

Special Review

Diagnosis, Problems, and Alternatives for College Journalism Education in South Korea

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ABSTRACT

This study reviewed the programs of college journalism education in South Korea. The review on journalism education programs in ten universities showed that journalism education models in South Korea are different from both the American model that emphasizes field practices and the European model that emphasizes contextual knowledge for journalism. College journalism education in South Korea can be characterized as “the department store model of journalism education,” which focuses on various media and communication theories, with a small number of journalism courses. Journalism education programs in South Korea do not provide a systematic curriculum for practical skills required in the field. Only small proportion of faculty members was found to dedicate themselves to journalism-related courses. There are few journalism-related courses and instructors for the digital media environment. Goals of journalism education are found to be rather abstract and ambiguous, aiming at both the practical skills and theories. New models of journalism education for the new media and digital environment are discussed.

KEYWORDS

college journalism education, journalism education models, journalism curriculums, journalism educators, journalism education goals

Journalism is one of the subjects of education in which “the theory of platform” and “the practice of field” collide. Journalism scholars maintain that journalists do not have sufficient knowledge on social and other sciences, whereas journalists argue that journalism educators do not know well how things work in the field (Zelizer, 2009). There have been debates regarding whether vocational training for journalism should be offered in universities (Cunningham, 2002; Picard, 2015). The educators in universities focus on theory-oriented programs, but media practitioners demand field-oriented talents with practical skills (Folkerts, 2014; Josephi, 2009). The gap between academia for journalism studies and professionalism in the field seems substantial. There is even an

invisible and deep-rooted hostility between journalism scholars and journalists (Deuze, 2006).

Differences in understanding journalism education between academia and media industries are particularly more noticeable in South Korea (Choi, 2010). Although the journalism education program was introduced to South Korea more than 60 years ago, journalism education is still under debate. Previous studies have addressed the issues of journalism education (Gillmor, 2016), but few studies systematically reviewed goals, programs, and instructors in journalism education (Carr, 2005; Ercan, 2018; Picard, 2015). The issues of journalism education can be elucidated by a systemic review and analysis of educational content, educators, and goals of journalism education programs. By grasping the characteristics of journalism education in Korean universities, this study suggests future directions of journalism education in South Korea.

This study has three main goals. First, I review the characteristics of college journalism education in terms of curriculum, educators, and educational goals. Second, I examine models of the journalism education and identify which model is used in journalism education programs in South Korea. Third, I discuss new models that college journalism education should pursue in the digital media environment.

Social Functions of Journalism Education

Journalism education in college perform two important social functions. First, universities teach contextual knowledge, practical skills, and occupational ethics to future journalists (Deuze, 2006). For example, college journalism education helps students develop practical skills such as information gathering, writing, reporting, editing, data handling, data visualization, and journalism ethics. Second, college journalism education

contributes to foster informed citizens who are equipped with media literacy to critically process information about various social issues.

In many countries, journalism education focuses on teaching practical skills necessary for news production (Deuze, 2006; Lim, 2009). The professional virtues required to journalists are naturally field-oriented (Picard, 2015). In terms of journalism function, Kim (2005) indicates that skills that are necessary for future journalists; (1) the imparting skills to coverage and reporting news, (2) the professional literacy including the systematic knowledge and experience about mass communication, (3) the work ethics as a journalist and understanding about the fundamental principles about journalism, (4) the professional insight and view in the areas where they are reporting, and (5) the comprehensive knowledge about the structures and operating ways of the whole society. Thus, journalists are required to have comprehensive and systematic knowledge because they cover and report diverse news genres such as general news, opinions, criticisms and entertainments, and deal with the complicated social issues.

Journalists need skills to understand complex social issues in a comprehensive and systematic way. Therefore, it is desirable to provide curriculums matching the level of students in terms of skills (i.e., basic, intermediate, and advanced level) as well as specific knowledge regarding various areas. Practical education such as coverage or reporting is not sufficient because news deals with various areas such as economy, international, health and culture. For example, business journalism requires contextual knowledge regarding economics, statistics and business administration, and international journalism also requires comprehensive understanding of foreign politics and international relations.

Journalism education programs have constantly been changing in line with changes in the technological environment. Journalism

education for a multicultural society, media literacy, innovative coverage by digitalization, and the development of educational programs on multimedia news production methods can be good examples. Weischenberg (2001) mentions that the ideal curriculums of journalism education consist of (1) the instrumental skills such as the technic of news writing and reporting; (2) the contextual knowledge about economy, policy, law, history, and society; (3) the expressive techniques to deliver information and news; (4) the scientific methods to analyze the social phenomena.

