

THE MEDIA'S ETHICS

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Abstract: The media play a huge role in people's lives because they inform people about the happenings in the world. Sometimes one has to wonder how accurate that information really is and what role ethics play in the Universe. The media's ethics refers to moral principles and values that journalists and media houses should respect, including truthfulness, objectivity, precision, respect for privacy, etc. Fake news is a problem that occurs when the media presents incorrect or misleading information, if someone is malicious or wants to manipulate public opinion, they can easily exploit these falsehoods. That is why ethics in the media is very important in order to prevent the spread of fake news and preserve the integrity of journalism. One of the important issues related to ethics in the media is the question of the source of information, journalists should check their sources to make sure that the information they convey to the public is really true. Sometimes, journalists may be under pressure to publish information that is not fully verified in order to be first with the news or to please their editors and media houses.

Keywords: ethics, media, journalists, sensationalism, censorship.

Introduction

The issue of responsibility is the central axis around which all other ethical issues of current society revolve, including all media ethics issues. Most of the ethical problems in the media have little correspondence with the law, but therefore have a big connection with responsibility, decisions and, above all, with common sense. One of the questions for journalists is whether to get involved in the event or to observe and report on it.

Ethics, philosophically speaking, is a discipline that studies morality, as well as the basic criteria of human action. Recently, both in the world and in regional countries, there have been discussions about freedom of the press. According to the

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philosophy of the 17th and 18th centuries, the press should be controlled by the state, i.e. power. In order for this to happen, the press must first be completely free. The press must be free and responsible. Freedom allows it to be responsible, and responsibility allows it to remain free.

Rules of conduct

When one talks about rules of conduct, it is about the differences between personal and professional ethics. Here, it is drawn attention to a zone that lies between formal rules and personal morality. Recently, both in the world and in regional countries, great attention has been paid to issues such as the professional integrity of the media, making ethical decisions, professional and institutional ethics, etc. Media ethics or ethics in media have become indispensable disciplines in educational institutions. The International Federation of Journalists believes that, if the media want to maintain public trust, they must demonstrate that they respect the rules of journalistic ethics and support the independence of the work of their journalists. Furthermore, they must accept responsibility by accepting the work of bodies such as the National Council of Journalists and other forms of self-regulation. The principles of journalism must not be compromised by its pursuit of greater profits. Self-regulation in any profession or social field presupposes that norms are developed and implemented by those whose behavior is governed by those norms, in order to improve the provision of services to consumers, claimants or, as in the case of the media, to the entire society. It requires the setting of standards and compliance with the standards of individuals and institutions to which they will apply, as well as the development of procedures and mechanisms with the help of which these rules will be implemented.

Ethical problems in practice

Ethical issues and problems faced by an individual in the media can be classified into seven categories, namely: plagiarism and false information, conflict of interest, invasion of privacy, sources of information, social justice, concealment of information. Some of them will be discussed.

The first and most important obligation of a journalist is to respect the truth and the public's right to know the truth. „The code of ethical journalism must no longer be seen as a „dead letter on paper“, a „mere document“, but as an opportunity to see

and accept certain moral norms that over time should be incorporated into one's professional conduct“ (Donev, Vojinović, 2022, p. 286). Fulfilling this obligation, the journalist will always defend the principles of freedom of fair collection and publication of news and the right to fair commentary and criticism. This is said in the Declaration on the Principles of Journalists' Conduct adopted by the International Federation of Journalists. However, different rules are sometimes applied. Laws of an unregulated market that, ineffectively and often instrumentalized for political purposes, the judiciary fails to control. Exclusivity at any price, circulation, viewership are most often achieved in an immoral, unprofessional and illegal way. This is a shocking fact, but the race for the market in which journalists, who respect "tabloid" rules, do not pay much attention to the observance of the Law on Public Information, with the lack of a single code of news, is taking its toll.

„Coding the genre structure is important because it indicates quiet reshaping of journalist forms in practice, where the traditional article and numerous analytical forms are becoming increasingly rare, which speaks of the poor genre environment and, at the same time, warns of the superficiality of reporting, without research and analytical approaches in the formation of information“ (Jevtović, Bajić, Vojinović, 2022, p.1073).

Sensationalism

Sensationalism is another problem in media ethics. It happens when journalists exaggerate or take information out of context in order to attract the attention of the audience.“A superficial glance at the headlines and main topics leads to the observation that the relevant contents get certain publicity thanks to their place on the page“ (Jevtović, Bajić, Vojinović, 2022, p.1072). Such approaches can lead to wrong information and negative consequences for society.

On the other hand, respect for privacy is also a key part of media ethics. Journalists must be careful not to violate the privacy of individuals, especially when it comes to sensitive topics or the personal lives of public figures. Privacy is a basic human right that should be respected. The responsibility in the media is not only on journalists and media houses, people as users of media content, also have a responsibility to check the information that hear or read.“ When we talk about sensationalism as a phenomenon, we can freely say that sensationalism is the need to talk about something more than is necessary and to open up more media space for it“ (Vojinović, 2022, 25). Critical thinking and media literacy are key to

understanding and recognizing ethical issues in the media. In order to preserve the integrity of journalism and protect the truth, it is important that ethical principles are respected in the media industry. This includes transparency, responsibility and respect for the public that the media serves.

Censorship

Individuals who participate in the mass communication process are not the only ones affected by media ethics. The media themselves participate in opening up ethical issues (which are almost always manifested on a personal level) and the bigger the issues, the more they affect the media system itself. There is probably no more significant media issue with a longer and more richly discussed history than the issue of media censorship. And the mere mention of the word censorship almost immediately raises the temperature in the mass media. Similar to the conflict between the right of the mass media to be informed (to know) and the right of individuals to privacy, the battle over censorship is centered on the right of the media to be free, and the responsibilities that right entails. The worst and most dangerous form of censorship is political, ideological censorship.“ All the existing media by the collision of the icon and the binary code get a new value, changing the identity“ (Despotović, Jevtović, 2019, p.259). It is about stifling ideas. Totalitarian societies foster this type of censorship, causing enormous damage to the public.

Conclusion

Organizations that oversee the media industry, such as journalists' associations and media councils, play a key role in promoting media ethics. They can provide guidance, training and support to journalists to ensure that ethical principles are respected in their work. Of course, the media is constantly developing and changing, and ethics in the media must follow these changes, for example with the advent of social media and digital platforms, new challenges and ethical issues have emerged such as protecting data privacy, respecting copyright and fighting misinformation. In order to effectively deal with these challenges, it is necessary to constantly review and renew ethical standards in accordance with the development of technology and changes in society. Also, education on media ethics and literacy is essential so that journalists and media professionals, as well as the general public, are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to recognize and solve ethical problems in the media. Ethics and media present a necessary part of modern society and influence the way people understand and experience the world around

them. Promoting ethical principles in the media and ensuring their respect are key to preserving the integrity of journalism and building trust between the media and the public.

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