

Understanding and Usefulness of the Journalistic Ethics by Malay-language Journalists in Malaysia

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Abstract

The ethics of journalism began to be discussed in European countries since 17th century. Meanwhile in Malaysia, the existence of the Journalism Code of Ethics (EKM) on 20 May 1989 by the Malaysian Press Institute (MPI) and the Association of Newspaper Editors (ONE) is the starting point for elevating the career of a journalist in Malaysia to a high standard. Discussion on the issues of ethics is a never-ending agenda in the world of journalism and research on it has always received much attention among local researchers. Although journalists acknowledged these codes of ethics, their existence is not so clear, just heard, and less used by journalists who mostly claimed they are professional. The formation of a code of ethics for journalism is the starting point in elevating a journalist's career to a professional level. Everything must begin with his own. What is the importance of ethics in a career? What is the journalist's acceptance of EKM? What are the key elements that need to be present in the ethics of journalism in Malaysia? This paper will provide answers by using a mix-method, whereby 272 journalists from five Malay language newspapers were asked to answer a questionnaire and also an interview with six media practitioners. The study shows that most journalists in Malay language newspapers admit that they perform their duties based on the code of ethics. The majority of journalists are aware of the existence of EKM and support all eight elements of EKM. The journalists also acknowledge the importance of ethics in supporting the work of journalism.

Keywords: *Ethics, Journalist, Malay Newspaper, Malaysia*