The rapid changes in the media ecosystem such as the integration between technology and culture, globalization, localization, and social divisions request new paradigm of journalism education (Gillmor, 2016). Students need to learn how to plan and produce content for multiple digital platforms (Picard, 2015). Journalism education has the clear intent of modifying practice, enriching the quality of information and, with the help of this quality journalism, achieving improvement in the workings of civil society (Joseph, 2009). As UNESCO (2007) states, journalism is essential tools for the underpinning of key democratic principles that are fundamental to the development of every country. In this regard, journalism education is inextricably linked to the political form of democracy (Lim, 2009). The social function of journalism ultimately depends on the journalism education programs and the people who educate them. We need to pay attention to the educational model to understand the social functions of journalism in the digital age.

Models of Journalism Education

There are three main models of college journalism education (Deuze, 2006; Joseph, 2009; Mensing & Ryfe, 2013). The first is the university education-based model, in which universities

provide systematic journalism education programs (Berret & Phillips, 2016; Lorenz, 2011). Primarily, this is the American model, in which communication and journalism were initially taught as one of the liberal arts disciplines. However, starting with the University of Missouri in the United States in 1908, journalism schools were independently established to train future journalists. Many journalism schools have been established as independent departments within colleges of liberal arts, or social sciences (Joseph, 2009). The U.S. journalism education model has historically focused on imparting skills such as news coverage, news writing and reporting, editing and production, and media ethics. Journalism education in Canada has also taken a primarily vocational approach, with an emphasis on students learning about news values, story structure, interviewing and research strategies, hardware and software instruction, and storytelling styles (Gasher, 2007; Knox & Goodrum, 2007). Because of this historical background in North America, many research literature, seminars, and symposiums dealing with journalism education have focused mainly on instrumental skills, such as interviewing, reporting, researching, sourcing, writing and editing (Deuze, 2006; Picard, 2015).

The second is the internship model, in which students practice on-the-job at a national journalism school after receiving basic literacy education at school (Gaunt, 1992). This model has been implemented mainly in Europe, such as Germany, France, Spain, and Netherland. In the case of Spain, the national school of journalism was the most important training center, and it remained under government supervision until the early 1970s. The journalists in the block of the European countries had to pass through this kind of journalism school. Government-controlled journalism education highlighted the professionalization of journalism and the practical curriculum. Universities in Europe were generally reluctant to embrace the American model of

university-based schools of journalism and preferred the apprenticeship, work-based learning model (Barrera & Harnischmacher, 2019). As mentioned above, in Western universities, basic journalistic working practices appear universally (de Burgh, 2005; Josephi, 2009); journalism education combines tutelage in those practices with sets of technical and practical skills needed to carry out journalism (Picard, 2015).

The third is the knowledge-based curriculum model, which teaches the basic knowledge necessary for socially informed citizens. This model has been widely accepted in Asia, such as Korea, China, and Japan. This is a theory-based education that puts more emphasis on teaching general knowledge, instead of practical education to train those would-be journalists.

Asian media organizations were filled by most journalists who graduates from elite universities who hold degrees in political science, economics, or the humanities (Josephi, 2009). Historically, journalists majoring in media or journalism did not account for a large proportion in Asia. Asian universities mainly provide the curriculums of communication and media studies based on theories, not journalism practice. In China, journalism courses consist of skills classes and Chinese Communist philosophy, and are seen as lagging behind the demands of the market (Yu et al., 2000). Media education focused on theories and methodologies is particularly prominent in South Korea. Korean universities have offered theory-based communication courses with a tiny portion for journalism studies (Choi et al., 2019; Kim & Oh, 2017; Song, 2019). Those departments cover various sub-fields, thus have many different names of the department, such as newspaper and broadcasting, journalism, and journalism and information science. Recently, many departments changed it to "Communication Studies" or "Media Studies" (Choi et al., 2019). In the Asia-Pacific region, few universities offer journalism studies, and the vast majority of journalism students receive

job training, which has a rigid apprenticeship system in news organization (Josephi, 2009). These three educational models are not mutually exclusive, but the models appear differently depending on social or cultural backgrounds. This study examines which of the three journalism education models discussed above is more suitable for Korean universities in the digital media environment.

