

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATION



CHALLENGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG PR
PRACTITIONERS: THE CASE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
ORGANIZATIONS IN ADDIS ABABA

BY
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**A Thesis Presented to the School of Journalism and Communication
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Journalism and Communication**

JUNE 2019

AAU

DECLARATION

This project is my own original work and has not been submitted for an award of any degree in any other university. I have carried it out independently with the guidance and suggestions of the research advisor.

Dawit W/ Eyesus

(The Researcher)

Signature

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Dawit W/Eyesus, challenges of using social media among federal government organizations PR practitioners with specific reference to Addis Ababa City submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University. The work is original in its nature and is eligible to earn master's degree in journalism and communication.

Approved by the Board of Examiners:

Examiner_____ Signature_____ Date _____

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Advisor_____ Signature_____ Date _____

Chair of the Graduate School

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ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

E-mail- Electronic Mail

EPRDF -Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

ETC -The Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation

FB - Facebook

FM- Frequency Medium

GCAO- Government Communication Affairs Office

ICT - Information computer system

MW- Medium Wave

NGO-Non-governmental organization

PR- Public Relations

PRSA- Public Relation Society of America

RSS - Really Simple Syndication

SMS- Short Message Service

SPSS-- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

SW- Short Wave

TV – Television

UGC- User Generated Content

Abstract

Social Media have become a very important technological tool among public relations practitioners today. They emerged as an indispensable communication instrument in the process of connecting the practitioners with their key publics. This study is conducted with the aim of assessing the challenges of using Social Media among PR practitioners in federal government organizations in Addis Ababa. The study used descriptive mixed research design involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected using questionnaires from 213 federal government organization PR practitioners with response rate of 198 (93 %). The study used cluster sampling and each cluster was selected by using simple random sampling technique. Moreover, interview was conducted with purposively selected PR directors. The quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics method with the help of statistical package for social science (SPSS). On the other hand, the qualitative data gathered from the interview were analyzed qualitatively using thematic categorization approach. Accordingly, the finding of this study showed that lack of skilled manpower, less attention given by top management, internet connection problem, false organizational pages, shortage of electric power, shortage of information or unworthy of information, poor ICT infrastructure, deliberate disconnect of the internet, lack of skill to use media convergence, and lack of knowledge for boosting the page were found to be challenges of PR practitioners in federal government organizations' in use Social Media. In order to overcome those challenges, the researcher recommends provision of training for PR practitioners on how to effectively use Social Media platforms, and that top management should give more attention to the improvement of the infrastructure of Social Media at the organizations.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Practicing public relations (PR) activities in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. In the last regimes, public relations profession was practiced traditionally (Zeray, 2016). Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO) human resource data show that most government organizations PR Practitioners are not professionals. Hence, come from different disciplines and enter into the job on the basis of short-term training given by Government Communication Affairs Office.

From the Ethiopian government point of view, public relations has two-fold fundamental roles: the first is to create national consensus at the national level, and the second is to build Ethiopia's good image in the outside world (Zeray, 2016). To do so, the government hires PR practitioners in different government offices.

Public relations has also management and communication technical roles. This is clearly stated in Harlow's definition of PR. Public relations has a distinctive management function which helps in the understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its public. Further, it helps management to keep informed on and being responsive to public opinions and to effectively utilize change; PR also involves the problems or issues of the management. It serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends, and it uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (as cited in Seitel, 1995).

However, public relations in Ethiopia is less significant in the eyes of top-level management in an organization. As a result, the consistency of the public relations practices may not be on the right track. In spite of significant changes in the focus and practice of public relations during the last decade in Ethiopia, the term is still misused and misunderstood in many organizations. It is often wrongly associated with propaganda, publicity, and manipulation (Geremew, 2017).

Geremew (2017) added that although the name public relations is expanding and growing rapidly in many organizations in Ethiopia, the profession is still suffering from many problems

emanating from misunderstanding of the clear roles and functions of the public relations, low understanding of the difference between public relations as a discipline on its own, as a management tool, as marketing expert and as a communication process in an organization. However, PR practitioners try to do their best by using different media tools to disseminate organizations information for the public.

PR practitioners in Ethiopian government organizations use the variety of communication channels to impart information about the organizations and their accomplishment to its public. Mainly, they use traditional media such as print and broadcast media. Print media like annual magazines and books, occasional leaflets, booklets, and even in some organizations monthly and quarter newspapers are also published their routine activities of government. Some other PR practitioners in government organizations also used all forms of broadcast media (FM, SW, and MW radio and TV services) to disseminate information for the internal and external customers. But, according to Government Communication Affairs Office evaluation, the above communication channels have been limited to reach the public at large. Thus, the communication office focuses on using the internet and social media networks as well.

Studies show that the emergence of the internet has an extraordinary change in the reading culture. It has made its existence, fully or partially in the reading behavior of readers. Presently, reading is no longer confined to the print reading. The scope of reading sources has changed dramatically on the internet revolution to include websites, web pages books, e-journals, e-papers, e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs, wikis and other multimedia documents (Fayaz, 2009).

The emerging of social media helps PR practitioners to make their message widely spread to the large size of people especially to those audiences that have been neglected before. Social media has also changed the role of the practitioners to be faster and critical thinker than ever before (Joo & Teng, 2016). Sajithra and Rajindra (2013) added that social media is an extension of traditional word of mouth networks, which is always the most effective tools of disseminating information, and with the enablement of technology, it allows anyone with an internet connection to access and voice their opinion through the social media.

Thus, before its desolation Government Communication Affairs Office used to give direction to PR practitioners to use social media in their organizations and to create awareness in the area of democracy, federalism, government policies and strategies, and disseminate successes of organizational activities.

Among various roles of PR practitioners, building the image of the organization is the primary one. They provide information for the stockholders and the public at large regarding the organization and also minimize the effect of negative publicity. At a small organization, the PR practitioner may have to handle all the roles—cheerleader, media contact person, the respondent of criticism—themselves. At larger organizations or big PR firms, staffers can have more specialized roles to handle different organizational needs (Fraser, 2018).

Use of the internet and social media networks becomes a key platform for public relations practitioners and is considered an important tool in the PR kit. Waddel (2010) states that social media helps PR practitioners to build more new relationships across the country and in a sustainable manner never before possible. The widespread use of social media has fundamentally changed how PR practitioners communicate and share information for practice. Social media allows professionals to maintain ongoing, quality relationships with influencers, media, customers, and partners regardless of where they are (Waddel, 2010).

According to Sorrell (2008), the uncontrolled communication environment of social media has risks and opportunities inherent in the more complex but public relations practitioners are used to working in an uncontrolled environment. Komodromos (2014) stated in his article that PR is more about people and relationships, and PR professionals must focus on two-way communication and mutual understanding because monologue has changed to dialogue. Social media is preferable for PR practitioners to integrate online with the public.

In addition, for public relations professionals, however, social media extend beyond traditional media relations and offer the potential to share information, engage public, and build relationships with the public. The types of social media available to organizations and the public have the potential to both extend and narrow relationships (Kent & Taylor, 2014). Kent and Taylor added that if an organization wants to build relationships with people all across the world,

it will have a narrow relationship potential, and if it does not think more creatively, it will be more culturally sensitive in its selection of social media tools.

It is a major role of public relations practitioners to communicate with people to establish and maintain relationships. According to socialbakers' (2019), social media performance web page, social media especially Facebook is a primary choice of social network site in Ethiopia. More than six million people are active users of Facebook. The page assures that the most 'liked' page in Ethiopia is Tewnet.com. It has more than three million followers. Dire Tube, Mereja.com and Yegna Tube are other pages that have many followers following to Tewnet.com.

The government organizations social media strategic plan (2006) shows that there are fears of using social media as a tool for public relations works. There is a need to improve the use of social media in government office by avoiding different challenges. Therefore, the aim of this study tried to assess the challenges of using social media for federal government organizations PR practitioners with specific reference to Addis Ababa city.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Social media delivers what people need to share ideas, feelings, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Unlike the so-called "mainstream media" in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content, social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images, and communities (Scott, 2010). This makes ease the work of PR practitioners in order to create a mutual understanding with the public. This is because, the best way to think about social media are not in terms of the different technologies and tools but, rather, how those technologies and tools allow the public relations practitioners to communicate directly with their stakeholders (Scott, 2010).

Social networks are used as tools for the organizations to build relationships with the public as well as providing a variety of information and services to a diverse group of the direct and indirect public (McLennan & Howell, 2010). However, although social media has become an effective tool for the organization to communicate with the public, many of the public relations practitioners are still struggling with the challenges or impacts of social media, and most of the research shown that PR practitioners are still not fully embracing the social media (Galloway, 2005).

Nicoli and Komodromos (2013) explained that the challenge for PR practitioners is not just trying to find the best way to incorporate social media strategically, but also to determine the best way to measure it and evaluate it effectively. Considering that a primary objective of PR is to realize effective two-way communication and mutual understanding between an organization and its intended audience. Organizations are now called on to focus not only on the networks themselves, but also intently on the people in them and their cultures, lifestyles and behaviors (Komodromos, 2014).

According to Joseph (2017), an increasing number of communication platforms are challenging for PR practitioners to do their jobs properly. Because communication platforms offer a swift, easy way of disseminating messages across to target audience. Choosing the right communication channels for clients could be painstaking. Though many social media are free to use, and even if the need paying a subscription for some services, it is still convenient to use. However, the practitioner should invest time in order to reach out to the right audience; passing your messages across to them and getting desired results.

Joseph added that poor usage of social media is also a challenge to practice public relations works. Social media have formed the basis for public relations per-excellence in this digital age. Any practitioner that is lacking in the usage of this may fade-out of the profession soon. Social media such as Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, etc. are important in this present age of PR practice. However, most users of social networks abuse them a lot; while some are not diplomatic in the way they use them to convey messages to the public. Other practitioners promote themselves and products without prior interactions with their targets.

Currently, Internet World State (n.d) report shows that 16 million people of Ethiopia used the internet. Around 80% of Ethiopian youth are active users of social media. Today there are totally more than six million Facebook users in Ethiopia. In addition, the report of StatCounter (2018) demonstrates that among social media users of Ethiopia, 89.18 % are Facebook users and around 2.3% are Twitter users. Demographically, from 25-34 are the most active users of Facebook. This is an opportunity for government PR practitioners to disseminate information and reach youths.

However, in the past time, the Ethiopian government is highly suspicious of the internet. During the unrest in 2016, all social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc) was completely blocked. No one could use social media, even the government office PR practitioners. Thus, government PR practitioners of Ethiopian faced problems to use social media as a tool for their works practitioners to use social media.

According to Theaker (2002), public relations continue to have a serious problem. It has failed to communicate its core activity successfully to the wider public. Romo & Smith (2010) also point out that organization public relations faced with a challenge of how to use social media in order to build good image. This paper focused on the challenges of using social media for federal government organizations PR practitioners with specific reference to Addis Ababa city.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main aim of this study is to assess the challenges of using social media among federal government organization PR practitioners.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- examine the nature of social media usage among PR practitioners.
- identify challenges of PR practitioners in social media usage.
- investigate PR practitioners preference of social media to disseminate organizational information.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the nature of social media usage among PR practitioners
2. What are the challenges of PR practitioners in the usage of social media?
3. What social media tools are preferred by these PR practitioners to disseminate information?

