

Lessons Learned from the Practice Journalism of Student Journalists: Lanmapraw Newspaper, Burapha University

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Abstract

This qualitative research aimed to identify the lessons learned from the production of a physical student newspaper Lanmapraw . In-depth interviews were used to gather data from 4 groups of informants selected by means of purposive sampling, i.e. 1) the Faculty administrative team and student advisors, 2) producers of the physical form of the student newspaper, 3) readers and interested people and 4) professional media associations.

The study revealed lessons learned from the production of the physical student newspaper Lanmapraw in 6 aspects. They are 1) policy, which focuses on presenting constructive community news in Thailand's eastern region and national news based on the principle of professional journalism; 2) production, which is classified into 3 divisions, namely management, editorial, and production divisions, in line with professional standard; 3) readers, those who receive benefits and negative impact; 4) professional associations, who play significant roles in the improvement of the field of journalism and student newspapers; 5) social responsibility, by presenting accurate news and acting as a fair and reliable agent for society and 6) free press, which is not yet granted, due to the student newspaper's status and lack of understanding on the part of the Faculty administrators concerning the student newspaper's role and duty.

Keywords: Lanmapraw, student newspaper, Practice Journalism.

INTRODUCTION

Broadcast Journalism: News and current affairs reporting using sound and/or and delivered by means of radio and/or television transmission (Harcup, 2014, p. 42). These methods have been utilized for years because they reach the public widely and quickly, despite new or alternative means of information consumption, such as online, and digital media. In spite of advancements of these new media, it is undeniable that the traditional channels of news broadcasting remain influential to many people globally.

Educational institutions that offer Communication Arts programs have tried to gather information to use as a stepping stone to

review and evaluate their production of communication arts students for the labor market and to revise their programs to keep up with the changing world. The collected data reflected the lack of base knowledge to pursue further knowledge as a whole, and the lack of deep intellect (Rathwattanon, 2010, p. 144, cited in Wittayarut, 2001).

Communication Arts Programs have a direct impact on society because of their aims in cultivating media individuals to connect various social components and disseminate information and news, and to form attitude, and opinions among the public through mass media channels. This is therefore a mission directly influencing society in general, making mass media professionals the

medium and indicators of existing social conditions and changes (Kaveeya, 2003, p. 117).

The journalism program at Burapha University's Faculty of Communication Arts is one of the University's most popular programs. In order to better prepare students to become more qualified in the mass media field, the department started a platform for students to create campus-based newspaper. This is how Lanmapraw, a student activity newspaper, found its beginning. Here, the students from the journalism department can learn about news sourcing, writing, presentation, and how professional journalists practice the craft.

Creating Lanmapraw newspaper benefit both the students and their community. By giving third-year students hands-on experience on how to put together articles, illustrations, and local scoops, local readers are provided with a relatable news source, produced by Bangsaen residents. On top of being able to report on up-to-date events, students can use the physical newspaper to earn credit for graduation and apply this practical experience on their resume as well. Further benefit of this experience is being able to apply what they've learned to a more advanced journalism class in the fourth year Electronic media, producing news for coconews.in.th, an online source which anyone can access to current Bangsaen's happenings.

All truths — even the laws of science — are subject to revision, but we operate by them in the meantime because they are necessary and they work (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001). As a researcher and founder of the physical student newspaper Lanmapraw, who also hold courses in journalism, the researcher shows interest in presenting the lessons learned from Lanmapraw to students and faculty members, and hoping that a better understanding of the history, management, and production will pave way for further improvements of the paper, and for academic reference in the studies of topics in a similar nature. This research aims to identify the lessons learned from the physical student newspaper Lanmapraw.

Objectives

This research aims to identify the lessons learned from the physical student newspaper Lanmapraw.

Literature review:

The term newspaper, according to the Printing Act of B.E. 2484, is defined as 'That which is printed on, of, or within the same page; with or without limitations of timeframe; with or without correlations (Hiranrak, 1986 cited in Kemmanir, 2004, p. 16-17).

