



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***PRACTICE OF CODE OF ETHICS AND ACCURACY IN REPORTING
BY PRINT MEDIA CRIMINAL COURT REPORTERS***

MAGESWARI MUSALAYAH

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BERILMU BERBAKTI

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ACCURACY IN REPORTING BY PRINT MEDIA
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**MASTER OF SCIENCE
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**PRACTICE OF CODE OF ETHICS AND ACCURACY IN REPORTING BY
PRINT MEDIA CRIMINAL COURT REPORTERS**

By

MAGESWARI MUSALAYAH

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**PRACTICE OF CODE OF ETHICS AND ACCURACY IN REPORTING
BY PRINT MEDIA CRIMINAL COURT REPORTERS**

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March 2013

Chair: Associate Professor Siti Zobidah Omar, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

The practice of code of ethics among the media practitioners is still unclear. There is a gap in the studies over the meaning of the practice of code of ethics. Commitment to truth and accuracy in news reporting is recognized as a fundamental obligation of journalistic ethics. For journalists in Malaysia, they have their own Canons of Journalism (COJ) since 1989 (Shivadas & Krishnamoorthy, 2004) but there is no watchdog to oversee that such code of conduct of news media is strictly adhered to by the journalists (Kamarul Ariffin, 1996). COJ was chosen as the basis for the study on the criminal court reporters' understanding on the practice of code of ethics in their daily work. The focus of the study is to explore whether accuracy, which is listed as the

primary responsibility to be observed by the Malaysian journalists, is being subscribed as a core value by them.

The study was conducted at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex in Jalan Duta and Palace of Justice in Putrajaya. On the research design, the study used qualitative and phenomenology approach as its data collection method. The study used qualitative methods to obtain its data namely in-depth interview, observation and field notes. The reporters were interviewed until the data reaches to the saturation point. This has caused 12 reporters from the English and Malay newspapers to be purposively chosen for this research. Two senior news editors have also been interviewed to strengthen the findings of the study.

The researcher conducted data collection, data management and data analysis concurrently. The researcher has used NVivo 7 software to manage and analyze the data. Thematic analysis and constant comparison were used to sort and analyze the data to get organized findings. The researcher conducted member check, peer debriefing and be a good listener to ensure validity of the study. An audit trail was adopted to ensure its reliability. Triangulation was also helpful to ensure internal validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the study. The data was also checked on the applicability of certain ethical principles of the Kant's Duty Ethics Theory and Brockett's The Dimensions of Ethical Practice Model thus contributing to its usage in the area of journalism. Among others, the findings of this study confirmed to Kant's theory that it is the good will of the

court reporters to practice code of ethics regardless of consequences and that reason demands them to act rationally by adopting accuracy in reporting news daily. In addition, this study supports the Brockett's model, among others, to have a strong foundation of personal value system and priority to be accurate in reporting.

The findings revealed that although majority of the criminal court reporters have various understanding on the practice of code of ethics in their line of duty, it all confirmed that ethics is more to do with guidelines or principles concerning the rights and wrongs of human conduct. However, the reporters' understanding on the practice of code of ethics is at "elementary" level. The status of practice of all the elements of code of ethics among them is at "formative stage". It is not a well-formed culture yet. The level of thinking on code of ethics which formed journalism values was still unclear. On the other hand, accuracy is considered as core value in the code of ethics of print media court reporters. The findings revealed that diversity is also a matter of accuracy. The reporters applied various ethical ways to co-operate among themselves in order to uphold accuracy in reporting court news. Most of them said that retaining accuracy did not affect the execution of their duties daily as they accept it as part of their job and responsibility.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**AMALAN KOD ETIKA DAN KETEPATAN DALAM PELAPORAN BERITA
OLEH WARTAWAN MAHKAMAH JENAYAH MEDIA CETAK**