1.5 Significances of the Study

Using social media as a tool in PR practices makes government organization beneficial. Because it is an advanced technology that makes a shift from the traditional approach to a new model of dissemination of information. Thus, the finding may be valuable for different bodies. Primarily the study may be essential for future researchers. It can be a relevant source of reference for academicians working on related topics. Besides, the results of the research would be essential for the Ethiopian government organization since it recommends areas for further investigations. It's also important to policy-makers as it indicates how PR practitioners use social media within the government organizations. Moreover, the study will yield benefits to government PR practitioners who use social media in their organizations.

1.6 The scope of the Study

In the country, there are so many organizations, governmental and nongovernmental. However, this study was focused on Federal Government Office PR practitioners that are selected in Addis Ababa. This is because it is very difficult to address the entire government organizations presents in the country. Moreover, the data were collected from PR Directors and practitioners. It didn't include other workers in the organization. In addition, among various social media tools, this study limited its scope on the usage of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, which are considered to be the most relevant social media networks used in the field of PR practitioners.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study is not free from limitations. In this study, the researcher studied federal government organizations selected from Addis Ababa city. Besides, the questionnaire and interview asked only for PR practitioners and Directors working on federal government organizations. It did not include other experts working on the organization because the paper focused on PR practitioners only. Furthermore, organizations are far from one to the other. So, it was difficult to distribute the questionnaires. But, the researcher handled it systematically by clustering the organizations with their specific locations. The researcher also faced a challenge in getting enough kinds of books related to social media. However, he used journals, articles and other online materials instead.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

In this study the first chapter discussed background, statement of the problem, object of the study, research question, significances, scope, and limitations the study. In addition, the following questions are answered: 1) How do PR practitioners use social media; 2) What are the challenges of PR practitioners in the usage of social media; 3) What factors do determine the preference of social media as a tool for PR practitioners to disseminate information? Chapter two is deals with literature regarding challenges of federal government office PR practitioners in the usage of social media. Chapter three focused on the methodology used to conduct research essential to the study. On chapter four data presents, analyses and discussed PR practitioners on the usage and access to social media. The final chapter focused on the conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Definitions, Characteristics and Functions of Social Media

The term 'Social Media' refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue (Baruah, 2012). Social media are a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Mayfield (2008), social media can be defined as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics: participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness.

Harvey (2014) also define social media as follows:

Social media are the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation...With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction on a large scale became easier for individuals than ever before; and as such, a new media age was born where interactivity was placed at the center of new media functions. One individual could now speak to many as easily as many could speak to one, and instant feedback was a possibility. Where citizens and consumers used to have limited and somewhat muted voices, now they could share their opinions with many (p.1158).

Harvey (2014) added that the low cost and accessibility of new technology also allowed more options for media consumption than ever before—so instead of only a few news outlets, individuals now have the ability to seek information from several sources, and to dialogue with others via message forums about the information posted. At the core of this ongoing revolution is social media.

Safko and Brake (2009) refer to media that people can use to be social or “the story is in the tactics of each of the hundreds of technologies, all of the tools that are available for you to connect with your customers and prospects, and the strategies necessary to use these tactics and

tools effectively”. In the end, social media are about online interactions and connections (as cited in Looy, 2016. P. 27).

According to Harvey (2014), all social media involve some sort of digital platform, whether mobile or stationary. Not everything that is digital, however, is necessarily social media. Two common characteristics help to define social media. First, social media allow some form of participation. Social media are never completely passive, even if sometimes social networking sites such as Facebook may allow passive viewing of what others are posting. Usually, at bare minimum, a profile must be created that allows for the beginning of the potential for interaction. That quality sets social media apart from traditional media where personal profiles are not the norm. Second, and in line with their participatory nature, social media involve interaction. This interaction can be with established friends, family, or acquaintances, or with new people who share common interests or even a common acquaintance circle. Although many social media were or are initially treated or referred to as novel, as they continue to be integrated into personal and professional lives they become less noticed and more expected.

On the other hand, Taprial and Kanwar (2012), stated five distinctive characteristics of social media which make it much more powerful than the traditional media. These are accessibility, speed, interactivity, longevity/volatility and reach.

Accessibility: social media is easily accessible, takes no or low cost to use. It is easy to use and connect with others as well.

Speed: the content once published will be visible to all connected communities. Not only publishing responses are not delayed– they are near instantaneous as well.

Interactivity: social media offers two-way or more communication. Users interact with each other; ask questions, comments, share, offer the other version of viewpoints and others.

Longevity/Volatility: owing to the nature of the medium, social media content remain accessible for a long time. It can be updated at any time as well.

Reach: should the tribute go to the internet; anything put on social media can reach anyone crossing social interaction of the yore limited by cut breaks.

As the classes of social media make clear, social media have many different functions. First, they allow people to conduct identity work. When an individual puts who he or she is into a profile, it requires some kind of reflection. As individuals see reactions to their online social presence, they will consider themselves in a new light and notice that online interaction allows them to feel more open about thoughts, opinions, and inquiries. Second, social media allows people to tend to their relationships in different ways. Even if popular discourse often demonizes outlets such as Facebook or Twitter as narcissistic and shallow, research shows that they allow people, who may not otherwise be able to connect, an outlet to interact. People also report meeting some of their best friends and even spouses through computer mediated communication platforms (Harvey, 2014).

Harvey (2014) added that social media allow people to perform work functions. Sometimes, the social media is their work, such as a popular blog or someone with a large social network circle who is hired to promote events. Other times, people interact with work colleagues via social media sites, or especially with e-mail, take care of most of their work communication using the social media outlet is the third function. Fourth, social media allow people to seek information or share ideas. This information can range from political campaigns to local issues and disaster relief to where is a good place to buy plus-size clothing. Fifth, and often in line with information sharing, people can also offer opinions or consider the opinions of others through social media. Finally, individuals can find entertainment through such sites.

2.2 Types and Importance of Social Media in PR

2.2.1 Types of Social Media

Types of social media can be discussed by the different author in different ways. Foreman (2017) classified the social media into ten types. According to Foreman (2017), most people probably already use all the biggest social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn and media sharing sites such as Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, along with maybe a handful of others such as Pinterest and Google Plus. But there are much more to social media than the top social media and media sharing networks.

Foreman (2017) states 10 types of social media. They have their own functions. In the first place, we get social networks. Its function is connecting with people. For example, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn are grouped in this social media type. Media sharing network is the other social media

type. It shares photos, videos, and the like. Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube is some examples of media sharing networks. The discussion forum is also one of the social media. Share news and ideas are its roles. Reddit, Quora, and Digg are channeled to share news and ideas.

There are also social media types which Foreman explains such as bookmarking and content creation networks. Their tasks are discovered, save, and share new content. Pinterest and Flipboard are examples of bookmarking and content creation networks. To find and review businesses, consumer review networks are the appropriate social media type. For instance, Yelp, Zomato, and Trip Advisor (Foreman, 2017)

Foreman added that blogging and publishing networks are additional social media type. They have published content online role. WordPress, Tumblr, and Medium are examples of blogging and publishing networks of social media type. To share interests and hobbies, Interest-based networks are preferred sites such as Good reads, Houzz, and Last.fm. There is also a site called social shopping network which is helpful for online shopping. Polyvore, Etsy, and Fancy are examples of this site. For trade goods and services, sharing economy network site is preferable. For examples, Airbnb, Uber, and TaskRabbit are some examples. Anonymous social networks are the final type of social media which Foreman stated. Its function is to communicate anonymously. For instance, Whisper, Ask.fm, and After School are some Anonymous social networks.

Romo & Smith (2010) point out additional types of social media such as Photo Sharing (i.e. Flickr), Blogs, Podcasts and Vodcasts, Wikis, Social Bookmarking Sites, Widgets, Virtual Worlds, Social Media Releases, and RSS Feeds.

In general, knowing about these categories of social media and understanding why PR practitioners use them can open up new ideas and channels for engaging with the target audience more effectively (Foreman, 2017).

2.2.2 Importance of Social Media in PRs

Social media has dramatically changed the way we communicate and provided us with nontraditional ways to deliver our message. PR is arguably one of the main disciplines that can benefit from the various opportunities offered by social media (Souhail, 2015).

Social media helps people communicate freely without considering the geographical factor, and social media helps to facilitate people to stay connected with others by just clicking a few buttons and the message will be sent in the shortest period. Besides that, social media are to be used as a strategic communication to obtain the internal and external information regarding the organization. This view can support the view that in social media there is a rule of contribution where it encourages contribution and reactions from anyone who is interested in a particular study. The users can exchange information among the users easily by inviting them to participate in the discussion (Teng & Joo, 2016).

According to Souhail (2015), social media are where traditional PR tools are transformed into new formats of interactive content. A press release, PR's main communication tool for decades, can be turned into a video, a presentation, or a series of tweets and status updates. Events are another area where social media can be optimally used by PR professionals. Twitter is one of the major social media platforms that provide with an instant and easy way to communicate with the audience.

Souhail (2015) added that being active on social media helps improve the brand perception and overall image of the organization or companies. Publishing relevant news about the company, blogging about topics that matter to the audience and sharing that on social media helps in keeping PR in front of current customers and attract new ones. The more followers you attract, the more readers you will generate for your news which enhances your relevance and target audience reach.

Teng and Joo (2016) suggest that digital PR will have the opportunity to directly persuade their audience by answering their questions, provide more information to them as well as explaining to them especially when they are unsatisfied with the organizations' products or services. It is involved in disseminating information like issuing the online news release or any updates regarding its organization services to the stakeholders, as well as leveraging the power of journalism networks.

Social networking enables immediate sharing of information and, as the number of people using the internet continues to rise, with many blogging themselves; releases which are the post by PR can be easily picked up and posted by other bloggers and online journalists. This offers a wider

coverage of PR news and ensures it reaches a larger target audience. In conclusion, social media's main benefit is keeping your company in the public attention, ensuring it is current and in touch with potential customers (Vitis PR, 2019).

2.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media in PR

There is no doubt that social networking is modern invention that has the internet still the edge of seat due to its popularity with the people. This happened because of the support of people (Al-Jenaibi, 2013). Bring every type of a social group together in the one place and allow them to interact is really a big thing. There are many about advantages and disadvantages of social media networks, and what it can do for us or for organizations and institutions. Researcher selects the important points of advantages and disadvantages of social media networks.

2.3. 1 Advantages of social media in PR

It is cost-effective. PR department has to communicate or be contact with customers by an effective and inexpensive way for that social media. It is cheaper than use of social networks website for personal and commercial use both because most it is free to in the habit. While a person the use of fairly simple for anyone, and reduction of the functions works by the many people (Stamoulis, 2010).

Tran (2019) said that instead of spending on advertising, government entities can now leverage more cost-efficient social platforms to raise awareness about issues the public needs to know about. After all, these are platforms their audience already uses.

On the social networking site you can scout potential customers target markets with only few of clicks and key strokes as well as increase advertising the promotion strategies for you (Al-Jenaibi, 2014). It let the organization know the likes and dislikes, which are the enormous. If a company would to improve it business then that is the technique to go, whether on a budget or not (Tribby, 2010).