Julian Adams defined newspaper as a printed paper that is distributed daily, often manufactured in a metropolis or capital city, carrying all sorts of news, i.e., business news, sports, society, and entertainment, that occurred on that day or two or three days earlier.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that a newspaper is a form of printed matter providing current news or information to readers and the public, circulating daily, weekly or monthly. In any form of democracy, newspapers provide details of events occurring internationally and domestically. Ideally, newspapers do not belong to any one group of people, but rather to all who seek unbiased news or information. In addition, in any democratic society, newspapers, in general, have a key role in four areas - politics, education, society and culture, and public service announcements. From many theories on newspaper creation, factual accuracies and integrity is the common denominator and is taught to be included as the main guideline in the Practice Newspaper.

Each medium has its own challenges. The digital world changes so fast that it's a full-time education just keeping with the latest development (Mark Porter, Klanton, 2018, p. 230). The business of newspaper production, much like any production line, requires management within the organization. Generally, newspaper production is divided into 3 sections: management unit, overseeing finance, accounting, marketing, personnel,

training and premises; editorial, responsible for taking each page and column, carefully selecting down to the smallest of details and formatting each article across the pages, under the supervision of the chief editor who monitors the news in line with the paper's policy, leaving details to managing editorial; and manufacturing responsible for printing out what they receive from editorial and marketing before the newspapers are distributed to the public.

According to Bunsiripun (2007), authentic news should incorporate 3 basic components: engagement, truthfulness and its audience. Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information (Brown and Black, 2011, p. 31). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the news reporter to come up with accurate and engaging articles that capture the interest of prospective readers. To create a noteworthy article to capture the interest of readers, the writer must take into account not only the truthfulness, but also the potential to grab the reader's attention. News writing should be clear, concise, accurate and interesting (Cappon, 2019, p. 16). A newsworthy piece should meet one or more of the following characteristics: speediness, proximity, distinguishability, impact, peculiarity, conflict, sexual matters, disaster and human interest stories.

Newspaper management

In the business of printing, traditional management styles are often rejected, though those styles are what contribute to the success of the industry. These styles, as a matter of fact, are responsible for the growth of the publishing industry.

Customarily, printing press companies often promote internal employees to 3 executive or higher positions, based on experience and achievements in terms of operation and strategy. These positions are:

1.) First-level Management : they are those at the operation or performance level, who implement the policy handed down from those in higher positions. they collaborate with

their team and deliver problems and needs back to their superiors. These are usually young journalists occupying news desks and delivery units etc.

2.) Mid-level Management: they are those who deal with editorial aspects of printing press production. They are authorized to relay managerial policy from their superiors to those in the same position level and those under them. Middle level management include managing editor, news editor, and unit managers.

3.) Chief Executive Officers (aka CEO): they include publishers, editors, editors-in-chief, and general managers. They are responsible for determining the policies and direction of the press, and overseeing and handling the toughest of tasks that have effects on the company.

The principal responsibilities required to run a publishing business ranges between the duty to the public and consumers, and the businesses of making a profit. To make a profit, the newspaper needs to tune its product presentation, both news and advertising, as well as its whole marketing strategy to respond to the needs of newspaper market, and to be able to outperform its competitors.

All management theories are included and used for teaching in the production of Lanmapraw Practice Newspaper as to compare with other theories to see differences in editing, distribution, and publication processes.

Related Research

Buranadechachai (2007) conducted research entitled "Key features needed for local newspapers - Chonburi" and found that Chonburi local newspapers do not fulfill their roles and duties as local newspapers. The research revealed their need to be aware of local limitations and actual conditions, as well as fundamental factors necessary for effective and accurate news presentation. To be brief, the locals remain doubtful that the newspaper has fully performed its duty of news publishing.

Wittayarat (2011), in a university's online news source, has found that the Internet and social media networks have become a new staple news source in Thai society. The spread of online newspapers is changing the newspaper profession and driving universities to revise their programs to accommodate modern media technology. This has also solved budget problems related to producing student newspapers. Furthermore, With the creation of Pirab Noi awards by the Thailand News Association in 1993, student newspapers throughout Thailand have gained recognition and prestige from students, advisors and particularly university administrators. Student newspapers have become indispensable to those institutions with journalism programs.

