



Addis Ababa University

**SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF NEWS: THE CASE OF
ETHIO TELECOM'S HEAD OFFICE WORKERS**

AMBAYE BIRHANU TEDLLA

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
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DECLARATION

I hereby declared that this thesis entitled “Social media as a source of News: The case of ethio telecom’s head office workers” is my own effort. In compliance with internationally accepted practices, I have dually acknowledged and referenced all materials used in this work.

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Ambaye Birhanu Tedlla carried out his research work on the topic entitled “Social media as a source of News: The case of ethio telecom’s head office workers”. In my view, this work is the original work of Ambaye Birhanu Tedlla and qualifies for submission in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication.

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June 2019

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

UGC- User Generated Content

TV- Television

US- United States

FRC- Federal Radio Commission

PDF- Portable Document Format

SNS- Social Network Site

UK- United Kingdom

UGT- Uses and Gratification Theory

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

E-mail- Electronic Mail

BBC- British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN- Cable News Network

ABC- American Broadcasting Company

CBC- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

PBS- Public Broadcasting Service

Abstract

The main objective of the study was to examine the use of social media as a source of news focusing on ethio telecom's head office workers. Out of the total population of ethio telecom's head office workers, 377 participants were selected using systematic sampling technique. In addition, six interviewees were selected using purposive sampling technique. Questionnaires and semi-structured interview were conducted to collect data from the respondents. The data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics method. The findings were presented in the form of chart, graph and table. The data gained through interview were also analyzed qualitatively. The findings show that the main purpose of using social media for ethio telecom head office workers is collecting news and other kinds of information via smartphones. Majorities prefer to access news from media organizations account, which seems and conforms credible. The largest portion of respondents confirm that social media is a likable platform to deliver news fast. To that point, most of the respondents express that they do have knowledge about certain methods of verification which couldn't be practically applied. Therefore, based on the above conclusion the researcher recommends that the target users need to develop skills for practical applications of verification before and after reception of social media news.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on some basic parts of the research such as background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance, scope, limitation and organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the study

Information is vital for human being to improve their life and to know what is going around and abroad (Adane, 2012). Considering this, Karknu (2015, p.8) stated that the most important function of journalism is to convey information. Conveying information is an important part of the democratic decision-making system, as it brings transparency into society and for its part makes sure that the made decisions go along with the people's sense of justice.

People can gather information from sources like mainstream media and social media. According to Adane (2012), mass media particularly television, radio and newspaper are primary sources of information and most of the broadcast media start their transmission by the news. Westerman, Spence and Heide (2014) had also stated that social media are increasingly being used as an information source.

Yuan (2011) as quoted by Miller (n.d.), stated that news consumption over social media and traditional media simultaneously emerge in the information gathering process. The two types of platforms work in relation to each other in terms of information dispersal and consumption.

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 is 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 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Social media is classified into six groups. These are: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The emergence of social media has brought many advantages for the people who are using the platform. As it is listed by Baruah (2012, p.8), some of the advantages of social media are sharing ideas, tool of communication, bridges communication gap, source of information, important marketing tool, important customer interaction tool, important crisis communication tool, low costs/ cost effective and less time consuming.

Similarly, Amedie (2015), has also stated the importance of social media as follows.

Social media is a new forum that brings people to exchange idea, connect with, relate to and mobilize for a cause, seek advice, and offer guidance. Social media has removed communication barriers and created a decentralized communication channel and open the door for all to have a voice and participate in a democratic fashion including people in repressive countries. This media outlet accommodates a wide variety spontaneous, formal, informal, scholarly and unscholarly writings to flourish. (Amedie, 2015, p.3)

According to Safko and Brake (2009) cited by Wangu (2014, p.4), social media is a collection of online technologies that allow users to share insights, experiences and opinions with one another. The sharing can be in the form of text, audio, video or multimedia.

Social media are not only widely used to share experiences and stay in touch with friends and family. They also play an increasingly important role as sources of news as more and more people come across news on these platforms (Nielsen, Cornia & Kalogeropoulos, 2016).

Several newer technology developments are shaping new news media. Social media sites and blogs have helped the news become a social experience in fresh ways for the public. People use their social networks to filter, assess and react to news (Howe, 2011, p.9).

Howe (2011, p.9), added that online news consumers receive and send news through social media tools such as Twitter, blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and search engines. These tools elevate the public from news receivers to news contributors.

Ethiopia is formally connected to the internet in January 1997, with the internet service provider Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, now ethio telecom (Atnafu, 2014).

According to the data posted on ethio telecom Facebook page, “Digital 2019” report by “hootsuite & we are social” reported that Ethiopia has registered a 61% increment in social media users in the year 2019, ranked second-best next to Western Sahara in growth rate. Accordingly, a total number of social media users, until end of March 2019, has reached 10.6 million (ethio telecom, 2019).

In addition, the report also stated that the governments intent in using social media platforms as a source of information and a means of transmission has attracted a large number of social media users (ethio telecom, 2019).

Taking the prompt increase in the number of social media users and the use of social media as a source of news to account, this paper attempted to examine the use of social media as a source of news primarily focusing on ethio telecom’s head office workers.

1.2. Statement of the problem

"New technologies simplify the process of creating or receiving news via social networks. Users who are immersed in social media are likely to be more open to receiving news and information via their networked circles, from both peers and journalists" (Bullard, 2015, pp.171-172).

According to Matsa and Shearer (2018), about two-thirds of American adults (68%) get news from social media. In addition, Martin (2018) said that social media sites have become the main source of news online with more than 2.4 billion internet users, nearly 64.5 percent receive breaking news from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram instead of traditional media.

Similarly, across the entire sample of the survey reported in Reuters, 51% say they use social media as a source of news each week. Around 12% say it is their main source. Facebook is by far the most important network for finding, reading/watching, and sharing news (Newman, Fletcher, Levy & Nielsen, 2016).

Taking this into consideration, media organizations engage in using the social media platform for disseminating news. Bullard (2013), stated that news organizations are adapting to the new world of sharing news and information on social networks. The rise in the number of journalists with

social media editor titles indicates that news organizations are thinking about social media strategically and taking it seriously.

Likewise, although media companies were initially protective of their online content, they had come to terms with the advantages of viral media by the time Facebook opened its software platform to media and application developers. The New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN, ABC, CBS, and PBS all can be found on Facebook (Gangadharbatla, Bright & Logan, 2014, p.46).

Facebook refers to a significant amount of traffic to three of the top ten news websites. Specifically, Facebook generates 7% of the CNN traffic, 6% of the New York Times traffic, and 7% of the ABC News traffic (Gangadharbatla, Bright & Logan, 2014, p.46).

Similarly, users who get news online say they specifically get news from news organizations and individual journalists they follow in the social networking space (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchel, Rosenstiel & Olmstead, 2010).

In Ethiopia also, social media is being widely used, and media organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, journalists, public figures etc. are using the social media platform to release news and other related information.

Although it was stated that social media play an increasingly important role as sources of news (Nielsen, Cornia & Kalogeropoulos, 2016), many fake accounts are being opened.

As it is stated by Wani, Kirmani and Ansarulla (2016), 20% to 40% of the user profiles available on Facebook are fake profiles. With the fast growth of users, fake profiles/users have also grown.

Currently, in Ethiopia also fake accounts opened by the name of media organizations and celebrities are being emerged. For instance, Fana Broadcasting Corporate has announced on November 20, 2018, that more than 20 fake accounts were opened by its name and Facebook closed these fake accounts. As it is mentioned in the news, because these fake accounts have 10,000- 45,000 followers, they were distributing fake news and misinformed many social media users (Fana Broadcasting Corporate, 2018).

Besides, fake news is also another issue that can be raised related to social media. As it is stated by Simons (2017), at this time, fake news is considered to be a significant problem that faces global society and the way it functions.

A research done in America by Matsa and Shearer (2018) indicates that more than half of social media news consumers expect the news there to largely be inaccurate/ fake. However, many still see the benefits and continue consuming news from social media sites.

The ascent of mobile connectivity via smartphones has turned news gathering and news awareness into an anytime, anywhere affair for a segment of avid news watchers (Howe, 2011, p.9).

As it is stated in Digital news report of Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, smartphones encourage more frequent access and greater social sharing. According to the survey, heavy smartphone users tend to access the news more frequently than people who mainly use computers or tablets. Almost a fifth (19%) of those who use the smartphone as a main device say they access news more than five times a day (Newman, 2016).

In addition, it was stated in pew research center survey that more than a quarter of adults now commonly access the Internet on their mobile phones, adding yet another layer of change in consumers' relationship with news (Purcell et al., 2010).

As it is posted on ethio telecom's official Facebook page, the mobile device portfolio on ethio telecom network as of November 15, 2018 indicates that more than 40 million active mobile devices are available on ethio telecom's network (ethio telecom, 2018).

Among these devices, basic phones, smartphones, feature phones, data devices and tablet are 19.9 million (49.3%), 12.4 million (30.6%), 7.6 million (18.8%), 359,277(0.9%) and 162,286 (0.4%) respectively (ethio telecom, 2018).

Therefore, as 12.5 million (31% of the devices) are high-end mobile devices (smartphone and tablet), many individuals may have a chance to access the internet on their palm.

Similarly, since ethio telecom has given smartphones for more than 15,000 permanent employees of the company, the staffs may have the probability to use smartphones for accessing the internet.

In social media, people have the opportunity to express their opinions to the public and participate in conversations and dialogue through a common virtual medium, which also means that at the same time, every person is a publisher and a critic in cyberspace (Sawyer & Chen, 2012, p.152).

Accordingly, everyone who uses social media platform has to share his or her insights, experiences or opinions with responsibility. As it is stated in Alchemy Advertising (2018), we need to use social media with care and responsibility. We may not see at first the power it possesses, but we need to understand that everything that is used carelessly will lead to negative results.

Ndangam and Lee (2012), stated that social media can be used to propagate conflict or peace. Thus, individuals using social media need to consider the consequences of their activities and their own responsibility to be honest, fair and accurate; to check their facts; not to distort information; to question the motives of their sources; and to avoid creating stereotypes. They also said that responsibility is necessary on contents and images shared on social media .

In general, though all these conditions are being observed, people keep using social media as a source of news. Similarly, the researcher observed that ethio telecom's head office workers are spending their time on social media for searching news.

Thus, this research focused on the use of social media as a source of news with special attention to ethio telecom's head office staffs. It also investigated how ethio telecom's head office workers turned the challenges to opportunity while collecting news via social media.

1.3. Objective of the Study

The study has the following general and specific objectives.

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of this study was to examine the use of social media as a source of news focusing on ethio telecom's head office workers.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

Based on the above general objective, the following key points were identified as the specific objectives of the study:

- ❖ To identify the purpose that ethio telecom's head office workers use social media for.
- ❖ To examine how ethio telecom's head office workers use social media as a source of news.
- ❖ To investigate the extent to which ethio telecom's head office workers trust the news which are released via social media.
- ❖ To forward possible solutions on how ethio telecom's head office workers could verify News.

1.4. Research questions

This study addressed the following interrelated basic research questions:

1. For what purpose do ethio telecom's head office workers use social media?
2. How do ethio telecom's head office workers use social media as a source of news?
3. To what extent ethio telecom's head office workers trust the news which are released via social media?
4. What are the possible solutions that ethio telecom's head office workers could use to verify News?

1.5. Significance of the study

This study will have contribution to the field of media study, especially for social media study and the key importance are mentioned as follows:

- It is advantageous for the social media users of ethio telecom's head office workers. It will help them to have a better understanding about how they use social media while collecting news.
- It will be important for media organizations and popular social media account owners. It will enable them to understand how the platform is being used as a source of news and apply remedial actions to play role in the enhancement of social media usage as a source of news.
- The findings of this study will serve as a springboard for other researchers who would like to conduct research on the same or related topic.

1.6. Scope of the study

The title of the research is "Social media as a source of News: The case of ethio telecom's head office workers". Thus, the paper focused only on ethio telecom's head office workers. It did not include the population out of ethio telecom's head office.

