

**Felipe F. Salvosa II\***

*University of Santo Tomas (Manila)*

ORCID: 0000-0003-2539-7342

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES IN JOURNALISM EDUCATION: VIEWS FROM THE INDUSTRY, ACADEME, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

### **Streszczenie**

#### **Efekty kształcenia w edukacji dziennikarskiej: opinie przedstawicieli świata mediów, środowiska naukowego oraz samych zainteresowanych**

Biorąc pod uwagę szybko rozwijający charakter rozwoju dziennikarstwa w erze cyfrowej, wdrożenie reformy szkolnictwa od poziomu podstawowego oraz mandat Komisji ds. Szkolnictwa Wyższego (CHED) do przyjęcia ram edukacji opartej na wynikach (OBE) w celu zapewnienia modelu, w którym studenci zdobywają umiejętności na poziomie branżowym, filipińskie programy dziennikarskiego kształcenia są pod presją stworzenia elastycznego programu nauczania, który będzie zgodny z OBE i zaspokoi potrzeby branży. Przyjęcie w metodologii piramidy kompetencji dziennikarskich Clarka (2013) i przewodnika po wywiadach Tannera i innych. (2013), a także „Atrybuty absolwenta dziennikarstwa sieciowego”, przeprowadzono pogłębione wywiady z praktykami dziennikarstwa z różnych platform cyfrowych i rynków medialnych oraz nauczycielami dziennikarstwa w głównych miejskich centrach informacyjnych. Wyniki wywiadów poddano analizie tematycznej i krytycznej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Dziennikarstwo, edukacja dziennikarska, edukacja oparta na rezultatach prac, program nauczania*

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\* Felipe F. Salvosa II heads the Journalism Program of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, overseeing the curriculum, faculty and students in the bachelor's and master's levels. He is a researcher at the university's Research Center for Culture, Arts and the Humanities. At the same time, he is an adviser to The Varsitarian, the official student publication of UST, and an editor for the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and PressOne.PH. Mr. Salvosa has written for the Financial Times Group of London, BusinessWorld and other publications.

## Summary

Given the fast-paced nature of journalism in the digital era, the implementation of the K to 12 basic education reform, and the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to adopt the outcomes-based education (OBE) framework to ensure that students acquire industry-level skills, Philippine journalism programs are under pressure to create a responsive curriculum that will conform with OBE and meet industry needs. Adopting Clark's<sup>1</sup> Pyramid of Journalism Competence and Tanner et al.'s<sup>2</sup>, Graduate Attributes of a Networked Journalist's interview guide, in-depth interviews with journalism practitioners across multiple platforms and media markets, and journalism educators across major urban centers, were conducted, the texts of which were analyzed thematically.

**Keywords:** *Journalism, journalism education, outcomes-based education, curriculum*

## Introduction

Along with Philippine higher education, journalism education is going through two major shifts requiring major curricular adjustments: the transition to the post-K to 12 system that began in 2018 and the adoption of the outcomes-based education (OBE) framework. The former, which downloaded general education courses to two additional years of secondary education or Grades 11 and 12 of senior high school, and required more professional courses at the high education level, was mandated by law, Republic Act 10533 in 2013 (Official Gazette, n.d.). The latter was ordered by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2012), to ensure students acquire the necessary skills required by industry.

Prior to the entry of K to 12 graduates to the higher education system, CHED released new Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) for undergraduate degree programs. PSGs for the Bachelor of Journalism and Bachelor of Arts in Journalism programs were released in 2017 (CHED, 2017). Apart from traditional courses such as News Reporting and Writing and Feature Writing, CHED required new courses in Multimedia Reporting and Journalism Studies and a Seminar on Journalism Issues, among others, and introduced cognates and electives.

