PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS (AJI) IN IMPLEMENTING JOURNALIST IDEALISM IN PALEMBANG

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This research aims to explore the phenomenon of the Independent Journalists Alliance (AJI) in implementing journalistic idealism in the city of Palembang. The method employed is phenomenological study, enabling an in-depth understanding of AJI members' experiences, perspectives, and motivations regarding journalistic idealism. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with AJI members and analyzed using a qualitative approach. The research findings reveal the perceptions, challenges, and meanings attributed by AJI members to journalistic idealism within the Palembang context. These findings offer insights into how AJI translates and integrates the values of journalistic idealism into their journalistic practices in the region. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of AJI's role and journalistic idealism within the local and national contexts, as well as its implications for press freedom and journalistic professional integrity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communications is the process of conveying, receiving, and sending messages back. Essentially, communication is a fundamental human activity. Through communication, individuals can interact with each other in various activities everywhere, from homes and workplaces to within society. Communication is crucial [1]. Communication and journalism are like two sides of a coin that are interrelated, with journalism being a subset of communication [2]. Journalism, in turn, is a part of mass communication that plays a significant role in conveying messages or information to the public. The development of communication technology has brought about changes in media direction, with journalists being a pivotal element in the media journey.

Current journalistic practices have evolved beyond previous human expectations, with technological advancements providing convenience accepted by the public. The primary objective of journalism is to provide accurate, relevant, and objective information to the public. Journalists are professionals whose work directly affects the interests of the public. The practice of journalism as a profession requires high professionalism, intellectual capability, writing skills, proficient social interaction, as well as the ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines, and uphold journalistic integrity to maintain democratic values [3]. The presence of technology is inseparable from human life. Human activities are to some extent influenced by technological presence. The more advanced the culture, the more rapidly technology develops, as technology is an advancement of culture [4].

In practice, communication and journalism play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and perception. Journalism contributes to mass communication that significantly influences shaping public opinion. The consequences and independence of journalism uphold integrity to deliver objective and reliable information to the public. Research by [4]-[6] state that news is considered objective when it fulfills several elements, including accuracy, honesty, completeness, relevance to reality, reliability, and differentiation between fact and opinion. Information must also be balanced and fair, meaning it should not be sensationalized or biased.

In practice, journalistic idealism becomes the responsibility of a profession that provides accurate, reliable, and objective information to the public. The development of information technology and social media in the era of globalization has impacted journalism. Walter Lippmann (2021) asserted that the primary principle of journalistic idealism is the pursuit of truth and the
provision of accurate and fact-based information to the public. However, the impact includes 1) the pressure of speed sometimes leads journalism to present information and overlook accuracy principles, 2) media commercialization to maintain their existence leads to compromised independence and objectivity, 3) media competition focuses on sensationalism to increase ratings and readership, 4) limited information sources necessitate journalists to selectively choose credible and verifiable sources.

 Imperativeing journalistic idealism with principles that prioritize truth, justice, and public interest enhances public trust in mass media, avoids bias and manipulation in reporting, improves reporting quality, and helps the public comprehend complex issues in making related decisions. The implementation of journalistic idealism is guided by the journalistic code of ethics according to Law No. 40 of 1999. The Journalistic Code of Ethics is an ethical code agreed upon by journalist organizations and established by the Press Council, containing ethical guidelines for journalism created by, for, and from journalists [5]. This is also the case with the Independent Journalists Alliance (AJI), an organization established in 1994 in Implementting Jakarta. The purpose of AJI's establishment is to advocate press freedom and uphold journalistic ethics.

 In alignment with the demand for information transparency to support journalistic professionalism, journalists can refer to Law No. 14 of 2008 on public information openness as regulations that support freedom and professionalism in their tasks. Essentially, every public information is open and accessible to every user of public information. AJI actively fights against violations such as cases of violence against journalists, assaults, and intimidation by irresponsible parties. AJI provides a platform for journalists to share experiences and knowledge, along with journalism education and training. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to understand the phenomenological study of the Independent Journalists Alliance (AJI) in implementing journalistic idealism.

**Literature Review**

The literature on this topic highlights the symbiotic relationship between communication and journalism. Perbawasari (2013) emphasizes communication as a fundamental human activity, essential for interactions in various settings. Zainuddin (2011) underscores the interconnectedness of communication and journalism, considering journalism as a specialized form of communication. Waluyo (2018) sheds light on the demands of journalistic professionalism, intellectual capacity, and effective social interaction. Adib (2011) explores the impact of technology on human activities and cultural advancement, illustrating the close relationship between technological and cultural evolution.

References such as [4]-[6] collectively emphasize the principles of objective journalism, discussing accuracy, honesty, completeness, and reliability as key elements of unbiased reporting. Walter Lippmann’s perspective (2021) accentuates the importance of journalistic idealism, focusing on the pursuit of truth and factual reporting. Wina Armada Sukardi (2008) likely delves into the journalistic code of ethics, discussing its role in guiding journalists’ conduct and maintaining the integrity of journalism. Collectively these references contribute to the understanding of the symbiotic relationship between communication and journalism, the ethical foundations of journalism, and the principles that underlie objective reporting. They form the backdrop for the study’s exploration of the phenomenology of the Independent Journalists Alliance (AJI) and its application of journalistic idealism.

