

THE OPINION AND ATTITUDE OF YOUNG AND MIDDLE AGED CITIZENS ABOUT ONLINE MEDIA BROADCASTERS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN KOSOVO

Lirie Aliu

Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences, SEEU, Macedonia, liridion@gmail.com

Abstract: The media power is a barometer of democracy and it is considered as the oxygen of democracy. The aim of the research is to take the opinions of citizens of different ages and their comparison regarding the credibility and assessment of Kosovo's media and social networks. Raised survey question was "What are the opinions of Kosovo citizens regarding ethics in online media and what is their belief about political impact? Survey approach is quantitative with 368 random respondents from more than 2/3 of Kosovo region. Results are collected with valid questionnaires, given in frequency and percentage. Outcomes: age groups up to 30 years old were with elementary education, while groups over 46 years old mostly were of superior education. Ages up to 30 years old use smart phones for information on online networks (70%), the group over 46 years old (48%). In both groups only 26% to 32%, believe that cyber journalism has enough time for research and editing. 89% -90% think and believe that there is a political pressure in the media, and almost as much believe and expect in obtaining of a denigration law as soon as possible, over that the journalist should have boundaries with the news. 40% -48% of respondents believe that there is ethics in the media, and most respondents hinder the phenomenon where everyone can be a potential publisher. Public opinion believes very little in ethics in the media and social networks, alluding to their politicization. The data show that more attention should be paid to ethical codes and more courage for autonomous journalism.

Keywords: Online media, ethics, politics, social networks approach

1. INTRODUCTION

The media power is a barometer of democracy and it is rightly considered as the oxygen of democracy. Media freedom is one of the main pillars for the functioning of a democratic society as "the fourth power" of a state after the powers such as legislature, the decision-making and the judiciary.¹¹⁵ Today, "online journalism, according to those who produce manifestations on its behalf, represents a world-historical development - not so much because of the expressive power of the new media rather than because of its approach to producers and consumers." Everyone, in turn, can be a producer and customer of news.¹¹⁶ Every country experiencing the journey towards the processes of political transformation has undoubtedly specific and unique experience. In a previous definition of scholars T Karl and C Schmitter, transition is just a big period of political insecurity. The change of regimes is undoubtedly a difficult process.¹¹⁷ In this study, we tried to discuss the doubts that appear in Online Media and social networks which often report unreliable and unproven news. It's clearer to recognize who is the first to report news, with a bombastic title in order just to get a click. Online media studies are more than necessary in Kosovo. The study's discussion will focus on media associations about information resource issues and ethical codes. The study aims to support and protect the ethics of free, independent and responsible media in Kosovo. Although every online newspaper is responsible for its articles, yet a cyber journalist must protect the intellectual property, justice and credibility of its information. We have all seen how television is in search of the spectators and in realizing the great postulate "if you're visible, you're successful" produces infinite information that no one can synthesize everything or understand what's going on.¹¹⁸ In other hand, the word "journalist" is totally unprotected, everyone ("if fancy") can be called "journalist", and, of course, be hired as such!¹¹⁹ Another reason for faded confidence in media news is the prior verification of news. Very rarely, journalists pay close attention to the true news but publish "pink-style" news when it comes to corruption, scandal, election reporting, court reporting, and other forms of news. On the one hand,

¹¹⁵ BACAJ Valmir, 2010, Roli i medieve të lira për shoqërinë demokratike, artikull, Telegrafi, botuar më 19.11.2010

² CORNIA, A. Sehl, A. and Nielsen, R. K. 2016. Editorial Analytics: How News Media Are Developing. Oxford: RISJ.

