

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON JOURNALISTIC COMPETENCE IN RIAU'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE

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Submitted: 2023-10-30, Reviewed: 2023-11-12, Accepted: 2023-11-30
DOI: 10.22216/jcc.2023.v8i3.2660 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22216/jcc.2023.v8i3.2660>

Abstract

The competence of journalists is very important to ensure that the information that is presented to the public is accurate, balanced and of a high quality. Journalistic competence includes aspects of awareness, knowledge and skills that underpin accurate, objective and responsible reporting. In the context of the research in Riau Province, it was found that although it is recognised that journalistic competence plays a crucial role in ensuring accurate, balanced and quality information to the public, there is a gap in understanding among journalists in the region. In particular, this research highlights that journalists in Riau Province still face obstacles in fully understanding aspects of journalistic literacy. Data analysis using the qualitative method of in-depth interviews with the help of Nvivo 12 software shows that there is room for improvement in understanding the awareness, knowledge and skills that underlie accurate, objective and responsible reporting. Importantly, the need for a broader approach to all journalists is highlighted, suggesting that the solution to this gap is not only individual but also systemic. There is a need to develop strategies and programmes that involve the entire journalistic community in Riau Province so that the understanding of journalistic competence can be improved together. In addition, the application of competency scores also did not yield sufficient results, indicating the need for further evaluation of the journalist performance evaluation method. Therefore, this article is a call for a deeper change in approach to improve the understanding and application of journalistic competence in Riau Province. Through this contribution, it is hoped that research can provide a solid foundation for concrete steps to increase press professionalism in Riau Province, in line with the provisions of Press Law No. 40 of 1999.

Key Words: Journalistic competence, understanding of journalists, press professionalism

Abstrak

Kompetensi jurnalis sangat penting untuk menjamin informasi yang disajikan kepada masyarakat akurat, berimbang, dan berkualitas. Kompetensi jurnalistik mencakup aspek kesadaran, pengetahuan, dan keterampilan yang mendasari pemberitaan yang akurat, obyektif, dan bertanggung jawab. Dalam konteks penelitian di Provinsi Riau, ditemukan bahwa meskipun diakui bahwa kompetensi jurnalistik memainkan peran penting dalam memastikan informasi yang akurat, seimbang dan berkualitas kepada masyarakat, terdapat kesenjangan pemahaman di kalangan jurnalis di wilayah tersebut. Secara khusus, penelitian ini menyoroti bahwa jurnalis di Provinsi Riau masih menghadapi kendala dalam memahami aspek literasi jurnalistik secara utuh. Analisis data menggunakan metode kualitatif wawancara mendalam dengan bantuan software Nvivo 12 menunjukkan bahwa masih ada ruang untuk perbaikan dalam pemahaman kesadaran, pengetahuan dan keterampilan yang mendasari pelaporan yang akurat, obyektif dan bertanggung

jawab. Yang penting adalah perlunya pendekatan yang lebih luas terhadap semua jurnalis, yang menunjukkan bahwa solusi terhadap kesenjangan ini tidak hanya bersifat individual namun juga sistemik. Perlu disusun strategi dan program yang melibatkan seluruh civitas jurnalistik di Provinsi Riau agar pemahaman kompetensi jurnalistik dapat ditingkatkan secara bersama-sama. Selain itu, penerapan skor kompetensi juga belum memberikan hasil yang memadai sehingga perlu dilakukan evaluasi lebih lanjut terhadap metode penilaian kinerja jurnalis. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini merupakan seruan untuk melakukan perubahan pendekatan yang lebih mendalam guna meningkatkan pemahaman dan penerapan kompetensi jurnalistik di Provinsi Riau. Melalui kontribusi tersebut, diharapkan penelitian dapat memberikan landasan yang kokoh bagi langkah nyata peningkatan profesionalisme pers di Provinsi Riau, sejalan dengan ketentuan Undang-Undang Pers Nomor 40 Tahun 1999.

Kata Kunci: *Kompetensi jurnalistik, pemahaman jurnalis, profesionalisme pers*

INTRODUCTION

Journalism plays an important role in the preservation of democracy. As explained by (Costera Meijer & Bijleveld, 2016), the health of democracy depends on the presence of good journalism. Typically, scholars emphasise content and production routines as indicators of quality. However, the presence of media in society itself is not enough; good media must also be read, watched or listened to by the public in order to have an impact on democracy. The study of journalism then turned to the platforms used by the media. Driven by the crisis in the newspaper industry and the emergence of new digital tools, the public's interest in online news is growing. Web metrics even allow journalists to track the public's real interest in their work, providing new benchmarks for journalists' professional competence. Again, journalism is no longer limited to where it is located, but as an ideology that can permeate everywhere, so that the work of journalists remains relevant to the lives of the public (Deuze, 2019).

Journalism as a profession has experienced a long and steady development in most countries of the world. Whether in the face of censorship conditions, pressure from authorities or the hope of providing a social system for society, journalism is widely recognised and seen as a set of values,

principles and practices that are formed in different ways and settings around the world. Similarly, the field of journalism studies has developed as its subject matter has become an increasingly sophisticated and consensual body of knowledge, with various research methodologies and theoretical developments (Deuze, 2019).

