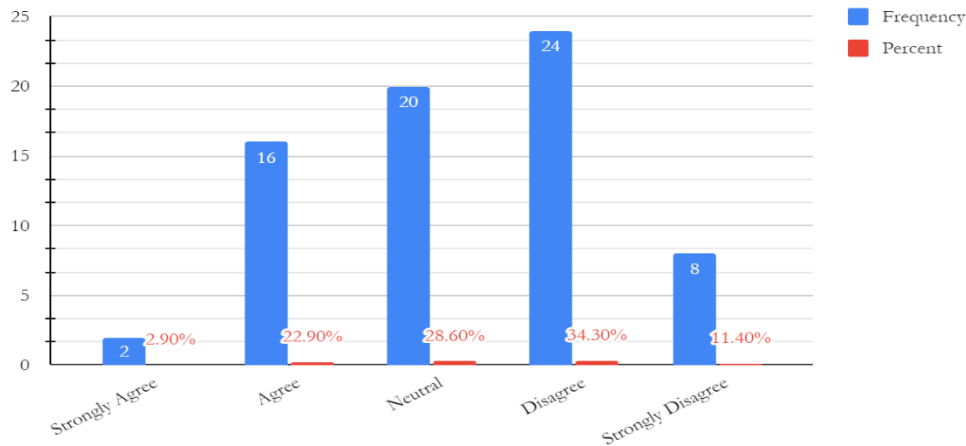


**Figure 6:** Freedom to make own plan and work on them

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Based on the above data, it is evident that a significant portion of the respondents hold negative views towards the statement "I do develop my own plans and mostly work on them." The majority of the respondents, 44.40%, expressed disagreement, while 11.40% strongly disagreed. In contrast, only 21.40% agreed with the statement, and 22.80% remained neutral. The data paints a clear picture that most of the respondents lack the freedom to independently plan and execute their work.

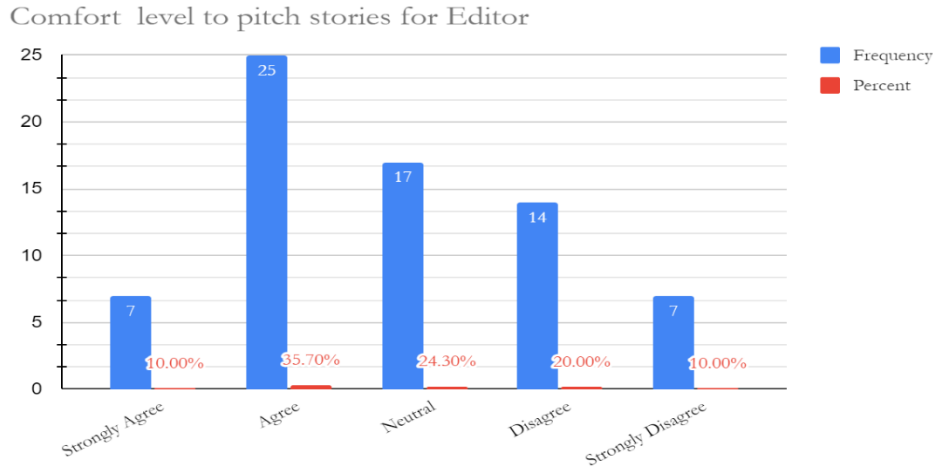
### Freedom to choose angle



**Figure 7:** Perceived Freedom to choose News Angle

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

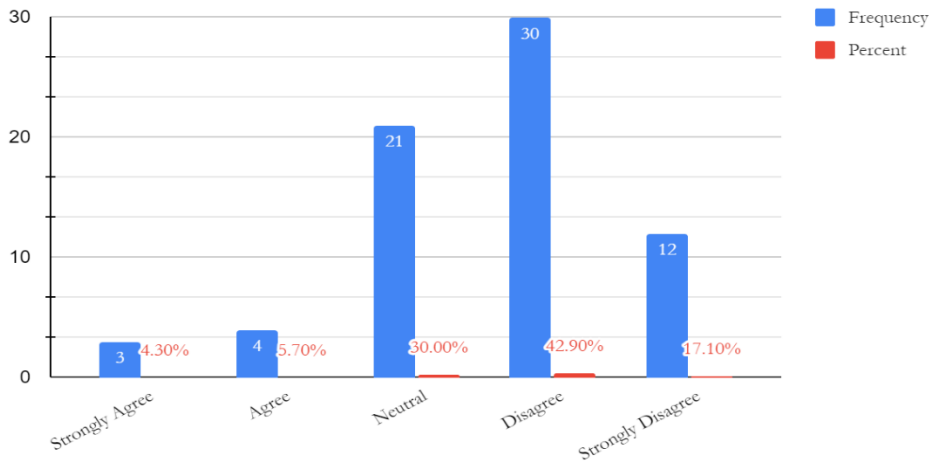
The analysis of the provided data on the question "When assigned a news story, I feel I have the freedom to choose the angle" reveals interesting insights. It shows that a considerable portion of the respondents, totaling 45.7%, either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, indicating that they do not feel they have the freedom to choose the angle when assigned a news story. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents, representing 28.6%, expressed a neutral stance on this issue. This perceived lack of freedom to choose news angles is a strong indicator of compromised journalistic freedom within the ETV News Channel newsroom. It highlights the need for measures to safeguard editorial independence, minimize influences, and empower journalists to apply their professional judgment in presenting multifaceted and unbiased news coverage.



**Figure 8:** Comfort Level to pitch News Stories for Editor  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Most participants agreed with the statement expressing comfort in pitching stories to the editor. Specifically, the highest proportion, 25 respondents (35.7%), agreed that they feel at ease pitching potential stories directly to their editor. This was followed by 17 respondents (24.3%) who expressed a neutral stance on the matter. The next highest group was 14 respondents (20.0%) who disagreed with feeling comfortable pitching stories to their editor. Tied at 7 respondents (10.0%) each were those who strongly agreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. These results suggest that, while the largest group felt comfortable pitching stories to their editor, a combined 21 respondents (30.0%) did not feel at ease with this process, indicating a significant portion experiencing discomfort or lack of freedom in this aspect of their work.