The role of educators to perform journalism education can also be a major topic of discussion. The journalism educators have come together around a strong need to educate novices into craft of journalism (Zelizer, 2009). In fact, the content of journalism education programs depends on who runs the program. The direction of journalism education is shaped differently depending on whether educators focus on teaching practical skills or teaching general theories and research. The characters of educators as well as the content of journalism education can be different depending on whether journalism is regarded as an independent major or as part of mass communication. If journalism is considered as the career education to cultivate practical skills that are needed in the media field, the educators with practical experience in the fields are required. However, if journalism is treated as part of mass communication, the professors who can teach general theories such as media effects and communication phenomena are more important.

Goals of Journalism Education

Every education has its own goal. College journalism programs, which foster future journalists or informed citizens, aim at specific educational objectives for which the program's curricular are designed. Deuze (2006) considered the motives of journalism education in two aspects: the training of journalists' profession and the contribution of social functions and well-being. In other words, one axis of journalism education is the individualistic view of cultivating

future journalists, and the other axis is the publicist view of cultivating virtuous citizens. Some researchers have identified the direction of journalism education as a follower approach that provides practical training for the vocational process and an innovator approach that focuses on future-oriented talent development (Deuze, 2006). The follower approach is the traditional model which stresses practical skills, such as writing, reporting, and editing, required for journalists, and the innovator approach is the evolved model to educate cultured people who have a comprehensive understanding and critics about society. These two views are complementary rather than contradictory.

The goals of journalism education should be understood in line of the changes in media environment. Charles Handy (1995) suggested that educations and vocational trainings should be prepared in the way of “the portfolio work life.” In modern society, people cannot successfully manage their career if they work for only one organization or they are good at only one job. Journalism education in every country is changing as: (1) technologies reshape it; (2) media theories shift teaching techniques; (3) new technologies create new shared ideas about journalism education; (4) unique circumstances in each country still produce different approaches; and (5) it expands in different regions of the world (Self, 2020).

There have been few systematic reviews or analyses on the programs, instructors and goals of journalism education in Korean universities. Based on the literature review, the following research questions are presented and investigated.

RQ1: What are the features of journalism education programs in Korean universities?

RQ2: What are the features of journalism educators in Korean universities?

RQ3: What are the goals of journalism education in Korean universities?

METHOD

Data Collection

In this study, college journalism education programs in main Korean universities were reviewed and analyzed in terms of 12 aspects: (1) the number of available courses related to the major; (2) total number of journalism courses; (3) the number of practical journalism courses; (4) the number of practical journalism courses taught by full-time professors without career experience as journalist; (5) the total number of full-time professors; (6) the number of full-time professors in charge of journalism; (7) the number of full-time professors in charge of practical journalism courses; (8) the number of external professors in charge of journalism practical courses; (9) the number of full-time professors with experience as a journalist; (10) the number of external professors with Ph.D. in practical journalism courses; (11) the educational goals of journalism; and (12) the career pathways of journalism education.

This study analyzed the curricula of the journalism and media major in ten universities located in Seoul; Seoul National University, Korea University, Yonsei University, Sungkyunkwan University, Ewha Womans University, Sogang University, Kyung Hee University, Chung-Ang University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Sookmyung Women’s University. These ten universities are not only four-year universities located in Seoul, but also universities with relatively large number of students related to media majors. To this end, their curricula were reviewed in advance through the website of these ten universities, and the number of students in the department was identified through the “University Alrimi” (www.academyinfo.go.kr), which officially informs the majors of each individual university. Although Hanyang University meets this criterion, it was excluded from the analysis because the majors were divided into the Seoul campus and the ERICA

campus located in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province.

This study collected data on the total number of courses and professors and data about the educational goals related to majors that these universities have opened and operated over last four years (2015-2018) in a systematic way. The relatively long analysis period is that some universities have made changes to the composition of the curriculum every year. This study collected data related to curriculums and educators in two ways. First, the current materials about the curriculums and full-time professors were collected through the course's overview section on individual university's website. Second, the final data about the courses by full-time professors and adjunctive professors were collected via email after directly contacting the instructors. If courses are duplicated or affiliated professors are not clearly classified, I checked the facts directly through the department officials of the universities. Educational objectives of journalism and the career pathways of journalism education were collected through the school overview section on the website of the individual university.

