



## Journalist Professionalism in Radio Broadcasting: Integrating Ethical Reporting, Accuracy, and Editorial Commitment

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### ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze journalist professionalism in maintaining ethical reporting and accuracy in radio broadcasting. The research employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants, including the editor-in-chief, journalists, and radio management. The study focused on the implementation of journalistic ethics, reporting accuracy as an indicator of professionalism, and the factors that support and hinder professional journalistic practices. The findings reveal that journalistic ethics are implemented through the principles of independence, balance, separation of facts from opinions, respect for sources, and compliance with professional ethical and broadcasting standards. In terms of accuracy, journalists apply systematic verification procedures, source confirmation, and structured news script preparation based on the 5W+1H framework. Although journalists face challenges such as time constraints, limited human resources, and the rapid flow of digital information, ethical standards and accuracy remain higher priorities than broadcasting speed. The study implies that journalist professionalism is shaped not only by individual competence but also by an effective editorial system and strong institutional commitment to ethical standards and verification practices. These factors play a crucial role in maintaining media credibility and public trust.

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of journalism has become increasingly important in contemporary society as citizens depend on the media to obtain accurate, credible, and timely information (Shah et al., 2021; Watson, 2024). Journalists function as intermediaries between events and the public by collecting, verifying, and disseminating information through various media platforms (Opdahl et al., 2023), including newspapers, television, radio, magazines, documentary films,

and digital media (Bôtošová et al., 2023). A journalist or reporter is expected to perform these responsibilities objectively and impartially in order to serve the public interest (Spurk & Katunzi, 2023). The importance of journalist professionalism is closely related to the quality of information received by society. Professional journalists adhere to ethical standards, verify information carefully, and maintain independence in reporting. Numerous cases of misinformation and unverified news circulating through digital platforms demonstrate the need for professional journalism. Therefore, journalist professionalism is not only a professional requirement but also a social necessity to ensure that the public receives trustworthy information (Himma-Kadakas & Ojamets, 2022). Consequently, examining journalist professionalism is important because it contributes to media credibility, democratic participation, and public trust in mass communication institutions.

Despite the crucial role of journalists in society, the media industry continues to face numerous challenges that affect professional journalistic practices (Gollmitzer, 2021). The rapid growth of digital technology has accelerated the dissemination of information, creating intense pressure on journalists to publish news quickly. In many cases, speed is prioritized over verification, increasing the risk of inaccurate reporting and ethical violations. Journalists are also confronted with limited resources, competition among media organizations, and the growing influence of social media content. These conditions often create dilemmas between meeting organizational demands and maintaining professional standards. Furthermore, the increasing spread of misinformation and disinformation has made journalistic accuracy more essential than ever (Mellado & Hermida, 2021). Professionalism requires journalists to comply with established regulations, ethical principles, and reporting standards while maintaining objectivity and accountability. Therefore, understanding how journalists maintain professionalism under these challenging conditions is important for identifying strategies that can strengthen ethical reporting practices and improve the quality of news production in contemporary media environments.

In practice, various phenomena indicate that maintaining journalist professionalism remains a significant challenge in media organizations, particularly in broadcast media. Radio journalism requires reporters to collect, verify (Manshur, 2025), and deliver information accurately within limited timeframes. Unlike print journalism, radio journalists rely heavily on verbal communication skills because information is delivered directly to listeners through spoken language. The professionalism of radio journalists involves expertise in reporting, communication skills, ethical awareness, and the ability to present factual information clearly and accurately (Lopez et al., 2022). Field

observations in many broadcasting institutions show that journalists often work under tight deadlines while simultaneously ensuring compliance with journalistic ethics and editorial standards (Jones et al., 2022). In addition, the increasing flow of digital information requires journalists to verify multiple sources before broadcasting news. These realities demonstrate that professionalism is not merely reflected in technical competence but also in ethical decision-making, discipline, and adherence to established journalistic principles throughout the news production process.

Previous studies have extensively discussed journalist professionalism from various perspectives. Research emphasizes that journalism is a profession characterized by specialized training, adherence to professional norms, and commitment to serving public interests (Hussen & Onia, 2024). This perspective highlights the importance of objectivity, independence, and ethical responsibility in journalistic work. Other studies have examined professionalism through indicators such as competence, ethics, accountability, and adherence to journalistic standards. These studies generally conclude that professional journalists play a significant role in maintaining media credibility and public trust. However, much of the existing literature focuses on general concepts of professionalism without thoroughly examining how ethical principles and reporting accuracy are implemented simultaneously in daily journalistic practices. As a result, there remains limited understanding of how journalists balance ethical obligations and accuracy requirements while facing practical challenges in contemporary news production environments.