### Perceived Control Over Daily Reporting

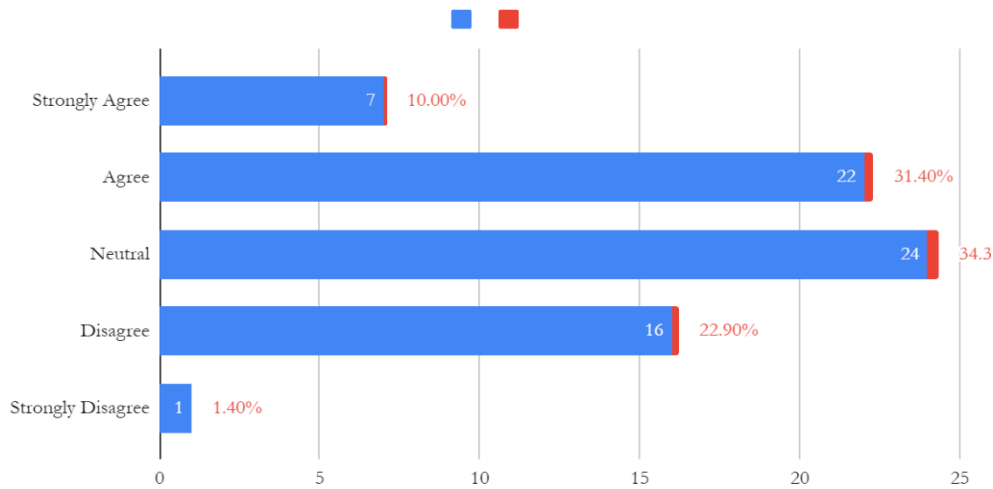


**Figure 9:** Perceived Control Over Daily Reporting

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

The next question posed to the informants focused on their perceived level of control over day-to-day reporting and news story development. The data indicates that 42.90% (30 respondents) disagree, 30% (21 respondents) feel neutral, and 17.10% (12 respondents) strongly disagree about having a high level of control in these areas at ETV News Channel. In contrast, only 5.7% (4 respondents) agree that they have significant control over their reporting and story development. As shown in Figure 9, the distribution of responses highlights almost 55% (42.90% + 12%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement regarding their level of control over day-to-day reporting and news story development at ETV News Channel. Which implies that a significant portion of the participants at ETV News Channel does not feel in control of their day-to-day reporting and news story development. This lack of perceived control could potentially impact their professional freedom, job satisfaction, productivity, and overall performance within the organization.

### Perceived Participation in Work-Affecting Decisions

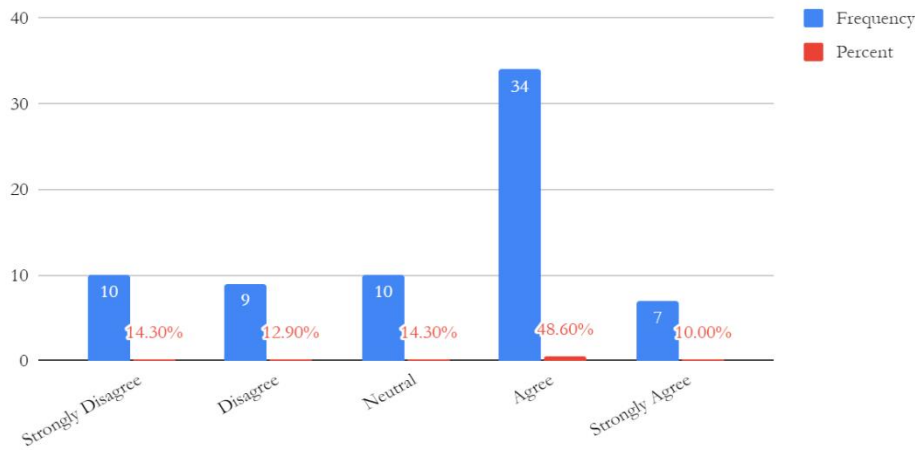


**Figure 10:** Perceived Participation in work affecting decision  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

From the graph above we can see that among the respondents, 31.4% (22 respondents) agreed, 34.3% (24 respondents) held a neutral position, 22.9% (16 respondents) disagreed, 10% (7 respondents) strongly agreed, and 1.4% (1 respondent) strongly disagreed regarding their participation in decisions affecting their work.

These findings highlight that a significant portion of journalists in the ETV newsroom (34.4%) feel that they are allowed to take part in decisions that impact their work. However, there are notable percentages of journalists who express disagreement (22.9%) or hold a neutral stance (35.9%) regarding their involvement in such decisions. This data suggests a lack of inclusive decision-making processes and limited autonomy for a considerable portion of journalists at the ETV newsroom.

Belief in Editorial Guidelines Supporting Journalistic Freedom & Independence



**Figure 11:** Belief in News organizations’ editorial guidelines support journalistic freedom and independence.

Source; Own Survey 2024

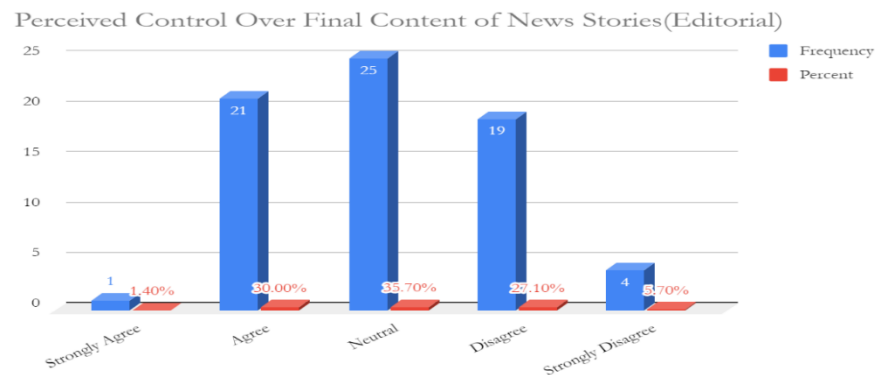
As can be seen from the graph among the respondents, 48.6% (34 respondents) agreed and 10% (7 respondents) strongly agreed that their news organization's editorial guidelines support journalistic freedom and independence. However, 14.3% (10 respondents) strongly disagreed and 12.9% (9 respondents) disagreed with this belief, while 14.3% (10 respondents) held a neutral position. A significant proportion of journalists (59.4%) feel that the guidelines are supportive, there is notable dissent and a neutral stance within the group.

<b>During editorial meetings, I feel comfortable raising concerns or suggesting changes to proposed stories.</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Disagree	14	20.00%
Disagree	20	28.60%
Neutral	21	30.00%
Agree	11	15.70%
Strongly Agree	4	5.70%

**Table 1:** Respondents Perceived Comfort Level in Editorial Meetings  
Source; Own Survey 2024

The table above illustrates the analysis of responses to question During editorial meetings, I feel comfortable raising concerns or suggesting changes to proposed stories reveals insights into journalists' comfort levels in raising concerns or suggesting changes during editorial meetings. Out of the 70 participants surveyed, 20% (14 respondents) strongly disagree, while 28.6% (20 respondents) disagree with feeling comfortable in such situations. Additionally, 30% (21 respondents) remain neutral on the matter. On the other hand, 15.7% (11 respondents) agree that they feel comfortable, and 5.7% (34respondents) strongly agree with this statement. The data reflects a significant portion expressing disagreement or neutrality, accounting for 78.1%, while a smaller percentage, totaling 21.9%, agree or strongly agree that they feel at ease raising concerns or suggesting changes during editorial meetings.

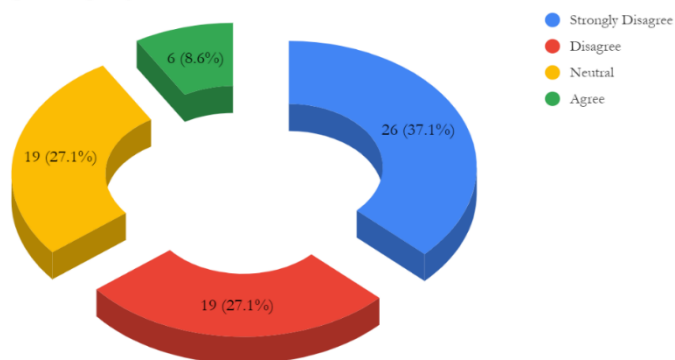
The analysis of responses focusing on the editorial process at the news organization and the extent of control journalists have over the final content of their news stories.



