

Teaching Journalism Ethics in Thailand¹

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to discern lecturers' and students' opinions towards current journalism ethics teaching and present a new approach to develop ethical reflection and decision making for journalism undergraduate students. Data were collected through questionnaires and opinion samples from Thai Rajabhat university lecturers and undergraduate students in the faculty of Communication Arts.

The findings were as follows:

1. The lecturers and students indicated that the present status of journalism ethics teaching encourages students to be brave in order to think, to do and to express themselves, especially in a reasonable manner. However, only minimal learning activities are being used that integrate professional ethics. In addition, only minimal case studies are used to prepare learners to face the realities creating current circumstances.

2. The present status of students' ability to ethically reflect on and make decisions about professional journalism, that is, students' ability to search and retrieve data for lessons, clear problem identification and problem solving alternatives, are at a moderate level. This should be developed to a higher level.

Key Words : *Mass Media Professional Ethics, Case-Based Learning, Reflection, Ethical Decision Making.*

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของอาจารย์และนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับสภาพการจัดการเรียนการสอนด้านจริยธรรมวิชาชีพสื่อมวลชนและแนวทางในการออกแบบการเรียนการสอนที่พัฒนาการคิดไตร่ตรองและการตัดสินใจเชิงจริยธรรม ของนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล คือแบบสอบถามความคิดเห็น กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นอาจารย์และนักศึกษาสาวาวิชานิเทศศาสตร์ ระดับปริญญาตรี มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏทั่วประเทศ

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า

1. ผลการวิเคราะห์สภาพปัจจุบันเกี่ยวกับการจัดการเรียนการสอนด้านจริยธรรมวิชาชีพสื่อมวลชน พบว่าอาจารย์และนักศึกษา มีความคิดเห็นว่า สภาพปัจจุบันมีลักษณะการจัดการเรียนการสอนที่ให้ผู้เรียนกล้าคิด กล้าทำ กล้าแสดงออก เน้นให้ผู้เรียนแสดงความคิดเห็นอย่างมีเหตุผล แต่ยังจัดกิจกรรมการเรียนการสอนที่สอดคล้อง

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จริยธรรมวิชาชีพน้อยกว่าที่ควร อีกทั้งการจัดกิจกรรมการเรียนการสอนโดยใช้กรณีศึกษาเพื่อให้ผู้เรียนเผชิญกับสถานการณ์จริงนั้นไม่มากเท่าที่ควร

2. ผลการวิเคราะห์สภาพปัจจุบันเกี่ยวกับความสามารถในการคิดไตร่ตรองและการตัดสินใจเชิงจริยธรรมวิชาชีพของนักศึกษา พบว่า ความสามารถในการรวบรวมและสืบค้นข้อมูลประกอบการเรียน การระบุปัญหาที่ชัดเจน การระบุทางเลือกในการแก้ปัญหา รวมทั้งการคิดไตร่ตรองและการตัดสินใจเชิงจริยธรรมวิชาชีพสื่อมวลชนอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ซึ่งควรได้รับการพัฒนาให้อยู่ในระดับที่สูงขึ้น

คำสำคัญ : จริยธรรมวิชาชีพสื่อมวลชน การคิดไตร่ตรอง การตัดสินใจเชิงจริยธรรม

FORWARD

To develop the country is to develop its population. The foundation of national development is the moral and educational quality of its people. The people of the country must be developed in the framework of goodness, intelligence and happiness - virtues and knowledge. In order to achieve this goal, the Office of Higher Education Commission has set forward the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education to implement concretely the National Higher Education Act emphasizing the National Higher Educational Standards of students' learning outcomes. These standards comprise 5 aspects: 1) virtues and ethics, 2) knowledge, 3) intellectual skills, 4) interpersonal relations and responsibility skills, 5) skill in mathematical analysis, communication, and Information Communication Technology. (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2009). These standards indicate that virtues and ethics are the key educational qualities that enable students to manage the concrete and ethical problems of the profession using value, empathy, basic value and professional ethics. These characteristics will appear in the forms of self-discipline, responsibility, honesty, sacrifice, good example, and world understanding, etc. Therefore, educational administration must be undertaken according to the framework of the 2009 Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. This will ensure that graduates demonstrate positive character quality and ethics, knowledge, skill, responsibility, creativity, and ability to solve complicated problems.