Traditional media might be extremely expensive, in particular for small businesses. In contrast, most social media platforms are totally free to use, the cost only to businesses in the time which is spent on updating profiles and interacting with customers or contacts.

The low price of access to the social media makes it particularly helpful to small businesses which often find the costs associated with traditional media high-priced. Organizations or institutions can use social media to create and distribute promotional material, such as articles, audio and videos to save the money but, in traditional media it would high cost for this content to appear in the press.eg on the radio or on TV (Salcido, 2011).

Builds Credibility is the other advantage of social media. Without having the confidence of customer, if you have the ability to communicate with them both at the personal level and professional level. Although doing some work, it definitely pays off as you offer could be exploited if there someone waiting for the wind of the products or services. As long as you do not over pursue them they, will do well here (Quinn, 2010).

Friedman (2014) explained that if you share content on topics that you know much about, you can begin to build credibility. This doesn't only go for your online presence. If you live your personal brand and your actions reflect your online presence, it validates that you can be trusted and those relationships you are building will be that much more authentic and valuable.

Social media is also a fantastic way for Public Relation Department to gather information about wants or desires of organization's customers, and to deal with any business troubles that may be encountering. Advertising social media is the most effective way to defend, establish, and increase organizations or institutions credibility (Tribby, 2010).

Moreover, interesting links are one among advantages of social media in PR. There potential in the situation is common. Using the social networking site by PR department, doing anything they can to get in contact with their customers to create a network of contacts .For example, when the company or organization have a new product or new information just they posted in these social media networking with some links to clarify what they posted, that can give the strength for companies or institutions if the PR department of those institutions know what to do. As long that PR department gives and receives responses, and then it is most likely stick with institutions or organizations. These contacts are certainly valuable in the long run (Salcido, 2011).

Friedman (2014) claimed that social media are not just about brands connecting with their customers. In fact, at its root, social media are about connecting people to people. From a professional perspective, you can grow your professional network online tremendously by

connecting with colleagues, mentors, role models and other professionals. If you nurture those relationships, you have a whole new network to tap when you're looking for opportunities or professional guidance.

In addition, social media gives you an opportunity to talk about what you know and what you want to be known for. Sharing your expertise will attract potential professional and personal connections. Learn how to present your professional experience, achievements and results and you will get more and more opportunities to connect with like-minded people (Friedman, 2014).

2.3. 2 Disadvantages of social media in PR

Shortage of anonymity is one of disadvantages of social media. You are extinguishing information on your name, location age and gender and type other many of the information that can not wish to tell others. That a lot of people say that to be cautious, but does not one could be certain at any time. As long as the people could know precisely who you are, then it can find some of the ways to do you to access (The Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Networking, 2011).

The tricks and harassed is the other disadvantages of social media. There is a risk of the lack of security in the context of the personal and commercial alike. As many websites the application of specific measures to keep any of these instances from harassment cybercrime stalking, online scams, identity theft to an absolute minimum, you may still not know (Young, 2010).

According to Norton (2011), waste of time is one among disadvantages of social media in PR. If that is not your type of thing, which would be just a time consuming for you. The key to social media is to have fun, whether you do it for kicks or click around for the business purposes. It should be understood able enough for one, but there were some people who never see the point. For them, it might be a disadvantage. Now there was nothing to really think about. Nothing is without blemish, but that for this kind of network must not truly be that much concern about your safety. As long as go along without committing huge mistakes, it is good enough. You can to take advantage of this phenomenon which remains online to this day.

2.4 Social Media in Public Relations Practice

Public relations is the art of managing communications between an organization and the public. Whether good or bad, people will always have something to say about the organization. Social media allows you to engage in the conversations taking place about the organization as they happen (Ponce, 2018).

Traditionally, public relations used press releases, brochures, annual reports, books, etc. for getting publicity but now these tools don't provide the same results as social media do. For public relations professionals, however, social media extend beyond traditional media relations and offer the potential to share information, engage publics, and build relationships with the public. The types of social media available to organizations and the public have the potential to both extend and narrow relationships (Kent & Taylor, 2014).

The new public relations tools have meant that a variety of new strategic communication tactics and channels have emerged giving public relations professionals new ways to reach stakeholders, public, and the media. Additionally, individuals, activists, and non-profit organizations can also use social media to influence organizations and attract media attention. Today, individuals and organizations no longer have to rely solely on traditional media channels and gatekeepers (Kent & Taylor, 2014).

According to Waddel, use of the internet and social media networks is widespread among public relations practitioners and comprise important tools in the PR area. Social media helps public relations because PR practitioners are able to build more new relationships across a wider landscape and in a sustainable way never before possible (as cited in Komodromos, 2014). Komodromos (2014) added that social media tools provide researchers and PR practitioners with a new and rich source of easily accessible data about individuals, society and potentially the world in general.

More recently, according to (Wang, 2015), public relations practitioners have shifted from traditional media to social media as a tool since their inception. There exists various types of social media such as social networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), content community (e.g., YouTube and Instagram), and virtual social world (e.g., Second Life), etc. These social media forms have been examined by lots of public relations studies.

In general, social media lets PR bypass the media and go straight to customers. Using social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter allows PR to follow and be followed by journalists, drive web traffic, manage issues by responding quickly to criticisms or negative perceptions, and increase exposure for business (Kamal, 2014).

2.5 Ways of Using Social Media for PRs

To utilize something, it is better to know the way how to use. The work of PR is focused on communication. Boitnott (2017) states that previously, PR practitioners used traditional media to disseminate information for the public. They also publish it online. Nowadays, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn can serve as the primary channels for organizations to release official information. It is helpful for PR practitioners to brand reasoning, explanations, and crisis response. Boitnott added that PR use of social media help to manage public opinion, react to large stories, react publicly to negative comments, and boost organizations reputation and earn new followers.

PR practitioners should develop relationship with the media via social media to extend the professional relationship beyond the press release pitch. It helps to share relevant information, provide value, and extend the conversation. In addition, to facilitate the brand message through content distribution; to incorporate social sharing into press releases; to create and leverage campaign Hashtags; and to real-time crisis management, using social media for PR practice is relevant (Fanaras, 2017).

Boitnott (2017) suggest that how public relations practitioners use social media in his article. Finding the social media influencers is one task for PR practitioners. This is because, they have huge digital followings to promote offerings and protect reputations. PR practitioners also should consider using social listening tool to identify brand threats. It helps to proactively find and address online threats and possibly prevent a major brand reputation crisis. Further, PR practitioners use social media to influence Journalist's stories. Journalists see social media to know about people saying. PRs practitioner, thus, participate from online discussion in order to influence journalists to present a certain angle. Moreover, using of social media helps PR practitioners to swiftly react to negative press and to make announcements.

Patterson (2014) also states four ways of using social media to support and enhance public relations. These are: include social sharing with press releases, create social campaigns around customer case studies, ask executives (higher officials) to publish on LinkedIn, and offer expert opinions in real-time. By doing so, PR practitioners will be able to communicate the messages directly with stakeholders and connect with the media and bloggers where they're proactively looking for news and resources instead of spamming them with information (like press releases) they simply don't want or can't share immediately.

PR should be strategic for using social media. To be strategic, PR practitioners should consider all the contents which are posted will be relevant to the audience and the time which are posting. Besides, PR practitioners should be posting consistently in frequency and style. Moreover, engage in conversations with audience is also an effective strategic use of social media for PR. To boost engagements, PR asks the audiences for suggestions or opinions on topics which are posts (Chadwick, 2018).

2.6 Social Media in Ethiopia

Social media in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon used by many people with Internet access unlike many areas of the world. According to Jensen and Sarrocco, the use of the Internet in Ethiopia began in 1993 at United Nation Economic Commission for Africa. It is in the following year that medical School of Addis Ababa University had accessed the internet with the help of US-based nongovernmental organization (NGO) (as cited in Kalo, 2015). This shows, from the beginning, the internet was a luxurious service for the mass in Ethiopia as it used to improve communications among organizations.

Even though the service was very limited it was not open for the wide use until 1997, a year internet service began to be delivered by the defunct organization called Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC). However, after two decades of service, the state of the internet in Ethiopia still is one of the most undersized in the world despite the diplomatic hub of the nation. This shows that Ethio-telecom has done little to target the wider population in accessing the internet (Kalo, 2015).

Citizens are accessing the internet via computers at internet cafes mainly based at Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, the year 2009 marked the use of the internet via phones which increases users

outside the capital. Mobile penetration is far greater in Ethiopia than internet penetration which would have an impact on the wide use of the internet, probably, in the long run (Kalo, 2015).

The use of social media for Ethiopian communities has touched a peak when Meles Zenawi, former Prime minister, died. This has happened due to the fact that the mainstream media shunned the issue and get focused on London Olympic. However, this has kept Ethiopians and the name Meles Zenawi noticeable in social media (Waldyes, 2012). It is thus that gives power to social media networks to play a competitive role in the political socialization of Ethiopian citizens (Desta, 2010).

As Internet World State (n.d) website report shows that currently, 16 million people of Ethiopia used the internet. Around 80% of Ethiopian youth are active users of social media. There are totally more than six million Facebook users are present today in Ethiopia. Demographically age from 25-34 are the most active users of Facebook. According to Chala's (2012), the most widespread social networking media in Ethiopia is Facebook.

The StatCounter November 2018 report supports the above idea. The report shows the social media stats in Ethiopia in the following table 1:

No.	Social media type	User in percent
1	Facebook	87 %
2	YouTube	6%
3	Pinterest	3.6%
4	Twitter	2.23%
5	Instagram	0.34%
6	Google+	0.33%

Table 1. Social media states in Ethiopia (source: StatCounter)

As the researcher observation, social media in Ethiopia doesn't play its important role. There are challenges using social media in the country. Especially, the last three years internet accesses in the country were blocked in the case of government protest. It implies that social media would be restricted by the government. The Lack of free Wi-Fi and scarcity of other facilities like internet connection are the other bottleneck of social media usage in Ethiopia. Furthermore, Smartphone

users are few. It is luxuries for other citizens. Thus, most Ethiopian people can't enjoy social media as a tool for disseminating information.

2.7 Government PRs Practitioners and Social Media Usage

Recently, the use of social media in the public sector has become a hot topic. Organization managers are beginning to embrace them to encourage civic engagement and build community. Because social media are transforming the way organizations communicate with their publics and governments. They are not exempt from societal pressures to make use of them (Graham & Avery, 2013).

Social media are an important tool for a government organization. It can improve interactivity between a government and the public, and they reach populations that do not consume traditional media as frequently as others (Bertot, Jaeger, Munson, & Glaisyer, 2010). It also helps for building social capital and democracy; and helps people to form and maintains better governments (Kent & Tylor, 2014). In addition, this new technology allows officials in government to build relationships with key stakeholders, namely the citizens it represents. The relationship-building potential of social media is especially valuable for public relations professionals since building relationships is at the core of public relations (Ledingham, 2003). It can also enhance governments' abilities to interact with and engage citizens as well as to meet their expectations for transparency. Practitioners in government public relations have more tools to engage and communicate with the public than ever before (Ledingham, 2003).

