

## **Functions and Roles of Journalists in Supporting Communication between Government and Society in Bone Regency**

**Herman<sup>1</sup>, Asriadi<sup>2</sup>, Abdul Rahman<sup>3\*</sup>, Mardi<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Puangrimaggalatung Bone  
E-mail: [rahmanstia87@gmail.com](mailto:rahmanstia87@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

Journalists are media communicators between the public and the government. Journalists must be a source of information, education, entertainment, and social control in societies. However, there are still some journalists who are not able to provide comprehensive information to the public regarding government programs, and vice versa. Journalists are not optimal in conveying public complaints to the government. The purpose is to determine public perceptions regarding the function and role of journalists in facilitating communication between the government and society. The research method used is qualitative. Data collection techniques in this study are through observation, interviews, and documentation. The number of respondents in this study was 16 people. Four respondents in each sub-district the reason that the respondents' answers had met the desired research points. Data analysis techniques in this study using reduction, data presentation, and concluding. The results of this study indicate that the public's perception of the function and role of journalists in supporting communication between the government and the Society in Bone Regency is good enough, even though there are still deficiencies that must be corrected in the future, such as journalists must have a better understanding of journalistic ethical codes, increase sources Qualified Human Resources (HR), Understanding related to the Role of Journalists as Social Control, Upholding the Professionalism of Journalists and Professional Knowledge and the most important thing is the existence of tests and training related to the journalist profession, namely the Journalist Competency Test (UKW).

**Keywords:** Perception, Function and Role, Journalist, Communication

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the rollout of the 1998 Reformation in the country, it has brought significant changes to socio-political life, including the life of the press. One of them is the increasing number of people establishing media. According to the records of the Press Council, it has reached several times the number of mass media publications. The Reformation Era has made persons or groups establish or publish media. This socio-political objective condition opens up and brings about changes in life towards democratization and broad transparency in various fields of government and society. It can be said that the Reformation era that began to roll made public spaces more open.(Hatta, 2018).

Opportunities in the Reformation era to freely set up media have also opened up to everyone who wants to become media workers or journalists, even though the requirements and job criteria of journalists demand adequate education and being able to understand the journalistic code of ethics well, and clear, the public has the right to obtain good, correct, and various information (Irwandy et al., 2020). Thus, the media understands freedom of the press as a condition constraint during the Suharto era and the collapse of the New Order. The media and journalists are free to express their opinions and expressions. Media in the

early days of the Reformation played an important role, so the public began to recognize that there was a media that had gone too far in its freedom (Sukartik, 2016)

This condition will not support the development of democracy and a healthy press life. The condition of press freedom that goes too far with journalists who are still unqualified and unprofessional certainly results in losses for society. The public is not presented with good news coverage and encouraging progress (Choriyati, 2019). The media is only used as a means for political propaganda and the political interests of media owners. The development of information and communication technology today has grown rapidly. The presence of the Internet makes it easier for people to get information more quickly (Tekkay et al., 2017). The ICT progress factor is also a wider challenge for journalists today. Press agencies must prepare ICT-based human resources and journalist competencies. Even now, social media has intervened in the concept of news and events adopted in press media journalism (Waluyo, 2019). This issue needs to be addressed wisely by the media and journalists.

According to (Ghassani & Sukowati, 2016) in their study that it is important for the government to have a good relationship with mass media in order to convey information about the government activities properly. Press is expected in reporting can be a friend of the community through preaching constructive, accurate, balanced, and comply with the code of ethics of journalists. Another study says that legal protection for the press as a social institution and vehicle for mass communication that has freedom expression and independence has been explicitly and accommodated in article 8 of the press law (Hukum et al., 2021).

The main problem faced so far is that media companies are still overwhelmed by the development of social media. News produced by journalists, including in Bone Regency. It has not been able to provide comprehensive information regarding government programs. Journalists are not optimal in conveying public complaints to the government.

Efforts to be made in overcoming this problem will further improve the ability of journalists to provide information to the public, so that the role and function of journalists as an information source can be conveyed properly. It will also get perceptions about public satisfaction related to the role and function of journalists in providing information to the public and submit complaints to the local government.

## **METHOD**

This research is a type of descriptive research using a qualitative approach. This research aims to gain a general understanding of social facts from the perspective of informants (Sugiyono, 2016). Therefore, the author will collect data, process data, and analyze data qualitatively to obtain in-depth information related to public perceptions of the Functions and Roles of Journalists in Supporting Communication between Government and Society in Bone Regency. This research will be carried out in 4 sub-districts in the city of Watampone, namely Tanete Riattang District, West Tanete Riattang District, East Tanete Riattang District, and Palakka District. The informants in this research were 16 people. Four respondents in each sub-district the reason that the respondents' answers had met the desired research points. The data source used is primary data through observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2014). This research used a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a data sampling technique with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2016), and the most important thing is how to determine key informants to answer related research problems to be discussed. The data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique used a qualitative descriptive analysis which includes; Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion drawing.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The function and role of journalists or the press in supporting communication between the government and the public are essential in everyday life. That's why journalists referred to as media communicators between what the public complains about the government policy to the public. In public