Furthermore, previous research has investigated organizational factors influencing journalistic professionalism, including editorial policies, institutional support, training programs, and newsroom culture. Professionalism is influenced not only by individual competence but also by organizational structures that establish work requirements and performance standards (Van Dalen, 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights into bureaucratic and managerial dimensions of professionalism, they often overlook the interaction between institutional commitment, ethical implementation, and reporting accuracy within broadcasting contexts. Existing research tends to examine these aspects separately rather than as interconnected elements shaping professional journalistic behavior. Consequently, a research gap remains regarding how professional journalists integrate ethical standards, verification procedures, and editorial policies in producing accurate news. Addressing this gap is essential because ethical compliance and reporting accuracy constitute fundamental pillars of responsible journalism and sustainable public trust (Muslichuddin et al., 2025).

This study offers a different perspective by examining journalist professionalism through the integration of ethical reporting practices and accuracy in the news production process. Rather than focusing solely on individual competence or organizational management, this research analyzes how ethical principles, verification mechanisms, and editorial policies operate collectively in shaping professional journalistic performance. The study emphasizes the relationship between journalistic ethics and reporting accuracy as mutually reinforcing dimensions of professionalism. By exploring supporting and inhibiting factors within the newsroom environment, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how professionalism is maintained in broadcasting institutions. The novelty of this study lies in its holistic approach, which positions ethics, accuracy, and organizational commitment as interconnected components that determine the quality and credibility of journalistic work. Such an approach is important because contemporary media environments require journalists to balance speed, accuracy, and ethical responsibility simultaneously.

Based on the issues and gaps identified above, this study addresses the question of how journalist professionalism is manifested through ethical reporting and reporting accuracy within the news production process. This research argues that journalist professionalism cannot be understood solely through individual skills or technical competence. Instead, professionalism emerges from the interaction between ethical awareness, rigorous verification practices, editorial supervision, and institutional commitment to professional standards. The study assumes that journalists who consistently apply ethical principles and verification procedures are more capable of producing accurate and credible news content. Furthermore, organizational support through clear editorial policies and accountability mechanisms strengthens professional behavior among journalists. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of journalism studies by providing empirical evidence regarding the relationship between ethics, accuracy, and professionalism. In addition, the study offers practical implications for media organizations seeking to strengthen credibility and public trust through professional journalistic practices.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach (Weyant, 2022; Younas & Inayat, 2024). The qualitative design was selected because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of journalist professionalism in maintaining ethical reporting and reporting accuracy within the context of radio broadcasting. A qualitative approach enables

researchers to explore meanings, experiences, values, and professional practices from the perspectives of the participants involved in the journalistic process. Furthermore, the case study approach was considered appropriate because it allows an intensive and comprehensive examination of a specific phenomenon within its real-life setting. By focusing on a single media institution, the study seeks to provide a contextual understanding of how journalistic ethics, verification procedures, and professional standards are implemented in daily reporting practices, as well as how journalists respond to the challenges encountered in contemporary broadcasting environments.

The research was conducted at Radio Start FM Panyabungan, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra. This location was selected because it represents a local broadcasting institution that actively produces and disseminates news to the public while operating within the dynamics and challenges of contemporary media practices. The study focused on three main aspects: the implementation of journalistic ethics in radio reporting, reporting accuracy as an indicator of journalist professionalism, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting professional journalistic practices. Research participants consisted of field reporters, editors or editors-in-chief, and radio managers. Informants were selected using purposive sampling (Bouncken et al., 2025), whereby participants were chosen based on their relevance, competence, and direct involvement in the journalistic work process. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation of news production and broadcasting activities, and documentation studies. Secondary data were obtained from internal organizational documents, including broadcasting standard operating procedures, news scripts, broadcast archives, the Journalistic Code of Ethics, the Press Law, and relevant books and scientific literature related to journalism professionalism, ethics, and reporting accuracy.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation according to the research objectives (Inayat & Younas, 2025). Subsequently, the condensed data were systematically presented in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation and understanding of the findings. The data display process enabled the researcher to identify patterns, relationships, and recurring themes related to journalist professionalism, ethical practices, and reporting accuracy. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying findings continuously throughout the research process to ensure credibility and consistency. To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation of sources and methods was applied by

comparing information obtained from different informants, observations, and documentary evidence. This analytical process enabled the researcher to generate comprehensive findings regarding the professionalism of radio journalists in maintaining ethical standards and reporting accuracy.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **Implementation of Journalistic Ethics in Radio Broadcast Practices**

The findings indicate that the implementation of journalistic ethics constitutes a fundamental aspect of news production and broadcasting activities. Ethical principles are applied throughout the process of gathering, verifying, and disseminating information to the public. Journalists and editorial staff consistently prioritize ethical considerations in producing news content, ensuring that information presented to listeners remains accurate, responsible, and aligned with broadcasting standards.