¹¹⁶ WILKINS LEE, Clifford G. Christians. (2009). "The Handbook of Mass Media Ethics". Routledge, New York

¹¹⁷ ZOTAJ, Elda. 2014, Tranzicioni politik dhe roli i tij në marëdhëniet e Shqipërisë me Bashkimin Evropian, temë doktoranture/pdf

¹¹⁸ ibid

¹¹⁹ MEKULI, Gzim, 2013, Etika në media dhe përgjegjësia e publikut, artikull botuar ne portalin telegrafi më 01.11.2013,

the entire Balkans has a high Internet penetration in the population, but Kosovo, according to the Information and Communication Technology Association, has an internet penetration of up to 84.8% at home, while users share about 76.6% of it. In Kosovo, are on average 9 internet (Wi-Fi) networks for each kilometre. On the other hand, media education almost does not exist in schools. A few years ago, "media education" has been started as a subject only at university level.¹²⁰ In general assessment, as in empirical research, traditional media websites continue to remain the most important and most popular source of news for the online audience.¹²¹ To deal with facts and reporting results that contradict these convictions, the journalist must be very courageous. The journalist is dedicated to accuracy, which starts with the correct writing of a name, and refuse to accept unproven things, no matter how privileged the authority or expert inform them.¹²² Media self-regulation is not censorship or self-censorship. It has to do with setting minimum principles for ethics, accuracy, individual rights and so on while preserving editorial autonomy in the reports and opinions expressed.

- **Why need to self-regulate?**

Only because editorial freedom is preserved; State intervention is minimized; Media quality is encouraged; Media accountability is witnessed; Media readers are allowed to access. Is it self-regulation with a foolproof print? No one is perfect. In addition, publicly-criticized reviews will always be perceived as inaccurate by those who are being analyzed. Self-regulation comes to the aid of the media to respond to legitimate complaints and to correct mistakes encountered during the work. What should be the role of society in formulating the code? Counsellors and drafters of the code should seek legal advice, should refer to previous codes and browse domestic and international literature. However, we must not forget that these professionals and organizations have their own specific interests and their suggestions should be seen with some distance and reservation as well as the creation of press councils in new democracies.¹²³ In an article published in the online newspaper 'Life in Kosovo', was written that "False news can make inaccurate conclusions about the real world situation-for example, making it harder for voters to figure out which election candidates they prefer by pointing out some in-existing problems".¹²⁴ It may be a long struggle, but some independent media and civil society organizations in the Balkans are determined to counter the wave of false news and misinformation that "overthrow" the Balkans.¹²⁵ The Code of Ethics represents a summary of ethical norms and rules regarding the most important ethical issues encountered in journalism.¹²⁶ On the other hand, the judiciary system still lags behind with the capacity to enforce media laws and legislation on their protection.¹²⁷ On 25.01.2017, a law on the Independent Media Council (IMC) was adopted as a regulation for media service providers whether it is audio or audio-visual. The purpose of this regulation determines the rights and obligations of media service providers, regardless of the mode of transmission in the Republic of Kosovo, in order to guarantee the protection of media pluralism and public interest. (IMC), Law 04 / L-44.¹²⁸

2. METHODOLOGY

After choosing the topic, a questionnaire survey was compiled and it provides enough data for the purposes of the study. The survey is prepared based on valid references. (OSCE, 2017),¹²⁹(PROGNI, 2012)¹³⁰,(ZOTAJ 2014).¹³¹ Part I of the questionnaire contains 2 questions that give us demographic data on place, age and education. The second part of the questionnaire contains 12 close-ended questions with 2 options, yes/no answers and multiple

¹²⁰ HOXHA, Abit, 2017, Demensia digjitale dhe media në Kosovë,

¹²¹ ZGURRI, Rrapo, 2012, art, Gazetaria , profesioni që mësohet duke praktikuar, EU Journalism Observatory, (EJO), 03.08.2012

¹²² Wikipedia, 2017, Cilësitë e një gazetari, Kjo faqe është redaktuar për herë të fundit më 21 shtator 2017, në orën 22:21

¹²³ Miklós Haraszti, Përfaqësuesi i OSBE-së për Lirinë e Medias, Redaktuar nga Adeline Hulin dhe Jon Smith, 2008 , Zyra e Përfaqësuesit për Lirinë e Medias, Vienë, Udhëzues për vetërregullimin e mediave/pdf

¹²⁴ PREBREZA, Visar, 2017, Lajm i Rremë për Sondazhe në Emër të Institutit 'Gani Bobi' artikull në gazetën.Jeta në Kosovë,