policy, journalists are a part of the Pentahelix elements that cannot separated and influence each other in a decision or policy-making (Khatimah, 2018). In carrying out their duties and responsibilities, journalists must be a source of information, education, entertainment media, and social control in public. It cannot denied that, in this era, there is also a lot of criticism aimed at journalists due to inaccurate reporting and often disturbing the public from irresponsible reporting. Therefore, to find out the public's perception of the function and role of journalists in supporting communication between the government and the community in Bone Regency, the researcher directly searched for interviews with several informants at the research location about phenomena related to the role and function of journalists in supporting communication between the government and the community. According to the sub-district secretary Tanete Riattang, the relation between the government and journalists is good enough. We always communicate with them because it is a priority for the responsive side to communicate with the government. The presence of journalists in every activity carried out by the sub-district will be a source of information that will be conveyed directly to the community through reporting, both in print and online media. In essence, the sub-district government is greatly assisted by having journalists as a communication link from the government to the community regarding all activities and policies implemented by the sub-district so that the community is also quick to respond and find out the information conveyed by the sub-district through press coverage (the sub-district secretary Tanete Riattang, Edi Saputra, 2023).

From the statement above, it is clear that journalists are one of the most needed elements to give information to the public. According to regulation Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning the journalist, the community has the right to get information, and the journalist must fulfill it. The same thing conveyed by the Sub-District Head of Tanete Riattang Barat said that as the sub-district government in Tanete Riattang Barat, I see that the roles and duties of journalists are by procedures and are maximal. The proof is that several media have a cooperative relationship with the sub-district government, such as *Tribun Bone*, *Radar Bone*, *Rakyat Sulse*, *Fajar*, and several online media that provide news to the public regarding all sub-district activities and programs. So, there are many positive things from the role of the journalist as a communicator or connector of information from the government to the public and vice versa. However, there are some individuals who act on behalf of journalists who only take advantage of loopholes to find fault with the government for personal gain without regard to journalistic ethics. (The Head of sub-district Tanete Riattang Barat, Hasnawaty Ramli, 2023).

A study conducted by (Wajong, 2018) said that the duties of journalists or the press are to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and provide information by ethics and responsibility so that what is reported is factual and the source is clear. Ardian said that until now, we as youth leaders appreciate the role and function of journalists in Bone Regency who have carried out their duties properly and professionally. The hope for the future is that journalists will provide opportunities for young people to report constructive criticism and complaints against government policies. (the youth leaders, Ardian, 2023).

Today's journalists have gained positive trust from society and the whole stakeholders in Bone Regency. It proves that their duties and functions increase the public's curiosity about the information, to carry out their function as informative, controlling, interpretive, directive, entertaining, and guardian of citizens' rights (Wibawa, 2020). On the other hand, we tried to interview a religious leader related to his perception of the role and function of journalists in Bone Regency. Journalists have strengthened the communication link between the government and the public, as society needs news to develop the region and uphold religion. (Religious leader, Abdul Basri, 2023). The government and the journalist always build good relations because the journalist is an essential element in government. The sub-district government always involves journalists as a source of information to the public in every activity regarding sub-district government programs and policies. Even though the community feels there are still deficiencies related to the journalist's reporting. Based on the results of an interview with the head of the economy, Tanete Riattang Timur District, he said that the government really appreciates the role and function of journalists as a media and source of information for the community because the government has made journalists their partners in work. Therefore, the sub-district government always involves

journalists in every activity with the aim of the programs and policies the government decides can convey to the community well through online and print media. (the head of the economy of Tanete Riattang Timur Sub-district, Asmah, 2023).

Meanwhile, the results of our interview with the youth leader of the Palakka sub-district said that we were satisfied with the performance of journalists. The journalists had to improve several things related to the speed and accuracy of the news exposed to the public. We consider that the roles and functions of journalists as a communication link to the public are good enough and maximal. (The Youth leader Palakka Sub-District, Ikbil Ramadan, 2023).

## DISCUSSION

At this stage, the researcher will present the results of interviews with several informants at the research location. Several informants who became informants in this study said that journalists could have a positive impact on communication between the sub-district government and the people in Bone Regency. However, there are people who do not understand the role and function of journalists and give a bad perception. They consider that function and role of journalists is to provide legal assistance to the community. The main functions and roles of journalists are to collect, process, and disseminate information to the public through print, online, and electronic media.

There were informants who said that sometimes there were journalists on behalf of certain media who only asked for compensation on the grounds that they wanted to travel outside the area, so that there were some people who thought that journalists who did this were not in accordance with the role and function of journalists in Law No. 40 of 1999 concerning the Press, namely the duties and functions of journalists are to find information according to the facts that occur in the field, then process this information and disseminate it to the public. Meanwhile, in Article 7 Paragraph (2) of the Press Law No. 40 of 1999 stipulates that journalists are strictly prohibited to asking for and receiving compensation from sources or another related to reporting.