<sup>1</sup> R. Clark, *The pyramid of journalism competence: What journalists need to know*. Saint Petersburg 2013, Retrieved from <https://www.poynter.org/news/pyramid-journalismcompetence-what-journalists-need-know>

<sup>2</sup> S. J. Tanner, M. O'Donnell, T. Cullen, K. Green, "Graduate qualities and journalism curriculum renewal: Balancing tertiary expectations and industry needs in a changing environment". Final report, Office for Learning and Teaching, Government of Australia, Canberra 2013. Retrieved from <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2990&context=lhapers>

Trends in the news industry, particularly in relation to technological evolution and development of news platforms (Baume, 2009; Castenada, 2003; Harrison et al., 2004; Hemmingway, 2008, McKinnon, 2004)<sup>3</sup>, have blurred the lines between broadcast journalism, print journalism, and online journalism (Huang, E., Davison, K., Shreve, S., Davis, T., Bettendorf, E., Nair, A., 2016)<sup>4</sup>. This blurring has called into question the conventional practice of journalism programs of having separate tracks for print, broadcast, and online journalism subjects. Knowing how to write is no longer enough. News organizations expect reporters to be able to produce the same story for different news platforms (Huang, E., et al., 2006)<sup>5</sup>. Amid evolving technology and new platforms, journalism schools need to rethink how digital journalism should be positioned in the curriculum (Deuze, 2008; Finucane, 2006; Hirst, 2010)<sup>6</sup>.

Among the 30 or so schools licensed to offer journalism programs, only three have been given recognition by CHed as centers of “excellence” or “development” – the University of the Philippines, the University of Santo Tomas, and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Gapasin et al. (2018)<sup>7</sup>, notes that university journalism education in the country faces programmatic constraints – even though many faculty members are news media practitioners, many journalism schools have faculty members who still do not have graduate degrees. Research programs are not in place, owing to the stress of teaching industry-aligned news practices that leave scholarly research behind. Thus, many of the 30 or so jour-

<sup>3</sup> P. Baume, *How technology is changing journalism*. “The Australian” 2009, April 13. Retrieved from <https://www.theaustralian.com>; L. Castañeda, S. Murphy, H. J. Hether, *Teaching print, broadcast, and online journalism concurrently: A case study assessing a convergence curriculum*. “Journalism & Mass Communication Educator” 2005, 60(1), 57-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580506000110>; J. Harrison, M. Hirst, M. De Wall, *Newspace: A place, not just a platform, for a critical pedagogy of journalism*, Brisbane 2004. Retrieved from <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30041256/hirst-newspaceaplace-2004.pdf>; E. Hemmingway, *Into the newsroom: Exploring the digital production of regional television news*. New York 2007.

<sup>4</sup> E. Huang, K. Davison, S. Shreve, T. Davis, E. Bettendorf, A. Nair, (2006). *Bridging newsrooms and classrooms: Preparing the next generation of journalists for converged media*. “Journalism & Communication Monographs” 2006, 8(3), 221-262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/152263790600800302>

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> M. Deuze, *Journalism education in an era of globalization*. *Global Journalism Research: theories, methods, findings, future*, Michigan 2008, 267-281; P. Finucane, *Teaching journalism for an unknown future*. “Nieman Reports” 2006, 60(1), 59. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com>; M. Hirst, *Journalism education “Down Under” A tale of two paradigms*. “Journalism Studies” 2010, 11(1), 83-98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615470903217345>

<sup>7</sup> A.R. Gapasin, K. M. Mirandilla, R. S. San Pascual, D. C. V. Sanqui, *Journalism Education in the Philippines*. „Media Asia” 2008, 35(2), 101-109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2008.11726873>

nalism schools in the country also have limited resources to launch themselves into internationally competitive degree programs.

This paper is guided by the central question: What makes a responsive journalism curriculum that conforms with outcomes-based education and that meets industry needs?

