

# THE ROLE OF JOURNALIST ORGANIZATIONS IN IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONALISM AND CREDIBILITY OF JOURNALISTS IN ACEH

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## ABSTRACT

The journalist profession can help the public get information quickly and easily. However, there is public distrust of the circulating news. One of the reasons is the credibility of journalists who are considered by the public to be declining. For journalists, this phenomenon is very paradoxical and not easy. However, like other cities in Indonesia, Aceh already has a journalist organization known as the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the role of Acehnese journalist organizations in improving journalistic professionalism. To find out how the role of journalist organizations in improving the professionalism of journalists, this study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of interviews and observations. Then the research data were analyzed using social responsibility theory (SR-Theory). Several programs initiated by this organization include training in journalistic code of ethics, professional responsibility for journalism, writing training, reportage training, editing workshops, photographers, videographers, and competency tests for members, as well as journalism socialization to schools in Aceh. On the other hand, the existence of this organization can be a legal protection for journalists.

**Keywords: Journalist Organization; Aceh; Journalism; Professionalism**

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## INTRODUCTION

A journalist or often also referred to as a journalist is someone who carries out a journalistic activity or someone who is identical with writing activities which is then published to the mass media through newspapers, television, radio, magazines and the internet. Journalists have their own prestige in the midst of their presence in society, some even think that journalists have great prestige. Therefore, the professionalism of a journalist in relation to his role in carrying out journalistic activities is an important aspect that must be possessed. The role of journalists as a communication bridge between the community and the government must be able to represent the public interest.

In addition, journalists are expected to be able to develop facts or information that can become news obtained based on the experience, knowledge, curiosity, and imagination of journalists in processing their newspapers. This will help journalists

become more sensitive to undisclosed facts or information that has the potential to become newsworthy and obtain more information than readers need and ensure compliance with the public's right to accurate information. According to Djen Amar (1984), journalists admit that they are responsible for the veracity of the report. Journalists must know and obtain correct information so that the ideas communicated become valid, effective. One way to create balanced news and represent the public interest is to maintain the professionalism of journalists.

Journalists are one of the pillars of democracy, as stated in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution with the aim of forming a state in the fourth paragraph, where journalists must be able to educate the life of the nation and state. According to Wijaya & Yudiningrum (2016) as social beings, journalists are also often faced with various problems, quoted from Republik.co.id, there are journalists who are beaten by the masses

while covering demonstrations news, this is allegedly because journalists are not professional in carrying out their duties so that they appear suspicious that the safety of journalists could be threatened.

Journalists are required to be professional not only because the ideals are in their profession, but this professionalism affects the media which has a tremendous effect on the public (Wibawa, 2012). A profession requires a certain courage and sincerity. Professional discipline binds every member who has entered the professional world, and denies the presence of those who cannot exercise discipline when someone chooses his job as a journalist as outlined in Law Number 40 of 1999/CHAPTER III / Article 7 / Paragraph 2 and Articles of the Journalistic Code of Ethics in Indonesia (Dewan Pers, 2005). Professional journalists are journalists who follow and adhere to the application of journalistic ethics and journalistic law, because they contain a path to professionalism, free from threats from dominant groups as well as that the trade press does not accept bribes or cover-ups from certain parties or sources.

Regarding the journalist profession, the Indonesian Press Council has issued Press Council Regulation No. 1/Peraturan DP/II/2010 concerning Journalists Qualification Standards, this regulation certainly aims to improve the quality and professionalism of Indonesian journalists, which includes guidelines and standards for journalist skills. According to press council regulations, the main competence of Indonesian journalists is or the ability that journalists must have to achieve the required performance when carrying out their duties in certain units in certain capacities. These main skills include 11 types of skills, namely:

- 1) Understand articles and uphold journalistic ethics;
- 2) Identifying issues relevant to topical value;
- 3) Establish and maintain networks and lobbying;