Definitions and Measures of Variables

This study defines three main concepts: education programs, educators, and educational goals as follows. Education programs refer to the journalism curriculum among the media-related courses that the university officially announce through its website. Media-related majors in Korean universities range from general communication to journalism (e.g., newspaper, broadcasting, Internet, and mobile), advertising and P.R. In addition, the characteristics of major courses are a mixture of theoretical and practical subjects. However, I intended to focus on the journalism curriculum that deals with theories and practice among the established media and communication curricula. Specifically, I try to compare and review the proportion of journalism

subjects among the total courses offered, and the proportion between journalism theory and practice.

Curriculum. The characteristic of the curriculum is divided into four areas; the number of total available courses, the total number of journalism courses (including theories), the number of practical journalism courses, and the number of practical journalism courses taught by full-time professors without experiences. The total number of journalism courses included only those courses related to journalism. The standards of journalism courses reclassified by referring the criteria for classification of the mass communication major of previous studies (Kim, 2009; Nam & Choi, 2005). The practical journalism curriculum just included practical courses about coverage, reporting, writing, reporting with photos, news editing, and investigative journalism required by the media industry rather than theories among the journalism courses.

The total number of journalism courses and journalism practical courses were further divided into sub-dimensions such as newspaper (including magazines), broadcasting (including radio), new media (Internet, mobile, etc.), and comprehensive knowledge. The reason for dividing into journalism courses by media and major attributes considered the specificity of journalism majors in Korean universities. Especially, the comprehensive knowledge is targeted at the subjects related to communication such as media criticism, media laws, histories about media's developments, understanding of public media, and communication and ideas which are useful to understand and evaluate social phenomena synthetically, and the humanities and social science such as politics, economics, sociology, law, and philosophy which are different disciplines from the communication ones.

Educators. Educators refer to the proportion of full-time professors, visiting professors and lecturers, etc., who teach journalism-related

courses. Educators include both theoretical and practical educators, who can be assorted into the following six groups. That is, the number of full-time professors, the number of full-time professors for journalism theory, the number of full-time professors for journalism practice, the number of external professors (including invited and adjunct professors) for journalism practice, the number of full-time professors with experiences as a journalist and the number of external professors of journalism with Ph.D.

In the analysis, full-time professors are officially affiliated with a university and teach courses related to journalism. In addition, the professor for practical lectures on journalism included both invited and adjunct professors, as well as full-time faculty members who were invited from outside. The number of full-time professors with experiences as journalists refers to the professors who had worked as journalists in the past. The degree of acknowledgment of invited professors in the field of journalism refers to whether the external professor, who is in charge of practical journalism education, has a relevant doctoral degree.

Educational goals. The educational goals refer to the educational purpose, value, and direction that universities have made public on their major website. The educational goals, posted on the major website, somehow reveal the features or direction of education, being focused on by any particular university. On the basis of the journalism educational goals, we can determine whether the university is aiming for practice-oriented or theoretical and comprehensive knowledge education.

RESULTS

Journalism Education Programs

There are no universities that use only *Journalism* as the name of the major among the universities

which offer the journalism courses. Unlike Western universities in U.S. or Europe, most universities in South Korea have used the names of courses with the mass communication, information, media, communication, media and communication, newspaper and broadcasting, and public relations and video contents. When the names of courses were translated from Korean into English, they seem to be included in the journalism area, but at least they do not use *Journalism* (e.g., *School of Journalism*) as the independent major name. Journalism content was not taught only by using *journalism* as the major name. However, the name of the major in college shows what more emphasis is placed on teaching students. In that sense, it is difficult to say that Korean universities are interested in journalism education. And they do not have systematic sequence courses to train future journalists. Seoul National University and Sogang University use only *Communication*, Korea University, Sungkyunkwan University, Ewha Womans University, Chung-Ang University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and Sookmyung Women's University use the comprehensive course name, *School (or Department) of Media and Communication*. Yonsei University use the name of *Media, PR (public relations) and Video* which not to be focused on *Journalism*. Kyung Hee University uses only *Journalism and Communication*, but it does not mean that they focus on *Journalism*. Most universities emphasize *Media and Communication* that have a very broad meaning through their major name.