There are many perceptions circulating in society regarding journalists or the press. There are people who give a good perception and a worse perception. Therefore, it is necessary to have an effort or movement so that the journalist profession gets a good impression and perception in society. Based on research data, the duties, roles, and functions of journalists must be balanced with an increase in quality Human Resources (HR) and pay attention to the journalistic code of ethics in carrying out their duties. There needs to be coaching for journalists or the press in the future so that people's perceptions that are not good can get good perceptions among the public.

According to (Imam Khalid, 2020), journalists need regular guidance and training so that the quality of human resources (HR) of press institutions can be of high quality. Providing an understanding of the journalistic profession, journalistic code of ethics, professionalism of journalists, and the important is an understanding of journalists' knowledge regarding the duties, roles, and functions of journalists as social control in society. One of the informants said that as social control, journalists must provide space for the community to provide constructive criticism of the local government so that what is criticized and input from the community related to local government policies is still conveyed even in print and online media. Therefore, to produce professional journalists, the role of the press institution is needed. And journalists who violate the journalistic code of ethics will be given strict sanctions (Hikmat, 2018).

Another opinion assumes that the role of press institution, especially in Bone Regency, such as the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI). It must be more intensively involved in producing journalists who are professional, qualified, and have ethics in communicating. According to (Irwandiy et al., 2020), to assess the quality of a journalist, some points must be paid attention, not only looking at the results of their work but also (1) *The Mental Activity of the Journalist* which means that the journalist's ability to filter and select an event because there is some news that are not suitable to be reported and (2) *Information*

*Gathering* namely the ability of a journalist to collect information or news contextually to turn all the information or news into a journalistic article.

Journalists are facilitators, liaisons, and connectors in communication between government and society. Therefore, as social control, journalists must have quality skills and knowledge because journalists are not only required to write news but also play an essential role in determining the development of a country (Lestaluhu, 2015). In carrying out the role and function of a journalist, a journalist must understand the journalistic code of ethics. It is not only related to ability and skill in carrying out journalist duties, but also they must understand the code of ethics well and consistently. This code of ethics is a moral foundation for a journalist, which contains guidelines on what journalists must do in carrying out journalistic duties (Hikmat, 2018).

Journalists must require an attitude of professionalism in their work. The attitude of upholding work professionalism requires special skills with the aim that journalist work can become a prestigious job opportunity. Journalist professionalism has six criteria namely, journalists must work full time, have a commitment to the profession, have professional standards, have formal knowledge and education, serve the community, and have freedom (Bayani & Fazri, 2022). Knowledge related to the profession means that journalists have more confidence and responsibility for its Profession, thus emphasizing that the journalist profession is not easily tempted by things that can damage and degrade the journalist profession.

From the description above, it can be explained that to get a good impression and perception regarding the function and role of journalists in society, a reporter or journalist must take the Journalist Competency Examination and have a competency certificate as a basis for having the right to become a professional journalist. Because the quality of journalists is not just a measure but also brings journalists to see facts that are not just facts, details of events that are not just stories, and writing is not just a technical matter (Lutfihyanto et al., 2020).

It is related to some of the public's unfavorable perceptions of the function and role of journalists as communication links between the community and the government and vice versa due to several factors. According to the information that researchers obtained in the four sub-districts that were the object of the research, (1) There is still minimal socialization from both media institutions and journalists regarding their functions and roles, (2) There are still individuals who sometimes pay little attention to the journalistic code of ethics and take advantage of the situation such as coming to government agencies but not carrying out the actual function of journalists but instead threatening, finding fault, and carrying out blackmail, (3) Journalists have minimal emotional approaches to community, youth, and religious figures.

The existing Press Council in Bone Regency must take a stand so that public trust and perceptions regarding the role and function of journalists receive a good response among the community. Therefore, there are several steps to improve public perception of the function and role of journalists in Bone Regency, namely (1) Journalists who report do not only focus on reporting but also need to provide outreach by informing the public regarding their functions and roles. Journalists must be able to explain that their function is to report on government programs so that they are conveyed well to the public. Likewise, vice versa, filtering people's aspirations and conveying to the government through the news. (2) Journalists work professionally based on Republic of Indonesia Law No. 40 of 1999 concerning the Press by avoiding the practice of extortion which damages the image of the journalist profession in society. (3) Media companies and journalists approach community leaders, youth leaders, and Religious leaders so that they better understand the function and role of journalists. (4) Strengthen coordination between journalists and the government in sub-districts and villages. If coordination goes well, it will be easier for journalists to monitor all government programs so that they are on target.

## CONCLUSION

From the interviews with several informants, the researchers concluded that the public's perception of the function and role of journalists in supporting communication between the Government and the Community in Bone Regency is quite good. Although there are still shortcomings that must be corrected in

the future, such as some journalists who carry out their duties without paying attention to the journalistic code of ethics.

To create a good perception regarding the function and role of journalists, the press council must do several things to improve the quality of Human Resources (HR), namely understanding the role of journalists as social control, understanding the journalistic code of ethics, upholding the professionalism of journalists, and Professional Knowledge and the most important thing is training related to the journalist profession and the Journalist Competency Examination. From the results of this research, the author hopes that the function and role of journalists must be strengthened in the fields of social control, entertainment, and education. Journalists can also mediate when there is miscommunication between the media and the government when presenting news.

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