In addition, the study focused on the use of social media as a source of news and other issues out of the title were not emphasized.

1.7. Limitation of the study

As social media is a recently emerged technological advancement, adequate related literature, especially books are not available. Thus, the researcher tried to use accessible research journals and articles to get input for the paper.

Since the research focused on ethio telecom's head office workers, the finding of the research was more limited to the sample population and it could not be generalized to the entire population of Ethiopia.

1.8. Organization of the study

The organization of this paper has the following format: Chapter one of the research incorporates the introduction part of the research: the background of the research, statement of the problem, objectives, major research questions, significance, scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter of the research has the literature review part of the study. The third chapter presents the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter of the study becomes a part where the collected data is going to be presented, analyzed and interpreted. Finally, the fifth chapter incorporates the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explores several issues like the concept of news, sources of news, types of news sources and sources usage. In addition to these points, other issues such as news media, the concept of social media, the use of social media as a source of news and theoretical framework get assessed.

2. News

Information is vital for human being to improve their life and to know what is going around and abroad. Thus, since mass media have the ability to disseminate identical information at the same time to diversified audiences, people can get this information through mass media (Adane, 2012).

According to Adane (2012), from media outputs, people more rely on news in order to satisfy their information needs because news is an important part of everyone's life. Traders and consumers need to know the price of the world market. Educated people want to increase their knowledge, and everybody needs to know what is happening and will happen around the world.

As it is stated in English topics.net (2016), the heart of the media's informing function lies in messages called news because news is report on things that people want or need to know.

2.1.What is News?

Scholars have used their own criteria and defined news in different ways. some scholars have defined news by considering the role it plays, others defined it considering the sources and audiences, others defined it taking the occurrence time of the event to account etc.

Mencher (2011), puts two general definitions concerning news; the first one is: "News is information about a break from the normal flow of events, an interruption in the expected, a deviation from the norm" and the second definition is: "News is information people can use to help them make sound decisions about their lives".

Dana (n.d.) cited in Zhuikov (n.d.), defined news as anything that interests a large part of the community and has never been brought to its attention before (Zhuikov, n.d.).

Metzler (n.d.) cited in Stepp (2009), has defined news as it is "prompt, 'bottom-line' recounting of factual information about events, situations and ideas (including opinions and interpretations) calculated to interest an audience and help people cope with themselves and their environment" (Stepp, 2009, p.84).

Gans (2004) has defined news as it is information which is transmitted from sources to the audience, with journalists who are both employees of bureaucratic commercial organizations and members of a profession-summarizing, refining, and altering what becomes available to them from sources in order to become the information suitable to their audience.

Considering the role it plays in the development of democracy, Defleur and Dennis (1981) cited in Alemu (2013), defined news as it is the most powerful media outlet that can make a significant contribution to building a democratic society by depicting a reasonably true picture of what is going on, creating what should be a close correspondence between the 'world outside' and the 'pictures in our heads'.

Furthermore, Hachten (2005, p.31), said that a democratic society requires a diversity of views and news sources available marketplaces of ideas from which the public can choose what it wishes to read and believe about public affairs.

Besides these definitions, different scholars have agreed on some criteria to evaluate the news worthiness of the issue.

It is true that there are some guidelines and criteria to judge whether something is news or not. These guidelines on which academicians agreed upon are called elements of news. These elements enable us to judge whether it is newsworthy or not (Abdulahi, 2012).

The elements that determine the newsworthiness of events, people and ideas are news values, (Mencher, 2011, pp.57-64). Among them timeliness, impact, prominence, proximity, unusualness, conflict and currency are defined below.

Timeliness- events that are immediate, recent. The daily newspaper, cable TV, the online news services and the hourly newscast seek to keep readers and listeners abreast of events (Mencher, 2011, p.57).

Impact- Events that are likely to affect many people. Journalists talk about many events that are significant, important. They talk about giving high priority in their coverage to situations that people need to know about to be well informed. The more people who are affected by the event, the bigger the story (Mencher, 2011, 58).

Prominence- Events involving well-known people or institutions. When the president trips disembarking from an airplane, it is front page news; when a city council member missteps it is not worth a line of print or a moment of air time. A local banker's embezzlement is more newsworthy than a clerk's thievery, even when the clerk has stolen more (Mencher, 2011, p.59).

Proximity- Events that are geographically or emotionally close to people. If 42 people die in an airplane crash in the Andes and one of the passengers is a resident of Little Rock, the news story in Little Rock will emphasize the death of the local person. This is known as localizing the news (Mencher, 2011, p.60).

Unusual- events that deviate sharply from the expected, that depart considerably from the experiences of everyday life make news. When a dog bites a man, it isn't news (Mencher, 2011, p.61).

Conflict- Strife or power struggles between individuals or ethnic groups or organizations contain a conflict value and often grab the attention of audiences. For example, stories about war, crime, and social discord are newsworthy because their conflict narrative spurs interest. The continuous coverage by US media outlets of worldwide terrorism is another example (Roberts, 2016).

Currency-Topics that are trending in news media and other media, such as Twitter and Facebook, are considered newsworthy. "Hot topics of the day" or stories that are in the general public discourse are other examples. Topics that have currency value generally have a short life span in the news cycle because they are discussed only briefly by the public (Roberts, 2016).

2.2. News sources

News sources are defined as, "the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in magazine articles, and those who supply background information or story suggestions" (Gans, 2004, p.80).

Ericson, Baranak and Chan (1989: 377) quoted in Bro (2018) said that news is a product of transactions between journalists and their sources (Bro, 2018).

Thus, journalists who are looking for news have to collect the information after accessing different kinds of documents or communicating the sources who are close to the event or the issue.

2.2.1. Types of News Sources

There are many types of news sources and they are categorized differently by different scholars. The main division of source material is between human and non-human sources (Dessie, 2011).

In addition, Garrison (1992, p.72), said "Reporters use two broad categories of sources for their work. People and documents".

2.2.1.1. Human Sources

Human sources always add a face, credibility and color to the investigative piece. Human sources can also provide expert testimony, elaborate on the statements of other sources, explain the evidence, provide opinion and confirm or corroborate what you already know (Forbes, 2005).

According to Garrison (1992, p.72), there are at least five common types of human sources commonly used in a day to day reporting and they are expert or professional sources, public sector official sources, private sector official sources and spokespersons, eyewitness and "typical" citizens.

2.2.1.2. Non-Human Sources

As human sources are valuable to journalists in the work of news gathering, non-human sources also play a vital role in media institutions.

Journalists can find many additional clues for human and non-human sources from a variety of written documents. Telephone directories, city directories, media directories, public and higher

education libraries contain a wealth of source materials that enable journalists to find background information for every story (Rich, 2003).

Potter (2006, p.8) has explained the advantage of using documents, data and public records for reporters. Since documents, data and public records can lead to great stories reporters can use them to look for trends or to spot irregularities.

2.2.2. Sources Usage

Unlike a propagandist or public relations officer, journalist find all available information and evaluates how much of it is important to the public before passes it to the audiences (Potter, 2006, p.8). Because objectivity, accuracy, balance, fairness, factuality, impartiality and accountability are the basic journalistic principles (Yat, 2007), reporters have to be careful and they are expected to apply the principles in their work.

Accuracy – Accuracy is the most venerated of all journalistic principles and the cornerstone of professional journalism. The information delivered should correspond to reality, to be truthful and verified by at least two independent sources. (Temenugova, Sopar, Dimitrovski & Tahiri, 2017).

To indicate that stress has to be given for accuracy and fairness Sullivan (2018), have said that "Fast is good, but right is better. We need the strongest possible commitment to accuracy and its close cousin, fairness. Yes, we're all in the biggest rush in the world to get the news out and we have the ability to do so like never before. But we'll wreck it all if we don't make as sure as we can that it's verifiably true".

"One of the best ways to ensure that a story is accurate is to find several other sources who will disclose exactly the same information. This is known as double- or triple-sourcing" (White, 2005, p.329).

Impartiality

Journalists must strive to be impartial at all times. This means that they refrain from showing bias toward any point of view or siding with one position over another when reporting or preparing a story for print, radio, or online (Temenugova et al., 2017).

Objectivity

Objectivity is a particular form of media practice and also a particular attitude to the task of information collection, processing and dissemination. It should not be confused with the broader notion of truth, although it is one version of it (McQuail, 2010).

According to McQuail (2010), the features of objectivity are mentioned below:

- It is the adoption of a position of detachment and neutrality towards the object of reporting.
- There is an effort to avoid partisanship: not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias.
- Objectivity requires strict attachment to accuracy and other truth criteria (such as relevance and completeness).

Potter (2006), explains that journalists are expected to present news in an objective way without reflecting their personal feeling. But she insists that it is difficult for journalists to be hundred percent objective since they are human beings.

Factuality

Factuality is the epistemological concept that there is a world of objects out there that is real and can be known, as opposed to merely believed or felt. The rules of journalism are structured so that news stories, if the rules are followed, can be factual in that they can accurately map the world to which they refer (Lawrence, n.d.).

Credibility

The role of media in democracy is to give citizens information they need to make decisions on matters, ranging from policy issues to consumer goods; and the effects of consumers' perceptions of news media credibility are extremely important in today's climate of increasing political and ideological polarization (Porrall, Fernández & Boga, 2014).

As it is stated in Mehrabi, Hassanm and Ali (2009), O'Keefe (1990) has defined Credibility as judgments made by a perceiver (e.g., a message recipient) concerning the believability of a communicator. But others believe that this definition should also include institutions as well as persons as communicators.

Media which are perceived to be credible have a higher likelihood of being patronized by audience or consumers (Porrall et al., 2014).

Thus, to get esteemed customers who have trust in media, media organizations have to disseminate credible information.

In addition, to eliminate the fear related to credibility and to collect reliable information from sources, users especially social media users had better verify the credibility of information they get.

A research that was done by Nababa (2016), indicates that more than two-third of the respondents of the study verify the credibility of information they get from the networks. This has indicated that majority of the respondents are not passive receivers of any information from the networks but actively participate and verify the credibility of information before believing or putting it to practice.

Having all these in mind, this research focuses on the sources of news from which individuals get the update about the environment. Especially, the use of social media as a source of news is the primary focusing area of the researcher. Thus, it is vital to discuss somepoints about the news media from which individuals collect news.

2.3. News media

McNair (2011) stated five functions of the media in societies that he called an ideal type of democratic society. These are; (1) informing citizens of what is happening around them ('surveillance' or 'monitoring' functions), (2) educating citizens as to the meaning and significance of the 'facts', (3) providing a platform for public political discourse and facilitating 'public opinion' formation, (4) giving publicity to governmental and political institutions, and (5) serving as a channel for the advocacy of political viewpoints.

Among these functions, the first function "informing citizens of what is happening around them" has relation with this research and news media are the media which play the role of informing citizens about what is being occurred in the environment.

As it is stated in Wikipedia (2018), News media or news industry are forms of mass media that focus on delivering news to the general public or a target public. These include print media (newspapers, newsmagazines), broadcast news (radio and television), and more recently the Internet (online newspapers, news blogs, etc.).

2.3.1. Newspaper

A newspaper is defined as a printed publication consisting of folded unstapled sheets and containing news, feature articles, advertisements and correspondence. This form of communication started in Ancient Rome where government announcement bulletins were carved in metal or stone and posted in public places (Kaur, 2013).

The newspaper is the oldest mass medium and still one of the most important, particularly to the maintenance of democratic society (Hiebert, Ungurait & Bohn, 1988).

As Hiebert et al. (1988) stated, newspapers have gone through stages of development typical of most mass media, starting as business and commercial media for an elite audience, then gradually becoming mass media for popular audiences, and finally specializing for a segmented audience.

Newspapers are called 'the mirrors of the world'. They reflect and report the trends and happening from all parts of the world. Usually, they cover every aspect of life- national, international, local, social, political, cultural etc. (Kaur, 2013).