- 4) Fluency in the language;
- 5) Collect and analyze information (facts and data) and news information;
- 6) Presenting news;
- 7) News editing;
- 8) Designing news titles or serials and/or news program slots;
- 9) Managing Editor;
- 10) Determine news policies and directions;
- 11) Use of media and technology

Journalists will never become professional journalists if they do not have the passion to be professional (someone). Professional spirit fosters love for the profession, dynamism and solidarity with the profession. Without this, Journalists will be trapped in making Journalism a boring, tiring, and dry habit. Journalists will only deal with the work of technical reporters, the important thing is that there is news, the important thing is the task is completed, the important thing is that deadlines are respected. The journalists of this model are actually robots, which make journalists work without enthusiasm, without personality and easily become tools of power and money (Sukardi, 2009).

In Aceh, there are 13 administratively verified media, namely Aceh news (online), Aceh vidio (online), AJNN. Net (online), Berita merdeka (print), Dialeksis.com (online), Goaceh (online), Habadaily (online), KBA One (online), Modus aceh.co (online), Modus Aceh.co (print), Mind merdeka (print), Portalsatu.com (online) and Prohaba (print) and 2 local media that are administratively verified and factual, namely Rakyat Aceh (print) and Serambi Indonesia (print). The rest are very much media citizens who roam on social media (Dialeksis.com, 2019).

The current condition of journalists is still quite professional, this is proven by the large number of violations of the code of ethics and the number of media reports in conveying news or information. It was also explained by the press council that complaints of violations committed by the

media were unbalanced reporting and a lot of information was easily taken without first verifying the truth (Muliawanti, 2018; Nugroho & Samsuri, 2013).

It's the same with the image of journalists in the eyes of the people of Aceh today, based on initial observations, researchers found that journalists in Aceh really helped the community in getting information quickly and easily, but sometimes news obtained from the media could not be trusted just like that and had to be verified. First of all, the truth is, it is because the current era makes the credibility of journalists in the eyes of the public decline.

The study in this study uses the theory of social responsibility. The theory of social responsibility comes from the American initiative of the Committee on Freedom of the Press. The main driving force, namely failing to fulfill promises about press freedom and failing to fulfill the desired problems. In particular, the development of technology and commerce at the Press is said to have resulted in a lack of access to diverse people and groups, and a low level of performance to meet social and moral information in general.

Social responsibility theory must relate three slightly different principles. These are the Principles of Freedom and Personal Choice, the Principles of Media Freedom, and the Principles of Media's Obligation to Society. There are two main forms of development in this theory. One of them is the development of educational institutions which are independent institutions for fostering the media, and its development is very influential in expanding knowledge and deepening the concept of social responsibility towards journalists. Second, the further development of the analytical profession as a means of achieving higher professional standards.

The three main principles of social responsibility theory, which can be an indicator that a journalist is a professional, are as follows:

- 1) A media should avoid anything that could lead to crime, harm, public outcry, or crimes against ethnic or religious minorities.
- 2) In accepting and fulfilling these obligations, journalists and media must be able to regulate themselves within the limits of the existing legal framework and institutions.
- 3) Journalists and media professionals must be accountable to the public by always publishing factual news.

The professionalism of journalists can also be supported by joining journalistic organizations as a forum for learning and self-development. There are a number of journalistic organizations in post-reform Indonesia. But unfortunately quantity does not always equal quality, there is. According to the results of the Press Council's research on the quality of journalist organizations in Indonesia, it was determined that only PWI (Indonesian Journalists Association) and AJI (Aliansi of Independent Journalists) were eligible. These two journalistic organizations have a long history as a forum for journalists' associations. Both are considered representatives of the many journalistic organizations that exist and have regional branches, including one in Aceh.

One of the related journals that examines the role of journalist organizations in improving journalistic professionalism is Wulandhari Dwi Hastuti and Hermin Wahyuni who show that various journalist organizations have their respective roles in increasing the professionalism of journalists and with the existence of this journalistic organization it is very helpful for journalists in increasing credibility and synergy. at work.