In Indonesia, a journalist must have sufficient competence and be recognised by the press community in order to carry out his or her duties. The Standard of Competence of Journalists (SKW) was introduced by the Press Council as a tool to measure the professionalism of journalists. Journalistic competence is necessary to protect the interests of the public and their right to privacy. This competence is also to maintain the integrity of the journalist's duties and not to prevent the right of citizens to be journalists. The journalist's competence is considered first of all through intellectual ability and general knowledge. In this regard, the journalist's ability becomes a manifestation in understanding the importance of freedom of communication, the value of democracy and the state of the country (Priyambodo, 2011).

As stated by Priyambodo (2011), regarding the level of competence of journalists, the Press Council emphasised that a journalist must have the ability to

master the main competencies that enable achievement in the performance of journalistic tasks. In developing competencies, there are three main aspects that a journalist needs to master, namely awareness, knowledge and competence. Awareness refers to an understanding of ethics and law, a sensitivity to journalism, and an understanding of the importance of networking and advocacy. Knowledge refers

to mastery of journalism theory and principles, general knowledge and specific knowledge. Meanwhile, skills include 6M activities (finding, gathering, storing, mastering, processing and delivering information), research/investigation, news analysis, as well as competence in the use of technology and information tools, in addition to determining the direction of news coverage.

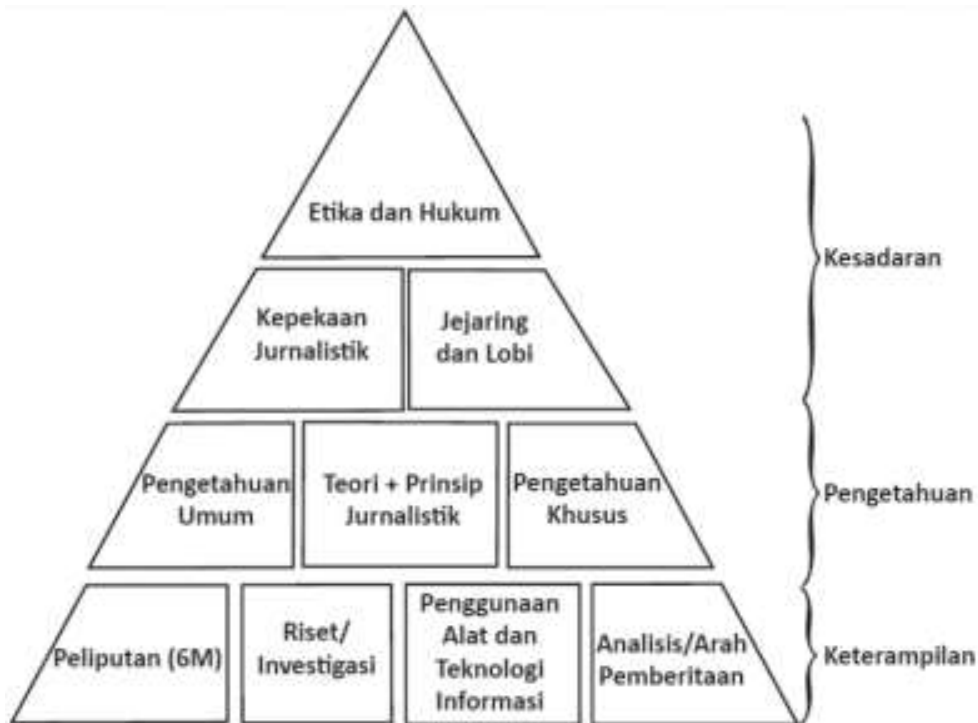


Figure 1. Journalist Competency Pyramid

There are three levels of professional qualification for journalists in Indonesia, namely junior journalist, associate journalist and senior journalist. Each level has different basic abilities, which vary according to the journalist's determination and role in the newspaper organisation (Waluyo, 2018). Young journalists have basic skills in carrying out journalistic activities, where their job is as a reporting journalist. The Young Journalist Group document includes:

- (1) Understanding and implementing the Code of Ethics in Journalism (KEJ), Child-Friendly Reporting Guidelines (PPRA) and laws or regulations related to the press;
- (2) Planning / recommending protection;
- (3) Editorial meetings (meetings with associated journalists);
- (4) Searching for material to cover planned events (attending media conferences);
- (5) Intercepting interviews (doorstop);
- (6) Networking;
- (7) Writing

news; (8) Editing own news; (9) Personal interview; (10) Providing section content.

After at least 3 years as a Junior Journalist, journalists can take the Associate Journalist exam. Associate journalists have the ability to manage journalistic activities. The documents of the Associate Journalist group include (1) Understanding and ensuring implementation of the Code of Journalistic Ethics, Child-Friendly Reporting Guidelines and laws or regulations related to the press; (2) Identifying/coordinating coverage (meeting with young journalists); (3) Editorial meeting (planning meeting with key journalists); (4) Writing of news and features; (5) Networking; (6) Editing of news; (7) Planning of investigative reporting; (8) Analysis of planned reporting material (enriching press conference results); (9) Planning of section content; (10) Meeting with key journalists to evaluate reporting results.