The role of newspapers cannot be underrated. It provides news, it brings awareness of issues, it generates employment. Newspapers continue to be one of the best informative mediums today (Sesha, 2012)

Newspapers perform the duty of making people aware of everything. They form public opinion and turn the people for or against the moves of the rulers. This is why even the most fear one dictator is afraid of the press. They picture every aspect included jokes, matrimonial, huddles, scientific facts, and cinemas etc. Catering to every taste and every need, newspapers present the whole world and play a vital role in life and part of human beings (Kaur, 2013).

According to Kaur (2013), newspapers are designed to present a complete picture of our day-to-day life. They are the guardians of democracy. They keep the general people well-informed to the world about the happenings around goings on. A well-informed public is essential for the success of a democracy. People have to be made aware of all the important happenings.

2.3.2. Radio

Radio as a word has its origin in the Latin expression "Radius" which means rays, this implies that radio is an instrument through which signals are beamed out via electromagnetic process land

distributed via a transmitter to a scattered audience who receive it via an antenna on a receiving set (Apuke, 2017).

The radio carrying the human voice was a laboratory novelty, but on Christmas Eve, 1906, radio ship operators, accustomed to hearing dots and dashes in their headsets were startled to hear an inventor named Reginald Fessenden read a speech, play a violin solo, and broadcast some recorded music (Hausman, n.d.).

Radio started out as a point to point communication, much like the telephone and telegraph the notion of broadcasting didn't come about until the 1920s. The decade of the 1920s was an important one in radio. Big business took control of the industry, receivers improved commercials were started networks were formed. And the FRC was set up to regulate radio (Dominick, 2002)

The radio is one of the most important inventions that affected and changed social life substantially. The radio drew the attention of large masses in a short time due to both technical and social effects it created on the societies during the period it was invented (Kuyucu, 2016, p.224).

According to Kuyucu (2016, p.226), the functions of the radio are classified in five groups: 'news information', 'education', 'advertisement of good and services', entertainment and persuasion' and 'actuation'.

More over, Kuyucu (2016, p.227), added that as a news platform, the radio is different from the newspaper and television. Naturally, text is essential for the newspaper. And an image is important for television. Radio is the platform of sound. The sacred element of the radio is sound. In other words, on a radio, it is required to express almost everything with sounds.

The first great news event involving radio was the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. Information about that event was sent by radio from ships close by, and people were astonished at how quickly the news was transmitted. From the 1920s, broadcasting, first radio and then television in the 1950s, has been at the forefront of coverage of every major news event (Stovall, 2018).

Radio is preferred by people intensively particularly during the working hours because of its advantages such as simplicity and low cost and the ability to deal with other things while listening to the radio (Kuyucu, 2016, p.227).

Radio is one of the most important means of communication. Through radio, people send spoken words, music, and other communication signals through the air to any part of the world. Radio broadcasts now feature music, news, discussion, interviews, description of sports events and advertising. People drive to their jobs listening to car radios and spend leisure hours hearing their favorite programs on the radio (Apuke, 2017).

2.3.2. Television

The first transmission of images occurred in 1881 using a device called the pantelegraph. Scanning in one form or another has been used in nearly every image transmission to date this includes television (Rooij, 2015).

Television is the predominant medium of mass entertainment in the Second half of the twentieth century. It is a highly competitive industry driven by advertising sales, the pursuit of higher profits and ratings (Narasimhamurthy, 2014).

Television appeals both the auditory and visual senses and hence it is an important communication device as it beholds the attention of the audience. For many people, it is impossible to imagine a life without their television sets, be it the daily news, or even the soap operas (Manohar, 2018).

"Television news is still a widely used and important source of news, and will remain so for many older people for years to come" (Nielsen & Sambrook, 2016).

2.3.3. Internet

It's the most important device of new age media. The discovery of the Internet can be called the biggest invention in mass media. In the earlier days, news used to reach people only with the morning newspaper. But today, live updates reach us simultaneously as the events unfold (Manohar, 2018).

Further more, Manohar (2018), said that with the advent of the Internet, we are now enjoying the benefits of high technology mass media, which is not only faster than the old school mass media, but also has a widespread range. The Internet has opened up several new opportunities for mass communication which include e-mail, websites, podcasts, e-forums, e-books, blogging, Internet TV, and many others, which are booming today.

The developments in Internet technology have seen a rapid rise and change in information flow in contemporary society. One such significant development is the popularity of social media sites, an innovation that is redefining the process of sharing mediated messages (Olaniran, 2014).

2.3.4.1. 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 is 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).

Social media can also 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 (Mayfield, 2008).

On the other hand, Taprial and Kanwar (2012, p.29), 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 goes to the internet, anything put on social media can reach anyone crossing social interaction of the yore limited by cut breaks (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012, p.29).

Furthermore, Cohen (2011), has also stated 8 social media characteristics and they are stated as follows:

- ❖ Encompasses a wide variety of content formats including text, video, photographs, audio, PDF and PowerPoint (Social content is a by-product of creating content with your community).
- ❖ Allows interactions to cross one or more platforms through social sharing, email and feeds.
- ❖ Involves different levels of engagement by participants who can create, comment or lurk on social media networks.
- ❖ Facilitates enhanced speed and breadth of information dissemination.
- ❖ Provides for one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many communications.
- ❖ Enables communication to take place in real time or asynchronously over time.
- ❖ Is device indifferent. It can take place via a computer (including laptops and netbooks), tablets (including iPads, iTouch and others) and mobile phones (particularly smartphones).
- ❖ Extends engagement by creating real-time online events, extending online interactions offline, or augmenting live events online.

2.3.4.1.1. Types of social media

While discussing about the types of social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), categorized social media into six groups. These are: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter), content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life).

Facebook

In February 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, with the help of Andrew McCollum and Eduardo Saverin, launched a website that would change online social interaction forever. Facebook started on the campus of Harvard University, where the three friends were students, Zuckerberg being a psychology major of all things (Croft, 2007).

Users may create a personal profile; add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications, photos and comments when they update their profile. Additionally,

Facebook users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, college, or other characteristics (Scaife, 2015).

Twitter: Twitter is among the newest SNS' that has quickly and enjoys widespread usage around the globe, as it is an SNS that has microblogging capability. Twitter is a real-time information network that connects users to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what they find interesting (Mesole, 2014).

Twitter is a social network similar to Facebook and Google+. While Twitter shares some common features with other social networking sites, it is unlike the other networks in many ways. Twitter users can post short statements with a maximum of 140 characters. This makes it a form of micro-blogging that allows users to focus only on the most important points when disseminating information (Blue Beetle Books, 2012).

As it is stated in Blue Beetle Books (2012), twitter users have the option to "follow" other users on Twitter. When you follow someone, you can read all of that user's messages, or Tweets, that they publicly share. Following someone does not give you the ability to send direct messages to that person, however. Users must follow you in order to receive direct messages. These are messages which are out of view of the public.

YouTube

YouTube, founded in 2005, is the world's most popular online video community, allowing millions of people to discover, watch and share originally created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators advertisers large and small (Goggin, 2012).

YouTube is based in San Bruno, California and uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos (Baofu, 2010).

As Baofu (2010) stated, most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals although media corporations including CBS, BBC, Universal Music Group and other organizations offer some of their material via the site, as part of the YouTube partnership program.

YouTube offered the public a beta test of the site in May 2005, six months before the official launch in November 2005. The site grew rapidly, and in July 2006 the company announced that more than 65,000 new videos were being uploaded every day, and that the site was receiving 100 million video views per day (Saharan, 2015).

Blogs: it is a contraction of the term web blog. Blogs traced back to 1990s and are popping up as an alternative media. Diary turned interactive website, blog, enables the public to own its website for opinion, daily experience and thought. It allows for a conversation (Etana, 2015).

Wikipedia: an open webpage for all to edit and produce contents online, Wikipedia is embraced by a lot of users for the fact that it provides digested information. It is called the most democratic forum by most for the reason that is free from advertising (Etana, 2015).

LinkedIn: launched in 2003, it is the biggest online professional network. This makes it different from other social media types. It is serving as a networking role for professionals and to those who look for them (Etana, 2015).

Google+: with Google plus Google make its latest effort to join the social networking space after a try with Google Wave, Buzz and Talk (Etana, 2015).

2.3.4.1.2. The use of social media as a source of news

In the current media landscape, news can be gained from a variety of online and offline sources 24 hours a day. Social media adds an extra dimension as a newsgathering and information broadcasting tool (Dowdell, 2013).

To explain the transformation that has been occurred after the existence of social media Mesole (2014) has said the following:

The emergence and social media technology usage have gradually altered communication and consumption of news around the globe as it has made it possible for news to disseminate fast and taken the traditional onus of disseminating news from journalists to a larger group of 'new media users who often only need cell phone or laptop with internet connection to 'practice' journalism. (Mesole, 2014, p.8)

With the help of social media tools, the Internet is fast changing the way people consume their news. This activity was previously limited to reading the newspaper or listening to a news bulletin on the radio, or watching it on TV. Today audiences can get an "instant helping" of the latest news, literally minutes old, on the Internet, or receive updates on their smartphones, in their email inbox or on their social network pages (Howe, 2011,).

Social media usage is becoming a common place for everyone and as a result, it is gradually becoming a leading source for breaking news. A research report in 2011 by Pew Research Center reported the growth and expansion of the use and adoption of SNS and the increase in usage for news purpose in the span of three years (Mesole, 2014).

As it is stated by Shearer and Gottfried (2017), the popularity of social media sites has pushed the owners to invest more on the media and play pivotal role for the enhancement of social media usage. For instance, YouTube has done a lot to improve the usability of the platform and launched and expanded YouTube TV, and the site added a "breaking news" summary on its homepage.

In addition, twitter spent the year promoting the platform's potential for news publishers and has announced launches for multiple news streaming partnerships (Shearer & Gottfried, 2017).

Social media platform provides an opportunity to enhance news reporting – not through interviewing those involved but through sharing the lived experiences of those who are on the ground via the social media texts they produce themselves (Dowdell, 2013).

The use of social media network has made news interactive and participatory, single individuals can comment and post news online relating their own experiences and commenting on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, the use of social media has brought about the ability to react, converse, share, and participate in the news rather than simply consuming it (Mesole, 2014).

According to the Pew Research Center, Americans' relationship to the news is being transformed in several directions thanks to the new tools and affordances of technology. In relation to this, the news is becoming a shared social experience as people exchange links to stories and recommend content as a form of cultural currency in their social networks (Purcell et al., 2010).

Matsa and Shearer (2018) stated in Pew research center survey that Facebook is still far and away the site Americans most commonly used for news. About four-in-ten Americans (43%) get news on Facebook. The next most commonly used site for news is YouTube, with 21% getting news there, followed by Twitter at 12%. Smaller portions of Americans (8% or fewer) get news from other social networks like Instagram, LinkedIn or Snapchat.

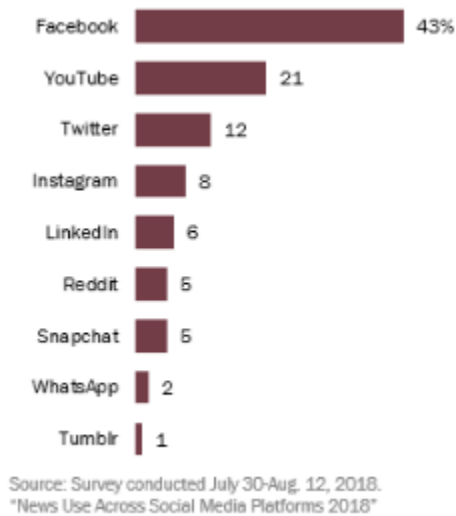


Figure 1- Social media site used by US adults

Source: Pew Research Center (2018)

According to the survey, about two-thirds of American adults (68%) get news on social media. Among the samples in the survey, 20% said they often accessed news, 27% replied that they sometimes accessed news and 21% said that they hardly ever accessed news on social media (Matsa & Shearer, 2018).