PWI in Aceh has been established since 2016 which at that time was still a PWI hall and in 2021 it became PWI Aceh Regency and consists of 12 people consisting of several sub-sectors according to the abilities of each journalist, namely the fields of organization, law and advocacy. , education and sports, welfare, and arts and culture and tourism. PWI Aceh also

regularly conducts training for its members and also goes to the field such as to schools to provide workshops related to the world of journalism.

All journalists in Aceh joined PWI because according to the observations of Aceh journalists, it was stated that journalistic organizations really help journalists understand their duties and responsibilities better. So it can be said that the role of journalists' organizations can improve the professionalism of a journalist. Furthermore, there was a case that happened to journalists from Aceh, namely being cursed and threatened by certain elements for writing a news story that was in accordance with the facts so as to reveal the crimes committed by these individuals and with the existence of journalist organizations such as PWI, they were able to become a legal umbrella for journalists at the time work (Anterokini.com, 2022). Therefore, this study will discuss and examine how the role of journalists' organizations in an effort to improve the professionalism of journalists (Case Study of the Aceh Indonesian Journalists Association).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Social Responsibility Theory (SR-Theory)**

This Social Responsibility Theory was born for several reasons. First, the technological and industrial revolution that changed the face and way of life of the American people, and which affected the very nature of the press. The Technological and Industrial Revolutions and the resulting social changes greatly affected the life of the press. Technological developments increase the size, speed and efficiency of old media, and produce new media: film, radio, and television. Industrialization was also followed by urbanization, and the gathering of large numbers of people allowed the growth of a massive circulation of newspapers. Obtaining education and increasing the number of citizens countries rapidly expanded the market for press

products. Everywhere the press has become an intermediary. The press has also become a body controlled by less and less owners. The development of technology allows the media to serve a large number of communicants. Media ownership becomes concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people (Siebert et al., 1986; Tsukamoto, 2006).

Second, the voices of sharp criticism, which are spoken more and more frequently at a time when the media has grown in size and importance, and which pose a threat of government regulation. By the time the Press had become a giant, it was the object of a great deal of criticism. The first book to attack the press appeared in 1859 and there have been attacks before. These criticisms increased in strength and intensity in the twentieth century. Broadly speaking, the themes of criticism in this twentieth century are (Siebert et al., 1986):

- 1) The press has used its mighty power just to his own interests. The owner of the press is only propagating his opinion, especially in political and economic matters, with sacrifice opposing opinions.
- 2) The press has become a means of satisfying giant businesses, and at one time the press allowed advertisers to control its editorial content as well as its editorial policy.
- 3) The press rejects any change in society.
- 4) The press prioritizes superficial sensations rather than aspects the importance of the events it covers, and the entertainment it provides is often of poor quality.
- 5) The press is harmful to public morals
- 6) The press violates the boundaries of private life for no good reason.
- 7) The press is controlled by one socio-economic class, the "business class", and it becomes increasingly difficult for new entrants to enter the

communications industry; therefore, a free and open press is under threat

Third, there is a new intellectual climate, where people are starting to be suspicious of the truths of the basic assumptions of the Enlightenment Age (Renaissance Age). Fourth, is the development of a professional spirit, when journalistic activities begin to attract the attention of the educated, and when the communication industry then reflects a feeling of responsibility among business people and industrialists.

### **SR Theory Concepts and Applications in Indonesia**

At the heart of the problem in discussing a press system is its freedom system (Achmadi, 1985). In other words, to know for sure what press system applies in a country, apart from knowing the socio-political system that applies in that country, it can also be seen from how that country regulates and interprets press freedom. Like other democratic countries in the world, Indonesia adheres to the principle of guaranteeing press freedom in its constitution. The 1945 Constitution as a result of the fifth amendment clearly shows this in Article 28, which reads:

Freedom of association and assembly, expressing thoughts verbally and in writing and so on is stipulated by law. then in 28 E paragraph (3): Everyone has the right to freedom of association, assembly and expression of opinion and article 28 F: Everyone has the right to communicate and obtain information to develop their personal and social environment, as well as the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information using all available channels.