Similarly, Burson-Marsteller believes that social media are an effective tool to foster communication of critical information and provide a user-friendly platform for citizens to engage users in civic activities, as well as for government organizations to build strong relationships with the public (Lee & Cho, 2017). As user-generated media, social media allow public relations practitioners in government the ability to inform and to seek input and opinions from relevant publics (Hand & Ching, 2011).

However, government organizations are increasingly using social media technologies to perform their activities; there are a number of grassroots efforts outside of government that intersect with government at many different points. Still, in its formative stages, a preliminary way of considering the social media technology context in which government operates along several

dimensions. For instance, democratic participation and engagement, co-production, crowdsourcing solutions and innovations, and transparency and accountability are some government social media operating dimensions (Bertot, Jaeger, Munson, & Glaisyer, 2010).

These dimensions offer great promise and challenges in redefining government-community connections and interactions. The ensuing sections expand on these dimensions and identify issues regarding governance and governing, transparency, and policy as offered through social media technologies (Bertot et al., 2010).

Romo & Smith (2010) point out that the reason for why government using social media. According to Romo & Smith, government using social media because it is important to expand reach new and diverse audiences, to facilitate interactive communication and community, to save time and money, and to put human face on government are some reasons.

According to content group Staff (2017), in the private sector, usage of social media is an effective way to solve problems in real-time, monitor sentiment, manage brand reputation and increase loyalty. There is a need for the government to be courageous and embrace social media like many global businesses do, for example, to respond to customer's complaints immediately, giving them the opportunity to resolve the issue and mitigate damage to their brand. Thus, social media should be seen as an opportunity for the government to effectively engage with its citizens and help society progress. It allows engagement with the public simple yet powerful, provides a useful tool to build audience trust and gives useful insights on public sentiment to help inform government decisions and public policy.

Prmention (2016), well know PRs web page, point out how PRs practitioners can use social media platforms advantageously. The page suggests some social media platforms used by PRs practitioners. The first and foremost social media platform is Facebook. It is most popular among the masses and allows public relations practitioners to engage audiences through high-quality content in the form of posts, videos, images, info graphics, and the links.

Twitter is another platform that is widely used by PR professionals in modern times. 'Short and sweet' should be the mantra on this platform as the user is limited to 140 characters, which is why it can get challenging to obtain messages across and ensure that it is systematically understood. According to Wigand (as cited in Lee & Cho, 2017), explains the advantage of

government organizations' use of Twitter. It is extending the reach of existing online messages such as news, speeches, web updates, and YouTube videos, and building relationships with targeted audiences, stakeholders, and key influencers such as journalists and bloggers. Additionally, provide an informal human voice to foster engagement and comprehension of messages, to enable audiences to interact easily with departments and officials, and to provide ways for audiences to subscribe to updates via Rich Site Summary (RSS), e-mail and SMS.

As the page indicates, the easiest of use of social media platform is Instagram. This is because all PRs practitioners expected to do is simply click a photo and post it. In addition, the Search and Explore functions are turning the social network into an easy-to-navigate news source. Obviously, pictures can speak better than text. The major motive of Instagram is to offer interesting accounts, photos and places to consumers. The highest benefit for PRs practitioners here is that they get a ready-made source of influencers to investigate.

Further, the page pointed out that through Pinterest, PRs practitioner can create value for audiences by curating content rather than creating it. PRs can simply 'Pin' images and other content systematically from other sources on the Web into elected pages. These images can be viewed by the audiences for inspiration and entertainment.

Prmention (2016) web page also discusses Google+. It has the ability to build eager communities of followers who support a cause or a person is tremendous. PRs practitioners can explore this platform and find several communities related to varied causes, interests, and people. They can use 'Circles' to create groups of targeted audiences and send them information that they know they will be interested in. when it comes to public relations, face-to-face communication is essential. This is where Hangouts come into the picture. Google+ confirms that everything that is posted is out there for the world to see. This makes it an ideal platform to post media releases, announcements, podcasts and articles.

LinkedIn is more of a professional networking platform by the opinion of most people as the page states. But that has changed with its new emphasis on publishing. LinkedIn can be used by PRs practitioners to highlight their client's experience, disseminate content, finding influencers, gaining industry insights, connecting with new clients, discovering media opportunities, identifying new business opportunities and amplifying clients' media coverage. PRs practitioners

can also use it to establish the relevance of their clients' company page(s). But networking opportunities are the biggest draw of LinkedIn. Such a page can prove to be a critical touch-point for the organization (Prmemention, 2016).

The page finally states that the company's Twitter feeds can be plugged into its LinkedIn pages that can be added with RSS feed from the company's blog. In addition, there are tabs that allow public relations practitioners to emphasize key products and support images and videos related to the company's offerings. There is a page admin that can see the page activities with the help of analytics. By joining LinkedIn Groups, PR practitioners can increase their reach where customers and prospects are, or by creating themselves. The focus should always be on quality rather than quantity. Having many groups does not mean having more contacts or referrals (Prmemention, 2016).

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The study will be anchored on the following theories:

2.8.1 Media Ecology Theory

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan has proposed the theoretical concepts of media ecology. He is famous for coining the phrase, "the medium is the message" (Moodle, 2018). But, the term media ecology was formally introduced by Neil Postman, researcher of the University of New York, in 1968 (Strate, 2002). According to Strate (2002), Postman defined media ecology as "the study of media as environments"; although it would be equally true to say that it is "the study of environments as media." The word ecology indicates the study of environments such as their structure, content, and impact on people. It looks into the matter of how media of communication affect human perception, understanding, feeling, and value; and how our interaction with media facilitates or impedes our chances of survival.

According to Postman ideas, the ecology of media as the environment is synthesized in a basic idea: technologies — which entail communication technologies, from writing to digital media — they generate environments that affect the everyday life of actors using them (Velasquez, Renó, Beltrán, Maldonado and Ortiz, 2018). During this time social media platforms affect the everyday life of actors using them. To reach those consumers, PR practitioners used social media

as a tool for disseminating information of their organizations. For Government Organization PR practitioners, it will be fruitful.

According to McLuhan and Power, new media give freedom for users to become consumers as well as producers. Social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and so on serve as a platform to transform this idea into reality. So, consumers have more way to share their idea, opinion, and interaction with others. Therefore, PR practitioners are forced to control the flow of communication in order to engage consumers and employees effectively (Teng & Joo, 2016).

Currently, in the beginning of the 21st century, people witnessing an explosion of new media species – webpages, blogs, wikis, social networks, videogames, mobile applications, etc. (Scolari, 2012). Kaialiisa (2012) explains that these species of new media make our private ideas, isolated thoughts and actions public. We have internet search engines where everyone can find some info about others and most of us have an account in some social network. It makes us to acknowledge that nothing we do is private and every mistake we make will be probably stored in the internet. Off course internet makes it easier to be in contact with your family and friends from all over the world and influences us to socialize more, express ourselves more and puts communication into the first place in society.

Although media environments change and more and more new mediums are invented, people still use almost all of them. And all these mediums are connected with each other, influencing each other and are often used at the same time. For example, we watch TV and listen to the radio from our mobile phones. TV programs use YouTube videos in their broadcasts and you can read books from e-readers, tablet computers, mobile phones etc. That gives us many ways to communicate with each other and many places to get information from. It makes life nowadays easier for human beings. You can always search some information you don't know from the internet. This was not possible even a few decades ago (Kaialiisa, 2012). This is a good opportunity for PR practice.

Recently, so many studies approved that social media can deliver information or message much more easily and efficiently than traditional media (print and broadcast media). PR practitioners

have changed a new information distribution way. Thus, the flows of information are altered from one-way communication to two-way communication to interact with the public (Teng & Joo, 2016).

The theory tries to discover what roles the media force us to play, how media structure what we are seeing, why media make us feel and act as we do (Moodle, 2018). In addition, the theory explains why and how the exercise of PR practitioners, consumers, and organizations will be changed by social media and how the media's evolution will continue the flow of communication. Moreover, the theory has shown that this is why PR practitioners, organizations, in particular, must learn how to use social media to communicate with strategy audiences effectively (Teng & Joo, 2016). Therefore, Media Ecology theory will be an anchored for this study.

2.8.2 Social Penetration Theory

Social penetration theory was formulated by psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in year 1973. Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor developed this theory to describe the development of interpersonal relationships through the progression of self-disclosure or deliberately revealing personal information such as personal motives or desires, feelings, thoughts, and experiences to others. This is because they believe that self-disclosure is a key to bring a relationship to a new level of intimacy by opening inner self (Baack, Fogliasso, & Harris, 2000, Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). Besides, there is an essential component of social penetration theory which is a two-way disclosure, or mutual disclosure called disclosure reciprocity. It is a process in which when one person reveals personal information of a certain intimacy level, the other person will in turn disclose information of the same level. This might feel a sense of emotional equity among individuals (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005).

Moodle (2018) state the four basic assumptions of social penetration theory. The first assumption is relationship development shift from superficial layers to intimate ones. The second assumption is the development of interpersonal relationships in systematic and predictable way. Relational development might not be sustainable. It might move backward, resulting in de-penetration and dissolution, this is the third assumption. The final assumption is self-disclosure. It is the key to facilitate relationship development. It allows individuals to know each other and plays a crucial

role in determining how long relationship can be, because gradual exploration of mutual selves is essential in the process of social penetration.

Altman and Taylor suggest that there are four stages which build up the intimacy relationship; orientation, exploratory, affective, and stable stage (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). There is also final stage known as de-penetration when the relationship begins to stop. It is a withdrawal of disclosure that leads to termination of the relationship (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). Based on these stages, the development of human relationship will be influenced not only by verbal and non-verbal communication but also the environmental behavioral (Baack et al., 2000). Some scholars argue that social penetration theory can be clearly observed computer mediated communication context nowadays. They added that individuals who display interest through the computer mediated communication have high proportions of self-disclosures than those who in face-to-face interactions (Tidwell & Walther, 2002).

This theory also applied in public relation context. According to Johnson (n.d), in Chron web page, state that PR practitioner practiced social penetration in order to build mutual relationship between customers and stockholders. Heath & Vasquez (2001) adds the above four stages in social penetration theory could be changed into similar term for public relation and be used to better understand the organization-stakeholder relationship and to act as factors affecting the relationship development. Johnson suggests that by using this theory, attractive PR campaign will bring closer relationship between the product and public by showing how the product intimate part of the public life.

This study try to also use social penetration theory as a framework that social media will bring more close relationship among the society without considering the geographical factors. Upon determining that, throughout the study it will allow the researcher to find out the challenges of using social media for public relation practice.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodology

The study is conducted to measure the challenges of using social media among federal government organizations PR practitioners with specific reference in Addis Ababa city. To realize the objective of the study and provide a conclusive answer for the research questions, the following research methodologies were employed.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring it effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (AAU, 2019).

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used descriptive research method. According to Creswell (1994), a descriptive method enables researchers to focus and show the different facts, information, and factors regarding the standing or position of the issue or problem as it occur during the time of the study. For this, the appropriate methodological approach is used to both quantitative and qualitative approach concurrently; i.e. a mixed methods research.

3.1.1 Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) research. This approach to research is used when this integration provides a better understanding of the research problem than either of each alone (Kothari, 2004).