**Figure 12:** Editorial process  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

The above data reveals that a significant proportion of respondents, representing a combined total of 32.8%, either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. Conversely, a slightly smaller percentage of respondents, 30%, agree that they have significant control over the final content of their news stories. Additionally, a substantial percentage of respondents, 35.7%, remain neutral or uncertain about the level of control they possess. The presence of respondents who strongly agree (1.4%) suggests that there are individuals within the sample who feel they have a high degree of control over the final content of their news stories.

Safeguarding of Journalistic Freedom in the Newsroom

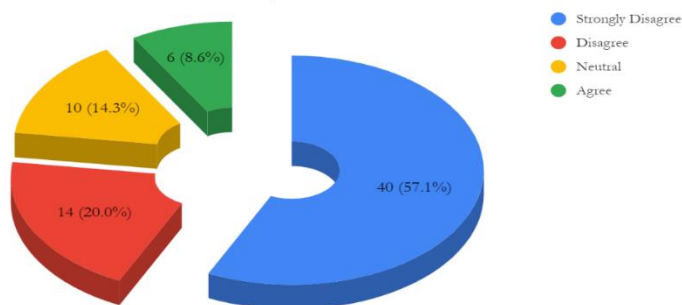


**Figure 13:** Safeguarding of Journalistic freedom in the newsroom  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Among the participants, 37.1% strongly disagree, 27.1% disagree, 27.1% are neutral, and 8.6% agree with the statement. This diversity of opinions highlights a range of views on the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms for protecting journalistic freedom within the organization. While a significant portion express disagreement with the adequacy of safeguards, a notable number remain neutral, and a smaller percentage acknowledge the presence of adequate mechanisms for upholding journalistic freedom.

In the analysis of responses to the statement that reads I believe the EBC is independent from political influence, distinct levels of agreement were observed among the respondents.

Perceived Belief in ETV's Independence from Political Influence



**Figure 14:** Perceived belief in ETVs Independence from political influence  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

The breakdown is as follows: from the total 70 respondents’ Strongly Disagree: 40 respondents, constituting 57.1% of the total participants. Disagree: 14 respondents, accounting for 20% of the respondents. Neutral: 10 respondents, making up 14.3% of the participants. Agree: 6 respondents, totaling 8.6% of the respondents. The data reveals a prevalent sentiment among the majority of respondents who either strongly disagree or disagree with the notion that EBC operates independently from political influences, collectively amounting to 77%. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents expressed neutrality or agreement with the statement.

### 4.3.2 Data Analysis on Perceived Internal and External Influences on Journalistic Freedom

#### Data Analysis on Perceived Internal Influences on Journalistic Freedom

This data analysis examines how journalists at ETV News Channel perceive internal and external factors influencing their journalistic freedom. By analyzing the responses to statements regarding ownership influence, editorial judgment, supervisor impact, news deadlines, market research, advertising considerations, profit expectations, and news production standards, it aims to understand the challenges and dynamics affecting their autonomy and decision-making in reporting. This analysis provides valuable insights into the factors shaping journalistic practices within the newsroom and the complexities of maintaining independence in media environments.

**Table 2:** Perceived Internal Influences on Journalistic Freedom

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe that the ownership of my news organization significantly influences the news stories chosen for reporting.(Ownership Influence)	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.1%)	2 (2.9%)	41 (58.6%)	21 (30.0%)
In my opinion I always feel free to exercise an independent news judgment rather than feeling	9 (12.9%)	27 (38.6%)	27 (38.6%)	6 (8.6%)	1 (1.4%)

pressured to adhere to agendas set by media owners. (Editorial Independence)					
My supervisors and higher editors sometimes influence the stories I choose to report on (Supervisor Influence)	3 (4.3%)	3 (4.3%)	8 (11.4%)	39 (55.7%)	17 (24.3%)
My news organization Pressing news deadlines limit my ability to exercise journalistic freedom in my reporting. (Deadline Pressure)	4 (5.7%)	11 (15.7%)	14 (20.0%)	29 (41.4%)	12 (17.1%)
Market and audience research findings significantly influence the editorial decisions made at ETV, Newsroom potentially limiting journalists' freedom.	19 (27.1%)	27 (38.6%)	17 (24.3%)	6 (8.6%)	1 (1.4%)
Advertising considerations significantly influence the stories I chose for reporting.	5 (7.1%)	7 (10.0%)	34 (48.6%)	7 (10.0%)	17 (24.3%)
Profit expectations of the news organization significantly influence the stories I chose for reporting.	19 (27.1%)	31 (44.3%)	10 (14.3%)	9 (12.9%)	1 (1.4%)
I believe that procedures and standards of news production at my newsroom promote journalistic freedom and diverse storytelling.	6 (8.6%)	8 (11.4%)	24 (34.3%)	23 (32.9%)	9 (12.9%)

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

One of the most significant factors reported is ownership influence, with 21 (30.0%) strongly agreeing, and 41 (58.6%) agreeing that the ownership of their news organization significantly influences the news stories chosen for reporting. Only 2 (2.9%) remained neutral, 5 (7.1%) disagreed, and 1 (1.4%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, these results indicate a strong perception (88.6% combined agreement) that ownership significantly impacts news selection, with a minority expressing dissent.

However, when it comes to editorial independence, 27 (38.6%) disagreed, and 9 (12.9%) strongly disagreed with the statement that they always feel free to exercise independent news judgment rather than feeling pressured to adhere to agendas set by media owners. A significant portion of 27 (38.6%) remained neutral, while only 6 (8.6%) agreed, and 1 (1.4%) strongly agreed that they could exercise true editorial independence. What emerges from the results reported here is that a notable portion (51.5% combined disagreement) feels restricted in exercising independent news judgment, highlighting a potential challenge in maintaining editorial autonomy.

If we now turn to the influence of supervisors and higher editors on the news selection process, it was also reported as a factor, with 17 (24.3%) strongly agreeing, and 39 (55.7%) agreeing that their supervisors and editors influence the stories they choose to report on. Only 8 (11.4%) remained neutral, while 3 (4.3%) disagreed, and 3 (4.3%) strongly disagreed with this statement. These results suggest that a significant majority (80% combined agreement) acknowledges the influence of supervisors and editors on their reporting choices, with some expressing neutrality or disagreement.

Another factor on journalistic freedom, according to the survey, was the pressure of news deadlines. 12 (17.1%) strongly agreed, and 29 (41.4%) agreed that pressing news deadlines limit their ability to exercise journalistic freedom in their reporting. However, 14 (20.0%) remained neutral, 11 (15.7%) disagreed, and 4 (5.7%) strongly disagreed with this statement. The results also indicate that a substantial number agree (58.5%) that deadlines limit journalistic freedom, there is a mix of opinions, including neutrality and disagreement.

Turning now to the perception of the respondents about market and audience influence, the majority of journalists, 19 (27.1%) strongly disagreed, and 27 (38.6%) disagreed with the statement that market and audience research findings significantly influence editorial decisions at ETV, potentially limiting their freedom. However, 17 (24.3%) remained neutral, 6 (8.6%) agreed, and 1 (1.4%) strongly agreed with this statement.