Mass communication-related courses offered by universities were 51 on average. By university, Ewha Womans University has the largest number, 73 courses, the universities with the relatively large number of available courses were Sogang University (68), Kyung Hee University (65), and Chung-Ang University (64). In contrast, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (43), Sungkyunkwan University (40), Sookmyung Women's University (36), and Seoul National

University (31) had a few available courses. However, it is difficult to compare using the number of available courses in the same standard because the number of available courses has differences by the university's operating ways. For example, Chung-Ang University and Sookmyung Women's University have the *Public Relations & Advertising* course separately, so the number of courses is not many.

The ratio of the journalism courses including theories over total available courses was not very high as the average of 25%. Just considering the journalism practical curriculum, the ratio is very low at 12.8%. By university, the Sookmyung Women's University has the highest ratio of journalism courses, and the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Ewha Womans University were relatively high. However, Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University had a relatively low proportion of journalism-related subjects over total available courses. Next, we analyzed by subdividing from whole journalism courses to specific areas. The newspaper (including magazines), 45.3% was the highest, the followings were the contextual knowledge, 27.3%, the TV broadcasting (including radio), 18.8%, and the new media (8.6%) such as the Internet in order.

These results show that Korean universities focus their journalism curriculum mainly on newspapers, the traditional media. A few journalism curriculums such as the Internet or mobile which have been emerged in line with the new media environment are offered. When I looked at the ratios of the number of detailed courses by the university, Korea University has the highest ratio in newspapers. Subsequently, Yonsei University, Sungkyunkwan University, and Ewha Womans University appeared in that order. In the case of broadcasting, Sookmyung Women's University had the highest figure of available courses, and Sogang University, Ewha Womans University, and Seoul National University was in order. In the new media area,

Chung-Ang University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies had the highest portions, and Seoul National University, Sookmyung Women's University, and Kyung Hee University appeared in that order. In the contextual knowledge area in which synthetic education is provided, Seoul National University and Sungkyunkwan University were the highest. The following universities were Yonsei University, Kyung Hee University, and Chung-Ang University.

The ratio of practical journalism courses was roughly 14.8%. By university, Sookmyung Women's University was highest, 38.9%, and Ewha Womans University, 26.0%, and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 23.2%, were relatively high. However, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and Korea University were 6.5%, 6.7%, and 8.5%, respectively. The above results show that major universities in Korea are not very interested in practical journalism education. In the field of practical majors, newspapers accounted for 61.8%, followed by broadcasting 21.1%, new media 9.2%, and background knowledge 7.9%. For newspaper practical courses, Korea University, Yonsei University, and Chung-Ang University had the highest proportion, while Kyung Hee University 71.4%, Sungkyunkwan University 66.7%, and Ewha Womans University 63.2% were relatively high. In the broadcasting area, Sogang University accounted for the most at 36.4%, followed by Sookmyung Women's University, 35.7%, Ewha Womans University, 21.1%, and Kyung Hee University's 14.3%. In the new media area, Sookmyung Women's University and Kyung Hee University were the highest with 14.3%, followed by Ewha Womans University, 10.5%, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and Sogang University 9.1% respectively.

In the digital media area, Sookmyung Women's University and Kyung Hee University showed the highest proportion, and Ewha Womans University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and Sogang University followed in order. In the

contextual knowledge, Seoul National University was the highest, 50.0%, Sungkyunkwan University was 33.3%, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies was 10.0%, and Sogang University was 9.1%. It shows that Seoul National University and Sungkyunkwan University are particularly focused on theory rather than practice.

Then, I analyzed the number of journalism courses taught by full-time professors with no practical experience. The analysis results showed 20.3% of the courses offered were taught by full-time professors with no practical experience. By university, Sungkyunkwan University had the largest percentage of the full-time professors without journalist experiences, and Sogang University, Korea University, and Chung-Ang University were in order. The percentage of these courses shows that the more the universities focused on the theory, the more the full-time professors without field experiences educate journalism courses.

Journalism Educators

The number of full-time professors for mass communication area of the major universities in Korea was on average 12.3 people. By university, Yonsei University had the largest number, 18, Korea University had 17, Ewha Womans University had 16, Sogang University had 13, and Kyung Hee University had 13. This item also had differences of the number of educators because Chung-Ang University and Sookmyung Women's University had the *Public Relations & Advertising* course separated from the journalism-related courses. The ratio of the full-time professors in charge of journalism (including theory) was just 13.3% on average. By University, Sookmyung Women's University was highest, 30.0%. Ewha Womans University of 25.0%, Kyung Hee University of 16.7%, Sogang University of 15.4%, and Chung-Ang University of 14.3% were the following orders. In contrast, Hankuk University

of Foreign Studies did not have any professors in charge of journalism, Korea University and Yonsei University showed very low figures about the professors in charge of journalism by comparison to the total number of professors.