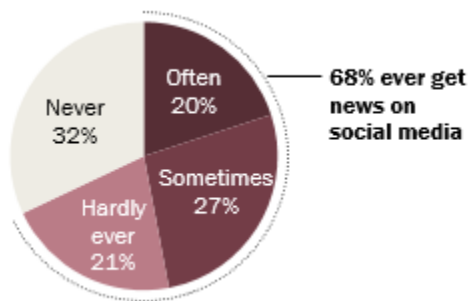
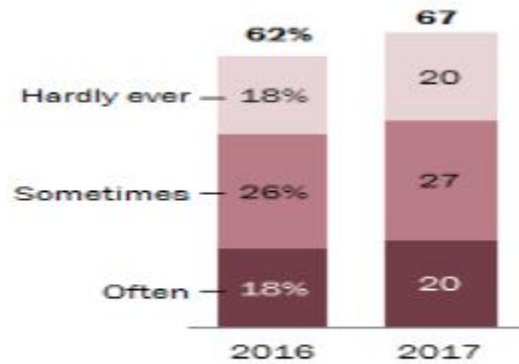


Figure 2- % of US adults who get news on social media

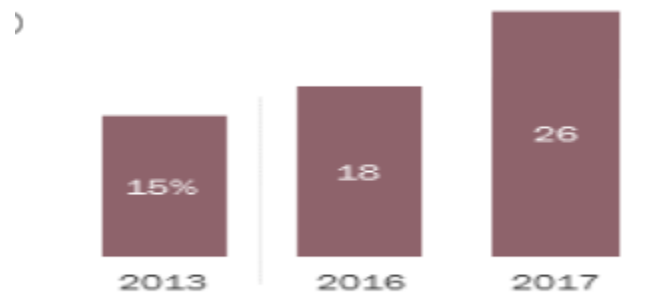
Source: Pew Research Center (2018)

Shearer and Gottfried (2017), have also stated in a survey which is published by Pew Research Center that as of August 2017, two-thirds (67%) of Americans report that they get at least some of their news on social media – with two-in-ten doing so often. This is a modest increase since early 2016, when (during the height of the presidential primaries) 62% of U.S. adults reported getting news from social media.



Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017. "News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2017"

Figure 3- % of US adults who get news on social media



Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017. "News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2017"

Figure 4- % of US adults who get news on two or more different social media sites

Source: Pew Research Center (2017)

According to the survey mentioned above, Twitter and YouTube had an increase in the share of their audience that gets news on the site. Since 2013, at least half of Twitter users have reported getting news on the site, but in 2017, with a president who frequently makes announcements on the platform, that share has increased to about three-quarters (74%), up 15 percentage points from last year. On YouTube, about a third of users now get news there (32%), up from 21% in 2016.

In Digital News Report 2016, Newman (2016), reported that 51% of individuals use social media as their main news source every week and that 12% claimed that social media was their most important information source, thus confirming the continued growth of social media as information source compared to other media.

Smith and Anderson (2018), have also indicated that many users of Facebook have a trend to visit Facebook frequently. As their finding indicates, 74% of Facebook users say they visit the site daily, with around half (51%) saying they do several times a day. The share of Facebook users who visit the site on a daily basis is statistically unchanged compared with 2016, when 76% of Facebook users reported they visited the site daily.

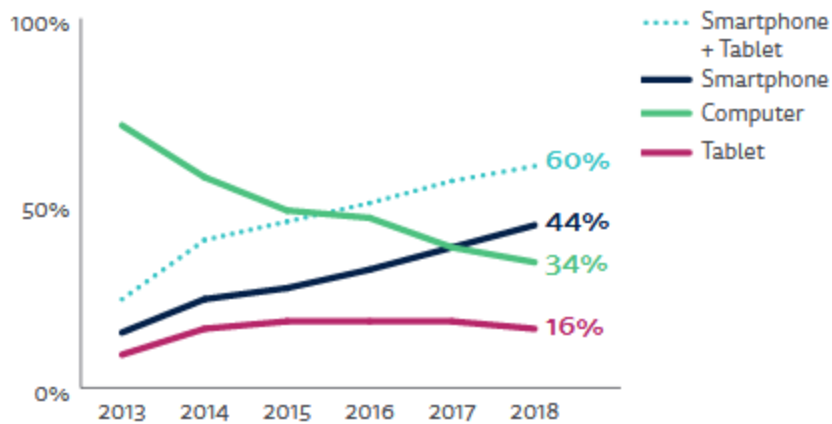
Shearer and Gottfried (2017), explained in the survey that many social media news users are accessing different kinds of platforms to get news and getting news on social media doesn't mean that other more traditional pathways to news are ignored. Many social media news users also get news from a variety of other platforms, although there are some differences among the users of the various sites.

According to the finding discussed in the survey, about one quarter of all U.S. adults (26%) get news from two or more platforms, up from 18% in 2016 and 15% in 2013 (Shearer and Gottfried, 2017).

The users are accessing the social media platforms using different kinds of devices like desktop computer, laptop, tablets mobile phones etc., and as it is indicated in different research works mobile phones especially smartphones are being used to access news on the social media platform.

For instance, in Digital News Report 2018, in the UK, the smartphone overtaking the computer as the MAIN (preferred) device for accessing news. The tablet has started to decline in importance as smartphones have become more powerful and versatile (Newman, 2018).

**PROPORTION THAT SAY EACH IS THEIR MAIN NEWS DEVICE
(2013-18) – UK**



UK8b6_5. You've said you use the following devices to access news in the last week, which is your MAIN way of accessing online news? Base: All in 2013-2018 who used a device for news in the last week: UK = 1638/1598/1795/1691/1733/1816."

Figure 5- % of different kinds of devices used for accessing news

Source: 2018 Digital news report of Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

AL-Harrasi and Al-Badi (2014), have also said that Smartphones have added great potential by enabling an increase in the use of social networking and in the number of hours spent on such sites.

As it is stated in Sensis Social Media Report 2017 also Smartphones are preferred to other devices for social networking, with usage increasing further in 2017 and Eighty-one percent of social media users access their social media accounts on a smartphone, which compares with 72% in 2016.

While accessing social media to collect news, encountering of fake news is becoming a serious issue that can have impact on social media usage. Considering this, Simons (2017), stated that, at this time, fake news is considered to be a significant problem that faces global society and the way it functions.

According to Tandoc, Lim and Ling (2017), the term “fake news” is not new and it is to be news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers. As Tandoc et al., (2017), discussed the digitization of news has challenged traditional definitions of news. Online platforms provide space for non-journalists to reach a mass audience. The rise of citizen journalism challenged the link between news and journalists, as non-journalists began to engage in journalistic activities to produce journalistic outputs, including news.

While discussing about the causes for the creation and dissemination of fake news, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017), stated that two main motivations underlie the production of fake news: financial and ideological. On one hand, outrageous and fake stories that go viral, precisely because they are outrageous, provide content producers with clicks that are convertible to advertising revenue. On the other hand, other fake news providers produce fake news to promote particular ideas or people that they favor, often by discrediting others.

Following the spread of fake news various protective methods are recommended by different scholars. Among them, Lazer et al. (2018), recommended two categories of potential interventions: (i) those aimed at empowering individuals to evaluate the fake news they encounter, and (ii) structural changes aimed at preventing exposure of individuals to fake news in the first instance.

2.4. Theoretical framework

2.4.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a popular approach to understand mass communication (Anouar, 2012). Thus, as this research is about the use of social media as a source of news, the Uses and Gratification Theory is appropriate to be used as a theoretical framework.

Uses and Gratifications Theory was first proposed by Katz in 1959 and consecutive relevant studies were conducted by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in 1974 (Lin & Chen, 2017).

Uses and gratifications theory seeks to explain the uses and functions of the media for individuals, groups, and society in general (Bonney, 2013).

Everybody uses the new media for one or more reasons. People may use the internet as a source of entertainment, for news updates, for social interaction among others. Thus, this theory is an

approach to describe and find out why people actively seek out specific media outlets and content to satisfy specific needs.

This theory places more focus on the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual message itself by asking what people do with media rather than what media does to people (Leung and Wei, 2000). Based on the definition provided in Lin and Chen's recent study, Uses and Gratifications Theory states that the audience selects media based on personal needs and knows which media can satisfy their needs (Lin & Chen, 2017).

Uses and Gratifications Theory is a framework that explains how and why people actively seek out for specific types of media (Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017).

According to Uses and Gratifications Theory, people receive gratifications through media, which satisfy their informational, social, and leisure needs.

The theory discusses how users proactively search for media that will not only meet a given need but enhance knowledge, social interactions and diversion. New media is inevitable in terms of the application of the uses and gratification theory (Bonney, 2013).

Social media platform offers the opportunity to gain information released by others and at the same time permit the users to reflect their feeling and thought for others. It also gives chance to form social interaction with others according to their interest.

The social media audience are not passive users. They examine and evaluate various types of media which are suitable to accomplish communication goals and choose the preferable platform. Accordingly, Wang, Fink and Cai (2008), said that theorists in uses and gratifications view people as active because they are able to examine and evaluate various types of media to accomplish communication goals.

In addition, Franulovic (2015), said that the audience has power over their media consumption and assumes an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, UGT holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification.

Uses and gratification links need gratification to a specific medium choice that rests with the audience member. Because people are active agents, they take initiative (West & Turner, 2010).

Generally, three major objectives with respect to the development of the uses and gratifications theory. The first major objective of this theory is to explain; how individuals use mass media to satisfy their needs. Secondly, to discover underlying motives for individuals' media use; and thirdly to identify the positive and the negative consequences of individual media use (Bonney, 2013).

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter incorporates the Research design, Population and Sample, Sampling technique and Sample determination, Data collection instruments, Data analysis techniques and Ethical consideration.

3.1. Research Design

Mixed approach was deployed in this research. As to Creswell and Clark (2007), mixed methods research is explained as follows:

Mixed methods research provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone. Researchers are given permission to use all of the tools of data collection available rather than being restricted to the type of data collection typically associated with qualitative or quantitative research. It helps answer questions that can't be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone. (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.9)

Creswell and Clark (2007), added that mixed methods research is practical in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address a research problem. It is also practical because individuals tend to solve problems using both numbers and words.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research method is one of the methods used to conduct this research. According to Payne and Payne (2004), the concern for qualitative research is to seek out and interpret the meaning that people bring to their own activities and events. It treats things as part of a holistic social process and contexts rather than as something that can be extracted and studied in isolation (Payne & Payne, 2004).

Qualitative research involves studies that do not attempt to quantify their results through statistical summary or analysis. Qualitative studies typically involve interviews and observations without

formal measurement. Qualitative research is often used as a source of hypotheses for later testing in quantitative research (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005).

Quantitative Approach

The second method that was used to conduct this research was a quantitative approach. Under this approach, the survey method was implemented. Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity (Kothari, 2004, p.3).

Moreover, according to Creswell (1994) quantitative research is also useful to quantify opinions, attitudes and behaviors and find out how the whole population feels about certain issues.

The study design was Descriptive survey. The descriptive method enables researchers to focus and show the different facts, information and factors regarding the position of the issue as it happens during the time of the study (Creswell, 1994).

3.2. Population and sample

The participants of this research were selected from ethio telecom's head office. The total population of ethio telecom's head office was 6,585 and 4005 of the population were male and 2580 of them were female.

The sources of the data employed for this research were ethio telecom's head office workers. Since the buildings located at Jemmo, Churchill road, Legehar, 6 kilo, Tikur anbesa and the main building sited near post office's head office were administered under head office, the employees who were working in these offices became part of the study.

Furthermore, to triangulate the information gathered through questionnaires, the researcher collected data from six informants. Four interviewees were managers at ethio telecom's corporate communication section, media management section, digital communication section and call center. The rest two were university teachers in journalism and communication department.

3.3. Sampling technique and sample determination

The researcher used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to determine the sample of the population.

Probability sampling technique is a method of sampling which gives the probability that a sample is representative of the population. Every individual of the population has an equal probability to be taken into the sample (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p.46).

Among the sampling techniques of probability sampling, systematic sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the questionnaires. Systematic sampling technique is useful when the sampling frame is available in the form of a list. In such a design the selection process starts by picking some random point in the list and then every nth element is selected until the desired number is secured (Kothari, 2004, p.15).