2. **METHOD**

This research delineates the role of journalists in conducting their journalistic activities in line with high professionalism, ethics, and competence as stipulated in the journalistic code of ethics. The journalistic code of ethics functions as a set of principles and regulations governing the behavior of journalists in their professional execution. Simultaneously, journalistic ethics can be defined as a system or norms that serve as a reference for media professionals in fulfilling their duties and journalistic functions. Journalistic ethics serves as a set of rules acknowledged and held in high regard.
by media professionals, both as individuals and as an institution. The essence of journalistic ethics lies in "upholding the truth" within the practice and execution of journalistic tasks [7].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research delineates the role of journalists in conducting their journalistic activities in line with high professionalism, ethics, and competence as stipulated in the journalistic code of ethics. The journalistic code of ethics functions as a set of principles and regulations governing the behavior of journalists in their professional execution. Simultaneously, journalistic ethics can be defined as a system or norms that serve as a reference for media professionals in fulfilling their duties and journalistic functions. Journalistic ethics serves as a set of rules acknowledged and held in high regard by media professionals, both as individuals and as an institution. The essence of journalistic ethics lies in "upholding the truth" within the practice and execution of journalistic tasks [7].

The primary objective is to safeguard integrity, honesty, and press freedom, while also providing guidance for journalists in fulfilling their responsibilities toward disseminating information to the public. The standards of journalistic competence serve as a measurement tool to determine a journalist's level of ability and competency, resulting in certification outputs at different levels: junior journalist, intermediate journalist, and senior journalist. This aligns with Presidential Regulation No. 23 of 2004, which is an implementation of Law No. 16 of 2003 on Employment, arising as a response to the demands for human resource competitiveness in the globalization era. Employees are expected to possess professional certification that not only equips them with knowledge needed by the industry but also enhances their competitiveness on a global scale.

Based on interviews with an informant named Ky regarding the roles and functions of journalists, it was ascertained that a journalist's primary duties involve seeking and processing data obtained through interviews for dissemination through mass media in the form of news. As a journalist, one must be actively engaged in the field to gain direct insight into events that will be transformed into news. The accuracy and factual nature of data, along with appropriate sources and the quality of reporting, are conducted in accordance with the journalistic code of ethics. Professionalism stands as a paramount aspect in fulfilling the role of a journalist.

Derived from the aforementioned interview, it is established that as a journalist, truth and accuracy in reporting must align with factual precision, accuracy, balance, and verifiability before being published. Thus, concerning professionalism, an AJI journalist adheres rigorously to Press Law No. 40 of 1999 and the Journalistic Code of Ethics. According to Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001), a journalist must possess nine journalistic elements: 1) focusing on the interests of the public by reporting and providing essential information, 2) presenting facts with high accuracy and verifying information before publication, 3) maintaining independence in seeking and reporting news, 4) avoiding bias in reporting, 5) ensuring fairness in conveying perspectives, 6) maintaining transparency, 7) conducting in-depth investigative analysis of significant issues, 8) maintaining a sense of social responsibility by providing accurate, relevant, and beneficial information to the public, and 9) encouraging active public participation in the journalistic process.

The findings of this study align with Zainuddin's (2011) assertion regarding the intrinsic relationship between communication and journalism. The research demonstrates that journalism operates as a subset of communication, indicating that effective communication forms the cornerstone of successful journalistic practices. This interplay emphasizes how journalism, as a specialized form of communication, is deeply intertwined with the broader communication landscape. The challenges highlighted by Waluyo (2018) regarding the demanding nature of journalistic professionalism find empirical support in this study. The results reveal that modern journalists face an intricate web of expectations, including high levels of professionalism, intellectual adeptness, exceptional writing skills, and adept social interaction. These findings underscore the multifaceted role of journalists in today's media environment and highlight the necessity of navigating these complexities while maintaining ethical integrity.
Furthermore, professionalism in journalism extends beyond possessing journalistic skills; journalists must also understand and adhere to the journalistic code of ethics. Article 7, Paragraph 2, of the Press Law states, "Journalists possess and adhere to the journalistic code of ethics" [8]. The key to accuracy lies in verification and clarification. To maintain accuracy, journalists must verify all initial information, cross-reference information with other sources, and conduct background research or contextual analysis of the information. The principle of accuracy not only demands that each piece of information is clear about its source (factual accuracy), but also requires the truth (substantive truth) of the information itself. Ideally, journalists should obtain information firsthand by being present at the scene or by interviewing individuals present at the scene (perpetrators, victims, or eyewitnesses) (AJI).

Moving forward, journalists must master journalistic skills such as interview techniques, writing techniques, editing techniques, and most importantly, conducting research, investigation, analysis, and determining the direction of reporting, including proficient use of their tools, including information technology [9]. In the digital era and with the advancement of technology, journalists need strong technological skills to effectively carry out journalistic tasks [10]. In the digital era, the development of information technology has transformed the journalism landscape and affected how journalists collect, process, and convey news. Experts and journalism practitioners have observed these changes and realized the importance of relevant technological skills for journalists to remain relevant and effective in their roles. In general, the use of technology to produce information for the public is an innovation related to technological development, the history, and the evolution of journalism [11].

New opportunities and challenges in the digital era present journalists with broader access and substantial public participation. This requires ongoing adaptation and innovation to maintain the integrity, sustainability, and relevance of journalism in this ever-evolving era. The digital transformation of journalism is closely linked to journalistic professionalism and idealism, as elucidated below. His encompasses the principles of ethics, integrity, objectivity, accuracy, and responsibility in reporting news. In the digital age, journalists must uphold these standards of professionalism despite facing time pressures, technological challenges, and rapid.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

In closing, this study highlights the enduring relevance of journalistic principles and ethics in an ever-evolving media landscape. As technology continues to reshape the way information is shared, journalism's commitment to truth, objectivity, and professionalism remains steadfast. The insights gained from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the vital role that journalism plays in shaping public discourse and fostering an informed society.

**REFERENCE**