The researchers hope to use the research findings to help develop a set of competencies, skills, and attributes required under the new curricula (three-year Bachelor in Journalism and four-year Bachelor of Arts in Journalism). Once this set of competencies is adopted by journalism schools, degree programs will hopefully be aligned with industry expectations as well as balance with the capabilities and resources of HEIs offering journalism programs. At the same time, adopting an OBE approach to journalism education will hopefully help schools become hubs of journalism training, scholarship, and media development.

## Journalism education amid technological upheavals

Various studies have pointed to the inability of traditional journalism education to catch up with technological upheavals that have changed the industry in the past two decades (Mensing, 2010; Clark, 2014)<sup>8</sup>. Mensing (2010) notes that “information is no longer scarce, breaking news is no longer the province of professional journalists, mass media are declining in influence, and news is easily personalized,” with the primary response being technology training expansion and the reorientation of sequence and media emphasis tracks. Kraeplin and Criado (2005)<sup>9</sup> note that convergence journalism has evolved as newsrooms have gone digital and have blending media formats. As media jobs became more demanding, some news practitioners began to team up to complete projects (Bulla, 2002; Abraham, 2001).

There is also a “chasm” on the perception of the importance of journalism education in terms of the understanding the value of journalism, and in acquiring “abilities in news gathering, editing, and presenting the news” (Clark, 2014)<sup>10</sup>. While 98 percent of journalism educators surveyed in Clark (2014) agreed that journalism education remained important in journalistic skills acquisition, the figure was only 59 percent for journalism professionals. Journalism schools may

<sup>8</sup> D. Mensing, *Rethinking (again) the future of journalism education*. Journalism Studies 2010, 11(4), 511-523; R. Clark, *The pyramid of journalism competence: What journalists need to know*. Saint Petersburg 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.poynter.org/news/pyramid-journalism-competence-what-journalists-need-know>

<sup>9</sup> C. Kraeplin, C.A. Criado, *Building a case for convergence journalism curriculum*. Journalism & Mass Communication Educator 2005, 60(1), 47-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580506000109>

<sup>10</sup> R. Clark, *The pyramid of journalism competence: What ...*

have to teach not only writing skills but also critical thinking; research methodology; narrative, descriptive and explanatory writing; an adequate amount of general knowledge; and a deep understanding of journalism's role in a democracy (Cobden, 2007)<sup>11</sup>.

Journalism education focuses more on technical aspects, leading online news media critics and journalists to question whether journalism programs can adequately prepare and secure future graduates a job. This tends to dehumanize the profession by encouraging students to repress their individuality, enthusiasm, and creativity (Carpenter, 2009)<sup>12</sup>.

Skinner, Gasher, & Compton (2001)<sup>13</sup> argue that skills-building exercises need to be incorporated into all elements of the curriculum, including liberal arts courses. Writing, interviewing, and computer skills are key to a journalist's success. Moreover, the emergence of the internet as both a research tool and as a news medium in its own right has added to the menu of basic training for students. Students are also encouraged to experiment with various story and writing forms. They can write editorials and feature articles instead of traditional essays and research papers, and use interviews, rather than books and articles, as the primary sources for their work.

Journalism education has aspects specific to it: the particular balance of academic, applied and occupational learning; simulations of real working experience and engagement with the world; conformity to professional standards of behavior; involvement with local communities; the application of the competency concept in assessment criteria; and the high degree of transferability of skills, particularly research and composition skills (De Burgh, 2003)<sup>14</sup>.

At the same time, some scholars have asserted that global journalism education is not merely a 'vocational school' that teaches industry skills. The journalism school is housed in "a university tradition," thus it also analyzes the journalism profession and discipline as journalists and as scholars. The journalism school also contributes to improving a country's journalism landscape through industry experience and through scholarly analysis (Folkerts, Hamilton & Lemann, 2013)<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> M. Cobden, *A new approach to undergraduate journalism education*. Halifax 2007, Retrieved from: [www.amic.org.sg/Resources/Research\\_Materials/Journalism/A%2520New%2520Approach%2520to%2520Undergraduate%2520Journalism%2520Education.pdf+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ph](http://www.amic.org.sg/Resources/Research_Materials/Journalism/A%2520New%2520Approach%2520to%2520Undergraduate%2520Journalism%2520Education.pdf+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ph)