In order to determine the sample size, the researcher used Yamane (1967) sample selection method with a probability of 95 % free error. Based on this method, a total of 377 samples were drawn from the total population.

$$n_0 = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)} = \frac{6585}{1+6585(0.05^2)} \approx 377$$

Where: n_0 is the sample size,

N is the total population size,

e is the level of precision

In addition to this, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the informants for the interview. Purposive sampling, as the name suggests, is done with a purpose, which means that the selection of sampling units is purposive in nature. Purposive sampling can be very useful for situations where you need to reach a targeted sample quickly and where a random process of selection or proportionality is not the primary concern (Singh, 2007).

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments that had been employed for collecting primary data included questionnaire (open-ended and close-ended) and semi-structured interview.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

The researcher used self-administered questionnaire to collect information on the study.

A questionnaire is a form which is prepared and distributed for the purpose of securing responses. The questions are factual and designed for securing information about certain conditions or practices, of which the recipient is presumed to have knowledge (Singh, 2006).

The questionnaire had both open-ended and close-ended types. According to Singh (2006), the close-ended type consists of a question or a statement to which a person responds by selecting one or more choices. It improves the reliability and consistency of the data.

Open-ended questions are questions that do not have pre-coded options. These are used extensively in formative research or qualitative research when researchers want to capture the respondent's responses verbatim (Singh, 2007, p.69).

The researcher also used Likert-scaled questionnaire. The summated ratings scale/Likert scale was developed in 1932 by Rensis Likert as a five-point, bipolar response scale. It tries to assess people's agreement/disagreement, approval/disapproval on a five-point scale (Singh, 2007, p.75). One of the keys to an effective Likert-scaled questionnaire is respondent persistence (Watson & Noble, 2005).

3.4.2. Semi-structured interview

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to be prepared and appear competent during the interview. It also allows informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data.

Moreover, DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) stated that semi-structured interview is an effective method for data collection when the researcher wants to collect qualitative, open-ended data; to triangulate other data collected by other instruments, to explore participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic; and to delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues.

Thus, the researcher employed semi-structured interview and triangulated the information which was obtained from the questionnaire about the use of social media as a source of news.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

As it is stated above, under research design, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods. Then, the data were analyzed based on appropriate quantitative and qualitative research data analysis techniques.

Quantitative data that was collected through the questionnaire got analyzed using frequencies and percentages. In addition, the findings were presented in the form of chart, graph and table. The analysis of quantitative data was conducted with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). SPSS is the Program that is used to process the data collected in this study. In addition, information through the qualitative instrument (semi-structured interview) became analyzed qualitatively using words in narrative manner. Finally, the two data results were triangulated to complement each other.

3.6. Ethical consideration

According to Singh (2006), a researcher should protect the dignity and welfare of human sample subjects, respect the freedom of the human sample to decline participation, maintain the confidentiality of research data, guard against violation or invasion of privacy and maintain ethical standard remains with the individual.

Therefore, the confidentiality of participants data was protected, and the information gained from the informants was used only for this research purpose. It couldn't be transferred to any third party in any circumstance.

3.7. Validity and Reliability

Reliability means dependability or consistency. It suggests that the same thing is repeated or recurs under the identical or very similar conditions. The opposite of reliability is an erratic, unstable, or inconsistent result that happens because of the measurement itself (Neuman, 2014).

Validity suggests truthfulness. It refers to how well an idea "fits" with actual reality. The absence of validity means that the fit between the ideas we use to analyze the social world and what actually occurs in the lived social world is poor. In simple terms, validity addresses the question of how well we measure social reality using our constructs about it (Neuman, 2014).

Hence, to get quality results of the research, the researcher used suitable instruments to collect appropriate data from the respondents and attempted to avoid biases and mistakes while analyzing and interpreting the findings collected from the respondents of the questionnaires. In addition, to eliminate subjectivity related problems that might occur during the analysis of the findings obtained from interviewees, the researcher made an effort to put the qualitative data as sound as the informants' explanation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter is the main part of the research work, in which the data gathered using both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are presented, analyzed and interpreted. The findings collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interview were analyzed based on the objective of the research.

As it is stated in chapter three, the questionnaires were distributed to a total of 377 ethio telecom's head office workers. But the number of questionnaires which were appropriately filled and returned was 366. The rest 11 questionnaires couldn't be collected. As a result, the return rate became 97 %.

4.1. Demographics of Survey Respondents

Table 1: Frequency of respondents based on their sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	256	69.9 %
Female	110	30.1 %
Total	366	100.0 %

As shown in the above table, the total number of respondents comprised 69.9% male and 30.1% female. This indicates that most of the respondents are male.

Table 2: Frequency of respondents based on their age

Age category	Frequency	Percent
20-25	21	5.7 %
26-30	158	43.2 %
31-40	133	36.3 %
41 and above	54	14.8 %
Total	366	100.0 %

In terms of age, 5.7% of the respondents' age fell in the category 20-25 years. 43.2% of the respondents are between 26-30 years. The respondents who were in the category of 31-40 age group covers 36.3%. The rest 14.8% respondents were incorporated in the age group categorized under 41 and above years.

Therefore, the largest portion of respondents (43.2 %) falls in the age category of 26-30 years.

Table 3: Frequency of respondents based on their level of education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	10	2.7 %
First degree	321	87.7%
Masters degree and above	35	9.6%
Total	366	100.0%

As it is indicated in the above table, 2.7 % of the respondents are diploma holders, 87.7% are first degree graduates and respondents who have Masters degree and above covers 9.6%.

Thus, it can be understood that most of the respondents (87.7 %) are first-degree graduates.

4.2 Purpose of using social media

Table 4: Accounts created in social media platforms

Types of social media platforms	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Facebook	331	36.2%	90.4%
Twitter	160	17.5%	43.7%
Google+	152	16.6%	41.5%
LinkedIn	82	9.0%	22.4%
Instagram	116	12.7%	31.7%
Others	74	8.1%	20.2%
Total	915	100.0%	250.0%

The respondents had a chance to select more than one response, and table 4 shows that 36.2% of the respondents had Facebook account. 17.5% of the respondents had a twitter account. 16.6%, 12.7% and 9% of the respondents had Google+, Instagram and LinkedIn account respectively. 8.1% of the respondents selected the alternative others. From these, it is understood that the respondents used multiple social media accounts, and among them, Facebook was used by the majority of respondents.

With reference to communication theories, Uses and Gratifications Theory states that the audience selects media based on personal needs. As well as, the audience recognizes which media can satisfy their needs (Lin & Chen, 2017). Franulovic (2015), also added that UGT holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. Thus, in the current research, Facebook found to be the primary platform that most audiences used to satisfy their needs.

In the same way, as it is indicated in previous research done in Ethiopia, the most preferable social media account was Facebook followed by YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn (Kebede, 2017). In addition, Facebook is the top social media site embraced by billions in the world (Etana, 2015).

Table 5: Purpose of using social media

Purpose of using social media	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
sharing idea	248	27.3%	67.8%
tool of communication	184	20.3%	50.3%
Entertainment	169	18.6%	46.2%
source of news and other kind of information	284	31.3%	77.6%
building business	22	2.4%	6.0%
Total	907	100.0%	247.8%

Regarding the purpose of social media, multiple responses were allowed for the respondents, and 27.3% of the respondents said that social media was useful for sharing an idea. 20.3% of the respondents replied that social media was used as a tool of communication. 18.6% of the respondents said that entertainment was one purpose of social media. Respondents who said that social media was used as a source of news and other kinds of information cover 31.3%, whereas 2.4 % of the respondents said that they used social media for building a business.

The highest number of respondents (31.3 %) used social media as a source of news and other kinds of information. Therefore, it can be understood that among various purposes of social media, being a source of news and other kinds of information is the main purpose that motivates ethio telecom workers to use social media.

The finding of Nielsen, Cornia and Kalogeropoulos (2016), agreed to the important role that social media could play. Nielsen et al. confirmed that social media play an increasingly important role as sources of news. As a result, more and more people tend to use social media as news platforms.

In addition, Baruah (2012, p.8), stated that some of the advantages of social media are sharing ideas, tool of communication, bridges communication gap, source of information, important marketing tool, important customer interaction tool, important crisis communication tool, low costs/ cost effective and less time consuming.

Concerning the purpose of social media, 66% of the interviewees' response revealed that social media were used for sharing news and other kinds of information. Since social media allow users to publish their ideas in writing, with pictures and through videos, the platforms are used to share news and other kinds of information. At the same time, they could be served as platforms to access and consume what has been shared by others.

According to the 3rd interviewee, social media could enable users to record and share news directly from the scene of the event using their mobile devices and the platform becomes the fastest way to distribute the first-hand information before news crews could balance the news communicating several concerned bodies, making production and delivering to their audiences (Interviewee 3, on April 6, 2019).

As to the interviewee, once the news is posted on social media, it could be reached by many people fast. Thus, social media are useful for sharing news.

The 4th interviewee said that social media has plus functions on the mainstream media and used for awareness creation. According to the interviewee, since numerous kinds of information are circulated on the platform, users could be multi-directional. In addition, the informant said that social media could maximize people's level of involvement on various issues. Because people could have multi-directional knowledge, they could participate in different political, economic and social issues and their engagement could be improved (Interviewee 4, on April 13, 2019).

The interviewees also said that social media break the barriers of time and distance between people and enable users chat with their friends and relatives across the globe, promote business organizations and their products, form common interest groups, find missing people, find work opportunity, update status and notify various life events of individuals like relationship, marriage, travel, engagement, having a child, etc.

As they discussed, social media are also used as a platform for fundraising to collect money for supporting the victims of manmade or natural disasters and individuals who are needy in various aspects.

Table 6: Frequently engaging deeds in social media

Frequently engaging deeds in social media	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
reading news/ stories posted on social media	342	58.8%	93.4%
writing and sharing stories	74	12.7%	20.2%
re-posting news/stories	75	12.9%	20.5%
give comment on posts	82	14.1%	22.4%
Others	9	1.5%	2.5%
Total	582	100.0%	159.0%

As it is shown in the table above, 58.8% of the respondents who gave reply for the question “How do you frequently engage in social media?” responded that they frequently engaged in

social media by reading news/stories posted on social media. While 12.7% of the respondents responded saying they frequently engaged in social media by writing and sharing stories, 12.9 % of the respondents engaged in social media by reposting news/stories. Respondents who engaged in social media by giving comments on posts cover 14.1%, whereas the respondents who selected the alternative others covered 1.5%.

Therefore, the finding shows that most of the respondents (58.8%) frequently engaged in social media by reading news/stories posted on social media.

With relation to this, the concept of Uses and Gratifications Theory places more focus on the consumer or audience, instead of the actual message itself by asking what people do with media rather than what media does to people (Leung & Wei, 2000). Thus, we can understand that ethio telecom’s head office workers mainly use the social media platform for accessing posted news and stories.

4.3 Usage of social media as a source of news

Table 7: Preferable social media platform to access news

Types of social media platforms	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Facebook	258	52.9%	79.4%
Twitter	113	23.2%	34.8%
YouTube	84	17.2%	25.8%
Others	33	6.8%	10.2%
Total	488	100.0%	150.2%

As it is indicated in the above table, 52.9% of the respondents who used social media as a source of news preferred Facebook to access news followed by Twitter that covered 23.2% of the participants' response. 17.2% of the respondents said that their preference to access news was YouTube, whereas 6.8 % of the respondents preferred other social media platforms to access news.

This implies that most of the respondents (52.9 %) prefer Facebook to access news.

Supporting this, a previous research work studied by Mesole (2014) indicates that the most preferred social media platform as a news source was Facebook followed by Twitter. Furthermore, Matsa and Shearer (2018) stated in Pew research center survey that Facebook is still far and away the site Americans most commonly used for news. About four-in-ten Americans (43%) get news on Facebook. The next most commonly used site for news is YouTube, with 21% getting news there, followed by Twitter at 12%. Smaller portions of Americans (8% or fewer) get news from other social networks like Instagram, LinkedIn or Snapchat.