When it came to the influence of advertising considerations on the stories they choose for reporting, 17 (24.3%) strongly agreed, and 7 (10.0%) agreed that advertising considerations play

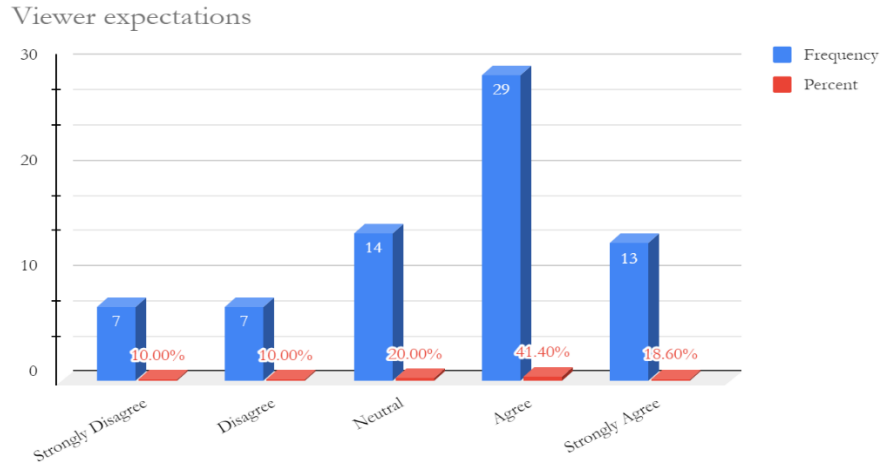
a role in their news selection process. However, a significant portion of 34 (48.6%) remained neutral, while 7 (10.0%) disagreed, and 5 (7.1%) strongly disagreed with this statement.

Regarding profit expectations, 19 (27.1%) strongly disagreed, and 31 (44.3%) disagreed with the statement that these expectations significantly influence the stories they choose for reporting. However, 10 (14.3%) remained neutral, 9 (12.9%) agreed, and 1 (1.4%) strongly agreed that profit expectations shape their news coverage.

The survey responses were divided on whether the procedures and standards of news production at ETV promote journalistic freedom and diverse storytelling. 9 (12.9%) strongly agreed, and 23 (32.9%) agreed with this statement, while 24 (34.3%) remained neutral, 8 (11.4%) disagreed, and 6 (8.6%) strongly disagreed.

### **Perceived External Influences on Journalistic Freedom**

Journalists' ability to report freely and provide diverse narratives can be influenced by various external factors beyond the newsroom walls, as highlighted by McQuail (2000). These external influences include legal frames or regulatory environments, government influence, news sources, subjectivity in reporting, audience expectations, storytelling styles, and advertiser pressures. This section explores the perceived external influences on journalistic freedom at ETV News Channel, as revealed by the survey responses. The analysis focus into how viewer expectations, government pressure, political interference, media laws, news sources, and advertising considerations shape the journalists' perceptions of their professional autonomy and the stories they choose to cover.

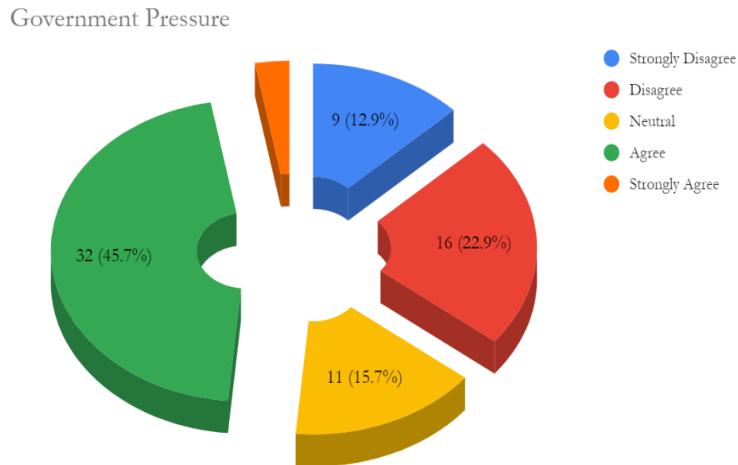


**Figure 15:** viewer Expectation

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

According to the above data provided, the majority of the respondents had varying perceptions regarding the influence of viewer expectations and preferences on the news stories they choose for reporting. 10% (7 respondents) strongly disagreed, 10% (7 respondents) disagreed, 20% (14 respondents) held a neutral position, 41.4% (29 respondents) agreed, and 18.6% (13 respondents) strongly agreed with the statement. A significant proportion of the data suggests that journalists at ETV may face pressures to prioritize audience appeal over journalistic values like objectivity and serving the public interest, potentially compromising editorial independence.

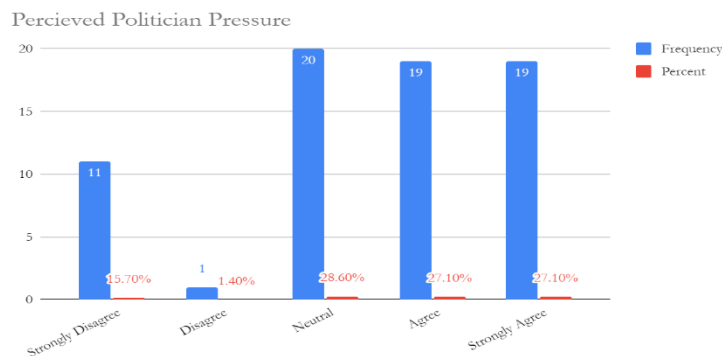
**Pressure from government officials significantly limits my ability to freely express myself in my reporting.**



**Figure 16: Perceived Government influence/Pressure**

*Source; Own Survey 2024*

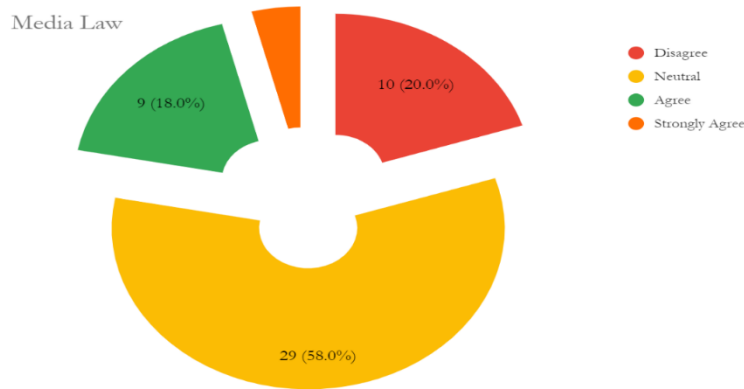
When it comes to the influence of pressure from government officials on their ability to freely express themselves in reporting, 22.9% (16 respondents) disagreed, 15.7% (11 respondents) held a neutral position, 45.7% (32 respondents) agreed, and 3.5% (3 respondents) strongly agreed.