Communication Arts is an important curriculum helping the growth and progress of national development. It is an important tool to develop human resources for people to have better understanding, skills and ability to seek for data and information. As well it assists in the acquiring of broad, real, deep and immediate knowledge, as well as the ability to utilize appropriate modern communication technology for the betterment of society with responsibility, virtue and ethics, and to abide by a professional code of ethics. (Communication Arts, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, 2012) The 2012 report on the curriculum assessment of the Liberal Arts Faculty (Communication Arts Program), Phranakhon Rajabhat University revealed that ethics promotion instruction was at a

moderate level. The report on the communication curriculum evaluation of Silpakorn University indicated that the employers of the Communication Arts graduates indicated that the graduates' ability to analyze and to solve problems reasonably was at a very low level. Regarding professional ethics, the graduates' sense of responsibility was estimated to be at a low level (Faculty of Information Communication Technology, Silpakorn University, 2012). After a review of this data, it was agreed that all educational institutes teaching Communication Arts must develop students' skills to analyze and solve problems reasonably, and deepen their professional ethics in order to better prepare them for their career world.

The Communication Arts curriculum therefore needs to integrate profession ethics in all subjects in order for students to learn how to think, reflect and practice. It is not enough to integrate mass media professional ethics into one specific subject. To gain a deeper understanding of this strategy, the researcher studied the development of integrated instructions found on websites, using a case study of Yonisomanasikara, Pali for wise or proper consideration and attention, to develop a professional ethics approximation and decision making process for undergraduate students. The researcher needed to find relevant data and information about the current teaching of journalism ethics, as well as the status of students' thinking and decision-making ability within mass media professional ethics. The immediate goal was to develop an effective Journalism Ethics Learning-Teaching Model.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research were to study the lecturers' and students' opinions about the present status and problems concerning the teaching of mass media professional ethics, and to study Communication Arts students' reflection and decision making ability about mass media professional ethics. The goal was to use this data to construct a model for teaching mass media professional ethics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethics is an important attribute that every human being should hold and practice for the benefit of society as a whole, in lieu of morality or a doctrine for peace of mind, for the peace and happiness of society, and for the sake of professional ethics. Ethical practice will bring goodness to society and enable societies to be virtuous and moral. As well, learning-teaching management in educational institutions can help human beings to demonstrate ethical conduct, especially professional ethics.

A Communication Arts curriculum produces graduates for the mass media profession where there is a need for knowledge, competency, skill and mass media professional ethics, so that those who practice within the mass media profession will practice the profession correctly and justly within the framework of civil law and an ethical code. Many researchers have conducted studies of the ethical decision-making process of the mass media profession, such as Sriluksana Silpi (1996) who conducted research on the ethical reporting of crime in newspapers. The findings reveal that most newspaper reporters realize the problems created by reporting limitations to cover criminal news; for example, the details and pictures of sexual cases involving children and young adults. When the reporters were confronted with such ethical problems the motif most used was that of the professional ethical standards. When they were interviewed about the criminal cases that used to be publicized in newspapers, they indicated that making the news most believable in the eyes of their readers was the most important criterion. This indicated that, in real life, news reporters could not practice their career within the framework of a set professional standard because of competition with other newspapers and ways of finding reliable news sources may lead to news reporters overlooking the privacy rights of their news subjects. This discovery of the presence of difficult ethical decisions, especially around an individual's privacy rights, coincided with the findings of Virojna Srihiran (1998) who conducted research on the conscious mind (journalistic ethics) of newspaper photographers and their decision making process to take pictures. The findings highlight that the journalistic conscious mind of newspaper photographers was at a high level, the highest level of responsibility, a high level regarding duty awareness and a do-not-take-sides neutrality. The least or lowest level concerned freedom. As for a journalistic ethical decision making process of newspaper photographers, the findings show that newspaper photographers mostly decided to take pictures even if it concerned a case that threatened their professional ethics. They emphasized the truth of the story, its news worthiness and the ethical principles involved. Overall, ethical decision making was found to be at a low level. In short, the reporters were confronted with ethical risk at all times. They need the skill to make quick decisions to present the news and its pictures. For this reason, mass media practitioners need the ability to judge the ethics of a situation with which they are confronted.