Oleh

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Amalan kod etika di kalangan pengamal-pengamal media adalah masih tidak jelas. Terdapat lompang di dalam kajian berkenaan dengan maksud amalan kod etika. Komitmen terhadap kebenaran dan ketepatan di dalam melapor berita adalah dikenalpasti sebagai tanggungjawab asas bagi etika kewartawanan. Pemberita di Malaysia mempunyai Kod Etika Kewartawanan yang tersendiri sejak 1989 (Shivadas & Krishnamoorthy, 2004) tetapi tidak ada sebarang pemerhati untuk memastikan kod tersebut dipatuhi oleh pemberita dengan sepenuhnya (Kamarul Ariffin, 1996). Kod Etika Kewartawanan dipilih sebagai asas kajian bagi melihat pemahaman wartawan mahkamah jenayah dalam mengamalkan kod etika sewaktu menjalankan tugas harian

mereka. Focus kajian adalah bagi mengkaji sama ada ketepatan, yang disenaraikan sebagai tanggungjawab utama yang perlu dititik beratkan oleh pemberita di Malaysia, menjadi teras amalan mereka.

Kajian ini telah dijalankan di Kompleks Mahkamah Kuala Lumpur di Jalan Duta dan Istana Kehakiman di Putrajaya. Berhubung dengan kaedah kajian, ia menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan fenomenologi untuk mengumpul data. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif untuk memperoleh data iaitu melalui temubual, pemerhatian dan nota lapangan. Pemberita telah ditemubual sehingga data mencapai tahap tepu. Ini telah menyebabkan penyelidik untuk menemubual 12 pemberita daripada surat khabar berbahasa Inggeris dan Melayu bagi tujuan kajian ini. Dua orang pengarang berita kanan telah juga ditemubual untuk mengukuhkan hasil kajian.

Penyelidik telah menjalankan proses pengumpulan, pengurusan and penganalisisan data secara serentak. Sebagai tambahan, penyelidik telah menggunakan perisian computer NVivo 7 untuk mengurus dan menganalisis data. Analisis tema dan perbandingan telah digunakan untuk mengasingkan dan menganalisis data untuk memperoleh penemuan yang teratur. Penyelidik juga telah melakukan semakan semula dengan semua wartawan yang dipilih, seorang rakan sekerja dan seorang individu dalam industri dan menjadi pendengar yang baik bagi memastikan kesahihan kajian ini. Metodologi yang jelas telah digunapakai untuk memastikan keutuhan data. Triangulasi juga sangat berguna untuk memastikan kesahihan dalaman, keutuhan data dan kebolehpercayaan kajian ini. Data

juga telah di lihat dari segi kesesuaian sesuatu prinsip etika yang ditekan dalam Teori Etika Tugas Kant dan Model Dimensi Amalan Etika Brockett sekaligus menyumbang terhadap penggunaannya di dalam bidang kewartawanan. Hasil kajian telah mengukuhkan teori Kant bahawa adalah menjadi kehendak wartawan mahkamah jenayah untuk mengamalkan kod etika kewartawanan tanpa mengira apa jua balasannya dan kebolehan untuk berfikir telah menyebabkan mereka untuk bertindak secara rasional dengan mengaplikasikan ketepatan dalam pelaporan berita setiap hari. Sebagai tambahan, kajian ini juga telah menyokong model Brockett, di mana ia telah menjurus kepada kedapatan fakta bahawa wartawan seharusnya mempunyai asas sistem nilai peribadi yang kuat dan memberi keutamaan kepada ketepatan dalam pelaporan berita mahkamah.