Niblock (2012), as pressure grows on journalism academics to publish scholarly outputs and attract external research income, many express frustration over the uncertain status of journalism practice in relation to the requirement for making a contribution to knowledge (Harcup, 2011). Simultaneously, work in education theory has highlighted contextual shifts in arts and humanities education that signify a pressing need for journalism studies as well as other disciplines to define their position regarding practice within research. Recent reflections on practice and research within journalism education (Niblock, 2007) suggest the discipline is seeking forms of scholarship that cohere better with its industry-facing character. This paper seeks to originate both a methodological framework and an epistemological perspective that acknowledges practitioner perspectives as accumulated knowledge. Drawing on concepts of reflexivity and habits, it will negotiate and evaluate a range of potential models of practice as research, and discuss their implications for furthering the profile of journalism scholarship.

Steensen and Ahva (2015), this article investigates contemporary notions of theory in journalism studies. Many scholars have argued that we need better ways of conceptualizing what journalism is and how it develops in a digital age. There is, however, a lack of knowledge regarding what the theoretical trends within the interdisciplinary domain of

journalism studies are today and to what extent contemporary inquiries into journalism are framed by emerging theories and perspectives. To fill this knowledge gap, we have conducted an analysis of more than 9000 metadata keywords and 195 abstracts found in the first 14 volumes (2000–2013) of the two most internationally acknowledged journals dedicated to journalism studies: *Journalism—Theory, Practice and Criticism* and *Journalism Studies*. The findings indicate that there has been a move towards greater theoretical awareness in journalism studies since 2000 and that the variety of theoretical approaches has increased.

From related researches above, it is concluded that however many changes the digital age brings to the field of news reporting, integrity and truthfulness remains a constant stable as the principle of journalism.

Method

This qualitative research seeks to identify lessons learned from the production of a physical student newspaper *Lanmapraw*. Documentary studies and in-depth interviews were used to gather data from 4 groups of informants selected by means of purposive sampling, namely 1) the Faculty administrative team and student advisors, 2) producers of the physical form of the student newspaper, 3) readers and interested people and 4) professional media associations. The total number of informants were 19, and analytical description was used to present the newspaper's history, roles, and guidelines for improvement.

Results

The student newspaper *Lanmapraw* has stated its objectives and target readers, work guidelines, organizational structure, form and presentation of news and vision of *Lanmapraw* as a model student newspaper under the principle of media professionalism, and serving Burapha University student body and faculty and staff as principal target readers, and people

in surrounding areas as secondary target readers. The paper has served as a platform for journalism students in the Department of Communication Arts affording them real life experience in presenting news, information and opinions in line with the ethical and professional practices of professional journalists for the past 15 years while encountering a number of obstacles from the first issue to the final one. Its existence for 15 years has revealed a number of aspects worth studying. They are:

1. Professional attitudes: Journalism students have displayed a positive attitude to the field of journalism. This attitude starts from their determination to make journalism as their first choice of study, to the number of years in classroom lectures and real life experience in producing a student newspaper. As a result of their positive attitude, many have expressed their interest in pursuing journalism as their future career.

2. Knowledge and skill in producing the student newspaper, Lanmapraw : Journalism students have learned from their experienced teachers and professional experts in the field from various organizations the methods of newspaper production and professional ethics and culture. They also learned from their seniors who passed on their knowledge and experience, adding professional strength to the younger generation.

3. Preparedness for newspaper production: Journalism students' preparation for producing a newspaper starts in their second year of study with their enrollment in prerequisites to the newspaper production class. With extra experience and knowledge from guest-experts in the field, and freedom to choose news of interest under close supervision, and readiness to help solve problems from advisors, the students are ready to begin their first steps in producing a newspaper with an adequate degree of confidence, freedom, and professionalism.