According to Creswell (1994):

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this

form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (p.2).

By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, the researcher gains in breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration, while offsetting the weaknesses inherent to using each approach by itself. Generally, the researcher used this approach in attempt to ensure comprehensiveness and better understanding of the issue.

A. Quantitative Research

Quantitative is a type of research method which roots on the measurement of quantity or amount (Kothari, 2004). Creswell (1994) defined quantitative as an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures.

The greatest strength of quantitative research enables the researcher to produce quantifiable and reliable data that can be usually generalizable to some larger population. It is associated with the rational and objective measurement of observable phenomena (Ashley & Boyed, 2006). This approach is assumed to be relatively better in survey studies as it helps to be more objective, to have higher sample size and minimize possible cost such as material and time (Kothari, 2004). According to Rea and Parker (1997), survey research is usually quantitative because it enables a researcher to generalize about the entire population by making quantitative data taken from a sample of population.

Therefore, the gathered data from quantitative sources would be used to examine information obtaining from federal government PR practitioners by answering the question that what kind of challenge the practitioners have faced.

B. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (1994), assumed to be an exploring and understanding approach that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures. Data typically collected in the participant's setting and the analyzed data inductively building from particulars to general

themes. In this type of research approach, the researcher will be making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure.

Kothari (2004) also states that the qualitative approach of research is concerned with subject assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior, in this situation the researchers' role are understandings and impressions. The approach involves dealing with few individuals to get information. By putting in mind the above points, the researcher studied the challenges of using social media for federal government organizations PR practitioners.

3.2 Population and Sample

The populations of the study are considered to be all practitioners of federal government organizations public relations who found under different cluster in Addis Ababa city.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Determination

The researcher used probability-sampling techniques to determine the sample of population. Especially cluster sampling was used. Cluster sampling is used in statistics when natural groups are present in a population. The researcher sub-divided into clusters, or group's the whole population and then a random sample was selected from each group.

In addition to this, the researcher used purposive sampling to select respondents for semi-structured interview. Kothari (2004) clearly stated that purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study.

According to Ahmed (2009), the population within a cluster should ideally be as heterogeneous as possible, but there should be homogeneity between cluster means. Each cluster should be a small-scale representation of the total population. The clusters should be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. A random sampling technique then will be used on any relevant clusters to choose which clusters to include in the study. In single-stage cluster sampling, all the elements from each of the selected clusters will be used. In two-stage cluster sampling, a random sampling technique applied to the elements from each of the selected clusters.

The number of total population for the study is 453. In order to determine the sample size, the researcher use Taro Yamane (1967) sample selection method with a probability of 95 % confidential level. Based on this method, a total of 213 samples which is 47% drawn from the total population.

$$n_0 = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)} = \frac{453}{1+453(0.05^2)} \approx 213$$

Where

n_0 is the sample size,

N is the total population size,

e is the level of precision

Table 3.1. Total number of population and sample size

Clusters	Total numbers of target population	Sample size
Finance and Economic Cluster	87	41
Agricultural and Industry Cluster	73	34
Infrastructure Cluster	90	42
Social Cluster	110	52
Justice and Democracy Institution Cluster	71	33
Sciences and Communication Technology Cluster	22	11
Total	453	213

$$\text{Distributions} = \frac{\text{no of individual in each cluster offices X sample size}}{\text{Total number of population}}$$

The sample size represents 47% of the total target population. Based on this percentage the sample from each cluster selected proportionately. The respondents from each cluster wereselected by using simple random sampling technique.

3.4 Data Sources and Type

Data was collected from PR practitioners and Directors who are currently working under the different cluster. In the research, both primary and secondary types of data were used. The primary data are questionnaires and interviews. The Secondary data were collected from published journal articles, books, working performances, and documents which are related to PR works may use to substantiate the reliability of the information obtained from the questionnaire.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The data gathering instruments of this study were a questionnaire and interview.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The data-gathering instrument of this study is a questionnaire. Basically, the researcher used the Likert-scaled questionnaire. One of the keys to an effective Likert-scaled questionnaire is respondent persistence (Watson & Noble, 2005). Any item that confuses, threatens, or fatigues a respondent must be reworded or eliminated.

The sequence of statements in a Likert-scaled questionnaire is important: the longer the instrument (i.e., the greater the number of statements included in the left column), the more important item placement becomes. Difficult or emotionally charged items should be placed near the end of the instrument.

The questionnaire is self-administered and was checked by the research's advisor. It systematically categorized in order to make it easily understandable by the respondents. Both open ended and close ended questions were included.

3.5.2 Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain data for further clarity of the research with PRs Directors in the different organization that found under the above cluster with an intention to get detail information about the existing challenges of using social media for public relations practitioners.

The researcher interviewed 10 PRs Directors from all clusters in order to gather most effective information regarding usage of social media in PRs practitioner and challenges which are faced by PR practitioners in their work.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

In order to analyze the data gathered and come up with answers to the research questions, descriptive statistics was employed. The collected questionnaires analyzed statistically with the help of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 22. Moreover, it was summarized by frequencies and percentages. Besides, the qualitative data gathered from the interview was analyzed qualitatively through thematic approach.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), “research participants should not be subjected to harm in anyways and respect for the dignity of research participants should be prioritized.” By considering this, the researcher assured the purpose of the research paper and the confidentiality of any information on the introductory part of the questionnaire. In addition, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents during the data distribution. By the time data distributing and gathering, some respondents may not show a willingness to fill and respond the questionnaire, however, the researcher attempted to convince them by explaining the purpose of the study, and assure the confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Presentations, Analysis and Interpretation

The main objective of this study was to assess the challenges of using social media for PR practitioners the case of federal government organization in Addis Ababa. Specific objectives of the study were to examine the nature of social media usage among PR practitioners, identify challenges of PRs practitioners in social media usage, and investigate PR practitioners' preference of social media to disseminate organizational information.

Primary data was collected from Federal Government Organization PR practitioners and directors by using questionnaire and interview respectively. Secondary data was collected through reviewing of different books, journal articles and manual. The collected data analyzed and described with the help of SPSS version 22. Out of 213 distributed questionnaires, 198 (93%) were returned; two of them were returned blank and 13 questionnaires not returned. The study also employed semi-structured interview with 10 PRsdirectors from all clusters. Then, the data were collected and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative method.

The following table 4.1 shows the responder rate of the questionnaires.

Table 4.1 Response rate

Distributed questionnaires	Responded questionnaires	Questionnaires returned blank	Questionnaire not returned	Total %
213	198	2	13	93

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The personal information of respondents obtained from returned questionnaires are summarized and described as follows.

Table 4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of participants

Items	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	160	80.8
	Female	38	19.2
	Total	198	100.0
Age of respondents	21-25	9	4.5
	26-30	55	27.8
	31-35	58	29.3
	36-40	45	22.7
	More than 40	31	15.7
	Total	198	100.0
Educational Background	Less than diploma	0	0
	Diploma	2	1.0
	Bachelor's Degree	137	69.2
	Master's Degree	59	29.8
	PhD	0	0
	Total	198	100.0
Position	Junior PR officer	18	9.1
	PR officer	50	25.3
	Senior PR	85	42.9
	Team leader	36	18.2
	Other	9	4.5
	Total	198	100.0
Service year	less than a year	12	6.1
	1-2 years	58	29.3
	3-4 years	63	31.8
	more than 4 years	65	32.8
Total		198	100.0

Table 4.1.1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. Accordingly, among 198 respondents (80.8%) are male and (9.2%) are females. This shows that the majority of PR

practitioners are male. In terms of age of the respondents, (29.3%) are between 31-35 years old, (27.8 %) are aged 26-30, (22.7 %) are aged 36-40, 15.7 % of respondents are above 40 years old, and the rest (4.5 %) of respondents are between 21-25 years old. This indicates that most of federal government PR practitioners are youths or at their early adulthoods; therefore, they may have an accepting of new media and social media.

Regarding the educational background of respondents, majorities (69.2 %) are Bachelor's degree holders, (29.8 %) of respondents are Master's Degree holders, and only one percent is in diploma level. This implies that almost all of the respondents are well educated.

In connection with respondents' position, majority of respondents 42.9 percent are Senior PR officers whereas 25.3 percent are PR officers. Respondents who are team leaders are 18.2 percent and 9.1 percent of respondents are Junior PR officers. The rest of the respondents (4.5 %) are working as PR but they are different in the position name.

Concerning service years of respondents, majority (32.8 %) of the respondents was having more than 4 years of working experience while (31.8 %) of respondents have 3 to 4 years' services in PR. In addition, 29.3 percent of respondents have 1 to 2 years of work experience while the remaining PRlo (6.1 %) served their organizations less than a year. From this data, we can understand that majorities' of employees in the organization having enough working experience.

Table 4.1.2 Are you graduate in PR or Journalism and Communication?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	92	46.5
No	106	53.5
Total	198	100.0

From table 4.1.2, we can understand that majority of PR practitioners (53.5 %) are not graduated from PR or Journalism and communication schools while the rest of respondents (46.5 %) are graduated from PR or Journalism and communication schools. This indicates that significant of PR practitioners have no PR or Journalism and communication background.

4.2 Importance of Social Media Platforms Embraced by PRs Practitioners

This section analyzes the use and importance of social media among the PR practitioners.

4.2.1 Use of Social Media in PRs Practice

The following table describes the use of social media in PR practice.

Table 4.2.1 Do you use social media in PR practice?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	194	98.0
No	4	2.0
Total	198	100.0

The table 4.2.1 summarizes the overall analysis of the use of social media in PR officers. As shown table 4.2.1, most (98 %) respondents use social media for PR practice whereas only 2 percent of respondents say they don't use it for PR practice. This implies that social media has perceived as an important tool for federal government organization PR practitioners in order to disseminate information regards their organization. In addition, it demonstrates that they are familiar with new media.

4.2.2 Types of Social Media Mode Used by PRs Practitioners for the Official Purposes

The researcher asked the type of social media platform used by PR for official purpose. Based on the data gathered, PR practitioners used Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram for the official purpose. This is summarized in table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2 Types of social media mode used dominantly by PR practitioners for official purpose

Types of social media	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	180	84.5
Twitter	50	23.5
LinkedIn	21	9.8
Instagram	18	8.4

The summarized table shows us the frequencies of respondents in use of social media platforms. Accordingly, most widely social media platform (84.5%) used by federal government organization PR practitioners is Facebook. 23.5 percent of respondents stated that they dominantly used to Twitter as social media platform in their PR practices. Some respondents (9.8 percent) acknowledged LinkedIn and 8.4 percent of respondents recognized Instagram ranking them as third and fourthly used social media platforms respectively. In addition to this, some PR practitioners added that sometimes they used social media like Tumblr, YouTube, Telegram, Massager, and WhatsApp. This indicates that Facebook is dominating the social media network used by federal government organization PR practitioners for official purpose.