**Figure 17: Perceived political influence**

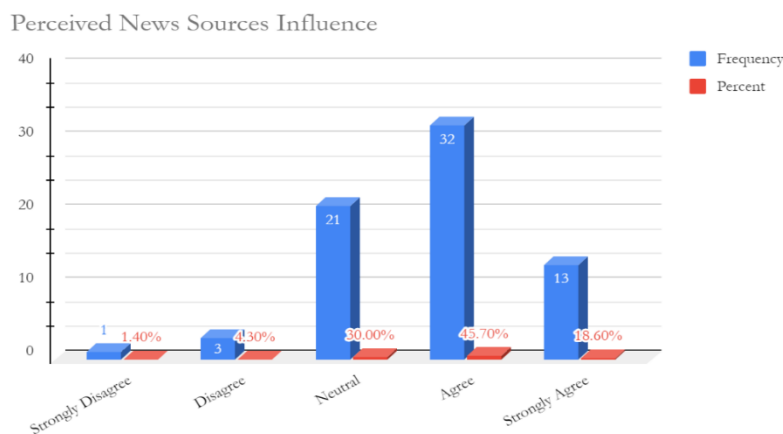
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Similarly, regarding the influence of pressure from politicians on their ability to freely express themselves in reporting, 15.7% (11 respondents) strongly disagreed, 1.4% (1 respondent) disagreed, 28.6% (20 respondents) held a neutral position, 27.1% (19 respondents) agreed, and 27.1% (19 respondents) strongly agreed. The data suggests that a significant proportion of journalists in the ETV newsroom perceive limitations on their freedom of expression due to pressure from politicians.



**Figure 18:** Perceived Effectiveness of Media Laws and Regulations in Safeguarding Journalistic Freedom. *Source; Own Survey 2024*

In terms of the belief that media laws in Ethiopia significantly promote journalistic freedom and diverse storytelling, 20% (10 respondents) strongly disagreed, 20% (10 respondents) disagreed, 58% (29 respondents) held a neutral position, 18% (9 respondents) agreed, and 2.9% (2 respondents) strongly agreed. These findings indicate that a substantial number of journalists in the ETV newsroom have reservations about the effectiveness of media laws in promoting journalistic freedom and diverse storytelling.

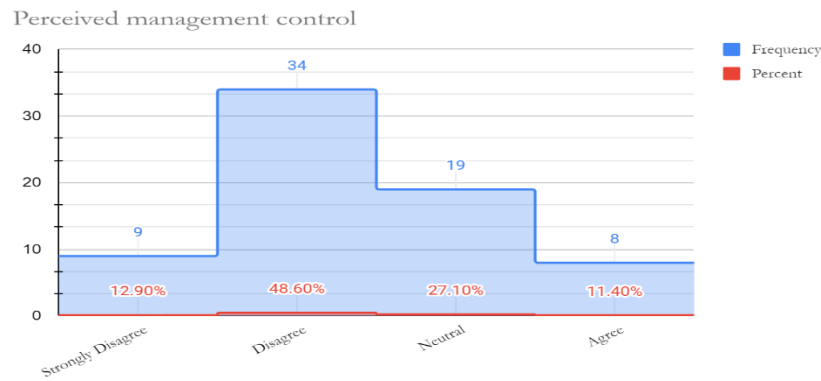


**Figure 19:** Perceived influence from News sources *Source; Own Survey 2024*

Regarding the influence of news sources on the angle of news stories chosen for reporting, 1.4% (1 respondent) strongly disagreed, 4.3% (3 respondents) disagreed, 30% (21 respondents) held a neutral position, 45.7% (32 respondents) agreed, and 18.6% (13 respondents) strongly agreed. The data suggests that a majority of journalists in the ETV newsroom perceive that news sources sometimes influence the angle of their news stories.

### 4.3.3 Management Influence on Content Monitoring and Control

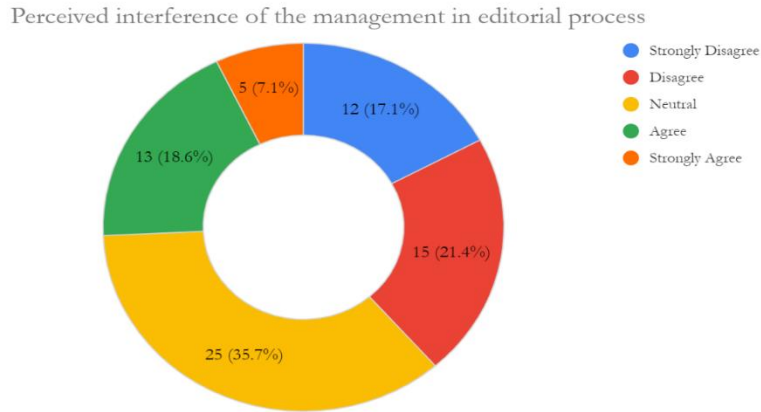
The analysis highlights a range of perceptions among the respondents. While there are some positive views regarding management control and the editorial review process, concerns about censorship, the presence of clear guidelines for content monitoring, and the ability to achieve balanced reporting are prevalent. Based on the data collected from a total of respondents, the analysis reveals mixed perceptions regarding different aspects of Management control and monitoring in news room.



**Figure 20: Perceived Management Control**

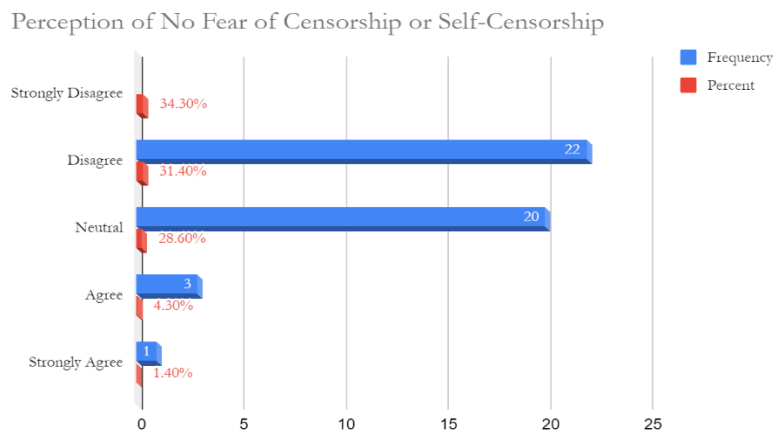
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

To begin with, in terms of management control over news content encouraging critical perspectives, only 8 respondents (11.4%) agreed, while 9 respondents (12.9%, including 9 strongly disagreeing and 34 disagreeing) did not believe that management fosters an environment that encourages critical perspectives.



**Figure 21:** Perceived interference of the management in editorial process  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Moving on to the editorial review process, 23 respondents (35.7%) held a neutral position, whereas 27 respondents (17.1%, including 12 strongly disagreeing and 15 disagreeing) did not perceive a fair balance between journalistic freedom and editorial oversight. In contrast, 13 respondents (18.6%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.



**Figure 22:** Perception of No Censorship or Self-Censorship  
*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Based on the data provided, the responses to the statement "In my experience, I have never feared censorship by my superiors' management that leads to self-censorship, and hinders the reporting of issues" are as follows: the majority of respondents, 46 out of 70 (65.7%), either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.

Specifically, 24 respondents (34.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they have indeed experienced or feared censorship and self-censorship imposed by their superiors' management, leading to self-censorship and hindering their reporting of issues.

Additionally, 22 respondents (31.4%) disagreed with the statement, further reinforcing the presence of censorship and self-censorship concerns among these individuals.

On the other hand, 20 respondents (28.6%) remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This could suggest that these respondents have mixed experiences or are uncertain about the presence of censorship and self-censorship within their organizations.

Only a small percentage of respondents, 4 out of 70 (5.7%), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that they have not experienced or feared censorship and self-censorship from their superiors' management. Overall, the data reveals a concerning trend, with a majority of respondents, 46 out of 70 (65.7%), acknowledging the existence of censorship and self-censorship within their news organizations.