Although it does not explicitly mention press freedom, in essence freedom of opinion and expression is the essence of press freedom. What is stated in Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, in essence, is the root of the system of press freedom in Indonesia (Sobur, 2001). Even the

formulation of Article 28 F "...has the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information using all available channels" is a clear description of press activities.

Of the three articles that need to be noted is the emergence of article 28 E paragraph (3) and 28 F which is the result of the fifth amendment in 2000. These articles appear together with a number of other articles that regulate human rights. That means our Constitution has outlined that press freedom is one of some of the most basic human rights. With this basic concept, the Indonesian press began to look for meaning and determine its goals and functions in the lives of Indonesian people. The constitutional basis of the Indonesian press system is the spirit of togetherness, kinship and mutual cooperation (Achmadi, 1985).

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research method uses qualitative research using descriptive methods. Qualitative research is widely used in social research. Qualitative research is research whose research results are not obtained by statistical procedures or other quantitative methods. Researchers use a naturalist approach to understand certain phenomena. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in that it explains cause-and-effect relationships, predicts, and generalizes findings. Qualitative studies seek to clarify and understand a phenomenon and extrapolate it to similar situations (Golafshani, 2003).

According to Creswell (2009) and Sugiyono (2017), the research method is basically scientific way to collect data with a specific purpose and use. The research method is a method or technique used to conduct research or observation activities, research methods are very important in carrying out research activities so that researchers can focus more on what they are looking for. Qualitative research is very effective in collecting culturally specific information such as values, opinions,

behavior and social context in a population (Mack, 2005).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Professionalism comes from the Anglo-Saxon language which means skill, expertise, and discipline. Professionalism also means pursuing a profession for profit or a source of livelihood. The American Webster Dictionary argues that professionalism is an intelligent behavior, goal, or set of qualities, which reflects a person's attitude towards work and the nature of the job/profession (Anoraga, 2019).

In this case, it can be understood that the characteristic of professionalism is the desire to always show behavior that can be used as a good criterion. Furthermore, we strive to improve and maintain our expertise by achieving professional behavior. This manifestation is carried out in various ways, for example through appearance, speech, use of language, body posture, and daily life attitudes. The desire to always pursue various professional development opportunities that can improve and improve the quality of knowledge and skills (Mondry, 2008). According to Azwar (2018), journalists must also be loyal to the community by not only prioritizing personal interests, but for the interests of the community and still relying on the accuracy of facts, this is called journalist professionalism.

The role of journalist organizations can help in increasing the professionalism of a journalist, one of which is the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) Aceh. This organization accommodates all journalists in Aceh, in addition to aiming to establish friendship as well as a place for developing talent and gaining new knowledge related to journalism, especially for novice journalists who are just entering the world of journalism. So this journalist organization really has a role in shaping and improving professionalism. This was stated by Arif Hidayat, a member of PWI Aceh in an interview with the researcher:

*“With this organization, we can learn more about the journalistic code of ethics, good and correct writing can also help reach friends who have just joined the world of journalism”.*

One of the visions and missions of PWI Aceh is to improve the professionalism of Aceh journalists. Based on this vision and mission, PWI Aceh made several programs not only to improve the professionalism of its members or journalists but also for prospective students or students. First, the program carried out by PWI Aceh in increasing the professionalism of journalists is by regularly conducting writing training, reporting training, good and correct news editing workshops, photographer and videographer workshops, and also discussions with other senior journalists. This was also conveyed by Suar members of PWI Aceh:

*“Before joining PWI, sometimes when I wrote, it was often unstructured, but with this organization I was able to learn from the trainings held and also from other senior journalists”*