After becoming an Associate Journalist, the journalist can upgrade their level by taking the Master Journalist exam. An intermediate journalist must have worked for at least 2 years to be eligible to take the main journalist exam. Key journalists must be able to evaluate and adjust the process of journalistic activity. The document of the group of key journalists includes (1) Ensuring the existence of guidelines and conducting training on the Code of Journalistic Ethics, child-friendly reporting guidelines and laws or regulations related to the press; (2) Facilitating and building networks; (3) Editorial meeting (planning meeting with associated journalists); (4) Evaluating the reporting plan; (5) Determining material for broadcastable coverage; (6) Rubric and editorial policy; (7) Direct investigative coverage; (8) Writing article titles or editorial views; (9) Editorial meeting (evaluation).

Professional certification is a sign of a person's competence in the profession they practise. A competent journalist is a journalist who has the competence to follow the expertise required for a professional journalist. In fact, journalists who already have a certificate are eligible for the status of professional journalist. Journalists who have not undergone a competency review are considered to lack the competence to comply with these competency standards (Ritonga, 2019).

A deep understanding of journalistic competence is a crucial aspect in developing the quality of news reporting and maintaining the integrity of the journalistic profession. In Riau Province, Indonesia, as elsewhere, journalists' understanding of their competence can be a determining factor in providing accurate and quality information to the public. One of the main reasons why it is necessary to conduct research on journalists' understanding of journalistic competence in Riau is to determine the extent of their understanding of professional standards, ethics and procedures for reporting news. This research can provide an in-depth insight into the training and development needs needed to improve the quality of reporting in the area.

It can also make a positive contribution to raising journalists' awareness of their role as guardians of press freedom and shapers of public opinion. By understanding journalists' skills, they can be more effective in providing accurate, objective and trustworthy information to the public.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research was carried out using a qualitative approach. This involved conducting in-depth interviews with six journalists in Riau as informants. Qualitative research refers to a type of research carried

out in specific contexts that exist in real (natural) life, with the aim of investigating and understanding phenomena: what happens, why it happens and how it happens. This means that qualitative research is centred on the idea of continuous inquiry, involving in-depth research focused on one or more cases (de Beer, 1993).

In-depth interviews themselves are repeated meetings between researchers and research participants with the aim of understanding participants' views about their lives, experiences or social situations, expressed in their own language (Bogdan and Taylor, 1989). An in-depth interview is a two-way conversation in an equal, intimate and informal setting.

Through in-depth interviews, the researchers explored the informants' knowledge and experience of the application of journalistic competence and social responsibility in their daily journalistic activities. Specifically, this research aims to find out how journalists in Riau understand journalistic competence and the

implementation of press social responsibility in their daily journalistic activities. This research also provides an up-to-date picture and the latest developments on the implementation of competence in Riau Province, Indonesia, considering it as an important factor in the realisation of press professionalism that needs to be focused on by various parties.

DISCUSSION / RESEARCH FINDING

The question investigated in this study is about journalists' understanding of journalistic competence and how they implement the values of journalistic competence in their daily journalistic activities. After analysis using Nvivo 12 software, three sub-themes were created to answer this question, namely: 1) awareness, 2) knowledge, 3) skills. Table 1 shows a list of themes, sub-themes and the number of quotes related to the theme of journalists' understanding of journalistic competence.

Table 1. Journalists' Understanding of Competence, Sub Themes and Number of Quotations

Theme	Sub Theme	Number of Quotations
Journalists' Understanding of Competence	Awareness	90
	Knowledge	184
	Skills	86
Total		360

This study found that all informants expressed the importance for every journalist to understand journalistic competence and the values contained in the concept. More than just understanding, this competence needs to be applied professionally and responsibly in carrying out daily journalistic

tasks. The informant's view is in line with that of Marta-Lazo (2020), who emphasises that journalistic competence refers to the journalist's ability to carry out journalistic activities with knowledge and responsibility that meet professional standards.

A total of six people were selected as informants for this study. All of these informants are experienced journalists who have been working for more than five years, representing two groups which are the certified competent group and the competent non-certified group. The reason why the number of informants is six is because the researcher has selected two categories of journalists working in Riau Province, either those who have a competency certificate or those who do not have a competency certificate. This is because the category of competence consists of three levels, namely senior journalist, associate journalist and junior journalist, so three informants representing each level of competence are used. For the group of journalists without a certificate of competence, the researcher used the length of work and position in the editorial structure, namely editor-in-chief (more than 15 years of work), editor (10-15 years of work) and reporter (less than 5 years of work).

All names of participants in the study were kept confidential and given codes Inf.1A to Inf.6A to ensure that their identities were not known to the public. Inf.1A, Inf.2A and Inf.3A are informants from a group recognised as competent, while Inf.4A, Inf.5A and Inf.6A are reporters from a group not recognised as competent. Through in-depth interviews with six informants, issues related to the competence of journalists were addressed, including awareness, knowledge and skills. These aspects include

understanding law and ethics, sensitivity in journalism, building networks and relationships, general knowledge, specialised knowledge, understanding the theory and principles of journalism, reporting news, research and investigation, using information technology tools and analysing news trends. . Data from the interviews were collected, processed and analysed using Nvivo 12 software.

The results of the study show that most informants understand the values contained in the competence of journalists in Indonesia. In the sub-theme of understanding the competence of journalists, Inf.1A, Inf.2A and Inf.3A provide in-depth explanations. Inf.1A answered 10 modifications, Inf.2A answered 9 modifications and Inf.3A answered 8 modifications. Inf.4A answered 8 modifications, Inf.5A answered 7 modifications and Inf.6A answered 6 modifications.