The mainly used device to access social media

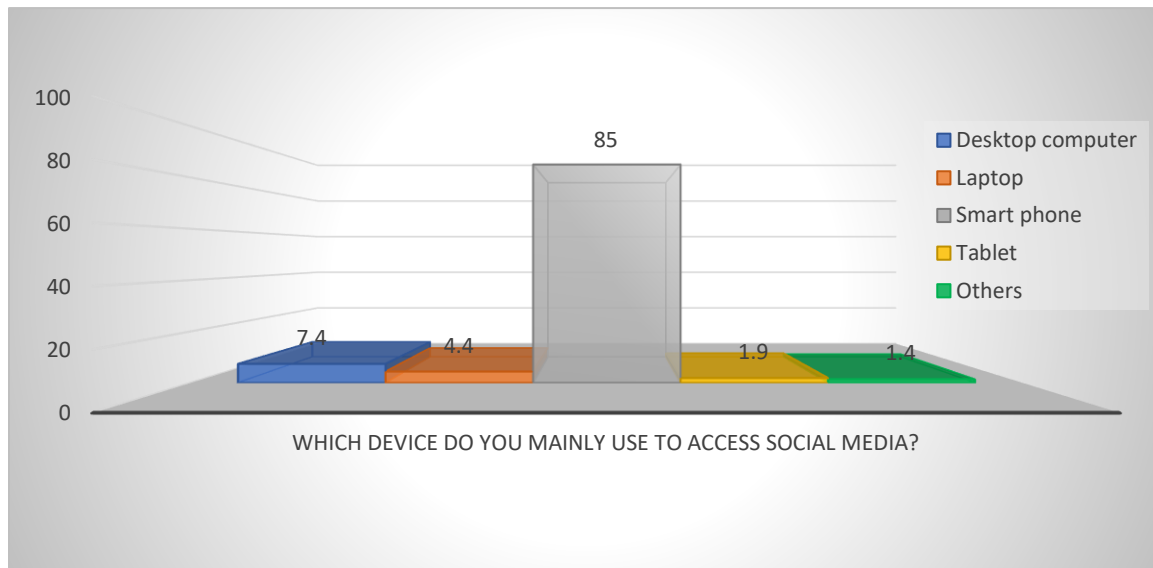


Figure 6- % of devices used to access social media

As it is displayed in the above figure, the mainly used device to access social media for 7.4 % of respondents was desktop computer. 4.4% of the respondents used laptop computer as the main device to access social media. Of the total social media user respondents, participants who covered 85% used smartphone as the main device to access social media. The mainly used device for 1.9% of the respondents was tablet, whereas 1.4 % of the respondents said other devices were their main devices to access news.

From this, we can understand that the largest portion of respondents (85%) use smartphone as the main device to access social media.

Similarly, different research works studied by different scholars indicated that mobile phones especially smartphones are being used to access news on the social media platform.

For instance, in Digital News Report 2018, in the UK, the smartphone overtaking the computer as the main (preferred) device for accessing news (Newman, 2018). In Sensis Social Media Report 2017 also, it was stated that smartphones are preferred to other devices for social networking, with usage increasing further in 2017 and 81% percent of social media users access their social media accounts on a smartphone, which compares with 72% in 2016.

Respondents most trusted social media account to use as a source of news

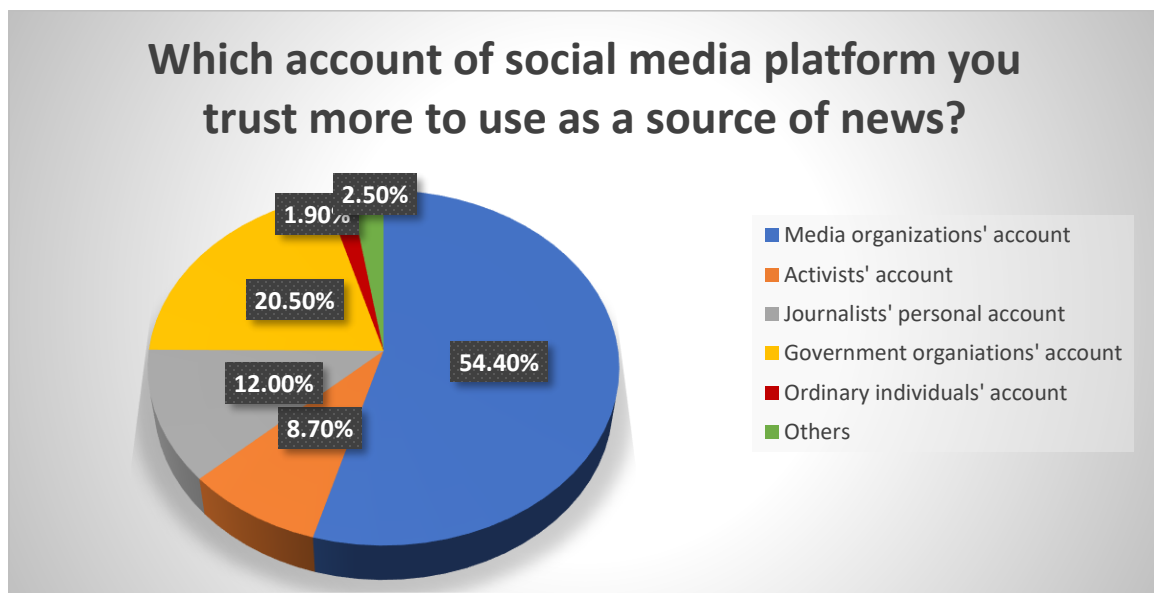


Figure 7- the social media accounts which can be trusted by respondents

Figure 7 indicates that 54.4 % of the respondents trusted media organizations account to access news. 8.7% of the respondents replied that activists account was their most trusted account to access news and 12% of the respondents replied that journalists' personal account was their most trusted account to access news. While government organizations' account was the most trusted news source for 20.5% of the respondents, ordinary individuals' account became the most trusted account to be used as a source of news for respondents who covers only 1.9 %. The remaining 2.5% of the respondents replied that other accounts which were not mentioned in the alternatives were their most trusted social media accounts to be used as a news source.

Respondents who selected the alternative others specified that politicians', officials of different organizations and celebrities' accounts were their most trusted sources of news.

This implies that the highest number of respondents (54.4 %) accessed media organizations accounts because they were their most trusted sources of news.

Respondents who selected media organizations accounts as their most trusted sources of news reasoned that they preferred to access media organizations accounts because media organizations had responsible and dedicated professionals to broadcast news, the news released using media organizations account could be trustworthy.

When the respondents justified their reason, they also said that because media organizations have accountability and they care for their reputation, they disseminate credible news. According to the explanation of the respondents, media organizations have a trend to verify the credibility of news and they make balance before sharing the news for the audience.

Supporting this, Purcell et al. (2010) said that users who get news online say they specifically get news from news organizations and individual journalists they follow in the social networking space.

Table 8: Places where respondents mostly access social media news

Places	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
on the taxi	119	21.4%	32.5%
at home	157	28.2%	42.9%
at the workplace	51	9.2%	13.9%
in a cafe/ restaurant	46	8.3%	12.6%
Anywhere	183	32.9%	50.0%
Total	556	100.0%	151.9%

Table 8 shows that respondents who covered 21.4% mostly access their social media accounts to get news on the taxi, whereas 28.2 % of the respondents mostly accessed their social media

accounts to get news at home. Respondents who accessed their social media accounts to get news at the workplace covered 9.2 %. 8.3 % of the respondents said that they accessed their social media accounts to get news in a café/ restaurant. 32.9 % of the respondents responded that they accessed their social media accounts to get news anywhere, where the access was available.

This implies that majorities (32.9 %) accessed their social media accounts to get news anywhere. The mobility feature of social media platforms enabled social media users to access their account everywhere, where the access was available. It could be in a taxi, at home, at the workplace, in a café/ restaurant or somewhere else. In relation with this, Howe (2011), had a supporting idea and said that the ascent of mobile connectivity via smart phones had turned news gathering and news awareness into an anytime, anywhere affair for a segment of avid news watchers.

Table 9: Frequency of visiting social media to access news

Frequency of visiting social media to access news		
	Frequency	Percent
multiple times in a day	169	46.2 %
Daily	147	40.2 %
a few times a week	32	8.7 %
once a week	2	.5 %
a few times a month	1	.3 %
Rarely	15	4.1 %
Total	366	100.0 %

While responding to the request "How often do you visit social media to access news?", 46.2 % of the respondents said that they visited social media sites to access news multiple times a day. The respondents who said that they visited social media sites daily covered 40.2 %. 8.7% of the respondents visited social media sites a few times a week. While 0.5 % of the respondents responded that they accessed social media sites once a week, only 0.3% of the respondent visited social media sites a few times a month. The respondents who said that they rarely visited social media sites covered 4.1%.

Thus, it can be understood that most of the respondents (46.2%) visited social media sites multiple times a day.

Table 10: Feeling of being responsible while sharing news on social media

Do you feel being responsible while sharing news on social media?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	330	90.2 %
No	36	9.8 %
Total	366	100.0 %

The result displayed in table 10 indicates that 90.2% of the respondents answered the question "Do you feel being responsible while sharing news on social media?" saying yes but 9.8% of the respondents replied saying no.

This implies that most of the respondents (90.2%) feel being responsible while sharing news on social media.

In relation to this, Ndangam and Lee (2012) stated that social media can be used to propagate conflict or peace. Accordingly, individuals using social media need to consider the consequences of their activities and understand their own responsibility to be honest, fair and accurate. Perhaps, to check their facts; not to distort information; to question the motives of their sources, and to avoid creating stereotypes. Their responsibility must be extended up to the level of securing the contents and images shared on social media (Ndangam & Lee, 2012).

Table 11: Most likable feature of social media

Most likable feature of social media	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
It is a platform to deliver news fast	240	32.4%	65.6%
It is easily accessible	194	26.2%	53.0%
It is a means for making interaction with others	94	12.7%	25.7%
It is a source for multiple kind of information	205	27.7%	56.0%
Others	8	1.1%	2.2%
Total	741	100.0%	202.5%

Regarding the most liked features of social media, 32.4% of the respondents said that they liked social media because it was a platform to deliver news fast. Because social media could easily be accessible, 26.2 % of the respondents liked it. 12.7% of the respondents responded that they liked social media because it was a means for making interaction with others. 27.7% of the respondents said that they liked social media because it was a source for multiple kinds of information. Respondents who selected the alternative others covered 1.1% and they specified the features they liked most about social media. As they stated the features, they liked most about social media were it was a platform to build a business and to schedule and manage an event.

As a result, majorities of the respondents (32.4 %) liked social media because it was a platform to deliver news fast.

The data that was gathered through interview also strengthened the response collected through questionnaires. As most of the interviewees (83.3 %) said, being a means of information source including news was one likable feature of social media. In addition, interviewees added that cost-effectiveness, means of communication for people living at different poles, means of acquaintance for individuals who don't know each other, having mobility feature, being a platform to share feeling, means to reach to many shortly, being friendly and having easily adjustable feature as per the interest of the individual were the pleasant features of social media.

According to the 6th interviewee having mobility feature is the most fundamental feature of social media. He said that because of the mobility feature of social media, everyone could access news at any time, everywhere. As to the interviewee, after the emergence of social media, the user is not expected to stay at home to watch TV or to listen to the radio to get news. The user could open his device on his palm and access what he wanted from where he is sitting (Interviewee 6, on April 13, 2019).

The 4th interviewee also said that immediacy, interactiveness and world wideness are the likable features of social media. As he discussed social media could enable users to share and access news shortly. The immediacy feature coupled with the interactive feature could enable users to contact authors and give feedback or comments on the news immediately. The world wideness feature of social media could enable users to connect people globally (Interviewee 4, on April 13, 2019).

4.4. The credibility of social media news

The credibility of the news released via social media.