**Table 3:** content monitoring practices and guidelines

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
In my opinion, my news organization has clear guidelines for content monitoring that helps to ensure transparency and protect journalists' freedom.	12 (17.1%)	27 (38.6%)	17 (24.3%)	13 (18.6%)	1 (1.4%)
I believe that content monitoring practices ultimately serve the public interest by promoting accurate and unbiased reporting.	14 (20.0%)	29 (41.4%)	17 (24.3%)	8 (11.4%)	2 (2.9%)

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Overall, I feel that My News organization management have a good balance between ensuring responsible journalism and allowing journalists the freedom to report on important stories.	31 (44.3%)	12 (17.1%)	17 (24.3%)	10 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
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*Source; Own Survey 2024*

Based on the data provided, In response to the statement "In my opinion, my news organization has clear guidelines for content monitoring that helps to ensure transparency and protect journalists' freedom," the majority of respondents (38.6% disagree and 17.1% strongly disagree) expressed disagreement, suggesting a lack of clear guidelines for content monitoring within their organizations. However, a significant portion (24.3%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or mixed experiences regarding the existence of clear guidelines for content monitoring. Only 18.6% agreed and 1.4% strongly agreed with the statement, implying that a small minority believed their organizations had clear guidelines for content monitoring.

Regarding the statement "I believe that content monitoring practices ultimately serve the public interest by promoting accurate and unbiased reporting," the majority of respondents (41.4% disagree and 20% strongly disagree) expressed disagreement, suggesting that they did not perceive content monitoring practices as serving the public interest or promoting accurate and unbiased reporting. Again, a significant portion (24.3%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or mixed opinions on the matter. Only a small percentage (11.4% agree and 2.9% strongly agree) believed that content monitoring practices served the public interest by promoting accurate and unbiased reporting.

In response to the statement "Overall, I feel that My News organization management have a good balance between ensuring responsible journalism and allowing journalists the freedom to report on important stories," a staggering 44.3% strongly disagreed, and 17.1% disagreed, indicating a significant lack of confidence in their news organizations' ability to strike a balance between responsible journalism and journalistic freedom. However, 24.3% remained neutral, suggesting a degree of uncertainty or mixed experiences. Only 14.3% agreed that their news organizations had achieved a good balance between responsible journalism and journalistic freedom.

## 4.4 Qualitative Data Analysis

This section presents qualitative data and analyzes the research participants' results to answer the research questions stated in the first chapter. A total of seven informants were interviewed, including 1 department head, 1 editor-in-chief, 2 senior editors, and 3 reporters. These interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of the informants' personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives on journalistic freedom within their newsroom.

**Table4;** Profile of the Informants'

<b>INFORMANT NO.</b>	<b>POSITION</b>
1	Editor in Chief
2	Department Head
3	Senior Editor
4	Senior Editor
5	Senior Reporter
6	Reporter
7	Senior Reporter

As the study explores the challenges faced by journalists in Ethiopia, with a particular focus on the constraints surrounding journalistic autonomy and freedom. By analyzing interview excerpts from various participants, the research identify issues that shape the media landscape in the country.

To begin with, one participant emphasizes the importance of journalistic professionalism and adherence to ethical principles in protecting journalistic freedom. They highlight the need for journalists to address societal issues responsibly while minimizing potential harm, thus exercising their professional autonomy. As PAR 1 states: "Journalistic freedom is the requirement for journalists to work and plan professionally while upholding ethical principles until the story is aired or broadcast. We have to emphasize the importance of focusing on societal problems and striving to minimize harm while exercising professional freedom. Furthermore, our editorial policy

ensures journalists have the freedom to carry out our work professionally; the problem lies in its implementation." (PAR 1)

This viewpoint aligns with Kovach and Rosenstiel's (2007) advocacy for journalistic freedom to be accompanied by a commitment to serving the public interest. The participant's assertion that journalistic freedom is derived from media policy underscores the organizational context that influences the landscape of journalistic freedom.

According to the interviewees, the level of freedom enjoyed by a media organization is contingent upon the specific outlet for which they work. It is widely believed that absolute freedom for the media does not exist, and the degree of freedom is relative, influenced by factors such as the type of media company and its ownership structure. However, it is important to note that ownership is not the sole determinant of a media organization's freedom; other variables also play a significant role in shaping the extent of their freedom. As PAR 3 states: "I believe that the level of media freedom depends on the specific media outlet you work for. There will never be absolute freedom; its degree is always relative. It's not just about the type of media company or who owns it; there are other variables that determine how much freedom a media organization truly has." (PAR 3)

This aligns with the scholarly perspectives of Baran and Davis (2015), who emphasize that the level of media freedom is influenced by various factors beyond just ownership, including the organizational context and other contextual variables.

Given that ETV is a state-owned public media institution, some argue it is "inherently beholden to government interests and authorities." According to scholar Edward Herman, media owners are the first filter through which powerful people control the flow of ideas in media (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). One informant emphasized that there is no true freedom within a public media institution, contending that such organizations should ideally serve the public interest. However, there are doubts about whether these institutions genuinely fulfill this role in practice. Additionally, the country's media landscape was described as being confined within a box established by a select group of government officials over the past fifty years, indicating a lack of genuine freedom in media operations. As PAR 7 commented: "Because this is a public media institution, there is no true freedom. As a public organization, it should serve the public interest, but the question remains:

do our public organizations actually serve the public in practice?. And when it comes to our country, there is this box that the media institutions operate in—a box that has been established for the last fifty years, reflecting the ideas of just a few elite government officials. Where the government's influence in the newsroom is bold and visible. Even with just one phone call, government officials can stop a story from being broadcast. This is how the media operates here. I believe in freedom with responsibility in order to work for the public good, but that is not the case in our country." (PAR 7)

This view aligns with the authoritarian theory of the press, as described by Siebert et al. (1956), which suggests that political forces control the press as propaganda agents through ownership and influence.

Another informant indicated that the state of journalism in the country does not align with the principles of a free press in the traditional sense. Instead, the focus appears to be on serving as conduits for the government's communication strategy, with objectivity taking a backseat to the execution of specific media policy doctrines. As one interviewee stated: "Journalism without journalistic freedom is simply unthinkable. As a journalist, you need that freedom to do your job properly. Without it, you're essentially handcuffed and unable to fully carry out the duties and responsibilities that come with this profession. In the classic sense, we certainly don't operate as a free press. Our journalism is squarely dedicated to being effective messengers and propagandists for the government's communication strategy." (PAR 3)

This perspective resonates with Deuze's (2005) conceptualization of journalism as a professional identity and ideology, where the notion of a "free press" may be challenged by the realities of media-government relationships.

According to the interviewees, it is clear that the editorial process within the media organization described is influenced and controlled by external factors, primarily the government and higher-level management. Interviewee 2 expresses that there is a lack of genuine editorial freedom, with definitive red lines that cannot be crossed without facing repercussions. Interference is pervasive, dictating topics, angles, language, and shaping the narrative. This interference ranges from formal censorship to subtle influence. As PAR 2 said: "The editorial freedom we're supposed to have is

an illusion. Definitive red lines exist, and crossing them has repercussions for those with power over our station's content. Interference pervades every aspect; there's no genuine freedom. Assigned stories come with boundaries; editors reshape pitches entirely. Self-censorship prevails as we anticipate what superiors approve. Interference dictates topics, angles, and language, shaping the narrative. Despite paper policies, constant meddling restricts journalistic freedoms, ranging from formal censorship to subtle influence. Our editorial independence faces severe constraints." (PAR 2).