Based on the skill classification, the three journalists who were recognised as having more answering skills (27) than the three journalists who were recognised as having no skills (21). This shows that journalists who are recognised as having skills have a deeper understanding of the issue of journalistic competence. The views of all informants in the study on journalists' understanding of journalistic competence are explained in Figure 2.

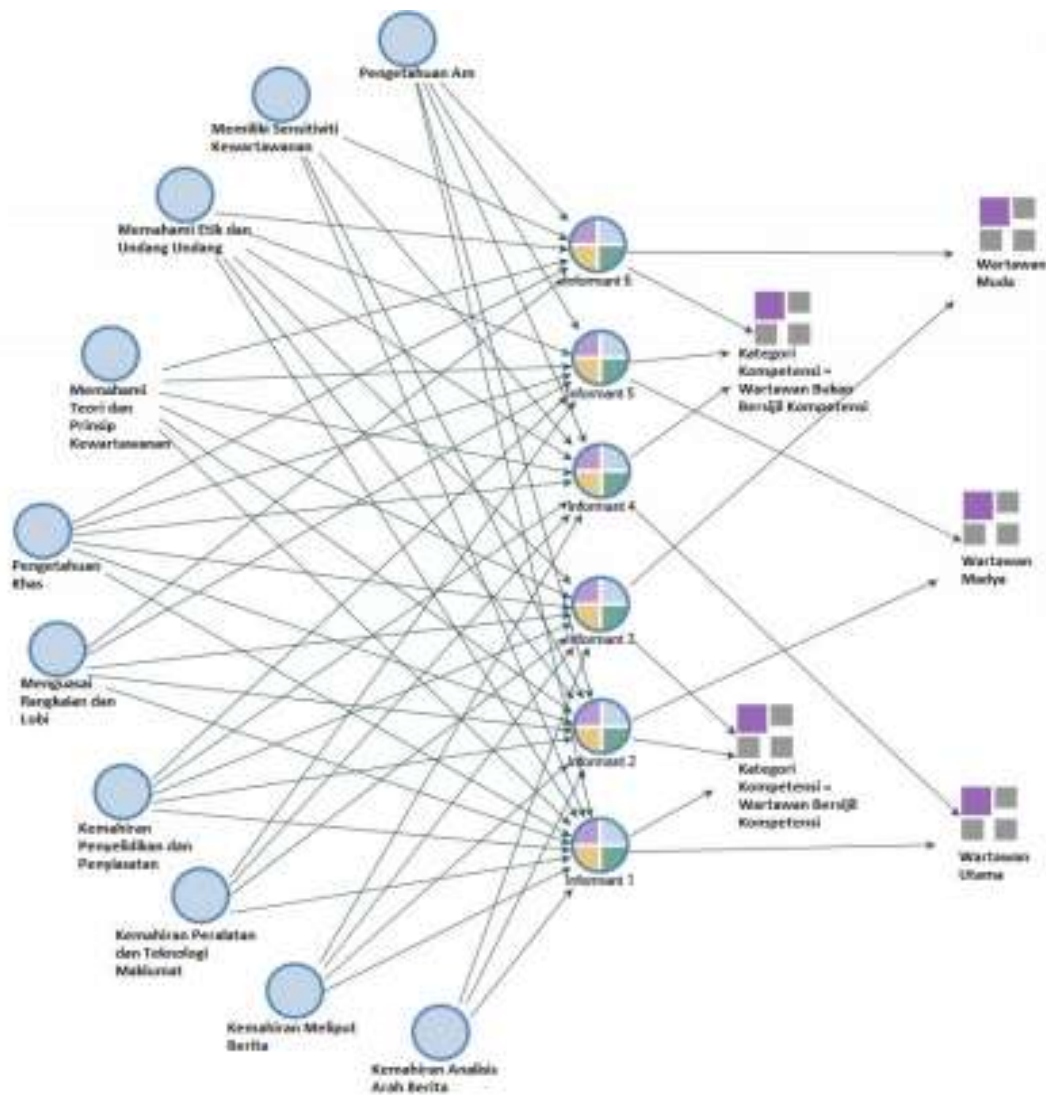


Figure 2. Image of the Code Network of Journalists' Understanding of Journalists' Competencies

All responses were collected, processed and analysed using Nvivo 12 software. The results of the analysis showed that most of the study participants really understood the values contained in the concept of competence of Indonesian journalists. In the sub-theme of understanding the competence of journalists, Inf.1A, Inf.2A and Inf.3A show enthusiasm in providing explanations. Inf.1A answered 10 modifiers, Inf.2A answered 9 modifiers, and Inf.3A answered 8 modifiers. While

Inf.4A answered 8 modifiers, Inf.5A answered 7 modifiers and Inf.6A answered 6 modifiers (see Figure 4.1). Also on the basis of competency classification, journalists with a certificate of competency responded more (27) than journalists without a certificate of competency (21).