4.2.3 Duration for Using Social Media in the Organization

Table 4.2.3 Duration for using social media in the organization

	Frequency	Percent
less than a year	12	6.1
1-2 years	58	29.3
3-4 years	63	31.8
more than 4 years	65	32.8
Total	198	100.0

PR practitioners differed on the duration of using social media in their work experience. Majority of the respondent (32.8 percent) had been used social media for more than 4 years. 31.8 percent of respondents, on the other hand, used social media between 3 to 4 years for PR works. However, 29.3 percent of respondents used the new media between 1-2 years and 6.1 percent of respondent used it for less than a year. On average 32.3 percent of the respondent used social media more than three years. It implies that PR practitioners have experience in using social media for their PR works.

4.2.4 Number of Social Media Page Likes

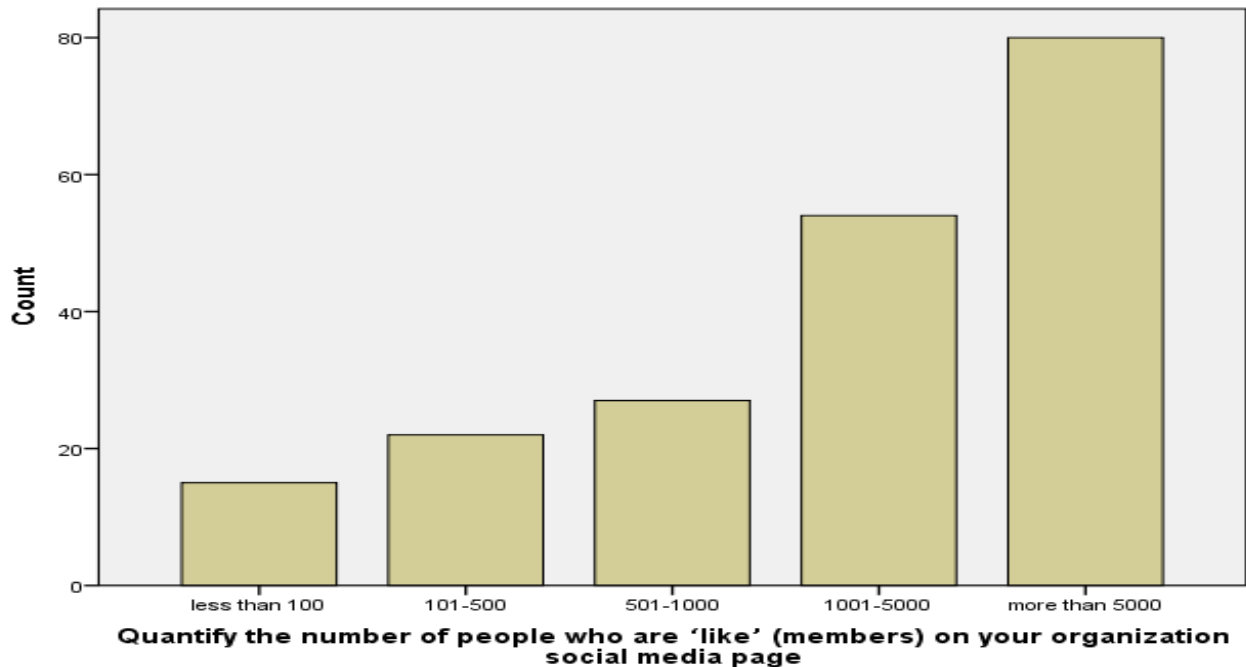
The researcher asked respondents how many people like their organization social media page. This confirms how many people can reach information disseminated by PR. It is analyzed in the following table.

Table 4.2.4 Number of social media page Likes

	Frequency	Percent
less than 100	15	7.6
101-500	22	11.1
501-1000	27	13.6
1001-5000	54	27.3
more than 5000	80	40.4
Total	198	100.0

Obviously, people who like the page can get the information posted by the admin. Based on this fact, the result summarized in table 4.2.4 shows that majority (40.4 percent) of respondents have more than 5000 followers. Besides, 27.3 percent of respondents have between 1001 to 5000 people who like their pages. Furthermore, 13.6 percent of respondents acknowledged between 501 to 1000 members like their organizational social media page while 11.1 percent of respondents agreed between 101 to 500 people like their page. The list number (7.6 percent) of PR practitioners responded that less than 100 people like their preferred organization social media page. The analysis implies that information disseminated by PR practitioners can reach so many followers at once. This can be demonstrated shortly in the following figure.

Figure 1: PRs practitioners' response to the number of people who like their social media page



4.2.5 Social Media Use Enhanced Service Delivery in the Organization

The study also required to determine the use of social media can enhance service delivery in the organization. It was allowed respondents to choose either yes or no. This can be summarized in the following manner.

Table 4.2.5: Social media use enhanced service delivery in the organization

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	177	89.4
No	21	10.6
Total	198	100.0

Table 4.2.5 shows us, most PR practitioners (89.4 percent) believed that social media use enhanced service delivery in their organization whereas 10.6 percent of the respondent didn't agree that social media use enhances their organization service delivery. The reason of respondents agreed on using social media to enhance service delivery in their organizations was social media allow to access and disseminate their organizational information for customers. For instance, it is important to inform organizational service to the public. This indicates that PR practitioners understand the importance of social media to satisfy their organization customs by enhancing service delivery.

4.2.6 Knowing the Importance of Social Media Usage for Federal Government Organization PR Practitioners

Table 4.2.6 The importance of social media usage

No.	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Social media informs and educates the public on the services we offered	52.2%	42.9%	4%	0.5%	0%
2	Social media is promoting goodwill of our organization through conversation and interactivity	39.4%	50%	8.6%	1.5%	0.5%
3	Social media facilitates corporate communication through two-way communication to enhance understanding to the public in our organization	40.4%	46%	11.1%	2%	0.5%
4	Social media helps in countering negative publicity in our organization	31.8%	42.4%	19.7%	4%	2%
5	Social media allows equal access to public information	24.2%	37.4%	16.7%	16.2%	5.6%
6	Social media facilitates transparency, accountability and timely response	19.2%	39.9%	19.2%	16.2%	5.6%
7	Social media improves the role of a public relations practitioner through experience	40.4%	50.5%	7.1%	2.0%	0%

The researcher tried to find out practitioners' knowledge of the importance of social media. The analysis shows that majority (79.5 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media inform and educate the public regarding their services; promote goodwill of the organization; facilitates corporate communication through two-way communication; helps in countering negative publicity; allows equal access to public information; facilitates transparency, accountability and timely response; and improves the role of PR practitioner through experience. This implies that most federal government organization PR practitioners were aware of the importance of social media in their organization.

4.3 Preference of Social Media Tools Employed in PR Practice in the Organizations

4.3.1 The Most Preferred Social Media Platform in your Organization

The researcher also asked to know which social media mode is preferred by Federal Government Organization PR officers. All PR practitioners responded that Facebook as the most preferred social media mode for their organization. The reason for the preference of Facebook from different social media platform is; to reach so many customers, stockholders, and the people at large easily. Most Ethiopian people preferred Facebook from many other types of social media. In addition, it disseminates words, pictures, and videos at once. Thus, it serves as media convergence. This indicates that Federal Government Organization PRs practitioners preferred this social media platform to get their majorities of target audiences.

4.3.2 Using Social Media on a Daily PRs Practice

The researcher sought to determine whether PRs practitioners use social media on daily PRs practice or not. The result is shown in the following table below.

Table 4.3.2 Do you use social media on a daily basis as in your PRs practice

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	168	84.8
No	30	15.2
Total	198	100.0

Most respondents (84.8 percent) use social media on a daily basis whereas 15.2 percent of PR practitioners not used social media on a daily basis. It implies that most PR practitioners used social media as a tool for PRs activities.

4.3.3 PR Activities Done on Social Media

The study is also interested to know about Federal Government Organization PRs messages disseminated by social media. Respondents had been privileged to select more than one message. This can be summarized by counting the frequencies which were selected more than once.

Table 4.3.3 PR activities done on social media

PR activities	Frequency	Percent
Disseminating news	157	73.7
Promoting organizational services and products	133	62.4
Creating awareness regarding national policies and strategies	89	41.8
Working on country image building	90	42.2

N.B. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option

When the researcher asked which PRs activities are done in social media, majorities (73.7 percent) of PR practitioners stated that they use it for disseminating organizational news. Promoting organizational services and products put in second place (62.4 percent). Some (42.2 percent) of PR practitioners accorded using it for country image building whereas 41.8 percent of the respondent indicated that they use it for creating awareness regarding national policies and strategies. According to the above data, federal government organization PR practitioners used social media to deliver information regarding organizational news, promoting organizational services and products, awareness creating on national policies and strategies, and country image building. However, most of the time PR practitioners used social media to disseminating news, their organization plan, performance, events, and different new or current activities.

4.3.4 Updating Organizational Information Posted on Social Media

The study also required to determine the frequency of updating organizational information posted on social media. PR practitioners were to choose from options daily, three times a week, twice a week, and weekly. Their responses were summarized in the following table.

Table 4.3.4. How frequently do update your organizations' information posted on social media?

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	81	40.9
Three times a week	37	18.7
Twice a week	21	10.6
Weekly	59	29.8
Total	198	100.0

The results show that majorities (40.9 percent) of the respondents update the organization information daily while 29.8 percent of respondents update the information weekly. Besides, 18.7 percent of the respondent updates three times a week whereas 10.6 percent of the respondent update twice a week. Certain practitioners responded that they update organizational information monthly. The result of analysis implies that PR practitioners are active in updating their information.

4.3.5 Preferred Social Media Mode by PR When Responding to Complaints and Critical Comments on Social Media

The preferred social media to respond about complaints and critical comments are Facebook as most PRs practitioners responded. Their summarized reason is, it easily accessible for target audiences or followers. It also allows getting complaints and commenting and responding timely.

4.3.6 Public Relations and Social Media

In order to know about specific use of social media, the respondents were provided with statements to select based on whether they strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. PR officers select what they agree or disagree based on the statement given. The outcome is summarized in table 4.3.6 below.

No.	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Publics seek information on services offered in your organization	48%	44.9%	4.5%	2.5%	0%
2	Through use of social media the organization gives updates on information of service	35.9%	58.1%	4%	1.5%	0.5%
3	Our PR officers research through social media to find on publics attitudes/ opinions	20.7%	37.9%	25.8%	11.6%	4%
4	Social media is used by PR to interact with publics	29.8%	56.6%	12.1%	1%	0.5%
5	Social media is used to research on better way of relating with the public by PR	18.2%	48%	28%	4%	1%

	officers						
6	Directorate meeting focus on feedback from social media	14.6%	33.8%	29.3%	18.2%	4%	
7	PR officers spend more time writing on social media platform than other tasks	13.1%	30.3%	24.2%	23.2%	9.1%	
8	PR officers in future will need to take training on social media	66.2%	26.3%	3.5%	2.5%	1.5%	

We can understand from the table that, PR used social media in a number of ways. The reasons for the use of social media presented in high percentage were to give information. Majorities (48%) of respondents who strongly agreed and 44.9 percent who agreed stated this. Highest number (58.1%) of respondent stated that the use of social media in the organization is to give updates on information of service. Similarly, 56.6% of respondent stated that social media is used by PR to interact with public. On the other hand, statements like directorate meeting on social media, PRs officers spend more time writing on social media, and research through social media had low rates.