The second is the outreach program conducted in Aceh schools, so PWI Aceh sent some of its members to conduct counseling. This is done to increase the knowledge of students who will continue their studies related to journalism. Not only that, several members of PWI Aceh also participated as resource persons at events held by schools and other parties. Not only that, the professionalism of Aceh journalists also received a good response and impression in the eyes of the Aceh people themselves. That is, the news that is delivered is accurate and accurate. This was conveyed by one of the people of Aceh, Linda Riati:

*“So it's like we need information, especially Aceh, quickly, for example, if there is a murder or theft, so with the presence of this reporter, we can quickly get that information. So I am*

*very grateful and happy to have journalists in Aceh.”*

The Aceh community has given a very positive impression on the professionalism of Aceh journalists because so far there have been no cases that harm the community by Aceh journalists, this was conveyed by Ahmad Alfadil, the Aceh community:

*“In my view, the professionalism of the performance of journalists in Aceh is quite good, we can see from the news that is presented that it is suitable for consumption, so far for hoax news or news that does not match the facts, I don't think there is any and I believe that Aceh journalists provide questions that really help the community's knowledge regarding things that are needed.”*

The Aceh Journalists Association is a forum that accommodates Aceh journalists and journalistic organizations have a role in increasing the professionalism of journalists. This was conveyed by Musliadi as a journalist:

*“By joining PWI, I have a place to develop my abilities as well as a place to seek knowledge and deepen my profession so that with this organization I know what I don't know about the world of journalism.”*

Furthermore, PWI Aceh is also a legal umbrella for journalists because with this organization it can protect journalists at work, this was conveyed by Hendra As one of Aceh journalists and chairman of PWI Aceh said:

*“This journalist organization is a legal umbrella for us when carrying out our duties, for example in 2018 there was a case of journalists from Aceh who were scolded and threatened for writing news according to facts so as to reveal crime syndicates and with the existence of PWI, they were able to protect journalists who were members of it because PWI is also a*

*an official press organization that has been recognized by the state as well.”*

A journalist needs to join a journalistic community or organization to improve his professionalism. Journalists' organizations must have synergy, integrity and credibility which aims to build the spirit of professionalism of journalists so that they can develop professional press freedom in the future. Synergy is the attitude of journalists who are able to maintain harmonious relations with the community and also with the government, integrity is the consistent attitude of Aceh journalists in reporting information according to the journalistic code of ethics and also credibility is the growing public trust in the Aceh journalist profession.

Based on the three main principles of social responsibility theory, which can be an indicator that a journalist is said to be professional, it shows that Aceh journalists are already professional in carrying out their profession as a journalist, first, that a media must avoid anything that can lead to crime, loss, public turmoil, or crimes against ethnic or religious minorities. This has been found in Aceh journalists by providing information in accordance with existing facts and data, which also often makes journalists threatened and even cursed by individuals who feel aggrieved, this was conveyed directly by a member of PWI Aceh with the initials SHR, but in this case, SHR was reluctant to mention the case because he had made peace with the unscrupulous parties.

Furthermore, in accepting and fulfilling these obligations, journalists and media must be able to regulate themselves within the limits of the existing legal framework and institutions. Aceh journalists maintain good relations with the government and the community but also do not take sides in providing information, this is evidenced by the public perception which states that Aceh journalists establish harmonious relationships with the people in

Aceh and also greatly assist the community in obtaining information in a timely manner.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the journalist organization, the Indonesian Journalist Association of Aceh plays a role in increasing the level of professionalism of journalists, this can be seen from the many positive impressions from the people of Aceh regarding the performance of journalists in Aceh, furthermore this professional journalist is shown by an understanding of the journalistic code of ethics. as well as his responsibilities as a journalist, also in conveying news that is always timely and actual and can also be seen from the many activities and programs carried out by the Aceh Journalists Association, one of which is training and competency testing for PWI Aceh members who will join and other programs such as socialization related journalism to schools. The author's suggestion to the Association of Indonesian Journalists in Aceh is that in the future it is hoped that there will be more frequent training and socialization related to the world of journalism and it is also hoped that a journalist competency test will be conducted openly.

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