This reflects the findings of Giles (2003), who discusses the organizational design and paradoxes within newsrooms, where journalistic autonomy may be constrained by institutional structures and power dynamics.

The editorial process involves the identification of public issues, the selection of stories, and guidance provided by the editor to shape the narrative in alignment with the media outlet's editorial policies and the government's agenda. As PAR 5 commented: "We operate in two ways. Firstly, we identify public issues and assign reporters to work on these 'project stories.' Secondly, we select event-based stories by checking if they fulfill news elements and considering their potential influence. Government stories are essential due to media-government ties. During assignments, the editor is the gatekeeper, providing angles and orientation. They shape the story's perspective." (PAR 5). This aligns with the scholarly perspectives of Usher (2014) and Schlosberg (2016), who highlight the role of editorial decision-making processes in shaping media content and agenda control.

The editorial decision-making process is influenced by the government's agenda, as evident from the requirement to align coverage plans with the government's narratives and messaging. As PAR 6 stated: "Our media house is primarily a policy implementer; we exist to push forward and shape narratives that align with the government's agenda. The directives and overarching narratives we're meant to promote come directly from official state sources. There's a weekly media committee meeting involving senior figures, where we get explicit guidance on what major issues or themes need to be prioritized in our coverage that week. The discussions center around how to construct appealing storytelling that achieves the desired optics and endorsement from the masses. We have to ensure our coverage plans align with pushing their narratives and messaging." (PAR 6) This

perspective is well described within the authoritarian theory of the press, as described by Siebert et al. (1956), where the media is viewed as a tool for political control and propaganda.

The majority of participants concurred with the statement that management also influences the editorial process. As PAR 4 stated: "The leaders and decision-makers within our news organization don't operate in a vacuum. They must be pragmatic about maintaining their own positions and standing with those who sign their paychecks at the end of the day. As much as they'd like to fully stand up for the public's right to know, there's only so much they can realistically do to uphold that principle. Their hands are tied by the reality of who actually employs them and funds this operation. If they cross too many lines and go against the owners' interests, they risk getting replaced by others who will tow the line harder. So, there's always an inherent limit to how much public advocacy they can do when it clashes with the business side of running this media company." (PAR 4) This observation was also the findings of Reich and Hanitzsch (2013), who emphasize that organizational factors, such as management and ownership, can significantly influence journalists' professional autonomy.

Adding to this, the interviewees expressed concerns about the lack of security and protection for journalists in their workplace and beyond. PAR 2 stated that some individuals claiming to be from government institutions, such as the police, can come and take journalists from their desks, and the management does not dare to intervene. This creates an environment of insecurity and fear among journalists, as they feel vulnerable both in the office and in our daily lives. This aligns with the findings of the CIPESA report (2022), which highlights the growing concerns over the safety and security of journalists in Africa, with state actors being a significant source of threat.

This study has found that generally landscape of journalistic autonomy in Ethiopia, is where journalists face constraints from various sources, including the government, media ownership, and organizational structures. The lack of genuine editorial freedom, the pervasive interference in the editorial process, and the concerns over the safety and security of journalists all contribute to a media environment that falls short of the principles of a free press. This aligns with the authoritarian theory of the press and the findings of the CIPESA report (2022) on the state of media freedom and the safety of journalists in Africa.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The final chapter of this study encompasses the conclusions drawn and recommendations made based on the previous chapters. This section is of great significance as it synthesizes findings from various research methods employed in this study, namely interviews and surveys, to assess the level of journalistic freedom within the Ethiopian Television News Channel (ETV). The main objectives of this study were to evaluate the extent of freedom and operational dynamics of journalists within the newsroom, analyze the content monitoring and control mechanisms implemented by management, and identify internal and external factors that influence journalistic freedom. By examining the gathered data, the conclusions of the findings are written, while the recommendations will be proposed based on practical approaches to foster greater independence among journalists. With these findings in mind, this chapter aims to provide several suggestions to mitigate the identified constraints and promote journalistic freedom within the newsroom of the ETV News Channel.

#### **5.2. Summary**

This study explored the state of journalistic freedom experienced by journalists working at the Ethiopian Television (ETV) news channel. The research aimed to address the following key questions:

1. What is the level of journalistic freedom experienced by journalists within the EBC newsroom?
2. What are the internal and external factors that influence or limit journalists' freedom of expression within the EBC newsroom?
3. How do the EBC management's content monitoring and control mechanisms impact the ability of journalists to freely produce news content without editorial constraints or imposed narratives?

The findings revealed that a majority of ETV journalists perceived significant constraints in their ability to independently develop work plans, reporting frameworks, and story proposals. There was a general discomfort expressed regarding their participation in work-related decisions and control over the final reporting products.

The study identified both internal and external factors that influence journalistic freedom at ETV. Internally, the impact of media ownership, compromised editorial independence, deadline pressures, and market-driven considerations were found to shape story selection and coverage decisions. Externally, audience expectations, government pressure, political interference, and strategic maneuvering by news sources also emerged as significant constraints.

The research further highlighted the ETV management's substantial influence over the content production process, with a primary focus on satisfying the media owner rather than upholding the editorial freedom guaranteed by media institutions. Journalists perceived pressure from management to adhere to specific agendas set by the media owner, limiting their ability to pitch critical or controversial stories. Concerns were also raised about the lack of transparency and potentially arbitrary decision-making in the content monitoring and approval processes within the ETV newsroom.

The study emphasizes the need for reforms within the ETV management to ensure a more independent and unbiased approach to journalism. By addressing these constraints and fostering an environment that prioritizes editorial freedom, ETV can contribute to a more informed and democratic society.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

The findings on journalistic freedom for journalists working at Ethiopian Television (ETV) show a work environment where journalists struggle to develop their own stories, propose ideas, or even participate in decisions about their work. This suggests a culture where journalists have little control over the content they produce.

The study identified several factors that restrict journalistic freedom at ETV. Internal pressures include who owns the station, the need to make money, and tight deadlines. External influences come from audience expectations, government pressure, and even political interference. These forces all combine to limit the types of stories journalists can pursue.

On top of that, ETV management seems to have a lot of control over what makes it on air. The study suggests that management prioritizes the interests of the media owner over letting journalists report freely. This can lead to pressure to write stories in a certain way, even if journalists disagree.

Another key finding is that ETV management has a lot of control over what content gets aired. Journalists feel pressured to follow management's agenda, which may not always allow for critical or controversial stories. There's also a lack of clear guidelines for how content is monitored and approved, which makes journalists nervous and less likely to report on sensitive topics.

The results of this study show that ETV needs to make changes to give its journalists more freedom. If ETV empowers journalists and makes the decision-making process more transparent, it can become a source of more independent and diverse reporting, ultimately contributing to a better informed and more democratic Ethiopia.

### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following key recommendations are proposed to address the constraints on journalistic freedom at the Ethiopian Television (ETV) news channel:

- ❖ ETV should develop and communicate clear guidelines for content monitoring that prioritize editorial independence and the freedom of expression. These guidelines should

outline the criteria for story selection and provide a framework for diverse and critical reporting.