Next, I look at the number of the full-time professors in charge of journalism practice. As a consequence, the professors in charge of journalism practice among total professors were 7.3% on average. By university, Ewha Womans University (25.0%) was highest, and the following orders were Sookmyung Women's University of 20.0%, Sungkyunkwan University of 16.6%, Kyung Hee University of 8.3%, Sogang University of 7.7%, and Korea University of 5.9%. On the contrary, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies do not have any full-time professors in charge of journalism practice.

The average percentage of external professors (including adjunct professors) for journalism practice education among total number of full-time professors is 60.9%. By university, Sookmyung Women's University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Chung-Ang University, and Kyung Hee University is in order. However, the ratio of the external lectures in charge of practice education at Sungkyunkwan University is the lowest, Yonsei University, Ewha Womans University, and Korea University also have lower figures. This result indicates that Korean universities pay no attention to teaching for journalism practice courses, and they rely mainly on external instructors if they want to teach the journalism practice courses. Generally, the more the universities focus on journalism practice, the more external instructors they hired; in contrast, the more the universities focus on theory education, the few external instructors the universities hired.

In the analysis about the full-time professors who had a background as journalists, the ratio is just 8.9%, and the number of the professors are on average 1.1 people. By university, Ewha

Womans University has the largest portion as 25.0%, Sookmyung Women's University of 20.0%, Kyung Hee University of 16.7% are the following orders. In contrast, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies have no full-time professors who have experienced as journalists.

Finally, the ratio of the external professors in charge of journalism practices with Ph.D. is average 21.3%. By university, Sungkyunkwan University has the largest figure, 100%. The following is Seoul National University of 40%, Yonsei University of 50%, Sogang University of 33.3% in order have a high ratio of the external instructors with Ph.D. However, the 5% of the external instructors in Sookmyung Women's University have Ph. D., and ones in Kyung Hee University, in Ewha Womans University, and in Hankuk University of Foreign Studies are 11.1%, 25.0% and 27.3%. However, the interpretation of these results needs to be careful because the ratio of external instructors between universities should be considered.

Educational Goals of Journalism

Analyzing journalism educational goals by the university, the vast majority of universities set goals in a mixture of theory and practice. However, this educational goal in Korean universities is contrary to the educational curriculum which focuses on theories too much. Even though they operate curriculums focused on theories, they emphasize their educational goals are to carry out holistic person education through well-distributed theories and practices. These features are understood as an eclectic educational goal because Korean universities do not have a purely journalistic school like the U.S. or Europe. In addition, as a result of analyzing the career path of journalism education, all universities focused on nurturing professional journalists. But there is no single university that aims to foster journalists as the real goal of journalism education. On the

surface, the published educational goals and the actual educational contents do not match. Paradoxically, the educational direction is abstract and ambiguous rather than concrete and clear, as most universities reveal that their educational goal is to cultivate holistic talents who have both theories and practices. This shows that Korean universities are putting more weight on nurturing intelligent and informed citizen who can adapt to the information society, rather than training purely journalists.

DISCUSSION

Educational content and goals vary from country to country, depending on culture, public perceptions of the media, along with the environments and characteristics of media industry. Journalism education in South Korea is facing a crisis due to several factors. Some of them are a clash of academicism and professionalism, inadequate education programs, a shortage of journalism professors, the crisis in the media industry, lack of job opportunities for journalism graduates, and rapid change in media technologies. This study was carried out to look into these problems critically, make a diagnosis, and, if possible, try to find alternatives of college journalism education. This study also explored a suitable journalism education model in today's digital media environment.

No Korean universities have independent journalism programs, and their educational content fails to meet the needs of the media industry. Instead, they offer programs and majors with rather comprehensive names, such as communication and information studies, media and communication courses, broadcasting programs, public relations & video studies. This makes the identity of journalism education relatively obscure. Moreover, journalism curricula are offered as minor courses, and more oriented toward general media theory or communication

theory than journalism. Even journalism curricula are mostly theory-oriented.