All six informants interviewed agreed that journalists in Riau Province, Indonesia, should understand and apply the values of journalistic competence in order to realise a professional newspaper. Therefore, a high

awareness of the principles of independent and responsible journalism is necessary. Independent journalists, as stated in Article 1 of the Journalism Code of Ethics, which reads: "Indonesian journalists act independently, produce true and balanced news, and do not have bad intentions. According to the study's informant, journalists are born independent of the media, which is also independent.

Rahmat (2020) stated that in the context of awareness, Indonesian journalists should understand three things: understanding the Press Law and Journalistic Code of Ethics, having journalistic sensitivity, and interacting extensively with their network power and lobbying ability. Priyambodo (2011) added that understanding the Press Law and the Code of Journalistic Ethics is the most important requirement for a journalist to act professionally. By understanding the rules of journalism, journalists are guided to always move in the corridor of truth.

By referring to the Code of Journalism Ethics, the possibility of conflict between the media and society can be minimised. The Journalism Code of Ethics is a set of ethical values in the field of journalism, formed by journalists and for journalists (Sukardi, 2008). Press Law No. 40 of 1999 states that the Journalism Code of Ethics is a code of ethics approved by journalists' organisations and established by the Press Council. There are four main principles in the Journalism Code of Ethics: (1) moral principles, which include moral values; (2) professionalism principles, which include accurate reporting, clear sources, and distinguishing between facts and opinions; (3) democratic principles, which require fair, thorough, and balanced treatment; and (4) the principle of supremacy of law, which includes respecting the principle of

presumption of innocence, denial of news, and not abusing one's profession.

According to Sahrir (2020), every journalist needs to know, understand and apply the values contained therein in their daily journalistic work. With strong competencies, journalists can better perform their duties, provide quality information to the public and play an important role in maintaining democracy, accountability and transparency in society. Therefore, all six informants interviewed agreed that the value of journalistic literacy must be understood and applied by Indonesian journalists in order to create a professional newspaper.

According to Rahmat (2020), journalism skills are important for journalists because they ensure that journalists gather facts and information accurately so that the news delivered to the public is true and reliable. Journalists who have the skills to organise information into an interesting and easy to understand narrative, while maintaining objectivity in reporting. Journalism skills also help journalists to identify reliable, accurate and responsible sources; having journalism skills can process statistical data information into a narrative that can be understood by the general public. Skills in journalism ensure that the information presented is accurate when it is needed by the public to make decisions.

From the results of the study, it is known that the understanding of journalists in Riau Province, Indonesia is not very good. This is due to several reasons, including the low knowledge of journalists, lack of concern for the value of competence inherent in the journalism profession, and many journalists who do not have sufficient formal education.

According to the informant, it is a fundamental right of every Indonesian citizen to be a journalist, based on Press Law No. 40 of 1999. There is no formal education requirement in this law that limits a person's

right to be a journalist. As a result, there are quite a few journalists with only a high school education (SMA) or less. However, many also have a formal bachelor's degree (S1).

Therefore, in order to perform their duties as journalists, they must have a sufficient standard of competence, which must be agreed upon by the press community. This standard of competence is a measure of the professionalism of the journalist. Competence of journalists is mainly related to intellectual ability and general knowledge. An understanding of the importance of freedom of communication, nationality and a democratic state is embedded in the competence of journalists.

1. Awareness

Competence standards also include the aspect of awareness as the first aspect that will maintain the quality of professional ethics. Journalists must adhere to journalistic ethical principles such as objectivity, balance and avoiding conflicts of interest. Strong ethics help maintain a journalist's integrity and professional image. Based on the results of the research on this aspect, journalists in Riau are generally sufficient, although there are some weaknesses that need to be improved. These weaknesses include irresponsible journalists who do not understand the importance of journalistic competence.

The first sub-theme in the theme of journalists' understanding of journalistic competencies is awareness. The results of the study data analysis using Nvivo 12 software show that a total of 90 interview excerpts were successfully extracted from the interviews with the study informants.

Informant Inf.3A stated that laws and ethics are made to control journalists so that they stay in the line of true journalism. According to Inf. 3A:

The journalistic code of ethics is a rule that is made to limit or guide a journalist in his work. In this case, there are points that journalists must follow in relation to their profession. So that the journalist does not act recklessly or deviate from his profession.(Inf. 3A).

Inf.6A:

I think there are still friends who do not fully understand what journalism really is, because they do not understand the Press Law No. 40 of 1999 and the Journalists' Code of Ethics. How does this work deserve to be published, how does it deserve to be reported? Is it a SARA story or not? Reading the Code of Journalistic Ethics is limited to reading, not understanding.(Inf. 6A).

This view is also emphasised by Inf.5A. His experience as a journalist for 15 years has taught him about the current situation, where the stability of the newspaper economy is deteriorating, so journalists need to be "smart" to survive.

Inf.5A states:

If I actually have to, we have to implement the code of ethics, yes, everyone who is a journalist must implement it. We must know and we must implement. But sometimes, well that was earlier, because of interests, there are things that are forced that make us close our eyes. In fact, if we follow everything in the code of ethics. Let's be honest, journalists can't live. They may leave this profession and find another job or find a side job.(Inf. 5A)

In this context, added Inf.5A, the press is only considered a tool that has a negative connotation nowadays. This tool becomes an instrument for media owners and journalists in the field. Currently, many

journalists have NGO cards or even political party cards.