- ❖ ETV should strive to create a work environment that actively involves journalists in decision-making processes, such as story selection and editorial decisions. This will empower journalists to exercise their professional judgment and contribute to the organization's overall editorial direction.
- ❖ ETV should work towards diversifying its ownership structure and reducing its dependence on government interests. This can help mitigate the influence of external pressures on the organization's content production process and foster a more pluralistic environment.
- ❖ ETV should ensure the physical and emotional well-being of its journalists by providing them with proper training, resources, and support. This can create a more conducive environment for independent and fearless reporting.
- ❖ ETV should collaborate with educational institutions and civil society organizations to develop and implement media literacy programs. Empowering the public with critical thinking skills can help them become more discerning consumers of news and information.

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## **7. Appendix**

### **Instrument 1: Survey**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**MA Program in Broadcast Journalism**  
**Questionnaire for Ethiopian Television Journalists**

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. This questionnaire aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of journalistic freedom among journalists working in the news department of Ethiopian Television. Your honest and anonymous responses will be valuable in contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the current state of journalistic freedom within the organization. All responses will be kept confidential and used solely for the purposes of this study.

#### **Part 1: Demographic Information**

**Instructions: Please answer the following questions by ticking the box(es) that best apply to you.**

**1. Gender:**

- Male       Female

**2. Age:**

- 18-25       26-35       36-45       46-55       56 and above

**3. Marital Status:**

- Single       Married       Divorced       Widowed

**4. Current Position:**

- Junior Reporter       Reporter       Senior Reporter  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Highest Level of Education:**

- High school diploma                       Bachelor's degree                       Master's degree  
 Doctorate degree

**6. Employment:**

- Full-Time Employee                       Part-Time Employee                       Freelancer  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Years with ETV News:**

- Less than 1 year                       1-5 years                       6-10 years                       11-15 years  
 More than 15 years

**Part 2: Journalist Freedom in the Newsroom**

**Instruction:** While answering the following questions consider situations such as receiving story assignments, participating in editorial meetings, and producing news stories in your newsroom. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale of 1 to 5, where: **1, Strongly Disagree(SD) 2, Disagree(D) 3, Neutral(N) 4, Agree(A) 5, Strongly Agree(SA)**. Simply circle the number that best represents your view for each statement.

No	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
8	I do develop my own plans and mostly work on them	1	2	3	4	5
9	When assigned a news story, I feel I have the freedom to choose the angle.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I feel comfortable pitching potential stories directly to my editor.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I have a high level of control over my day-to-day reporting and News story development.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I am allowed to take part in decisions that affect my work.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I believe my News organizations' editorial guidelines support journalistic freedom and independence.	1	2	3	4	5

14	During editorial meetings, I feel comfortable raising concerns or suggesting changes to proposed stories.	1	2	3	4	5
15	The editorial process at my news organization allows me significant control over the final content of my news stories.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My news organization has adequate mechanisms in place to safeguard journalistic freedom	1	2	3	4	5
17	I believe the EBC is independent from political influence	1	2	3	4	5

**Part 2: Perceived Internal and External Influences on Journalistic Freedom**

**Instruction:** As you answer these questions, please consider the factors that influence your decision-making process when shaping the angle and choosing the story while producing news stories.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?

No	Internal	SD	D	N	A	SA
18	I believe that the ownership of my news organization significantly influences the news stories chosen for reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
19	In my opinion I always feel free to exercise an independent news judgment rather than feeling pressured to adhere to agendas set by media owners.	1	2	3	4	5
20	My supervisors and higher editors sometimes influence the stories I choose to report on	1	2	3	4	5
21	My news organization Pressing news deadlines limit my ability to exercise journalistic freedom in my reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Market and audience research findings significantly influence the editorial decisions made at ETV, Newsroom potentially limiting journalists' freedom.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Advertising considerations significantly influence the stories I chose for reporting.	1	2	3	4	5

24	Profit expectations of the news organization significantly influence the stories I chose for reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I believe that procedures and standards of news production at my newsroom promote journalistic freedom and diverse storytelling.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>External</b>						
26	The expectations and preferences of our viewers significantly influence the news stories I chose for reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Pressure from government officials significantly limits my ability to freely express myself in my reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Pressure from politician significantly limits my ability to freely express myself in my reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I believe that Media laws in Ethiopia significantly promote journalistic freedom and diverse storytelling.	1	2	3	4	5
30	News sources sometimes influences the angle of News stories I chose for reporting	1	2	3	4	5

**Part 4: Management Content Monitoring and Control**

**Instruction:** Consider the policies, guidelines, and review processes for news stories established by your superiors and news organization management, please answer the following questions in what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences.

No	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
31	In my News organization the management's control over news content encourages journalists to express critical perspectives in their reporting.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I believe that my News Organizations editorial review process allows for a fair balance between journalistic freedom and editorial oversight.	1	2	3	4	5

- 33 In my experience, I have never fear of censorship by my superiors'1 2 3 4 5  
management that leads to self-censorship, and hinder the  
reporting issues.
- 34 In my opinion, my news organization has clear guidelines for content1 2 3 4 5  
monitoring that helps to ensure transparency and protect  
journalists' freedom.
- 35 I believe that content monitoring practices ultimately serve the public1 2 3 4 5  
interest by promoting accurate and unbiased reporting.
- 36 Overall, I feel that My News organization management have a good1 2 3 4 5  
balance between ensuring responsible journalism and allowing  
journalists the freedom to report on important stories.

37. Describe a specific situation where you felt your journalistic freedom was either significantly supported or significantly challenged. What factors contributed to this experience?

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38. In your opinion, what specific changes could be implemented by your news organization management to further ensure and protect journalistic freedom within the newsroom?

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THANKS!

## **Instrument 2: In-depth Interview**

### **General information**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. This interview aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of journalistic freedom among journalists working in the news department of Ethiopian Television. Your honest and anonymous responses will be valuable in contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the current state of journalistic freedom within the organization. All responses will be kept confidential and used solely for the purposes of this study.

Education Qualification \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience at EBC \_\_\_\_\_

Positions held at EBC \_\_\_\_\_

### **Interview items**

1. How would you define or describe journalistic freedom within the context of the Ethiopian Television News Channel?
2. Could you walk me through the process of how editorial decisions are made in the newsroom? Who sets the agenda, and what considerations are prioritized in this process?
3. How would you assess the level of independence journalists in the newsroom have in making editorial decisions?
4. How does editors and managers influence story selection and the angles taken on news stories?
5. Are there any external pressures, such as political or commercial influences, that impact editorial decisions in the newsroom? If so, could you please share some details about the nature of these pressures?
6. Can you discuss the influence of media ownership on the editorial process and content at your news organization?
7. How do you navigate the balance between upholding the principles of journalistic independence and complying with internal policies and external pressures? Can you provide specific examples of how this plays out in practice within the newsroom?

## **Profile of Interviewees**

<b>Participant List</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Position</b>
Participant 1	Masters Degree	45	Department Head
Participant 2	Masters Degree	46	Editor-in-Chief
Participant 3	Masters Degree	33	Senior Editor
Participant 4	Masters Degree	37	Senior Editor
Participant 5	Masters Degree	35	Reporter
Participant 6	Bachelor Degree	26	Reporter
Participant 7	Masters Degree	31	Reporter