The study found that the principle of independence is reflected in the process of collecting and preparing news materials based on factual information obtained from the field. Journalists attempt to avoid influence from individuals, groups, or institutions that may affect the objectivity of reporting. Editorial policies require journalists to conduct clarification before broadcasting information, particularly on issues related to social conflicts, public policies, and legal matters. This practice demonstrates efforts to maintain professional distance and preserve editorial independence in the news production process.

The findings also show that the principle of balance is implemented by providing opportunities for different parties involved in a news event to present their perspectives. In situations where confirmation from one party has not been obtained, the editorial team may postpone broadcasting the news until additional information is collected. This practice aims to ensure that news reports contain proportional and balanced information before being delivered to listeners.

Furthermore, the results reveal that the separation between facts and opinions is consistently maintained in news programs. Broadcasters and reporters deliver information based on verified data, official statements, and interview results. Personal opinions are not included in news reports, while analytical views or assessments are presented through specific program formats such as discussions or talk shows. This approach allows listeners to distinguish between factual information and individual viewpoints.

The study also found that respect for sources forms an important part of journalistic practice. Journalists maintain the accuracy of quotations, avoid altering source statements, and pay attention to the privacy of individuals

involved in news events. In addition, broadcasters use language that is polite, clear, and appropriate for public communication. Ethical considerations are applied not only to the content of news reports but also to the manner in which information is communicated to audiences.

Overall, the findings indicate a strong commitment to compliance with journalistic ethics and broadcasting standards. Although journalists face various operational challenges, ethical principles remain an important consideration in editorial decision-making. The implementation of ethical standards contributes to maintaining the credibility of the media institution and strengthening public trust in broadcast information.

### **Accuracy of Reporting as an Indicator of Radio Journalist Professionalism**

The findings show that reporting accuracy is regarded as a key indicator of journalist professionalism. Accuracy is reflected in efforts to ensure that all information presented to listeners is factual, complete, verified, and free from misleading content. Journalists emphasize the importance of presenting correct information regarding events, sources, data, and contextual details before news is broadcast.

Data verification emerges as one of the primary mechanisms used to maintain reporting accuracy. Journalists conduct cross-checking procedures by comparing information obtained from multiple sources. Information received from one source is verified through confirmation with additional sources before being considered suitable for publication. Journalists also examine supporting materials, including documents, recordings, and other available evidence, to ensure the reliability of reported facts.

The results further indicate that source confirmation plays an important role in the production of accurate news. Journalists conduct interviews with relevant sources, evaluate source credibility, and seek clarification regarding information that may contain inconsistencies. This process allows journalists to minimize potential errors and improve the validity of information presented to the public.

Another finding concerns the preparation of radio news scripts. Journalists employ structured writing techniques to ensure that news content can be clearly understood through audio broadcasting. News scripts are arranged systematically by placing the most important information at the beginning of the report, using concise and factual language, incorporating direct statements from sources, and ensuring the completeness of information through the application of the 5W+1H elements.

The study also found that journalists face challenges related to the rapid flow of information and the demands of timely broadcasting. The need to deliver

news quickly often requires journalists to work within limited timeframes while maintaining verification standards. Information obtained through digital platforms and social media requires additional checking before being broadcast. Despite these challenges, journalists continue to prioritize verification and confirmation procedures as part of their professional responsibilities.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that accuracy remains a central consideration in journalistic work. Verification processes, source confirmation, and systematic news writing practices contribute significantly to maintaining the quality of broadcast information. These practices support the professionalism of journalists and help ensure that audiences receive reliable and trustworthy news content.

## **Discussion**

The findings indicate that the professionalism of radio journalists is reflected in the consistent implementation of journalistic ethics, particularly through the principles of independence, balance, separation of facts and opinions, respect for sources, and adherence to broadcasting standards. These findings are consistent with the view that journalism is characterized by professional norms, specialized competencies, and a commitment to serving the public interest (Paik, 2023). Similarly, the findings support the argument that independence is a fundamental element of professional journalism because it enables journalists to produce objective and accountable news (Sonni et al., 2024). The evidence that journalists verify information before broadcasting and avoid disseminating unconfirmed reports demonstrates that ethical principles remain central to journalistic practice despite the increasing complexity of the contemporary media environment.

