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(Review Article)

Professional Ethics Codes for Global Media

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Abstract

Background: The present study focuses on the importance of observing professional ethics codes by global media. The main objective of this study is to emphasize the necessity of providing ethical codes for global media. Global media ethics aims at developing a comprehensive set of principles and standards for the practice of journalism in age of globalization.
This study has reviewed the main interrelated theory regarding ethics, morality and media. The media ethics codes of different countries have been examined under the research. The study findings show that the ethics dominating the media of each country comes from the values, norms, and code of conduct existing in that society; accordingly, there is a direct relationship between media ethics code and the values and norms of a society or culture.
Conclusion: Based on the study's literature review, theoretical framework and the comparison analysis of the different media ethics codes, the article introduces an applicable ethical guideline and the main strategic professional ethics codes for global media.

Keywords: Ethics, Global media, Professional Ethics Codes

Introduction

Today media interconnected world brings together a plurality of different religions, traditions and groups varying political agendas, social ideals.

Media content deemed offensive by certain groups can spark not just domestic unrest and even violence but global tensions.
Therefore, global media power entails global media responsibilities.

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A parochial media, ignoring its global responsibilities, can wreak havoc in this global world. So we need globally responsible media to help citizens understand the different global environment problems.
We need a global media ethics for our interconnected world.
The following article, studying different concepts of ethics, media ethics, and its approaches and also presenting a brief comparison among different countries media ethics codes, try to illustrate the importance of Global Media Ethics Code for our new tightly linked global world.

What is ethics?

Ethic has been defined as a set of inner and spiritual traits of human, which emerge as behavioral acts that arise from the inner moods of human. For this reason, it is said that ethics can be defined through his works. The continuation of a type of specific behavior is because of this that behavior has inner root within the soul of individual, which the root is called mood and ethic. (1)

Difference between ethics and ethical principles

Some scholars divide the term "ethical principles" from the term "ethics" and generally use "ethics" to specify the criteria for "good behavior," but "ethical principle" to introduce a rational approach, and even practical and justifiable about behavioral rules (2). Because ethical principles are presented modified and in the form of recommendations in certain articles and clauses, they are closer to the field of law, but the difference with legal provisions is that the legal regulations are universal and enforcing it is required for all individuals, while ethical principles do not have an authoritative feature and include only a specific social or professional group (such as media companions, doctors, lawyers, etc.), and their mandatory aspects are limited. (3)

Relationship between ethics and rights

Throughout the history, 3 steps have been considered for the relationship between ethics and rights as follows:

1- There was no difference between ethics and rights.
2- While the Freedom Movement was constituted in 18 century, the pioneering scholars of liberalism thought that they designated a distinct border between ethics and rights and believed, what exist inside of us associated with ourselves.

Immanuel Kant was the followers of this idea who said; ethics considers human intrinsic attributes, but rights are related with outer behavioral practices. The followers' political objective of this idea was to restrict governments' influences on the people individual life, and they had believed that humanity should never be sacrificed due to governments' authority.

3- But the world wars I&II proved that through the struggle, because of the democracy, it is not possible to eliminate oppression, hence some principles had to be defined to restrict democracy and then it was tried to maintain the relationship between the rights and ethics.

So it can be concluded that ethics and rights do not have the equal concepts. Ethics evaluates rights. Furthermore the scholars who are thinking about the society affairs concluded that if ethics split from rights, then beauty and delicacy have been removed and we only obeyed the power and authority, thus the execution of the right must be ethical.
Moreover, with regarding to legal provisions, a government is not permitted to pass every rule that it prefers, but the rules and moral powers prohibit that, and ethics influence on the rules.
If ethics removed from rights, then law would lose its acceptability. practices.(4)

History of media ethics approaches

The history of media ethics can be divided into five stages. One Of Researcher summarizes the ethical view embedded in every historical stage as follow:

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Authoritarianism-utopian (16 to 17 centuries): the ethical aim of journalism is to support and promote the authorities in power and their programs, whether the aim of authority is utopian or more modest.
Liberal (18 century): the ethical aim of journalism in this period is to provide the information and views necessary for a free and self-governing liberal society. Freedom of speech is more important than not embarrassing authority.
Objectivity-social responsibility (19 century): the ethical aim of journalism is the same as liberal theory to be free so that journalists can inform citizens and act as a watchdog on government. The freedom to publish should be restrained by norms of objectivity and the social responsibilities of responsible journalism.
Interpretive and advocational (20 century): the ethical aim of journalism is not simply to inform or to report facts but also to interpret the world for citizens and /or to advocate for reforms and social causes. The interpretive and advocacy approach is skeptical about impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity.
Care- communitarian: like social responsibility theory. The care-communitarian approach wants journalists to be free but to use that freedom responsibility. «Responsibly» refers to specific aims such as helping to develop caring human relations and communities and fairly representing minorities and other disadvantaged groups.(5)

Social responsibility theory

Media theory that used in this study is the media social responsibility. Theory of social responsibility is more focused on the media ethics, theoretically. This theory is attended on both independence and commitment in media. This theory assumes that media should be committed to democratic policies. The basics of this theory include independence of media and media's commitment to society.
Some of communication experts believe that theory of social responsibility in democratic societies has effective framework for professional ethics. This ethical framework is matched with political-social characteristics of News in all societies. Therefore, this theory is the basic of current study. (6)
This study also tries to compare the media ethics standards of some main countries mainly in continental divisions emphasizing two series of proactive and restrained media ethics principles.

Necessity of professional ethics codes

Ethical principles were first attended by the professional committees and unions of the press owners and journalists in western countries, and later by the international and reginal professional organization of the national community and United Nations. (7)
The committees, trade and medium unions, in different countries, have provided the media ethics charters in this countries and then have updated them according to the emergence of new media.
The following table can show the main findings in the brief comparison study (8-20)
The examination of media ethics charters in different countries reveals that ethics originate in values, norms, and common practices governing the media in a community; as a result, there is a direct relationship between this charter and values and norms accepted in a community or a culture.
Drafting a media ethics charter is a way which organizes the media in terms of ethics, and needs to be done by experts, authorities, and associations of journalists. Such a charter should include different opinions, be coherent, and be supported in all periods.
The media should perform their jobs in accordance with the following ethics principles: truth, objectivity, fairness, avoiding defamation, observing public decency, respecting personal privacy, avoiding plagiarism, respecting the ethnicities, avoiding violence, stating the source of information, not crossing the red lines, avoiding lies and falsification, observing impartiality, and paying undivided attention to selecting words and images.

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Table1: Codes of media ethics for Scandinavian, Europe, America, Asia, Africa

	Scandinavian	Europe	America	Asia	Africa
1	Freedom expression	Freedom expression	Freedom expression	Respect individual privacy	Freedom expression
2	Respect individual privacy	Respect individual privacy	Respect individual privacy	Independence	Respect individual privacy
3	Independence	Independence	Independence	Avoid insults	Independence
4	Justice	Justice	Justice	Justice	Justice
5	Truth	Truth	Truth	Avoid of violence	Avoid of violence
6	Lack of plagiarism	Lack of plagiarism	Lack of plagiarism	Respect to public Ethics	Truth
7	Objectivity	Objectivity	Objectivity	Truth	Objectivity
8	Social responsibility	Social responsibility	Social responsibility	Honesty	Social responsibility
9	Fairness	Honestly	Advocacy	Fairness	Honestly
10	Accuracy	Independence	Accuracy	Accuracy	Fairness
11	avoiding defamation	Protection of Dignity	Avoiding defamation	Protection of Dignity	Protection of Dignity
12	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities	respecting the ethnicities

Nowadays, news agencies use the communication technology to collect news, videos, and images from around the world at remarkable speed. This technology has enabled news agencies to deliver pieces of news to their audiences all over the world.

Through the verification of media ethical charters of different countries, we can find out that the value-based morality, norms, and procedures that are present in the community, govern the media system of every country, so based on this reality, there is a straight relationship between that charter, values, and society norms or culture.

One of the procedures in order to organizing media in the scope of ethics is compiling the media ethics charter, which this task must be carried out by the experts, scholars, and journalists trade unions. This charter must comprise various opinions and be stable as well; also it must be protecting the whole periods.

New media and Ethical principles

Today by emergence of new media, the nature of journalism and its ethics has also been transformed. Professional shares the journalistic sphere with tweeters, bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media users. The economics of professional journalism struggles as audiences migrate online.