Regarding violations of law and ethics committed by journalists, Inf.6A states that journalists who do not get certification have strong views. For him, journalists who deliberately break the law must be severely punished by the media where they work and the journalists' organizations they belong to.

He said:

Then we must also be firm if the journalist is the one who violates it as well. Especially committing extortion and other serious violations, don't hesitate to get fired like that. Don't give up anymore. Those who hurt institutions that hurt this profession have an impact on the quality of our press in the eyes of the public, that journalists are bad in the eyes of the public.(Inf. 6A)

To assess the level of awareness of journalists about journalistic competence, it can be observed through the journalistic sensitivity possessed by each journalist. Through this sensitivity, journalists will produce interesting and relevant news for the community. The existence of journalistic sensitivity will also prevent journalists from reporting news that is not suitable for public interest.

Inf.6A and Inf.2A say that today's journalists need to read a lot and practice their journalistic skills all the time. Inf.6A acknowledges that journalists always have a lot to ask.

Inf.6A says:

Those who are observers are not all academics, are they? But they have extraordinary knowledge. Well, this is what I meant by our awareness. If we are aware, we will always be learning, we will always be training journalists, training writing, reading a lot, asking a lot of questions. Because the

reporter's job is to ask, it's not that he doesn't know, even if he knows he should ask. That is the job of a journalist. With a lot of knowledge, we will be able to write a lot and cover issues that are under the surface but are really important for society. The journalist is actually an observer, but he applies it in the context of journalism, where he does not have an opinion in writing the news.(Inf.6A)

Inf.2A added:

I write news that is more political. So I sharpen my sensitivity by reading and watching the news or political issues.(Inf.2A)

Strong networking skills can help journalists obtain more accurate information and increase public confidence in the credibility and integrity of journalism.

Inf.1A states:

One of the strengths of the journalist is networking. A journalist who does not have a network will not get information or good news that the community needs. For example, I am the Prime Minister. If we don't have a network, we can be harassed by local reporters. But if we have a network, we can respond directly. For example, 'Sir, how is this'? Then he would reply, 'I've already told your father's members. Well, that's in. That's the point of having a network, even if you can't control everything. But you have to.(Inf. 1A)

2. Knowledge

The second sub-theme of the journalists' understanding of journalistic competence is knowledge. Inf.5A admitted that he was tested by his colleagues with different general knowledge. According to the supervisor, a person can only be called a journalist if he or she has extensive knowledge. Inf.5A has to go through several

internships in reporting areas such as law and crime, urban affairs, business and sports. He shared:

The profession of journalism is valued by the community, yes, because in the old days it was so difficult that people had to go through several stages of the process, including after being judged to have extensive general knowledge. It was so difficult to get a press card that I became a journalist. Almost a year ago, a few months ago, I got a press card.(Inf. 5A)

What are the criteria for a journalist with extensive knowledge? Inf.1A gives answers that complement each other. Inf.1A thinks that a journalist is considered to have a broad knowledge if he/she keeps up to date on different subjects. Therefore, a diligent effort to read and know current issues in society becomes important. He said:

As a journalist, I often follow the latest issues in the media and this is very important for a journalist. What is the reason, because it is about the journalist's knowledge. From the beginning there was a formula that journalists should be 10-9, that is 10 that the journalist knows and 9 that the public knows. This means that first we know 1 number from the community. Don't become a 9-10 reporter. This has been around since I was a student journalist in the 1980s. In newspaper training we are always reminded not to be a 9-10 reporter. Be a 10-9 journalist. So one point where we are superior to society. So what? The answer is that the news we write will be read by people tomorrow because there is information that is not yet known to the public. Don't let the community know more than what the reporter wrote.(Inf.1A)

How can the general knowledge of journalists be improved? This is the view of Inf.1A, Inf.4A and Inf.6A, which simultaneously criticise the quality of today's journalists:

Most journalists today are lazy readers. They only read the news themselves. They read other knowledge diligently, if it's good. There is the Internet and Google. If you used to have to read clippings, go to the library. Our media is the library, we go to the library and we have to spend an hour in the library.(Inf. 1A)

I update information almost every day. The reason is to get information so that when I talk to other sources or journalists, it is connected. It's not funny when a friend tells you something, but we don't connect, he he he. What is important is the willingness of journalists to improve their knowledge. The journalist's main skill is reading, right, not writing. I once heard on Malaysian radio that good writing is first reading, second reading, third reading, fourth reading. The fifth is just writing. That's the technique of writing. So we know what to write.(Inf.4A)

Yes, our knowledge should be improved. Now it's sophisticated. We used to be told to buy books. Now you just open Google, all the information about journalists is there. This means that there is no longer any space to separate. It is up to us whether we want to learn or not.(Inf. 6A)

One of the weaknesses of today's journalists is the lack of specialised knowledge in certain areas. This weakness directly affects the quality of the news produced and also reduces readers' interest in conventional media. Inf.5A gives an example of the difficulty of finding in-depth news coverage in online media. The importance

given to breaking news sometimes leads to a focus on topics that are superficial and do not add significant value. Although the latest news in the conventional media is often challenged by information spread by netizens through social media.