Although the importance of journalism continues to grow in Korea, practical journalism programs are relatively weak, when compared to those in U.S. or Europe. Most universities in the United States and Europe offer practical journalism courses. Media majors in Korea are not required to concentrate on journalism skills, such as interviewing, reporting, researching, sourcing, writing, and editing. Korean universities give far more weight to general communication or media theory rather than to practical journalism curricula. For example, the major universities such as Seoul National University, Yonsei University and Korea University do not put emphasis on practical journalism.

Journalism is not inherently a discipline of pure theory. Journalism has traditionally been regarded as an area where practical skills are more important than theory. That is because it has played a pivotal role in training aspiring journalists. Yet, from the initial stage, college journalism education in South Korea has been offered mainly in the communication field, rather than in journalism. Because of these innate limitations, the theory-oriented programs have been predominating over on-the-job programs. Does this mean that journalism curricula are firmly structured? Unfortunately, the answer is no. And that is why journalism programs in Korea fail to teach contextual knowledge that can provide a comprehensive and critical understanding of social issues. Such limitations on journalism education have led to several flaws. More than anything else, such limitations hinder the proper function of journalism education, in social integration, democratic development, and the formation of a public discourse culture.

The characteristic of journalism education in South Korea is summed up as *the department store model of journalism education*, emphasizing media and communication theory and partial interest in journalism. This model is not

suitable for systematic journalism education, as it offers numerous courses related to media and communication, rather than focusing on a specific field. Students take courses sporadically at their universities, and consequently fail to acquire practical skills and contextual knowledge about social issues, even though journalists need those skills and expertise in the field. The identity of journalism education in Korea is rather ambiguous compared to those in U.S., which puts emphasis on the systematic education of journalism skills. In the case of Europe, journalism education stresses not only social background knowledge but in-house training.

The educational goals of journalism in Korean universities do not have clear directions. The majority of them have goals of education, which are excessively ideal. Their goals are, in general, “to improve academic and practical abilities” or “to complete the holistic personality or professionals through future-oriented and creative educations.” These goals are quite abstract. Indeed, few universities have clear and concrete goals in terms of journalism programs. This suggests that the direction of college journalism education is vague, and the identity is ambiguous. For this reason, Korean students, aspiring to work in the media field (e.g., reporters, PDs, announcers, and media business professionals), enroll in non-degree institutes or training schools to learn practical skills. For example, a lot of students majoring in media-related fields at their school get the necessary skills for media careers from the Yoonseyoung Journalism School (YJS), a non-degree program run by Ewha Womans University or Semyung Graduate School of Journalism, run by Semyung University. It is undoubtedly wasteful in terms of educational resources. Journalism education in Korea tends to be centered on professors rather than student demanders. It means that the academic courses and programs are not what students want to learn, but what the professors want to teach. That is why Korean universities have fewer journalism

educators and fewer journalism programs than students' demand.

All these limitations and flaws point to the today's pressing need to develop new curricula, which are suitable for digital media. More specifically, new curricula should aim for a *practical model* equipped with instrumental skills on journalism, and contextual knowledge model consisting of social science knowledge or research methods. Now it is time to depart from a theory model based on concepts and theories of communication. Although thousands of media-related majors graduate each year, only a few complete journalism-related courses. The news organizations are complaining about the job abilities of journalism grads. As journalism education has faltered in Korea, even the voices for abolition of journalism education have been raised.

We need to teach students how to be strategic and flexible in serving audiences across multiple distribution platforms (Picard, 2015). And we need to help wannabe journalists become more specialized rather than generalized. Korean universities need to make active efforts to implement industry-academic cooperation programs, facilitating communication and program sharing with journalists in the field. Universities can secure on-site journalism education resources, and journalists can convey their experiences and knowledge at the university. For this purpose, journalism education programs in South Korea need to recruit practical professors and attempt to reform the program toward a comprehensive knowledge model.

This study microscopically analyzed the structural problems of college journalism education with a Korean case and discussed their implications in terms of conceptual approach. However, this study has some limitations in explaining the reality of college journalism education in South Korea. The ten universities selected for analysis in this study do not represent all the universities in Korea. Therefore, it cannot

be said that the reality of university journalism education in Korea has been sufficiently addressed. The simple descriptive methodology focusing on content analysis this research took may be critical shortcomings.

To fill the research limitations mentioned above, I propose an extension of the methodology for journalism education research. In follow-up studies, various research methods including surveys, case studies, and expert interviews, as well as analysis of the specific contents of the syllabus need to be attempted. In particular, in-depth interviews with university educators and journalists needs to be conducted.

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