This current study conducted a survey to collect data from mass media practitioners, all adult bachelor degree graduates. They reported that they did not have much opportunity to practice ethical decision making. If there was a need, in their work, to be able to make a correct and ethical decision when confronted with a difficult situation then, while they were studying in mass communication schools, the Communication Arts curriculum should provide an opportunity to practice such decision making. For example, opportunity needs to be afforded in the curriculum

that directly prepares graduates for a mass media career. Teaching-learning strategies should give students the opportunity to confront real life situations in which to practice ethical decision making.

The research results also found that the learning-teaching model that presents real life events or confronts students with real and/or mock-up situations, should then be analyzed as if they were a real situation. This kind of case-based learning model is one example of a teaching process that presents events, situations and facts in complete detail, along with reality-making multi-media that help learners to participate in idea expression, discussion, analysis, synthesis and concept and theory application, and the principles of analysis and decision making (Ward, 1998). The learners search and collect data from these situations in order to analyze and synthesize them and then to decide how to respond to such cases reasonably. They then conclude with the decisional direction appropriate to the particular situation which has more benefits than other means of decision making. This is an interactive learning process between learners and teachers and amongst the learners themselves.

Case-based learning enables learners to engage in analytical reflection of the causes and effects in the findings of the data, discover directions for future practice, gain knowledge for operational planning and the know-how to separate important data, to pinpoint and analyze problems or situations and to solve the encountered problems. In addition, the learners are able to select the important data for planning and decision making. Learners have the opportunities to search the data for problem solving elements in various situations. Besides this, learners gain the chance to express, discuss, listen to and accept others' ideas. This strategy will practice learners in comprehensive communication and essay-writing skills. Case-based learning is a value-added method to enhance learners' maturity and readiness for decision-making with appropriate values and intelligence.

The important components of case-based learning outlined by Wariratana Kaewurai (1998) include that case-based learning is student-centered learning, a small group teaching technique, and one that enables group discussion for knowledge generation. The cases used for the lessons should be current instances and should be integrated with real occupational cases for problem solving. Students soon appreciate the learning method and feel empowered to search for additional knowledge. In fact, learners can control the learning process by themselves. For example, they find they need to search for appropriate knowledge by themselves to solve the problems, according to the presented situation. As well, they can utilize the gained knowledge to solve problems and to suggest the appropriate problem solving methods for good results. In conclusion, the important components of case-based learning are instructors, learners, and the

cases themselves. Indeed, the appropriate integration of these components would enhance knowledge and critical thinking in using the appropriate data to solve the problems arising from the cases.

As for the steps of case-based learning, different educators suggest the order and use of the steps in a variety of ways. For example, Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) divided case-based learning into 6 steps, and Lua Woon Ming Leo (2006) divided case-based learning into 5 steps. However, this researcher has studied, analyzed and synthesized case-based learning into the following 6 steps; they are, 1) cognition and problem identification, 2) scrutinizing and analyzing the cause of the problems, 3) problem solution direction, 4) the selection of a problem solution direction, 5) feedback of the solution direction, and 6) presentation and evaluation. The details are in the following tables:

Table 1 the synthesis of the case-based learning steps

Barkley,Cross and Major (2005)	Leo, LW.M. (2006)	Tisna Kaemmani (2007)	Suvit Moonkam, Orathai Moonkam (2008)	Ikseon Choi, Sang Joon Lee and Jeongwan Kang(2009)	Researcher
1.Division of learners into case-based learning groups	1. Introduction of the case	1. Teachers, students introduce the case	1. Introduce the sample cases	1. Identify problem cases	1. Cognition and problem identification
2. Allocation of learners to ask questions about the case and problem solution	2. Form groups and initiate discussion	2. Students study the sample cases	2. Studying the case, group division to study the case	2. Assessing situations	2. Scrutinize and analyze the cause of problems
3. Learners work in groups to study the case and determine the decision alternatives	3. Identify the way forward	3. Students discuss the case problem to find the answers	3. Conclusion and evaluation of the lessons	3. Setting goals	3. Setting problem solving methods
4. Learners systemize data, applying tools to analyze problems by using data or experience to solve problems; what is the problem? Its causes, getting supporting data to conclude the problems.	4.Guide learning activities	4. Teachers, lecturers, students discuss answers	4.Generate solutions		4.Selective decision for problem solving alternatives