Inf.6A also added that the weakness in mastering specific knowledge is an obstacle to getting exclusive news in a certain field. He gave the example of journalists who do not understand how to choose the right source to interview when there is an important event to cover. This happens because these journalists do not have enough knowledge about the events they are covering. As a result, these journalists only interact with mediocre sources. As a result, the news produced is also mediocre.

Inf.4A also highlights the changing paradigm of Indonesian newspapers, which are more inclined towards news only. It emphasises that in-depth news columns, analysis, readers' opinions and citizen journalists are increasingly marginalised in the media. Inf.4A stresses that unless efforts are made to improve the quality of journalism, the quality of conventional media will continue to decline and be left behind by information disseminated through social media. According to Inf. 4A:

At the moment our media are losing rubrics, in the online media there are no more specific rubrics. As if there is only one category, which is only news. They are more after news. There is no in-depth news, features or whatever the term is. The concept of a reader's letter has started to disappear, including the media's attitude in the form of headlines or editorials. The headline or the editorial is every day. That's the attitude of the media. The attitude of the media is actually the attitude of the community conveyed by the media, or the attitude of the community towards a government decision

conveyed by the media. Well, that's what we're going to see now, that online media shouldn't have that.(Inf.4A)

Inf.5A added:

I hope that the owners and managers of the mass media will pay attention to the quality of the journalists they work with. Because the journalist is an asset as well as an ambassador of the media in the middle of society. The public will judge the quality of the media by the quality of each reporter. Good or not.(Inf.5A)

What is the social control function of the press and how should journalists exercise it in the field? In response to this question, Inf.4A and Inf.2A said they would continue to perform these functions. Inf.4A, for example, says that the essence of journalism is da'wah, which is calling for good and condemning evil, which includes elements of education and social control. Therefore, journalists cannot be far from reporting that educates the community while at the same time monitoring social values that are working well. However, when writing critical news, it must be in the corridor of real journalism, based on facts, balanced and not malicious. Therefore, journalists are required to have a good knowledge of the field so that the news produced is of high quality and expected by the community.

Inf.2A also believes that it is not easy for him to write social control news. For him, writing news requires its own skills, where journalists need to work better in terms of time and energy. First, as Inf.2A explained, journalists need to find an interesting issue or topic. Then the issue is assessed to see how the information can be used to make news. What are the patterns for getting the data, is it enough just to have an in-depth news report or does it need further investigation? If the issue requires more in-depth data gathering

and needs to be done confidentially, investigative reporting needs to be done quickly. Editors need to organise reporting teams, work schedules and funding. Finally, the newsroom needs to anticipate the negative impact of investigative reporting. For this reason, the editor-in-chief and the writer must be careful and consider the impact that the news may have. Of course, this requires people who are capable of carrying out the task of investigative journalism.

3. Skills

Mastering skills is the third sub-theme to answer the question of how journalists understand journalistic competence. The study found that the ability to report the news is the main essence in the journalist's understanding of journalistic competence because it is the main skill that a journalist must have. Inf.1A explains this:

If there is a journalist who is not good at writing news, he is not a journalist. Those who are called journalists must be good at making news, at least straight news. (Inf1A)

Inf.3A added that the emergence of people who claim to be journalists but are not good at writing news is a result of the Indonesian press system, which does not require journalists to have formal journalism training. Anyone can be a journalist. As a result, just by having a press card, which is easy to obtain, this type of journalist enters the community to find negative information, which is then used as a tool to blackmail people who are found guilty with the threat that if they do not give money, the news will be published in the media.

I still see a lot of these stupid journalists in the field. They are really good at finding interesting information, but not to

be written as news in the mass media as social control. So for them, journalists don't have to be good at writing news. This act harms the community and violates the journalistic code of ethics. This is a statement in the field that damages the image of journalists in the community. (Inf. 3A)

All informants acknowledged that not many journalists are skilled in research and technology, although these aspects are important for the competence of journalists. One of the reasons is that investigative reporting is rarely done by the media nowadays. This was highlighted by Inf.6A. According to him, investigative reporting requires a lot of resources, both in terms of time, money and manpower. Investigations require considerable time and effort, as well as significant investigative costs, such as working with experts and obtaining relevant documents. Many media today prefer to focus on fast and breaking news that can be published in a short time and at a lower cost.

He said:

The press today has limited resources. This is the main reason why the concept of research and investigation is rarely done by journalists. Another reason, in my opinion, is the high legal risk. Investigative reporting often involves the disclosure of confidential or controversial information, which can create legal risks for journalists or media outlets. Journalists can face expensive lawsuits or even physical threats if they conduct controversial or daring investigations. This makes many media outlets reluctant to investigate more deeply and comprehensively. (Inf.6A)

In line with the opinion of Inf.6A, the senior journalist of Inf.4A sees the changing factors in the media industry from print media platforms, especially magazines and

tabloids, to online media that emphasise the aspect of speed. Online media are now required to break news as quickly as possible. The news does not have to be long, what is important is that the media informs the public first. Since the advent of social media, declining readership and advertising revenues have forced many media outlets to cut costs and focus their resources on news that is easier and cheaper to produce.