¹²⁵ Jeta në Kosove, 2017, Fillon Lufta Kundër Makinerive të 'Lajmeve të Rreme' në Ballkan-artikull, botuar më : 07.12.2017

¹²⁶ HASANALIJAJ, Inva, 2017, Portalet informative, gazetarët nën presionin e klikimeve, 10 qershor , 2017

¹²⁷ OSCE, 2014, Liria e mediave dhe siguria e gazetarëve në Kosovë-Raport, botuar në Qershor 2014.pdf

¹²⁸ KPM,2017, Rregulluesit për ofruesit e shërbimeve mediale audio dhe audiovizuale, KPM/2017/02

¹²⁹ OSCE, 2014, Liria e mediave dhe siguria e gazetarëve në Kosovë-Raport, botuar në Qershor 2014.pdf

¹³⁰ PROGNI, Luljeta, 2012, Vlerësimi dhe ndikimi i internetit e rrjeteve sociale në politikën shqiptare, art, Metropol,12 nëntor 2012,

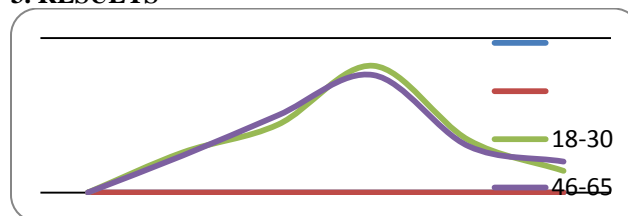
¹³¹ ZOTAJ, Elda, 2014, Tranzicioni politik dhe roli i tij në marëdhëniet e Shqipërisë me Bashkimin Evropian, temë doktoranture/pdf

answers. The questions were oriented to measure respondents' opinions about online media, media credibility, the source of technology-based information, the things that hold back online journalism and their access to influence and ethics in media. The careful selection of the literature, including legal documents, approved media regulations, ethical codes, journalist's profession, different news sources, fake news. Also were found published articles in newspapers and magazines other than authors of the field of journalism about the news impact on political events. The selected material has been adequate to determine the hypotheses of the study, and the orientation. The theoretical background has been the main supporter to formulate questionnaire for survey. The source of the information is written after each printed material and at the end presented in the bibliography. Some parts of the material are listed as they were from the author. A survey is conducted among 368 respondents from more than eight (8) municipalities in Kosovo. (Prishtina, Gjilan, Ferizaj, Peja, Podujeva, Kaçanik, Viti, Kamenica etc.), of different sex, ages and backgrounds with an accompanying description of the survey, where it is clearly described what are the goals of this study and anonymity will be respected. Survey was conducted during the December 2017 to February. 2018. The respondents were selected randomly. Structured questionnaire interview was conducted at the respondent occurrence. Each interview was conducted one by one without any influence from others. Respondents were of different professions; teachers, professors, doctors, nurses, economists, students, unemployed etc. There were no delimitations except age. All respondents were over 18 years old. All survey questionnaires were set from 1 to 368, and then inserted into the Excel database. After the counting, results tables were prepared. The survey approach is of a quantitative type. Samples of the study were randomly chosen from more than half of the countries in the territory of Kosovo. The analysis is done with adequate statistical methods while the presentation of results is done with frequency and percentage. Findings are presented in tables, graphical and diagrammatic order. The purpose of this paper was to get citizen opinion of different ages, and compare their opinions regarding the credibility and opinion about online media and social networks. Survey question: What are the opinions of Kosovo citizens regarding ethics in online media and what is their belief about political impact? H1- There is no significant difference between age groups regarding opinions about online media, social networks ethics and political influence. H2- The younger age groups obtain more online information from smart phones, while middle-aged age-groups get this information more from work and personal computers. Table 1 shows the age and education of the of the survey participants.