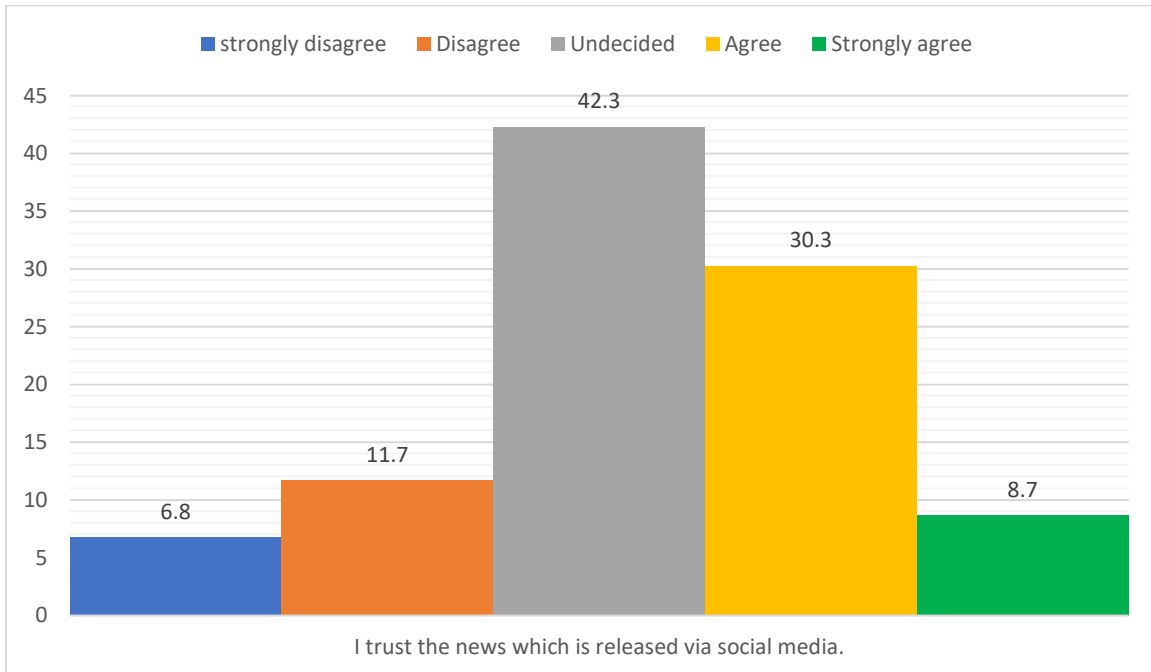


Figure 8- credibility of news released via social media

As it is shown in figure 8, 42.3% of the respondents, who gave reply on the trust level of news which is released via social media, selected undecided option. 30.3% of them said agree and 11.7% of them replied by saying disagree. When 8.7% of them selected the alternative strongly agree, 6.8% of the respondents said strongly disagree.

From this, we can understand that the largest portion of respondents (42.3 %) had undecided position about the trust they had on the news that was released via social media and most of them couldn't say either social media is credible or not.

Likewise, the data that was gained from the interviewees strengthened the response collected through questionnaires. As the interviewees discussed, the technological advancement and the emergence of social media platform has brought an additional opportunity for news distributors. Not only media organizations, but also individuals who could afford a mobile and an internet connection, could be publishers.

Thus, the interviewees said, "generalizing the credibility of social media news or saying social media news is credible or the reverse is difficult". As they discussed, since the interest of users is

different, both reliable and fake news may be circulated on the social media platform. Although there are responsible users who could share a fact, users who were interested in creating conflict might distribute fabricated fake news and the credibility of the news might be dependent on the factors like a news source, the content itself and the number of media who shared the news.

According to the response of 2nd interviewee and 5th interviewee, trust on social media news can be dependent on the factors like the identity of the source of the news and the content of the news. The content of the news should be concise and comprehensive. The information has not to be vague and a clear and true picture of what happened should be presented.

Therefore, it can be understood that the credibility of social media news can be determined by the factors like the source of the news and the content of the news.

Table 12: Dissemination of false information on fake/ duplicated social media accounts

Fake/ duplicated social media accounts are mostly used to disseminate false information.		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	27	7.4 %
Disagree	7	1.9 %
Undecided	33	9.0 %
Agree	105	28.7 %
strongly agree	194	53.0 %
Total	366	100.0 %

As the result indicated in the above table shows, 7.4 % of the respondents replied that they strongly disagreed on a statement Fake/ duplicated social media accounts are mostly used to disseminate false information. 1.9% of the respondents said disagree, whereas 9% of the respondents said undecided. While 28.7% of the respondents said agree, 53% of the respondents said strongly agree. Therefore, it can be understood that more than half of the respondents strongly agreed on a statement "Fake/ duplicated social media accounts are mostly used to disseminate false information".

Fake accounts are preferred means for malicious users of online social networks to send spam, commit fraud, or otherwise abuse the system. A single malicious actor may create dozens to thousands of fake accounts in order to scale their operation (Xiao, Freeman and Hwa, 2015).

Taking this into consideration, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th interviewees suggested some methods to differentiate fake/ duplicated accounts from the real. As the interviewees explained the methods are mentioned as follows:

Checking whether the account has a verification check mark or not - A verification badge is a check mark that appears next to the account's name, on the profile. It is given by the social media company and it confirmed that the account is the authentic page or profile for the public figure or media company. Having this in mind, many reputable media organizations and public figures have verified/ official social media accounts and the news that can be accessed from these accounts may be reliable.

Checking whether the page has an official contact address or not- if the page has an official contact address, it is possible to call and get confirmation about the realness of the account.

Checking the number of followers- Although it is not always true if the account has only a few followers and it is not followed by reputable or known followers, it may be fake or duplicated account.

Checking the track record of the source about posting reliable news- while checking the sharing history of the account, if it has an experience of posting reliable and unbiased news repeatedly, the news that is disseminated at that moment may be reliable and the account may be a real account.

Table 13: Fake news can be the source of conflict

Fake news can be the source of conflict	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	11	3.0%
Disagree	7	1.9%
Undecided	20	5.5%
Agree	78	21.3%
strongly agree	250	68.3%
Total	366	100.0%

Based on the data indicated in the above table, the reply of respondents for the statement, fake news can be the source of conflict, was 3% strongly disagree, 1.9% disagree, 5.5% undecided, 21.3% agree and 68.3% strongly agree.

Therefore, 68.3% of the respondents, majorities, strongly agreed that Fake news can be the sources of conflict.

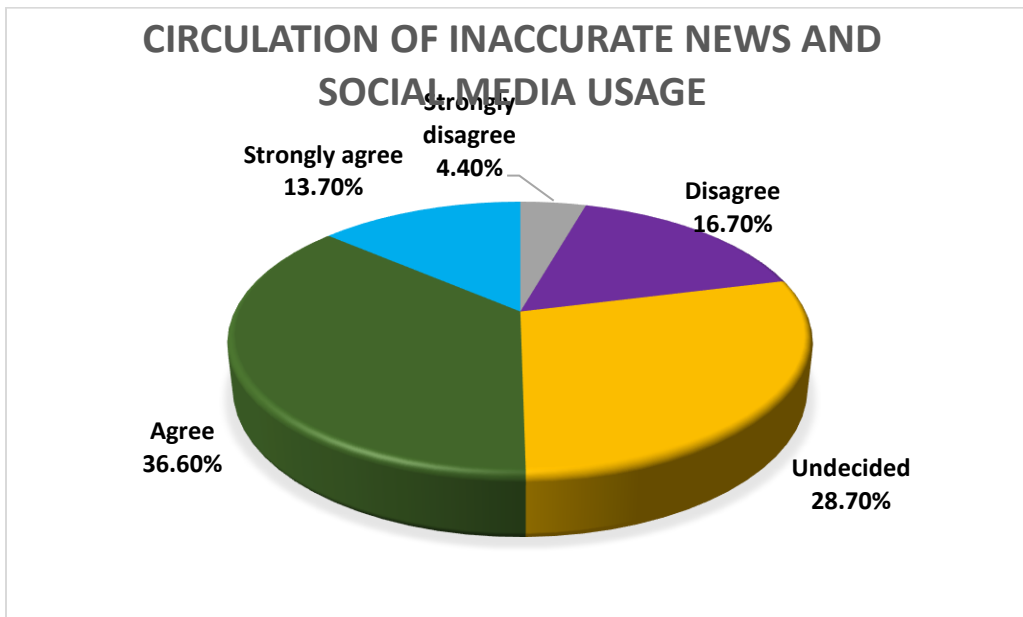


Figure 9 Circulation of inaccurate news and social media usage

As the result is indicated in the above figure, 4.4 % of the respondents replied that they strongly disagreed on a statement “I access social media news even though I expect that there may be inaccurate news circulating on the platform”. 16.7% of the respondents said disagree, whereas 28.7% of the respondents said undecided. While 36.6 % of the respondents said agree, 13.7 % of the respondents said strongly agree.

Then, because most of the respondents (36.6%) agreed on a statement, “I access social media news even though I expect that there may be inaccurate news circulating on the platform.”, we can understand that most of the users keep accessing social media news even though they expect that there may be fake news circulating on the platform because keep accessing could make them more benefited than being abstained from accessing social media.

Table 14: Speed of fake news and accurate news distribution.

Fake news is distributed fast than accurate news.	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	14	3.8 %
Disagree	20	5.5 %
Undecided	55	15.0 %
Agree	111	30.3 %
strongly agree	166	45.4 %
Total	366	100.0 %

While responding to the Likert scale statement that says Fake news is distributed fast than accurate news, 3.8% of the respondents said strongly disagree, 5.5% of them said disagree, 15% of them said undecided, 30.3% of them said agree and 45.4% of them said strongly agree.

This implies, most of the respondents strongly agreed that Fake news is distributed fast than accurate news.

According to Kumar and Shah (2018), Since humans in nature like new things and false news is more novel, people are more likely to share it. The novel information attracts more attention and gets shared more often (Kumar & Shah, 2018). Thus, it can be understood that fake news might seek the attention of social media users and could be distributed fast.

4.4 verification methods of social media news

Table 15: Knowledge on the methods of social media news verification

Do you know any method of verification that can be applied before and during the consumption of social media news?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	205	56.0 %
No	161	44.0 %
Total	366	100.0 %

As it is shown in the table above, respondents who said yes for the question "Do you know any method of verification that can be applied before and during the consumption of social media news?" were 56.0%. However, 44.0% of the respondents said no.

Thus, it can be understood that most of the respondents know methods of verification that can be applied before and during the consumption of social media news.

Table 16: Experience of verifying social media news

Do you verify social media news before consumption?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	178	48.6 %
No	188	51.4 %
Total	366	100.0 %

The above table shows that 48.6% of the respondents said yes, we verified social media news before consumption, but 51.4% of the respondents said no we didn't verify social media news before consumption. As a result, we understand that most of the respondents do not have a trend to verify social media news before consumption.

While discussing about verification, Schifferes et al. (2014), stated that as social media has become an important source of news, and identifying and verifying new information and pictures quickly are important issues for social media users.

Respondents who gave the response to the question that requests participants to list down the verification methods that can be applied before and during the consumption of social media news stated many points. They said that cross-checking the truthfulness of the news by watching and listening the mainstream media, searching the news in reputable and official sites, looking for the check mark with blue color which can be given by the social media company, checking the number of followers of the account, using Google image and video search, watching the repetitiveness of the news in many media, asking people who are the sources for more information, checking the identity of the account owner, checking the track record of the source about posting reliable news, contacting the right person who can have the information on the issue

and checking the date when the account was created are the verification methods they applied when they need to verify the news released via social media.

Supporting this, the office of prime minister stated on its official Twitter page on March 21 that social media users should identify and stop fake news implementing the following methods:

Consider the source- investigate the site or page where you are reading the story. How credible is it? Does the source have the pattern of sharing real or fake news? what is the intention and motive of the source in releasing such news? Why are they saying what are they saying?

Check the writer- Do a search on the writer. Do they have a real identity? Or are they hiding behind a fake name and picture? What is the previous track record? If they have real identity, consider their motive.

Fact check- Is it reasonable content? Does it contain empirical data? What relevant background information exists? If it contains an image, are you certain it was not photoshopped? If it is video material, are you sure that in editing, the content has been taken out of context?

Supporting sources- Are there supporting sources that shared the same news? Which are credible sources you can confirm with?