4. Budget for newspaper production: Journalism students are also required to have some practical skills in the newspaper business

, which includes production of the newspaper itself, and related business around the production. In order to reduce or eliminate dependence on the Department and the University, and to give themselves more freedom to report news, students are encouraged to raise funds from outside sources. From the first issue to the last, Lanmapraw has received no financial support from the Faculty or the University, giving them freedom to report news about the University community and surrounding areas.

5. Close-knit ties among Lanmapraw team members. Journalism students have a chance to develop close relationships with one another due to the proximity of their places to stay and the Lanmapraw student practice room which is open all day, and the availability of social media which makes it easier for students and teachers to discuss news-related issues, problems, and suggested solutions. This fosters team work and contributes to the success in Lanmapraw production.

6. From struggling to standing firm: Lanmapraw has gone through many obstacles to plant its feet on the school ground. At the beginning, the struggle came from having to find financial means to fund the process from research, writing, and printing. It was not until the National Journalists Council of Thailand bestowed on Lanmapraw the "Pirab Noi" awards that Burapha University's very own physical student newspaper received recognition for its work and its indispensable connection to the journalism program. Over 40 awards from Pirab Noi and other recognized news organizations have strengthened Lanmapraw's firm standing in the journalism field and strengthened Coconews, its sister online publication. Though the program in journalism has already closed giving rise to the field of convergence journalism, the online student newspaper is certain to continued.

Education has proven to be a critical tool to promote national growth. Cultivating communities that can send and receive news efficiently through student newspapers is a small, but significant platform to increase understanding of one's surroundings.

Moreover, freedom of the press has to be used responsibly and ethically. The student newspaper will not be used to slander or defame other people or violate personal rights. Any actions taken for news production should not result in danger or defamation to any parties.

Discussion

The following explains each categories of guidelines a journalist will use as a basis for news article development.

1. Policy

Lanmapraw followed the content guidelines, which state no baseless news or articles without proper research is to be published; no vulgar or offensive language may be used, and no stories involving slander or defamation of any third party who has no opportunity to defense or clarify themselves is to be presented. The Lanmapraw team will follow the code of conduct by presenting content filtered from reliable and comprehensive resources, presenting news in a creative manner, upholding the principles of fairness to those who are the subjects of an article, and adhering to the professional ethics of the National Newspaper Council. These guidelines upheld by the newspaper are also in line with Bunsiripan (2006) who stated the meaning of balanced news as facts pieced together, both in terms of focusing on the main subject of the article, and the relations between facts and events that occurred. The balance brings out important details to help readers absorb the story while giving an accurate account of what happened, especially with controversial news. This is also in line with Wittayasorana (2003) in his research on role and survival of local newspapers in globalization, which stated the paper's role in delivering daily news to the community and serving as a platform for community members to express their concerns and needs. It is also a stated policy of the journalism program in the Department of Communication Art of Burapha University that students in this field are required to create a model newspaper

following the professional ethics of the Thailand National Newspapers Council. Lanmapraw is designed to be a model civic newspaper for the Burapha University community. Its primary readers are Burapha University students and faculty and staff, and its secondary readers are residents of the University area. Its function is therefore to present news, information, opinions, in the same manner as professional newspapers. Niblock (2012) states that work in education theory has highlighted contextual shifts in arts and humanities education that signify a pressing need for journalism studies as well as other disciplines to define their position regarding practice within research.

2. Production

The quality of journalism around the world is often attributed to the nature of the education and training that journalists receive (Obijiofo and Hanusch, 2011, p. 8). 8 students are selected to hold the 8 positions in the Lanmapraw production team: executive and assistant executive editor, head and assistant executive news editor, head and assistant art executive editor, and head and assistant marketing editor. All of these administrative posts are teamed with representatives from both regular daytime program students and special evening program students. All eight positions design a working plan, scheduling, recruitment of labor needed, and other planning. They then pass down their policy recommendations and plans to the 3 divisions (standard in all newspapers organizations): management division, editorial division, and production division. Students must understand the structure of the printing press and replicate its model for the production of the student newspaper Lanmapraw. The editorial and art divisions research materials as well as correlate accompanying illustrations. The marketing team is tasked with finding sponsorships and supporters, along with finding distributor representatives. The teams then work together to meet the publishing deadline and collectively send their final product to develop into a final form, Lanmapraw, after a systematic check of all components have been applied for in order to