Age Groups							Total:	
	18-30		46-65					
N	255		113				368	
%	69%		31%				100%	
	Primary		Elementary		Superior			
Age	18-30	46-65	18-30	46-65	18-30	46-65	18-30	46-65
N	6	4	166	33	83	76	255	113
%	3%	3%	65%	29%	32%	67.5%	69%	31%

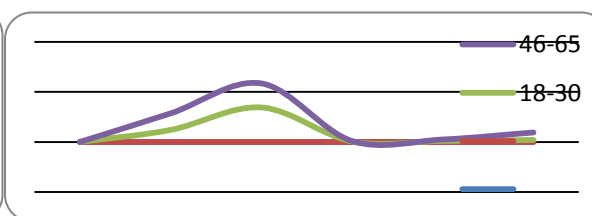
Tab 1. Age group and Education

3. RESULTS



Graph 1. One click information?

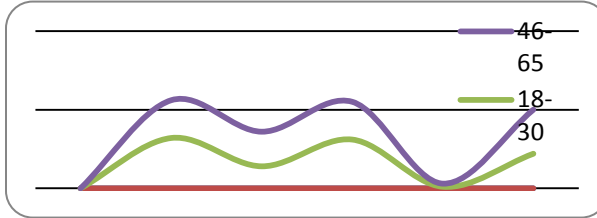
Graph1. Shows that 13% and 12% respectively of the two groups, think it is extraordinary, 22 respectively 25% it is efficient, 41% and 38% respectively have responded that it is quick information, 17%, respectively 15% think of them as somewhat suspicious and 7%, respectively 10%, consider it as a cost-free approach. Graph2. Shows that both age groups access their social and media platform as in follow: 24%, respectively 33% in their personal



Graph 2. Information approach technology

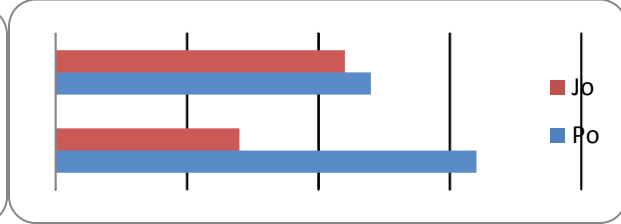
computers, 69% and 48% respectively by smart phone, 1% in both groups use public computers, 2% and 3% respectively use different tablets, while desktop computers for social networking use 4% and 15% respectively.

• **Cybernetic Journalism**

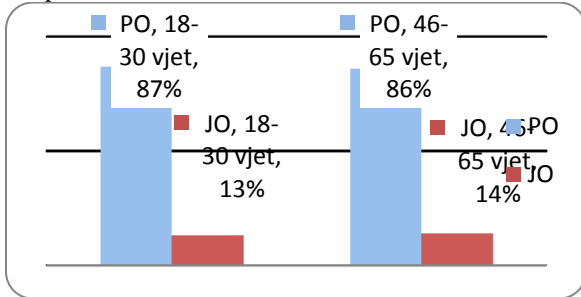


Graph 3. Time to review and edit news?

Graph3. Opinions of respondents of both age groups, 32% and 24% respectively think that cyber journalism has enough time to review and edit the news, 14% and 22% think there's no time, 31% and 24% respectively, think maybe a little, 1%, and 2%, respectively, there's no time at all, and 22% respectively 28% responded that this depends on the importance of the news. **Graph4.** Shows that 89% and 90% respectively believe that pressure from the political individuals exist in the media, 10% and 11% respectively do not believe that.

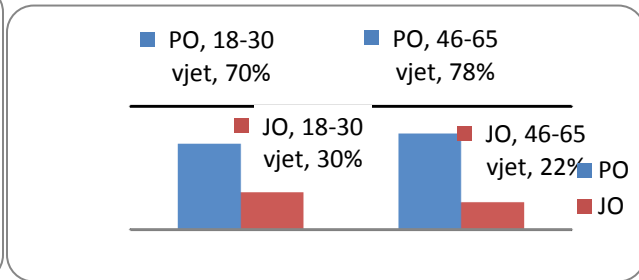


Graph 4. Political Pressure?