Table 1 the synthesis of the case-based learning steps (continues)

Barkley,Cross and Major (2005)	Leo, LW.M. (2006)	Tisna Kaemmani (2007)	Suvit Moonkam, Orathai Moonkam (2008)	Ikseon Choi, Sang Joon Lee and Jeongwan Kang(2009)	Researcher
	5. Organize presentation, mobilize and provide timely feedback	5. Teachers, students discuss problems, problem solving method.conclude the learned lessons			5. Idea feedback from the alternatives
		6. Teachers evaluate students' learning			6. Presentation and evaluation

From the related literature and research, it was found that case-based learning can be applied in many fields of study. It helps learners have to participate actively, analyze, and discuss within the learning process. It helps learners develop analytical skills and make alternative determination for ethical decision making.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was a study of the opinions of lecturers and students about the status of learning-teaching management and the approaches to develop a teaching model for mass media ethics teaching, a teaching model to develop ethical reflection and decision making within the framework of professional ethics codes. Data were collected from undergraduate students in the School of Communication Arts and other related schools, utilizing the following method.

1. Samples;

Samples for this research were 104 lecturers from the School of Communication Arts and other related schools of 5 Rajabhat universities and 402 undergraduate students who were studying in the school of Communication Arts and other related schools of the 5 Rajabhat universities.

2. Data collecting tools and the tool quality validation

2.1 Questionnaires on opinions of present mass media professional ethics teaching administration to develop the ethical reflection and decision making skills of undergraduate students in the school of Communication Arts and other related schools. Also surveyed was the students' ability to think and make decisions ethically from the perspective of the lecturers in the school of Communication Arts and other related schools. This had been tested for content validity and then the content validity checked by means of the index of item-objective congruence, IOC.

2.2 Questionnaires on opinions about current mass media professional ethics teaching management to develop the ethical reflection and decision making skills of undergraduate students in the school of Communication Arts and other related schools. Also surveyed was the students' ability to think and to make decisions ethically from the perspective of undergraduate students in the school of Communication Arts and other related schools. This had been tested for content validity and then had the content validity checked by means of the index of item-objective congruence, IOC.

3. Data analysis:

Data from the questionnaires was analyzed by frequency, mean and standard deviation.

FINDINGS

The research findings are divided into two categories; these are the current teaching management and the approach to a design of a learning-teaching model that will enhance students' ability to reflect analytically and make decisions within the frame of professional ethics, from the viewpoints of the lecturers and the undergraduate students in the school of Communication Arts and other related curriculum from the Rajabhat University group throughout the country.

The management of teaching mass media professional ethics: the findings of this aspect disclosed that the present status of teaching mass media professional ethics opens up an opportunity for students to search for new knowledge from many sources, encourages students to think, to do, and to express themselves, promotes students to search for new knowledge by themselves. Classroom learning uses a lecture format and is designed to meet the subject objectives. It does not emphasize the activities that incorporate mass media professional ethics. It was found that there is less case-based learning than should be. Communication channels for students to express themselves are still at a minimal level, including the students' self-expression.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of lecturers' opinions towards mass media professional ethics teaching management (Highest: 5 - the first level)

Instructional Status	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Open the opportunities for learners to search for new knowledge from the knowledge sources	4.29	0.72	High
Activities organized to encourage students to think, to do and to express themselves	4.27	0.69	High
Learning-teaching management concentrating on thinking process	4.26	0.57	High
Virtues and ethics integrated into learning activities	4.23	0.78	High
Learning activities that yield opportunities to listen to others' opinions and criticism	4.16	0.56	High

Table 3 Mean and standard deviation of students' opinions towards mass media professional ethics teaching management (Highest: 5 - the first level)