In a special case, most (66.2%) of respondents strongly agreed that PR officers in the future need to take training on social media. The overall analysis indicates that PR practitioners used social media but they don't intensively conduct research on it to find out public attitude. In addition, they have no consistent meetings which focus on feedback from social media. Furthermore, PR officers spend more time writing on other tasks than social media platforms.

4.4 challenges of PR Practitioners in Social Media Usage

This section is the heart of the study. It is brought from open-ended question of the questionnaire. The questions focused on opportunity and challenges of using social media in PR practice. The respondents allowed to give their response in the narration way. Therefore, the analysis provided qualitatively as shown below.

4.4.1. Opportunities to Use Social Media in PR Practice

When the researcher asks the opportunities of using social media, all PR practitioners responded that they have a desktop or Laptop computer. It is the first thing to use social media. Without a computer, no one can disseminate any information regards the organization services and

products. Besides this, information availability is the other important input to use social media. Every Federal Government Organization has information whether it is enough or not. Thus, the respondent secondly mentioned available information from their organization help to use social media. Furthermore, internet access is a vital one to use social media. However, most of the respondent agreed on sometimes there is an internet disconnection in their organization.

The establishment or creating a social media page, especially Facebook was an opportunity to use the new media as many respondents agreed. The growing numbers of people using social media were also an opportunity for PR practitioners. They are encouraged to impart any information regarded their organization and countrywide, policy, law, strategy, and image building.

Having different events also acknowledged as an opportunity of using social media by PR practitioners. The event may be organizational or national events. Those events enhance to use social media in order to provide for the public. From the event, PR practitioners collect information, pictures, and video. Then those messages disseminated by PR practitioners using social media convergent.

4.4.2 Challenges of Using Social Media for PR

Most respondents acknowledge the challenges of using social media for PR activities in the following manner. Slow or weak internet connection was the major challenges of using social media for PR work. PR is the mouth of the organization. According to Institute of Ombudsman (2008), a proclamation to provide for freedom of the mass media and access to information (proclamation No. 590/2008), PR is a responsible person to disseminate any information regarding the organization. The proclamation also recognizes that no one can give organization information without the consent of PR.

To disseminate the information easily and to reach so many people timely, social media is the preferred media. Thus, internet connection should be available every time.

Some PRs practitioners responded that the absence of a responsible person, who manages social media, is the challenge of using social media. It helps to post organizational as well as national information and different important documents which is helpful for the audience. In addition, it

needs to follow up on the information and received comments and suggestions from customers and stockholders. Then give a response to them. If there are false information concerns to the organization, it is a duty of a responsible person to give a response to that false information by posting the true version of it. Related to this, managing false information which is disseminated via social media especially through Facebook page is also a challenge for some respondents.

Some other responded that top management did not give attention to social media. It is a bottleneck to practice PR activities used through social media. Even they did not recognize the organization social media page. This affects the rest of the staff. It has an impact to boost the page and getting plenty of followers. Therefore, it has an influence on PR practice of using social media.

The false organizational pages were also challenges of using social media for some PR practitioners. They said that peoples create a Facebook page by using their organizational logo. Because of the similarity of the page, customers confused to identify the real page. This becomes a problem for PRs practitioners to convince their audiences.

The other major challenge of PR practitioners for using social media is the lack of skilled manpower in this area. PR practitioners should have knowledge about how to use new media. The information to be posted should also be very attractive. The text, picture, and video we used must be represented with one and the same. Knowing the current states of the page, giving feedback, how to boosting the page, uploading and downloading information and other related usages are significant for users.

Some other PR practitioners responded that they are forced to post only positive information on their social media. They commanded to the side for their organization. But they believed that they gradually lose their follower. Their audience turned to other media. Shortage of electric power also the challenge of using social media as PR practitioners responded. It is a problem to post organizational and national information timely. It makes weak performance the activities of PRs. They dominated by privet sectors.

To some extent, a shortage of information or unworthy of information was also a challenge for some PRs practitioners to use social media. Information should be updated continuously to become competent with others. Public relations gets information from the organization. If not, it

is difficult to the existence of PR in that organization. Obviously, the activities of Public relations are based on the performance of the institute. Poor ICT infrastructure was also a basic point which is raised by PRs practitioners' regards a challenge for using social media. ICT infrastructure is fundamental for PRs to exercise social media as a tool for PRs activities.

Deliberate disconnection of internet during violence appeared in the country is also the challenge for PR practitioners for using social media. Especially, when there was a state of emergency proclaimed in the country. Some PRs said political difference among the staff affects the usage of social media in the organization. Even though PR have their own political ideology, the situation did not allow posting what they want. Therefore, fear also a challenge of using social media as part of some PRs practitioners.

4.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

The interview data was obtained from 10 Federal Government Organizations PRs Directors from all clusters. The response of them has been summarized below.

4.5.1 Types of Social Media Platforms Used

The study needed to know which type of social media platform is used by Federal Government Organization PR practitioners. Accordingly, all of the interviewees had responded that Facebook is a social media platform used in their directorate. This response is similar to PR practitioners. In addition to this, some respondents answered Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram also other social media platforms sometimes used by PRs Directors and practitioners. This indicates that Facebook is a preferred social media for Federal Government Organizations.

4.5.2 The Reasons for Using Social Media

The researcher asked PR Directors why they use social media in their directorates. Respondents said they use it to disseminate organizational information. In addition, they responded that it helps to inform and educate the public and create awareness regarding their organization duties, responsibilities, services delivery, strategic plans, and so on. Some PR Directors responded that it needed to call for meeting (plan and performance), forum, and events the organization customers and stakeholders. For instance one of the respondents said the following:

“Our customers and stakeholders know our organizations’ Facebook page. They reached organizational information posted on our page. We also received their feedbacks through our Facebook page. So, social media make it easy for us to communication with our customers and stakeholders’ timely and cost effectively.”

Some respondents also believed that it is important to reach many people at once. This is crucial to connect people and developing relationships with customers, stakeholders, and Journalists. It also provides a great opportunity to establish customer service by gathering input, answering questions and listening to their feedback. They added that social media allows to get the organization message out to our target audience faster. They can create content and share information immediately, whether it’s a news announcement or other information for story ideas. Some other respondents also believed that the reason for using social media is because it is cost-effective. One among PR Director gives his reason by saying in short “It is easy to practice PR works.”

4.5.3 PR Activities carried out by Using Social Media

Respondents were also asked about what PR activities are carried out by using social media. Majority of respondents said organizational plan and performances are carried out by social media in the form of news. Besides, organizational policies and strategies, procedure, services, products, pieces of training given by the organization, awareness creations, events and other organization activities which are allowed to publicize are carried out by using social media.

Some respondents also answered country image building is another PR activity. So, by using social media, country developments, peace, and democracy are disseminated. They also said awareness creation on constitution, federalism, policies, and strategies carried out by using social media, especially Facebook. Some respondents responded that soft copy printed materials like newsletters, newspapers, magazines, articles, and leaflets are disseminated by using social media. “We can carry out every PR activities by using social media. The only thing is arranging the data into text, photo, and video” said one of the selected PRs directors of federal organization.

4.5.4 Social Media Page Followers

The researcher asked PR Directors that how many people follow their social media page. Their response varied according to their boosting capacity. It ranges from 1000 to 103 thousand followers. An organization which has fewer followers is counted in 1000 while the highest numbers of followers are counted 103 thousand. This implies that each Federal Government Organization is not at a similar pace for using social media and the number of people reaches their information disseminated by social media.

4.5.5 How Social Media are used as a Tool for PR Activities

All respondents were agreed social media are used as a tool for PR activities. However, they differ on how it is. They responded based on their knowledge about social media. Some respondents said that social media is easy to disseminate information. Print and broadcast media were serving as a tool for PRs to disseminate information for a long time. But, nowadays, social media is additional media to impart information for the public. It is new media that so many people are engaged to seek current information and responded to feedback timely. Thus, they responded that it is a new media tool for PR activities.

Others responded that to provide promotion without cost, social media is preferred than print and broadcast media. The reason is those traditional media are costly to promote organizational products and services. However, in social media especially Facebook you can promote without cost. Thus, social media work as a tool for PR promotional activity with cost-effectiveness. Similarly, one among PR Directors said:

“As we know PR used print, broadcast, and social media but social media is better than traditional media. Because we can disseminate information by using social media which are published in print materials and broadcasted. So, I recommended to all PR workers to use social media as a major tool for their works.”

Some other respondents said that social media facilitates corporate communication through two-way communication. This enhances understanding of the public in the organization. It is relevant to receive feedback from the followers. This is also important to adjust the practice of PR in order to stay with the audience.

Other PR Directors responded that social media allows PRs to be stronger and more impactful through amplifies organizational message in real time. With the help of social media, PR can impart news releases and other PR activities; and those activities are spread faster and at the same time, it reaches more people. So, PR Directors acknowledged that social media has allowed PR to reach a much larger audience.

4.5.6 Opportunities to Use Social Media

The researcher tried to know opportunities of using social media for PR works. PR Directors responded that Computer and Laptop availability is primary opportunities to use social media for PR works. At list there is a disk top computer in each PR officers. In addition, there are an audiovisual materials (video and photo cameras) and verities of videos and photos. These data are opportunities to be post on social media. One among PR director from the interviewee said:

“Facilities are very important to accomplish your work. Computer and Laptop are basic materials for PR activities in order to use social media. Each and every PR practitioners have at list disk top computer. This is an opportunity in my organization to organize formations which are posted on social media. Thus, I believe this ICT materials are opportunities.”

Some PR directors justified that current affairs and event availabilities in their organization also another opportunity for them. This helps to update the information which was posted on the page. Moreover, some other PR directors responded that customers and stakeholders needs and request of information about the organization also an opportunity to use social media. They added that internet connection is mandatory to use social media. Accordingly, availability of internet access (sometimes) in the organization is a chance to use social media.

Availability of human resource in the directorate is also an opportunity to use social media for some PR directors. They said that to accomplish any activities, existence of experts in the expected area is relevant for that position. Likewise, in the organization there are PR practitioners who use social media as a tool for PR works. Therefore, the presences of adequate PR employee in the organization make an opportunity to use social media. “Because nothing is done without human resource” said one among the interviewee.

4.5.7 Challenges to Use Social Media

The main focused of the researcher is assessing the challenge of using social media for PR practitioners. For this question the majority of respondent agreed upon lack of skilled manpower as a challenge for using social media. Respondents said that knowledge and skill for using social media is the basic thing. But both knowledge and skill do not exist in the ground. For instance, there is a lack of uploading information, creativity, and convergence and make attractive posted information. One Federal Government Organization PR Director supported the above idea by saying:

“Everything that will be posted in the page is given for an employee who has an admin. The data may have text, photo, and video. To make the posted data attractive and in convergent way, it needs skill. In addition, it also relevant having knowledge how to upload the text and photo together.”

Less attention of top management for social media also a challenge for using social media as some respondents said. To reach the majority of people, boosting its capacity is essential. To do this, the budget should be allocated. Because of the less attention of top management for social media, it is not done. Thus, it becomes a bottleneck for using social media. One among PR Directors who responded on challenges of using social media said:

“Anything in the organization should seek support and direction of top management. If the top management accepts the work, budget will be allocated for that activity. But, in our organization the reverse is true. The top management focus is tilted in traditional media which are publishing magazines, newspaper, leaflets, booklets, and other printed materials.”