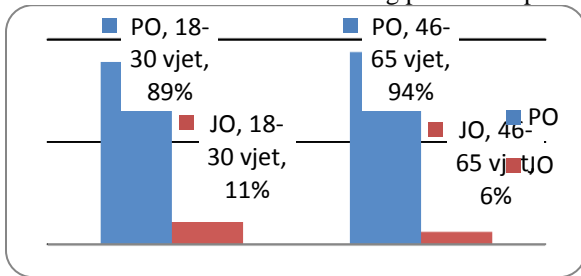


Graph 5. Obtaining a defamation law?

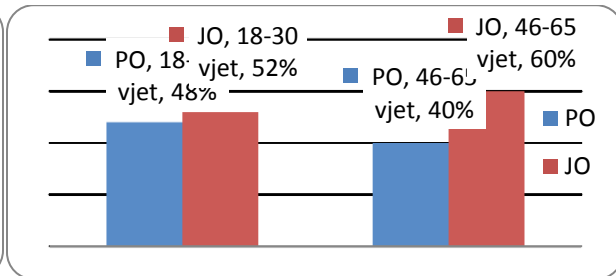
Graph5. Graph shows the opinion of the survey respondents if a defamation law can be obtained for online news. 87% answered with yes, 86% with no. **Graph6.** Shows that 70%, respectively 78% of respondents notice the difference in media treatment among public and political individuals.



Graph 6. Treatment of public and political individuals?



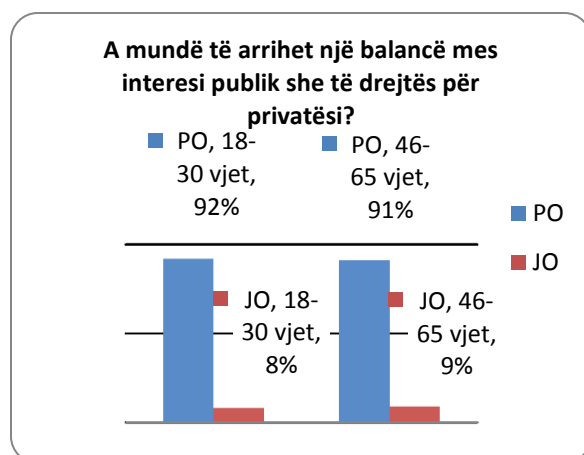
Graph 7. Journalist red lines?



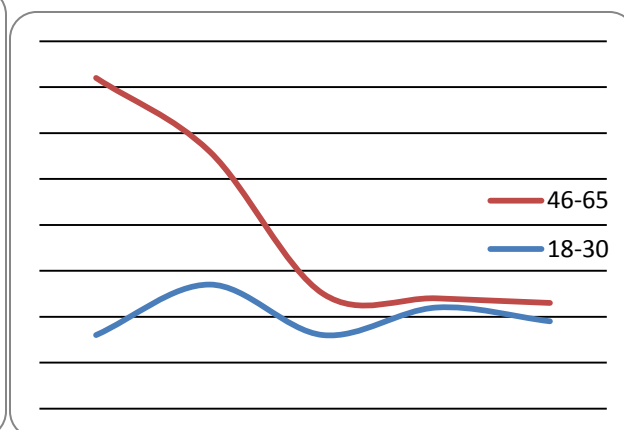
Graph 8. Ethics in media?

Graph7. Shows that 89% and 94% of respondents respectively, think there should be a red line to where the journalist can go with his news. **Graph8.** Shows clearly that less than half of the both groups 48% and 40% respectively believe that there is ethics in online media while 52% and 60% respectively do not believe it.

• **Public interest and the right to privacy**



Graph 9. Balance between public interest and privacy right?



Graph 10. Everyone can be a potential publisher?

Graph9. Shows the respondents' opinion on whether can be obtained a law to balance public interest and privacy law, where 92% and 91% respectively see this as possible to reach and a minority of 8% and 9% respectively believes it is impossible. **Graph10.** Shows how much disturbs the phenomenon where everyone can be a publisher, where 16% and 56% respectively admit that it disturb them a lot, 27% and 29% respectively disturbs them to some extent, only 16% and 9% respectively do not care about this phenomenon. 22% respectively 2% consider this phenomenon worrisome, while 19% and 4% respectively think this is an individual perception.