Instructional status	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Open the opportunities for learners to search for new knowledge from the knowledge sources	4.25	0.73	High
Learning activities organized to encourage students to search for knowledge by themselves	4.10	0.73	High
New information from daily life used as questions or situations in teaching media	4.04	0.74	High
Learning activities that yield opportunities to listen to others' opinions and criticism	4.16	0.56	High
Learning activities used for lecturing to meet the objectives of the course of subjects	4.00	0.78	High

Table 4 Mean and standard deviation of lecturers' and students' opinions towards students' ability to reflect analytically and to make decision within the framework of mass media professional ethics

Questions	Lecturers			Students		
	Mean	S.D	Interp.	Mean	S.D	Interp.
Learners' ability to understand mass media professional ethics	3.45	0.70	High	3.44	0.63	Moderate
Learners' ability to collect data for lessons	3.40	0.66	Moderate	3.82	0.73	High
Learners' ability to search for data for learning	3.46	0.79	Moderate	3.86	0.80	High
Learners' ability to identify problems clearly and correctly	3.21	0.62	Moderate	3.50	0.71	Moderate
Learners' ability to analyze encountered situations or problems reasonably	3.23	0.87	Moderate	3.79	0.82	High
Learners' ability to identify possible alternatives related to the problems	3.17	0.86	Moderate	3.91	0.77	High
Learners' ability to select data related to situations, problems or case studies	3.23	0.85	Moderate	3.83	0.73	High
Learners' ability to present appropriate conclusions	3.15	0.89	Moderate	3.89	0.73	High

The above tables indicate that lecturers' opinions about students' ability to reflect analytically and make decisions about mass media professional ethics was at a moderate level. Only the ability to understand mass media professional ethics was at a high level.

While students' own opinions about their ability to reflect analytically and make decisions about mass media profession ethics was at a high level. The only items found to be at a moderate level were the learners' ability to understand mass media professional ethics, the ability to identify problems clearly and correctly, and the learners' ability to make decisions about mass media profession ethics. Lecturers and students shared the same opinion about learners' ability to make decisions about mass media professional ethics. Their shared opinions were at a moderate level. These skills need to be developed to gain higher ability to make decisions ethically about mass media profession ethics.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From tables 1 to 3, we learn the breakdown of details concerning the current situation of mass media professional ethics teaching that has opened up opportunities for learners to search

for new knowledge from knowledge sources, encouraged students to think, to do, and to express themselves, emphasized students to search for knowledge by themselves. There were learning activities that and has emphasized a lecture format in order to meet the objectives of the courses, while still integrated into mass media professional ethics. Case-based learning was found to remain at a minimal level and communication channel opportunities for students to express themselves was also found to be at minimal level.

The research findings also discerned that teaching, lecturers' and students' assessments of students' ability to reflect and to make decisions about mass media professional ethics were all found to be at a moderate level. As well, the ability to collect and retrieve data, to identify problems clearly, to analyze and identify problem solution alternatives were also found to be at a moderate level.

Therefore, it is recommended that a future approach to the learning-teaching management of mass media professional ethics should emphasize that learners meet or confront real problems or real life situations. This future approach should be a student-centered learning process in order that students would practice how to utilize their ability, intellect and reasoning to analyze and classify real problems. They can plan and set an approach to solve problems that coincides with Pol Saengsawang's concept (1987) which states that case-based learning, or a case study or a learning by case examination approach is a learning process that gives students a variety of roles through which to participate in the problem solving of real situations, or in specific mock-up situations. In the problem solving process, learners have to analyze data, assess problems, decide an optimal method to solve particular problems, then report the causes and a problem solving approach to their group. This process matches that of Pongyuth Klaryuth (2009) who maintains that the benefits of case-based learning offer students the opportunities to deepen their understanding of particular problems directly by themselves, to help them gain an ability to think analytically, to develop questioning and discussing skills, with training to think through problems and make decisions, to create a learning process related to the problem's causes and outcomes. These findings also reflect those of Choovit Chaibao(2009) who concluded that case-based learning helps students to gain an ability to think analytically and to see the ramifications of a situation clearly, to enjoy learning, to generate good learning habits and to attain a desired learning achievement. These conclusions and recommendations also are found in Lane (2007) who explained that case-based learning was effective preparation for students to learn problem solving techniques where the students can learn, through participation, from the decision making process and problem solving methods.



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