The media revolution has created tension among values on two levels.

The first level is due to online journalism. The culture of traditional journalism, with its values of accuracy, pre-publication verification, balance, impartiality, and gate-keeping, rubs up against the culture of online journalism which emphasizes immediacy, transparency, partiality, non-professional journalists and post-publication correction. The second level is due to the emergence of a global journalism. (21)

Some scholars believe new media is reshaping media ethics and transforming it to open ethics that has the potential to create a global ethics discourse that is inclusive and participatory.

Citizen uses of media, where the citizen is both consumer and producer of media, are changing the media sphere as a whole. New media small and large, from cell phones to personal blogs, increasingly occupy more of society's available communication space than before and lead to such concepts as media space and "media ecology " (22) .

These changes in the media ecology are translating into changes to media ethics in terms of in-

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tended users, the level and nature of participation, and the content. Put simply the changes are altering the way media ethics gets done.

The aim of media ethics is no longer adequately conceptualized as extending professional ethics so that it welcomes input from non-professionals.

New media communication also alters notions of meaningful participation and content control in media ethics. In a global media world, citizens do not need an invitation, or permission, to discuss media ethics, to critique journalism practice, or to suggest revisions and new norms. Discussing media normatively is a natural part of producing media. Ethical questions arise irresistibly when media activity is weaved into almost every aspect of one's life. Citizen-based ethics It is the activity of citizens reflecting, participating and shaping ethical discourse through global, interactive online discussions.

The culture of new media favors transparency and interactivity. Traditional Media, in recent years, have attempted to catch up to this transparent, interactive communication online by asking for readers' and viewers' reactions to stories, and by incorporating the technology of blogging, texting, Twitter and Facebook into their work and on their web sites. Much of the ethics discourse online and offline involves rich exchanges among professionals and non-professionals. The movement, then, is toward a more open media ethics in terms of discussion. (21)

Necessity of global media ethics

Today news media and the practice of journalism are increasingly global. In one hand media corporations are increasingly global enterprises. And on the other hand new technologies give news organizations the ability to gather information from around the world. News reports, via satellite and the Internet, reach people around the world and influence the actions of governments, militaries, humanitarian agencies, and warring ethnic groups. This media-connected world brings together a plurality of different religions, traditions, ethnic groups, values, and organizations with varying political agendas.

Therefore in this new scope of journalism, media ethics needs to take a global approach to responsible journalism. Its aims, principles, and practices have to be altered to reflect the global nature of media.

Responsibilities would be owed to readers and viewers scattered across the world. Standards would be redefined to promote a news media for citizens across borders.

Publishing materials deemed offensive by certain groups, as happened with the publication of the cartoons of Prophet Mohammed, can result in violence that ripples across borders. In such a climate, the role of the news media must be re-examined.

We need a global attitude in journalism that refuses to allow us to hunker down into a narrow and minimalist ethics that refuses to confront the major issues (22).

Finally, we need globally responsible media to help citizens understand the daunting global problems of poverty, environmental degradation, technological inequalities, and political instability. These problems require concerted global action and the construction of new global institutions. Moreover, without global principles, it is not possible to criticize media practices in other countries, including draconian restrictions on the press.

Global media ethics is interested in the ethical implications of the fact of global journalism. Therefore, global media ethics is called global for several reasons:

1. the global nature of what it studies: it aspires to be an ethics for a practice that is global in location, reach, and interconnectedness;
2. the global nature of its intended audience: a global ethics should, as we will argue below, seek to serve a global public - ultimately, all of humanity;
3. the global nature of its aims and purposes: serving a global public means promoting the good of citizens everywhere, of helping people flourish and enjoy just societies around the globe;

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4. Global principles to ground codes of ethics. A global ethics works to establish aims and general principles that responsible journalists across borders can agree to and honor in their own way, in their own media cultures (23).

Conclusion

The global media and journalism ethics should promote the individual and social goods. Global journalism should reveal inequalities, report diversity, assess the quality of social life, monitor citizens' participation, and assist social bridging between diverse classes, ethnic groups, religions, and cultures within and among countries. It should also promote media literacy and the evaluation of media. Journalism can promote the political and ethical goods by helping to nurture morally reasonable citizens willing to discuss essential issues.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, Informed Consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors

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