According to Inf. 4A:

I couldn't apply the research and investigative concepts I learned at Tempo to the current media I manage. The reason is that we don't have enough money to cover the investigation. The media are now chasing as many reader clicks as possible to get AdSense from the internet. In the end, an investigation depends on the quality of the news source. Today's media often rely on official news sources or less reliable social media to get news and information. (Inf. 4A)

Sometimes the pragmatism of the media comes into play. Inf.1A has experience of dealing with political issues in the election of regional leaders. He mentioned:

What feedback do we get from the news? How important is this news to us? And can we benefit from it or not? So the pragmatist started to come in. (Inf.1A)

4. Research Contribution

The results of this study have a positive impact on the development of science because it has filled the gap related to the implementation of journalistic competence and newspaper professionalism.

In an effort to further develop the quality of journalism, journalists are expected to start identifying areas where they need to improve the quality of implementation of competencies. Journalists

should set specific goals for improving the quality of their skills, whether they want to become better at interviewing (hosting), news writing, investigation or multimedia techniques.

Every journalist should also realise that a job in the field of journalism will not make a person rich, but it is a sincere devotion to the community, nation and country. The desire to get rich always tempts journalists to violate the code of ethics in order to get certain unjustified payments.

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study suggests that the implementation of competencies should be further promoted by implementing four main steps so that newspaper professionalism can be realised in Riau Province, Indonesia. The four main steps are

- 1) Create mass awareness among journalists about the importance of taking the Journalism Competency Test.
- 2) Encourage every journalist to take the competency test conducted by the Press Council through competency testing agencies.
- 3) Improve the quality of journalists through continuous education and training.
- 4) Mobilize journalism organizations, media enterprise organizations and media owners to really pay attention to the quality of journalists by improving journalists' understanding of journalism competence.

Meanwhile, in order to focus on quality journalism, media companies should accept new journalists with a formal Bachelor's degree (S1). It is understood that a good formal education is a guarantee of quality human resources. It would be better if the accepted person is a communication or journalism major.

From the research conducted, there are several reasons why the competence of journalists is very important. First, the competence of journalists helps to improve the accuracy of reporting and the reliability of the information presented. Skilled journalists are able to gather accurate facts and check their veracity before producing a story. They use good investigative methods, conduct interviews and check sources to ensure that the information they present to the public is reliable. Competent journalists must be able to separate their personal opinions and present information fairly, giving a voice to all parties involved in an event or issue. The news produced will remain objective and unbiased.

Secondly, competent journalists are those who adhere firmly to journalistic ethics. Competent journalists understand the journalistic code of ethics and apply it to every aspect of their work. In terms of journalistic ethics, Indonesian journalists have the guidelines of the Code of Journalistic Ethics, which can make journalists maintain their integrity as guardians of public information and democracy. Thirdly, journalistic competence makes journalists skilled in writing and communication. Journalists who are able to write and present information clearly, concisely and attractively will enable the public to understand the issue well. Good communication skills are also needed when conducting interviews, building relationships with sources and interacting with the community.

Fourthly, journalistic literacy means that journalists have multimedia skills. In today's digital age, journalists also need to be competent in the use of technology and new media. They need to be able to use equipment such as cameras, record audio, edit video and use media platforms to communicate information effectively.

Fifth, the competence of journalists produces journalists who are sensitive to the social and legal context. Competent journalists need to understand the social, cultural and political context in which they work. They also need to have a good understanding of the laws related to journalism, including press rights, freedom of expression and the obligation to respect applicable legal boundaries.

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CONCLUSION

The level of competence of journalists is very important because it contributes significantly to the integrity, credibility and quality of information provided to the public. This is the conclusion of the researcher's in-depth interview with six informants working as journalists in Riau Province, Indonesia.

This informant's view is in line with the aim of implementing journalistic competence, which is to realise the professionalism of the press by providing quality journalism. With the application of journalistic competence, the quality of information provided to the public will be achieved. Journalists will be responsible for providing accurate, complete and balanced information to the public. Standards of competence help journalists to research, check facts and ensure that the information they report is not misleading or inaccurate.

Understanding the competence of journalists includes three categories: awareness, knowledge and skills. Awareness in the context of journalistic competence

refers to understanding and recognising the moral, ethical and social implications of journalistic work. It includes an understanding of the implications of the information conveyed and an awareness of the role of journalists as observers of society and guardians of the truth. The first aspect is awareness, which includes an understanding of law and ethics, journalistic sensitivity and mastery of networking and lobbying skills.

The competence of journalists required by the Press Council includes the ability of journalists to understand, master and exercise the profession of journalism or journalism and to have the authority to make decisions in the field of journalism. This, in turn, involves awareness, knowledge and skills. With regard to improving the quality of journalists through education, most informants expect the Press Council to encourage newspaper companies to send their journalists to journalism education and training institutions. In this regard, the government is advised to intervene by strengthening journalism education and training institutions through the state budget or by inviting the private sector to help the press community.

The informants agreed that the training of journalists should be improved to become a special school. So that the graduates of this school will fill the field of Indonesian journalism. The above opinion is in line with the thoughts of Ritonga (2019) and Jaminah (2022) that due to the open policy, the human resources of Indonesian journalists lack communication knowledge. Mainstream media train potential journalists through in-house training or through third-party services, although many media companies do not provide such facilities (Jaminah, 2022). Prospective reporters are hired without training, reporting live and learning from senior reporters. Based on the various phenomena of journalism training, it

is necessary to think about a mechanism to regulate the professional training of future journalists.

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