Check your biases- Could your own belief affect your judgment on the issue? What prejudice do you hold that would make you believe the fake story? (Prime minister office of Ethiopia, 2019)

According to the suggestion given by the interviewees, different kinds of verification methods can be applied to verify social media news. As it is stated by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th interviewees, identifying the identity of the news source is the first and the foremost strategy to verify social media news. Identification of the news source identity can be done by checking whether the account has a verification check mark or not, Checking the number of followers and analyzing the trustworthiness of the source (Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 5, on April 6 and 7, 2019).

The 1st, 2nd and 5th interviewees added that checking the number of posts as one suggested method for verifying social media news. As they stated, Checking the number of posts is about analyzing

the number of posts displayed on the page and the time of creation of the account. If the account is created more recently and doesn't have many posts, it could be less reliable and the more likely be an account intended to spread fake news (Interviewees 1, 2 and 5, on April 6 and 7, 2019).

Checking whether the news is reported by multiple sources or not is also another method of verification suggested by the interviewees. If the news is reported by different unconnected sources, the news can be reliable.

As all the interviewees agreed contacting the source and reading past the headline can be suggested as additional verification methods of social media news. While explaining the concept Contacting the source, interviewees said that when necessary to check the reliability of the news from the horses' mouth, it is possible to send request to the source for further information.

As the interviewees discussed, reading past the headline is about going deep into the text beyond the title. Social media news distributors know that users are attracted by dramatic and exaggerated headlines, so they tend to use such an attractive headline to get more viewers. Thus, social media users should not make a judgment before reading past the headline.

Furthermore, social media news can be verified by using several kinds of online verification methods. As the interviewees recommended, images can be verified by using Google image search, TinEye, YouTube DataViewer and Yandex.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the conclusion part of the research based on the findings and the suggested possible recommendations.

5.1. Summary

The main objective of the study was to examine the use of social media as a source of news focusing on ethio telecom's head office workers.

To achieve the above major objective the following research questions were raised.

1. For what purpose do ethio telecom's head office workers use social media?
2. How do ethio telecom's head office workers use social media as a source of news?
3. To what extent ethio telecom's head office workers trust the news which are released via social media?
4. What are the possible solutions that ethio telecom's head office workers use to verify News?

Data were collected from ethio telecom's head office workers and university teachers. Questionnaires and semi-structured interview were used to gather information from the respondents. To gather data using questionnaires, 19 questions were developed and distributed to be filled by 377 respondents. Out of the total 377 questionnaires distributed for the respondents 366 were returned. In addition, semi-structured interviews were organized, and data were collected from six interviewees. And then, data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The major findings with regards to the purpose of using social media, the usage of social media as a source of news, the credibility of social media news and the verification methods of social media news are summarized as follows:

The largest portion of the respondents (36.2%) use Facebook and most of the respondents (31%) mainly accessed social media for the purpose of news collection and other kinds of information. According to the result found regarding with how they frequently engaged in social media, more

than half of the respondents (58.8%) frequently engaged in social media by reading news/stories posted on social media.

As per the interviewees' response concerning about purpose of social media, social media was used for sharing news and other kinds of information, awareness creation, maximizing people's level of involvement on political, economic and social issues, connecting people across the globe, promoting business organizations and products, forming common interest groups, finding missing people, fundraising, finding work opportunity, updating status and notifying various life events of individuals like relationship, marriage, travel, engagement, having a child, etc.

Most of the respondents who covered 85% used smartphone as the main device to access social media. The social media account that could be trusted by most of the respondents who covered 54.4 % was media organizations account. As it was explicated by the respondents, because media organizations care for their reputation and feel being more accountable, they have a trend of verifying the credibility of news. Regarding with the accessibility of social media highest number of respondents responded that they accessed their social media accounts to get news multiple times in a day, anywhere, where the access was available. When the respondents were asked about the feeling of being responsible which they had during sharing news on social media, they answered that they felt being responsible.

Regarding the most liked features of social media, the largest portion (32.4%) of the respondents said that they liked social media because it was a platform to deliver news fast.

While discussing about the likable features of social media interviewees responded that being a means of information source including news, cost-effectiveness, means of communication for people living at different places, means of acquaintance for individuals who don't know each other, having mobility feature, being a platform to share feeling, means to reach to many shortly, being friendly, having easily adjustable feature as per the interest of the individual, immediacy, interactiveness and world wideness are the pleasant features of social media.

When the respondents were asked to scale their trust on news released via social media sites majorities (42.3%) couldn't say that social media is credible or not. The credibility of social media news can be determined by the factors like the source of the news and the content of the news. Most of the respondents (53%) responded that they strongly agreed on a statement which said "fake/ duplicated social media accounts were mostly used to disseminate false information".

Majorities, 68.3%, of the respondents strongly agreed that Fake news could be the sources of conflict. The highest number (36.6 %) of the respondents agreed that they accessed social media news though they expected that there might be inaccurate news circulating on the social media platform. Most of the respondents (45.4%) strongly agreed that fake news was distributed fast than accurate news.

According to the replies given by the interviewees, generalizing the credibility of social media news or saying social media news was credible or the reverse was difficult. As they said, when the social media platform was used by responsible users, it could be a source for reliable news, whereas when the social media platform is used by irresponsible users, it can be a source for fabricated fake news and the credibility of the news might be dependent on the factors like a news source, the content itself and the number of people and media who shared or liked the news.

When asked about the verification methods of social media news, most of the respondents (56.0%) confirmed that they knew methods of verification which could be applied before and during the consumption of social media news. However, most of the respondents (51.4%) didn't verify social media news.

As per the replies of the respondents, cross-checking the truthfulness of the news by watching and listening the mainstream media, searching the news in reputable and official sites, looking for the check mark with blue color which can be given by the social media company and checking the number of followers of the account are the verification methods which can be applied by social media users. In addition, they confirmed that using google image and video search, watching the repetitiveness of the news in many media, asking people who are the sources for more information and checking the identity of the account owner could enable social media users to verify social media news. Furthermore, checking the track record of the source about posting reliable news, contacting the right person who can have the information on the issue and checking the date when the account was created are the verification methods which can be implemented when necessary to verify the news released via social media.

According to the suggestion given by the interviewees, different kinds of verification methods can be applied for verifying social media news. As they stated, identifying the identity of the news source, checking the number of posts, checking whether the news is reported by multiple sources

or not, contacting the source, reading past the headline and using online verification tools such as Google image search, TinEye, YouTube DataViewer and Yandex.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, the study reveals that the mainly used social media platform for ethio telecom's head office workers was Facebook, and they mainly used it for the purpose of accessing news and other kinds of information.

As it is indicated in the findings, most of ethio telecom's head office workers use social media via smartphones. Because most of them believed that media organizations care for their reputation and feel being more accountable, they preferred to access news from media organizations account. The highest number of ethio telecom's head office workers visited social media sites to access news multiple times in a day, anywhere, where the access was available. The largest portion of them also confirmed that they liked social media because it was a platform to deliver news fast.

Regarding with extent to which ethio telecom's head office workers trust the news released via social media, majorities couldn't say that social media is credible or not. The credibility of social media news can be determined by the factors like the source of the news and the content of the news. In addition, many of ethio telecom's head office workers kept accessing social media news though they expected that there might be inaccurate news circulating on the platforms.

According to the findings, most of ethio telecom's head office workers knew methods of verification which could be applied before and during the consumption of social media news. However, most of them didn't have a trend of verifying social media news.

5.3. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are forwarded. Moreover, the suggestions here are generally based on questionnaire, semi-structured interview and the review of literature. It is important to inform that the recommendations described below are meant to be informative rather than authoritative.

- To inspire users use social media as a source of news and enable them trust the news disseminated via social media, social media news distributors should share verified and reliable news.

- To prevent negative consequences that can be occurred as a result of irresponsible use of social media, ethio telecom's head office workers should use the platform responsibly.
- Media houses and popular social media account owners should fulfill the preconditions requested by social media companies and get the check mark so as to enable customers identify the official accounts from the fake/duplicated accounts.
- Media houses and popular social media account owners should share fake page alerts for the social media users and communicate social media companies to close duplicated accounts opened by their name.
- To differentiate fake/ duplicated accounts from the real, media organizations and popular social media page owners should introduce their real/ official pages and put official contact addresses on their pages.
- Ethio telecom's head office workers should differentiate fake/ duplicated accounts from the official/ real accounts using verification methods like looking for the check mark which can be given by the social media company, checking the number of followers of the account and checking the track record of the account.
- Ethio telecom's head office workers have to verify news disseminated on social media using verification methods such as examining the source, looking at other sources which agreed on the issue, checking individual's biases, reading past the headline, using tools like Google image search, TinEye, YouTube DataViewer and Yandex.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire prepared for the respondents

Addis Ababa University

School of Journalism and Communication

Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is designed to access information for a study meant to investigate "The use of social media as a source of news focusing on ethio telecom's head office workers". The study and the data are to be used only for an academic purpose. Your genuine responses are deemed to determine the soundness and validity of the research findings. Therefore, I kindly request you to fill the questionnaire genuinely and carefully. You are not required to write your name.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!!

Your answers for the choice item can be given by putting a tick (√) mark inside either of the boxes given.

Part I Demographic Information

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Age: 20-25 26-30 31-40 41 and above

3. Level of Education:

Below Diploma Diploma First Degree Masters degree and above

Part II Purpose of using social media

Objective: To analyze the purpose that ethio telecom's head office workers use the social media for.

1. In which social media platform you have an account? (you can choose more than one)

Facebook Twitter Google + LinkedIn Instagram Others

2. For what purpose do you use social media? (you can choose more than one)

Sharing idea Tool of communication Entertainment

Source of news and other kind of information Building business

If any, please mention-----

3. How do you **frequently** engage in social media?

Reading news/stories posted on social media Writing and sharing stories

Re-posting news/stories Give comment on posts Others

Part III = Usage of social media as a source of news

Objective: To examine the use of social media as a source of news.

1. Which social media platform do you **prefer** to access news?

Facebook Twitter YouTube Others

2. Which device do you **mainly** use to access social media?

Desktop Computer Laptop Smartphone Tablet Others

3. Which account of social media platform you trust **more** to use as a source of news?

Media organizations' account Activists' account Journalists' personal account

Government organizations' account Ordinary individuals account others

If your answer is others, please specify it-----

3.1 Why?-----

4. How often do you visit social media to access news?

Multiple times in a day Daily A few times a week

Once a week A few times a month Rarely

5. Where do you **mostly** access your social media account to get news?

On the taxi At home At the work place In a cafe/ restaurant

Any where

6. Do you feel being responsible while sharing news on social media? Yes No

7. What are the features you like most about social media?

It's a platform to deliver news fast It is easily accessible

It is a means for making interaction with others

It is a source for multiple kind of information Others

If your answer is others, please specify it-----

Part IV = Credibility of social media news

Objective: To investigate the extent to which ethio telecom's head office workers trust the news which are released via social media.

Respond for the following activities by putting a tick (√) mark against each item.

Key: 1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Undecided 4= Agree 5=Strongly Agree

No.	Activities	1	2	3	4	5
1	I trust the news which is released via social media.					
2	Fake/ duplicated social media accounts are mostly used to disseminate false information.					
3	Fake news can be the source of conflict					
4	I access social media news even though I expect that there may be inaccurate news circulating on the platform.					
5	Fake news is distributed fast than accurate news.					

Part V= Verification methods of social media news

Objective: To examine how ethio telecom’s head office workers verify news.

1. Do you know any method of verification that can be applied before and during the consumption of social media news? Yes No
2. Do you verify social media news before consumption? Yes No
3. If your answer for question number 1 is “yes”, please list the verification methods that can be applied before and during the consumption of social media news?

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questions for selected informants

**Addis Ababa University
School of Journalism and Communication
Semi-structured interview questions**

The interview had been held with the interviewees and discussed about

1. The credibility of news obtained from social media.

2. The purpose of using social media

3. Features of social media that can be liked by the users

4. Methods to differentiate fake or duplicated accounts from the real

5. Social media news verification methods that can be applied before and during news consumption