Walaupun penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sebahagian besar wartawan mahkamah jenayah mempunyai pelbagai pemahaman terhadap amalan kod etika dalam menjalankan tugas harian mereka, ia telah mengesahkan bahawa etika adalah berkenaan garis panduan atau prinsip berkaitan dengan apa yang betul dan salah di dalam perlakuan manusia. Walau bagaimanapun, pemahaman pemberita terhadap amalan kod etika kewartawanan adalah di tahap “permulaan” sahaja. Status amalan kesemua elemen kod etika kewartawanan di kalangan mereka adalah di tahap “formatif” sahaja. Ia bukan menjadi satu norma yang boleh diterimapakai oleh pemberita secara menyeluruh. Tahap pemikiran seseorang pemberita terhadap kod etika yang membentuk nilai kewartawanan adalah masih tidak jelas. Walau bagaimanapun, ketepatan menjadi nilai teras di dalam kod etika bagi pemberita mahkamah media cetak. Hasil kajian juga mendapati bahawa

kepelbagaian dalam cara penulisan juga menjadi satu aspek yang dititikberatkan dalam ketepatan. Pemberita juga didapati menggunakan pelbagai cara yang beretika untuk bekerjasama di antara satu sama lain untuk menjaga ketepatan di dalam pelaporan berita mahkamah. Kebanyakan pemberita juga berpendapat bahawa mengekalkan ketepatan tidak mengganggu pelaksanaan tugas harian mereka kerana ia telah diterima sebagai sebahagian daripada tugas dan tanggungjawab.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 11 March 2013 to conduct the final examination of Mageswari a/p Musalayah on her thesis entitled “Practice of Code of Ethics and Accuracy in Reporting By Print Media Criminal Court Reporters” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Master of Science.

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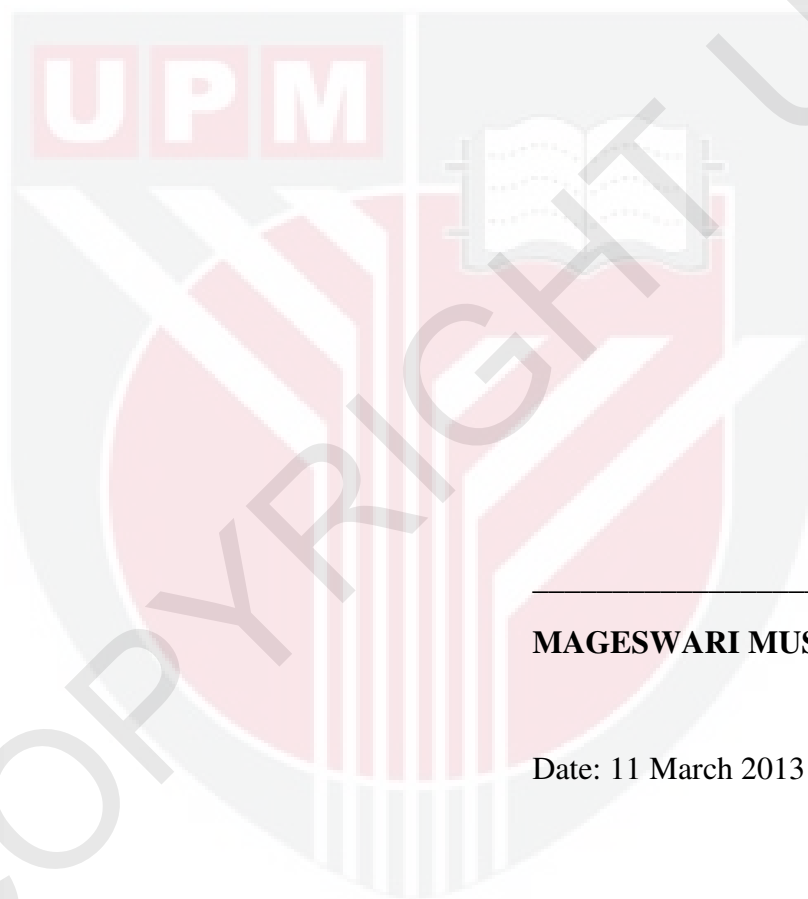
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



MAGESWARI MUSALAYAH

Date: 11 March 2013

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