Internet connection problem is also sometimes a challenge for some respondents. This problem makes the news couldn't be fresh. It can't address organization information for target audience timely. So, it loses two-way communication with the public. In addition, some respondents held social media is discriminatory because the information which is disseminated are delivered only who have smartphone and internet connection. Therefore, this is another challenge of using social media.

The main challenges held by the majority of respondents were a fake page similar to their real page and fake news. It is a problem to be credible on the eye of the public. It also creates confusion for followers. So, to convince the public, it becomes very difficult.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

This study was conducted with the aim of assessing the challenges of using social media among PR practitioners in federal government organizations in Addis Ababa. As the topic indicates, the purpose of this study was to identify challenges of PR practitioners in social media usage. In addition, the research was intended to examine the nature of social media usage among PR practitioners and investigate PR practitioners' preference of social media to disseminate organizational information. It was also valid to apply media ecology and social penetration theories as the theoretical framework of the research.

For this particular study descriptive mixed research design involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed. The data were collected through both questionnaires and interview. The study used cluster sampling and each cluster was selected by using simple random sampling technique. Purposive sampling also used to select respondents for semi-structured interview.

The respondents were selected from federal government organizations PR directors and practitioners. The sample PR practitioners filled questionnaires and the selected PR directors involved in semi-structured interview. Aged above 21, and has educational background ranging from college diploma to MA degrees. In connection with their positions, respondents' were PR directors, team leaders, Senior PR officers, PR officers, and Junior PR officers.

Both results obtained from questionnaires and interview confirmed that most (98 %) respondents use social media for PRs practice. They used Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram social network sites for the official purpose. But, most widely social media platform (84.5%) used by federal government organization PR Directors and practitioners are Facebook.

As the findings indicates, regarding with preference of social media to disseminate organizational information, all PR Directors and practitioners responded that Facebook as the most preferred social media platform for their organization. Their reasons were: it is easy to

reach so many customers, stockholders, and the people at large; most Ethiopian people preferred Facebook from many other types of social media; and Facebook disseminates texts, images, audio, and videos at once.

Finally, the study indicated that lack of skilled manpower, less attention of top management, internet connection problem, false organizational pages, shortage of electric power, shortage of information or unworthy of information, poor ICT infrastructure, deliberate disconnect of the internet, lack of skill to use media convergence, and lack of knowledge for boosting the page were found to be challenges of PR practitioners in federal government organizations' in use Social Media.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that Federal Government Organization PR practitioners used social media in their PR practice. Based on the information obtained through the questionnaire and semi-structured interview; the researcher analyzed the data by using both quantitative and qualitative data analyzed method. The researchers found challenges of PR practitioners for using social media. Based on the finding of the study, the researcher came up with the following conclusion and recommendations.

Almost all (98 percent) of the PR practitioners used social media. The most preferred social media for all PR practitioners is Facebook. Some of them also used Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube, Telegram, Massager, and WhatsApp. Majority of respondents (64.6 percent) had more than three years of experience on using social media. This implies that PR practitioners understood the importance of social media in their PR practice. They are not new for using social media.

Accordingly, the majority (40.4 percent) of respondents have more than 5000 followers. As found in the interview, the highest numbers of followers were counted 103 thousand. So, their information was delivered timely for their target audience. In addition, most (89.4 percent) of respondents also assured that the use of social media enhanced organization service delivery. Thus, they tried to satisfy their customers by imparting organization services and products. PR said that they called meeting their customers and stakeholder by using social media.

Majority (79.5%) of respondents agreed on social media power to inform and educate the public regarding services; promote the goodwill of the organization; facilitates corporate communication through two-way communication; helps in countering negative publicity; allows equal access to public information; facilitates transparency, accountability, and timely response; and improves the role of PR practitioner through experience. This also implies that federal government organization PR practitioners were aware on the importance of social media usage.

The study also assessed that the majority (73.7 percent) of PR practitioners used social media to disseminate news, their organization plan, performance, events, and different new or current activities. Sometimes they used social media to deliver information like organizational services and products, awareness creating on national policies and strategies, and country image building. This means that PRs used social media to disseminate organizational news more than promoting, awareness creation, and country image building activities.

However, more than 50 percent of the respondents have not updated the organization information daily. This is because there is a shortage of information and weak or slow internet connection in their organizations. This is a challenge of PR practitioners for using social media. Besides, based on the respondents, Facebook was their preferred and most used platform to practice their works. This indicates that most of the time other social media platforms had not been given service for PR works.

In general, PR practitioners understand the importance of social media for PR practices but they mostly used only social network site called Facebook. It implies that they didn't use an alternative social media platform for their organization PR practice. Organization audiences and customers couldn't get information with other social media mode. The other finding was most of the time directorate meeting not focused on feedback from social media. It indicates they used social media to disseminate information only. They didn't emphasize on customers and other audiences comments. This cannot improve their PR works. Moreover, majority (66.2 percent) of respondent were strongly agreed on future training need of PR officers on social media.

In conclusion, the open-ended and interview question were shown as similar challenges of Federal Government Organization PR practitioners for using social media. These are: lack of skilled manpower, less attention given by top management, internet connection problem, false

organizational pages, forced to post only positive information, shortage of electric power, shortage of information or unworthy of information, poor ICT infrastructure, deliberate disconnect of the internet, unskilled to use media convergence, lack of knowledge for boosting the page, and fear to express self-political ideology by using social media.

5.3 Recommendations

The study shows that there are challenges that are faced by Federal Government Organization PR practitioners to use social media and to practice their professions. Hence, in order to overcome those challenges, the researcher recommended the following points;

- PRs practitioners are experienced in traditional media. Social media are new for PR. It needs the skill to use in an attractive way. So the researcher recommended that every PR practitioners should take training regarding the use of social media.
- Top management is the decision makers of the organization. They are information primary sources of the institution. To deliver their organization information for their customers and stockholders timely, social media is nowadays a significant tool. Accordingly, they should encourage PRs practitioners to work on social media.
- To use social media, internet connection is a basic facility. In other words, nothing is done by social media without an internet connection. It is the heart of using social media. Therefore, the researcher highly recommended that internet connection should available in each organization to increase PR activities.
- False or fake accounts have highly tempted the truth of Facebook accounts. This can be avoided by boosting the real account otherwise it will confuse with false or fake account. Therefore, organizations should work to boost their account.
- The government, in general, should support each organization by facilitating every ICT infrastructures to improve PR use of social media.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX –A

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

QUESTIONNEIR FOR GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION PR PRACTITIONERS

Dear Respondents,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the research project entitled “challenges of using social media for federal government organization PR practitioners.” Your genuine and accurate responses will have great contribution to the findings of the research. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give genuine answers to the questions below. This questionnaire is only for research conducted in partial fulfillment of award of degree of Masters at school of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University. It will not be used for any other purpose. I would like to thank you in advance.

Instructions

- ✓ Please spare a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below
- ✓ Kindly tick or answer the questions correctly
- ✓ Do not write your name. Any information given will be treated with utmost confidence.

Section 1: Background Information

Tick in the appropriate box

1. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. How old are you? ☐ 21-25 years of age ☐ 26-30 years of age ☐ 31-35 years of age
☐ 36-40 years of age ☐ 41 years of age or older
3. What is your highest educational qualification-accomplishment?
☐ Less than diploma ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's degree
☐ Doctorate degree
4. Are you a graduate in PR or Journalism and Communication? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. What is your position in the PR Directorate of your Organization?
☐ Junior PR officer ☐ PR officer ☐ Senior PR officer ☐ Team leader

If other specify.....

6. How long have you been in the public relations Directorate?
☐ Less than a year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3-5 years ☐ 6-8 years ☐ More than 9 years

Section 2: Measuring the relevance of social media usage for PR practice in Government Organizations.

Objective: to analyze the importance of social media platforms embraced by PR practitioners.

- Do you use social media in PR practice? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Which of the following modes of social media do you use for official purpose (if more than one tick)
☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ LinkedIn ☐ Instagram
Others, state.....
- How long have use been using social media in your organization?
☐ Less than a year ☐ 3-4 years
☐ 1-2 years ☐ More than 5 years
- Quantify the number of people who are ‘like’ (**members**) on your organization social media page.
☐ Less than 100 ☐ 101-500 ☐ 501-1000 ☐ 1001-5000 ☐ more than 5001
- Do you think social media use has enhanced service delivery in your organization?
☐ Yes ☐ No
Explain your answer above.....
- Please tick appropriate box in response on how you agree or disagree with the statement given.

Key: **SA**- Strongly Agree **A**- Agree **UD**- Undecided
D- Disagree **SD**- Strongly Disagree

No.	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Social media informs and educates the public on the					

	services we offered					
2	Social media is promoting goodwill of our organization through conversation and interactivity					
3	Social media facilitates corporate communication through two-way communication to enhance understanding to the public in our organization					
4	Social media helps in countering negative publicity in our organization					
5	Social media allows equal access to public information					
6	Social media facilitates transparency, accountability and timely response					
7	Social media improves the role of a public relations practitioner through experience					

Section 3: Examining preference of social media tools employed in PR practice.

Objective: to investigate factors for preference of social media tools employed in PR practice in the organizations.

- Which is the most preferred social media mode in your organization?-----
- Do you use social media on daily basis as in your PR practice? ☐Yes ☐No
Explain your answer above.....
.....
- Which of the following activities are done in social media by the PR officers?
☐Disseminating news
☐Promoting organizational services and products
☐Creating awareness regarding national policies and strategies
☐Working on country image building
Others, state.....
- How frequently do update your organizations information posted on social media?
☐Daily ☐three times a week☐ twice a week ☐weekly
- Which is the preferred social media mode by PR officers when responding to complaints and critical comments on social media?.....
Why? (explain your answer).....

6. Please tick on how you agree or disagree on the statement below.

Key: **SA**- Strongly Agree **A**- Agree **UD**- Undecided

D- Disagree **SD**- Strongly Disagree

No.	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Publics seek information on services offered in your organization					
2	Through use of social media the organization gives updates on information of service					
3	Our PR officers research through social media to find on publics attitudes/ opinions					
4	Social media is used by PR to interact with publics					
5	Social media is used to research on better way of relating with the public by PR officers					
6	Directorate meeting focus on feedback from social media					
7	PR officers spend more time writing on social media platform than other tasks					
8	PR officers in future will need to take training on social media					

Section 4: Identify challenges of PR practitioners in social media usage.

1. What are opportunities to use social media in PR practice?

Explain your answer.....

.....

2. What challenges you faced in using social media?

Explain your answer.....

.....

Thank you once again for your time and cooperation!

If you have anything else you wish to add in regard to the subject of this questionnaire that might help me?

APPENDIX –B

Interview

This interview prepared to PR Directors in an attempt to understand the challenges of using social media for federal government PR practitioners. It may take 30 minutes of your time.

1. Which types of social media platforms are used in your directorate?
2. What are the reasons for using social media in your organization?
3. What are the PR activities carried out by the use of social media?
4. How many people follow your social media page?
5. Do you think that social media is a tool for PR activities? How?
6. What are the opportunities of using social media in PR practice?
7. What challenges do you face using social media for your organization?