The study also found that reporting accuracy is maintained through systematic verification procedures, source confirmation, and structured radio news writing techniques. These findings are in line with the view that radio journalism requires concise, factual, and clearly structured information because listeners rely solely on audio messages (Gutiérrez-Caneda et al., 2024). The findings further confirm that accuracy should remain a primary journalistic value despite pressures for rapid news dissemination (Shi & Sun, 2024). However, this study reveals that journalists do not merely follow technical verification procedures; they actively integrate ethical considerations into the verification process before deciding whether information is suitable for public dissemination. This finding extends previous discussions by demonstrating the close relationship between ethics and accuracy as interconnected dimensions of journalistic professionalism.

Another important finding concerns the role of organizational support in shaping journalist professionalism. The results show that editorial supervision, newsroom coordination, and institutional commitment significantly influence the implementation of ethical reporting practices. This finding supports the argument that professionalism is not solely determined by individual competence but is also shaped by organizational structures and work standards (Schmidt, 2023). Likewise, the findings are consistent with the view that media organizations play a strategic role in fostering professionalism through editorial policies and quality control mechanisms (Cools & Diakopoulos, 2024). Nevertheless, the present study provides a more comprehensive explanation by showing how editorial review processes function as practical mechanisms for maintaining both ethical compliance and reporting accuracy in daily newsroom operations.

The findings also reveal several challenges affecting journalist professionalism, including time pressure, limited human resources, and external influences. These results correspond with the observation that journalistic work is influenced not only by individual factors but also by organizational routines and broader social and economic pressures (Mellado et al., 2023). Similarly, the findings support the view that the tension between speed and accuracy is a major challenge in modern journalism (Perreault & Perreault, 2021). However, unlike studies that emphasize the negative consequences of these pressures, this research demonstrates that journalists continue to prioritize verification and ethical responsibility, even when rapid reporting is required. This suggests that professionalism is strengthened not only by competence but also by institutional commitment to journalistic values.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on journalist professionalism by demonstrating that ethics, accuracy, verification, and editorial systems should not be examined as separate variables. Instead, these elements operate as an integrated framework that collectively shapes professional journalistic behavior. This perspective expands existing discussions on professionalism, which primarily focus on competence, knowledge, and ethical attitudes as determinants of professionalism (Bastian et al., 2021). The novelty or state of the art of this study lies in its holistic analysis of how ethical implementation, reporting accuracy, editorial supervision, and organizational commitment interact within radio journalism. This integrated perspective provides a broader conceptual understanding of professionalism in contemporary broadcasting environments characterized by rapid information flows and increasing public demands for credible news.

Practically, the findings provide important implications for media organizations, journalists, and broadcasting regulators. For media institutions, strengthening editorial policies, verification procedures, and continuous professional development programs can enhance the quality of reporting and

institutional credibility. For journalists, the findings highlight the importance of maintaining ethical awareness and verification practices despite operational pressures. For policymakers and broadcasting authorities, the study provides empirical evidence supporting the need for continuous monitoring and reinforcement of professional standards within local media organizations. Furthermore, this research contributes to journalism studies by providing empirical evidence that public trust is maintained through the synergy between ethical compliance, rigorous verification processes, editorial accountability, and institutional commitment. In this regard, the findings reinforce the arguments regarding the importance of organizational and ethical dimensions in sustaining professional journalistic practices (Hall & Liebenberg, 2024).

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the professionalism of radio journalists is fundamentally shaped by the integration of journalistic ethics, reporting accuracy, and institutional commitment within the news production process. The most important lesson derived from this research is that professionalism in radio journalism is not solely dependent on individual competence but emerges from the synergy between ethical awareness, rigorous verification practices, editorial supervision, and organizational support. The findings contribute to the development of journalism studies by providing an integrated framework that connects ethics, accuracy, verification, and editorial systems as interrelated dimensions of professional journalistic practice, thereby enriching existing discussions that often examine these elements separately. In addition, this study offers practical insights for media organizations seeking to strengthen public trust through ethical and accurate reporting. Nevertheless, this research is limited to a single local radio institution and focuses primarily on the perspectives of journalists, editors, and management, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other media contexts. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to involve multiple broadcasting institutions, incorporate audience perspectives, and employ comparative or mixed-method approaches to obtain a broader understanding of journalist professionalism in the evolving digital media landscape.

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