Question 11. Evaluation of the current ethic situation, express how citizens assess the ethics situation in social and media networks news in Kosovo, where 25% and 19% respectively think of it as medial industry 21%, respectively 17% it encourages debates, while 25% respectively 11% as problematic, 15% respectively 21% as competitive reality, and 14% respectively 32% rate it as often offensive. **Question 12 .** What should media society seek? It shows how much technology affects in online media and social networks especially in the privacy violation and what the media society should seek further. 20% and 25% think that the media should be neutral, 32% and 42% respectively ask for continuous monitoring, and 36% and 22% respectively rely on collaboration with media commissions, while 12% and 6% respectively, think that there should be appeals for deviations, while 0% and 5% respectively think that a really sincere governmental support is needed.

3. DISCUSSION

The group of respondents aged 18 to 30, one click news consider as fast (41%) and cost-free (7%) or 48%, while the age group 46-65 as fast (38%) and cost-free (10%), meaning that there is no change of opinions and attitudes between the two study groups. Very few believe in efficiency. My study data has shown the same as in the article translated by (Mekuli 2013)¹³² that very few of the citizens believe in efficiency and in legally-confirmed news, but are largely tempted by bombastic titles. Respondents of the ages of 18-30 years, only 1/3 or 32% of them believe that the cyber journalist has enough time to review and edit the news, as well as the age group from 46 to 65 years share the same opinions, 31% of them. The gap between media consumers who receive online and TV news has narrowed recently informed the PSC, based on a study by the American Research Centre PEW,¹³³ Online media have reduced the readability of those printed, many popular newspapers are closed.¹³⁴ More than half of the group (46-65t) or 56% answered that they find disturbing the fact of many online news publishers, while the group (18-30 years) has shown that only 16% of them hinder this fact, but 22% of the group from 18 to 30 years consider this worrying and 19% as individual perception. The legal basis for the realization and exercise the profession of journalism and the right of expression includes also ratified international agreements According to a study by

¹³² MEKULI, Gzim, 2013, Etika në media dhe përgjegjësia e publikut, artikull botuar ne portalin telegraf i më 01.11.2013

¹³³ RONALD R. Kline and John Hopkins.(2010).”The Cybernetics Moment: Or Why We Call Our Age the Information Age”. University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

¹³⁴ KDP (Klubi i debatit politik),Shtator2017,Pas gazetave, interneti rrezikon televizionin: edhe pleqtë kalojnë në mediat online,PEW