guarantee reliability and correctness, and to save money and time in case something needs to be adjusted or altered before actual production of the physical student newspaper, here Lanmapraw. The final process is found to conform to Wittayarat (2001) who cited the importance of the editorial work before the manuscript is sent for printing and circulation. An article by Niblock (2012) presents that by drawing on concepts of reflexivity and habits, it will negotiate and evaluate a range of potential models of practice as research, and discuss their implications for furthering the profile of journalism scholarship. In addition to its conforming to standard newspaper production, Northong (1998), found Lanmapraw to be at a moderate leaning to low level of production readiness, due to its inadequate budget, inadequate expert advice, lack of equipment for newspaper preparation and production. Buranadechachai, the researcher, noted that Burapha University journalism students have studied with a number of expert lectures in the field and professional journalists, which equips them with knowledge in the field, thus reducing problems in producing Lanmapraw Practice Newspaper.

3. The Readers

The study reveals that most readers of Lanmapraw are educated individuals who benefit from the paper and considers it as something the community depends on. This finding confirms the study conducted by Buranadechachai (2007, 2013) which reveals that the community gain benefits from local newspapers at various levels, and Lanmapraw is a small student newspaper serving the local community of Burapha University and its surrounding areas. Any events or opinions having nationwide imports were found to be more relevant to local readers when they are also brought up to them by persons someone or agents representing their area. Chuaykaew (2520) said the paper will remain an asset to Burapha community if it can act as a political watchdog reporting on wrong or inappropriate issues affecting the Burapha community and its surroundings. The newspaper should continue to exist as a constructive news platform for the community and as a valuable practice in

journalism for students in the field. Wanawangso (2020), a local supporter of the newspaper, mentioned his interest in following education issues, issues within and outside the Burapha University community, and his appreciation for the paper. This confirms Imsiri and et al. (2008) who reported the readers' selection of news to serve their own interest and their preference for unbiased newspapers.

4. Professional Associations

Researches by Steensen and Ahva (2015) discusses how many scholars have argued that we need better ways of conceptualizing what journalism is and how it develops in a digital age. The study revealed that professional associations play a major role in improving the quality of journalism programs and university student newspapers. For example, the Thai Journalists Associations has set as its aims to help equip students in journalism before they graduate and enter the journalism profession with professional quality and ethics by organizing Pirab Noi journalism training program and student newspaper competition among Thai universities. Their involvement has contributed to the satisfactory outcome of many student newspapers, including Lanmapraw. Despite much pressure, including that from the University, Lanmapraw has proved a serious student newspaper, by winning a number of awards from various professional associations. Among those awards are Outstanding Headlines and Outstanding Editorial from the Confederation of Thai Journalists under the Royal Patronage, and Pirab Noi awards for Outstanding News and Outstanding News Documentary, and Ritapatiyasevee award from the Thai Journalists Association and Children's Rights and Children's Rights Promotion from UNICEF. These achievements were largely attributed to the professional associations who helped promote professionalism in individuals and institutions in the field. Buranadechachai (2006) mentioned her expectation for the Confederation of Thai Journalists to play a more active role in mediating disputes between the papers and university administrators and in supervising ethics and professionalism in

newspapers in general in order not to be branded as mere “Paper Tiger”.