Columbia Journalism Review, and "The George T. Delacorte Centre for Magazine Journalism," readers are less likely to gain confidence in too long articles that were once quite in progress, and nowadays it is shrinking in online media.¹³⁵ Both groups believe that politics have impact in media with 89% and 90% respectively. Kosovo is not included within 180 countries of the world ranking, in terms of press freedom in the report of the Organization "Reporters without borders". But this organization points out that all of the worst Balkan symptoms are in Kosovo. "The media in this country experience directly and indirectly from the influence of politics and financial pressures. Media that does not fit with government lines are often the target of financial insanity or tax inspectors," says Reporters without borders. In this study both groups 87%, respectively 86% of them, gave their opinions that truly can be obtained a law for defamation. This shows that there is no difference of opinion between the two groups. Both groups have given their opinions with 70% and 78% respectively, believing that there is a change in media access to public and political persons. As for the regulatory authority of broadcasting in the media "AMA", for that "Reporters without borders" have a clear definition: it is politicized.¹³⁶ In this study, the majority of 89% of the 18-30 years old group think there should be a red line to where the journalist should go with the news, while the second group of ages 46 to 65 agreed with 94% to set red lines for the journalist. The difference between these two groups is not very significant, yet with the confidence of the second group for 5% more; which probably indicates their maturity and experience. Kosovo has made a little or slight progress in ensuring protection to public officials against defamation or insult. However, the level of implementation of the particular legislation remains problematic. Governmental transparency is needed, access to information, where privacy and state confidentiality are sometimes unreasonably used as a basis for blocking access to information.¹³⁷ Hence, the first group over 18 years old, 48% of them believe that there's ethics in media, the second group over 46 years, 40% of them replied that there is ethics in the media. There is a difference between the two groups with a difference of 8%. While journalists generally recognize a level of independence from media owners, interference continues to be present in the daily editorial work, compromising unbiased journalism and leading to self-censorship. It is written in this report that public and political figures are the most commonly encountered targets than ordinary people.¹³⁸ In this study, most of the two groups believe that a balance between public interest and privacy law can be achieved with 92% and 91% respectively. The data from this study showed that the age group of 18 to 30 years of consider online media as medial industry (25%), competitive reality (15%) and often offensive (14%), and indicates if bringing together these percentages, is 54%. The second group, with over 46 years of age, estimates the same: medial industry (19%), competitive reality (21%) and often offensive (32%), and if we bring together these percentages it indicates higher percentage to 72%. Although the level of mistrust is above the average for both groups, however, the age group of 46-65 years gave much higher percentage of the negative rating than the first group with a margin of 18%. However, journalists often face litigation for defamation as well. That's because different circumstances may not prove a "beyond uncertainty" issue. Defining defamation as a criminal offense was considered a way to silence journalists.¹³⁹ With regard to the development of media technology and social networks, to maintain privacy, the media society according to respondents of these two study groups has shown that 1/5 and more (20% and 25% respectively) agreed to neutrality, the first group or 32% agreed for continuous control, while the second group of 42% for ongoing control over privacy, 5% of the second group think that there should be real government control and aid. However, by means of self-regulatory mechanisms such as the Code of Ethics, journalists have foreseen that information sources are preserved but also verified confidence motives before this resource is considered credible. In fact, the self-regulation of journalism has been seen as the best form of regulating the exercise of the profession of journalist. This would prevent the abuse of journalists' rights in general and the protection of the source of information in particular.¹⁴⁰ In this study regarding access to online media and social networks, the group up to 30 years old use 70% Smartphone; while the second group over 46 years old, only 48% use Smartphone for online information. The first group 28% of them use their personal computer for information, while the second

¹³⁵ AAB, 2016, Sa të besueshme janë mediat online në krahasim me ato tradicionale, The New Yorker/Lajmi.net, Data 06/07/2016

¹³⁶ Telegrafi, 2017, Freedom House: Liria e shtypit në pikën më të ulët në një decade, 28.04.2017

¹³⁷ KMSH&Cohu, Liria e shprehjes, medias dhe informimit në Kosovë, Kosovo 2.0, "Çohu", KMSH", 4 Maj 2016

¹³⁸ KMSH&Cohu, Liria e shprehjes, medias dhe informimit në Kosovë, Kosovo 2.0, Organizata Çohu, KMSH, Më 4 Maj 2016

¹³⁹ Burim E dhe Dardan A, 2015

¹⁴⁰ Burim E dhe Dardan A, 2015

group over 46 years old, 48% of them use their personal and work computer to get information on online media and social networks.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey showed that there is no difference between opinions and attitudes between the two study groups, between the age group up to 30 and those over 46 years old. The only significant difference was their access to online media and social networks. The group up to 30 years old mostly get news and other information using smartphones, while the second group less than a half of them get their information using smartphones. Work and personal computers were used more by the second group of ages over 46 years old. The phenomenon that everyone can be potential online media publisher in both groups is perceived as obstructive, which is often offensive and disturbing. A minority from both groups believe that there is ethics in Kosovo's media, and majority of both groups more than 90% perceive that politics has a major impact on Kosovo media. Findings of this survey recommend:

- It would be helpful to make more ethical debates in the field of media and especially online.
- More autonomy for Journalists to act and contribute to the news ethically because it helps democracy.
- The politics should move hands away from a direct impact on the media, and each publisher should be self-regulating the program under the PKC's media regulatory law.
- More courageous journalism and journalists should stick on to ethical codes and be responsible, impartial and answerable to the law, as privacy is sacred.

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