5. Social Responsibility

Pajaree Purintawarakul, a journalism lecturer, mentioned in an interview that Lanmapraw has tried its best to deliver ethical and professional news to fully and professionally benefit the community despite numerous obstacles. To protect themselves, their profession, and the public, the team has formed a professional network to resist unjust treatment and influence from administrators and capitalist force. Bunsiripan (2007,) mentioned fundamental characteristics of news including interest, facts, and readers, and consequently newspapers should present accurate news or information to interested readers. Other studies revealed obstacles preventing the community or society as a whole from receiving accurate and truthful news. One of them is a finding derived from the interview with Jakkrit Wawklaihong (interview, 2009), editor of Public Opinion, a local newspaper in Trat Province, and of Suriname Kongmamud, editor of Kawthai, a local paper in Rayong, mentioned the prospects of being bribed, bought, murdered, threatened by influential people affected by the news. Another similar finding is from research titled Awareness of News reporters of Thai Newspaper Profession conducted by Terdtummakun (2004) which revealed that journalists are highly aware of their professional ethics in presenting truthful news to the public and in acting as agents the public can rely on. The modern struggle for press freedom is roughly 350 years old, but huge tracts of the world still struggle to establish free news media (Hargreaves, 2014, p. 11). Steensen and Ahva (2015) also mentions how there is a lack of knowledge regarding what the theoretical trends within the interdisciplinary domain of journalism studies are today and to what extent contemporary inquiries into journalism are framed by emerging theories and perspectives. Other obstacles preventing journalists from adhering to professional ethics or being socially responsible are greed and bias (Sawaddiwallop, 1882). Greed can influence journalists to sell themselves or their pens, thus losing their

professional integrity. Some journalists choose to present inaccurate news to protect their loved ones or the those benefiting them, and intentionally present distorted news to damage someone or groups they dislike. However, the delivery of inaccurate news may be a result of a lack of thorough research on the news study to be presented. This behavior is a serious offense against journalistic ethics and professionalism. Buranadechachai (2006) concluded in a study that journalism professionals can fully serve society by exercising their rights and duties under the Constitution and under ethical principles of their professional associations to not violate other people's rights and those of their own profession.

6. Freedom of Press

Engaging in comparative work also helps to foster global scholarship and sustain networks of researchers across continents (Hanitzsch, Hanusch, Ramaprasad, and Arnold, 2019, p. 17). Bunrod Bunkerd, the Humanities and Social Science Dean at Burapha University, mentioned his full support for the rights and freedom of the student newspaper under the supervision of journalism program in his Faculty, to report the news, while aware of and responsible for its consequences. He also mentioned that the newspaper should be willing to welcome criticism concerning the news reporting, which should be based on professional ethics. This is found to be in line with Pajaree Purintawarakul, a journalism lecturer responsible for this student newspaper course, who considered this student newspaper a platform for the exercise of freedom of the press following the professional ethics dictated in the National Press Council of Thailand, B.E. 2541. These are reporting news objectively, paying respect to other people's personal rights and copyrights, and taking into consideration human rights including those concerning children, and the underprivileged. Freedom of speech then does not mean freedom from consequences

As chair of the journalism program at Burapha University, the researcher has witnessed a certain level of freedom of Lanmapraw in reporting news within the

context of a student newspaper, due to the respect of Burapha community and its surrounding areas. However, the respect and participation of certain administrative teams in making available news and information for the newspaper was still limited. Some expressed their distrust and even openly violated the paper reporters' freedom of the press.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that the Practice Newspaper uses the same framework in terms of operation and management as its professional counterparts. This course highlights the importance of integrity, moral, and ethics in presenting news and representing the journalists behind it. The practice in newspaper and article development helps graduates to gain experience and can branch out into a professional setting with the hands-on knowledge they received.

Suggestions

Referring to the lessons learned from the student newspaper Lanmapraw, the researcher presents that the Practice Newspaper should continually encourage academic enhancement among students such as participation in training or seminars organized by relevant professionals to stay with current events and technology updates. There should be priorities given to news broadcasting and articles that benefit the university and the its community. The editor can also conduct surveys in regards to which types of news the community need or has interests in subscribing to, and to be more responsive to readers' needs and suggestions. Academic advisors can help develop plans for students to bring their knowledge and contribution of writing, reporting, and editing to a professional level. Professional associates will contribute a more significant role in supervising the development of the Practice Newspaper to monitor that students uphold the ethics and integrity in news reporting and article production.

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