<sup>12</sup> S. Carpenter, *An application of the theory of expertise: Teaching broad and skill knowledge areas to prepare journalists for change*. Journalism & Mass Communication Educator 2009, 64(3), 287-304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580906400305>

<sup>13</sup> D. Skinner, M. J. Gasher, J. Compton, *Putting theory to practice: A critical approach to journalism studies*. „Journalism” 2001, 2(3), 341-360. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490100200304>

<sup>14</sup> H. De Burgh, *Skills are not enough: The case for journalism as an academic discipline*. Journalism 2004, 4(1), 95-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884903004001484>

<sup>15</sup> J. Folkerts, J. M. Hamilton, N. Lemann, *Educating journalists: A new plea for the university tradition*. New York 2013.

Given journalism's role in a democracy, the journalism school also contributes to enriching the profession's place in democratic systems (Cobden, 2007)<sup>16</sup>.

## Journalism and outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a model of education that rejects the traditional focus on what the school provides to students, in favor of making students demonstrate whatever the required outcomes are. OBE focuses and organizes a school's programs and instructional efforts around the clearly defined outcomes that the institution wants the students to demonstrate when they leave school (Spady, 1993)<sup>17</sup>. OBE reforms emphasize setting clear standards for observable, measurable outcomes. It does not demand the adoption of any specific outcome. OBE is a process that involves the restructuring of curriculum, assessment, and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits (Tucker, 2004)<sup>18</sup>.

There is a vital need to embed OBE principles in journalism education (Aripin et al., 2014)<sup>19</sup>. In the United States, the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) requires journalism and communication schools to have a written list of competencies and a written learning assessment plan. The criterion "Assessment of Learning Outcomes" is in fact the last of nine standards for ACEJMC accreditation.

In 1998, Roy Peter Clark of the Poynter Institute proposed the Pyramid of Journalism Competence, a structure composed of 10 blocks. The components of the pyramid are: news judgment and reporting, storytelling, critical thinking, and evidence. The other components are: audiovisual knowledge, technology, numeracy, civic and cultural literacy, and mission and purpose or ethics. According to Clark, these competencies seek to answer the questions "What does it mean to be a competent journalist?"

These competencies are:

**News judgment** – Decisions on what stories are considered important, interesting, or relevant that best serves the public interest.

**Reporting and evidence** – Entails gathering, verification, and the distribution of data and evidence.

<sup>16</sup> M. Cobden, *A new approach to undergraduate journalism...*

<sup>17</sup> W. Spady, *Outcomes-based education*. "Workshop Report" 1993, 5.

<sup>18</sup> J. B. Tucker, *Literature Review: Outcomes-focused Education in Universities*. Learning Support Network, Bentley 2004.

<sup>19</sup> N. Aripin, A. Ismail, R. Ismail, N. Mohamad, *Journalism education curriculum in Malaysia: A preliminary study in a Malaysian public university*. "Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences" 2014, 155, 159-164.



**Language and storytelling** – Considered one of the foundations of the pyramid which gives importance to the effective use of language to best communicate with the public.

**Analysis and interpretation (critical thinking)** – Usually in the form of arguments, opinion, commentary, and investigative reporting.

**Numeracy** – Defined as a journalist's capability of scrutinizing numbers and data. Clark also said that the lack of numeracy has been described as the "dark hole" of journalism competence.

**Technology** – Due to the increasing importance of technological competence in the digital age, competent journalists are expected to be capable of using various media platforms – from print to digital – to cope with the times.

**Audio-visual literacy** – A collaboration of writing, editing, reporting, and designing for a multimedia platform.

**Civic literacy** – Knowledge on government, politics, history, and the like.

**Cultural literacy** – Allows journalists to work in an environment that is unfamiliar to them without any bias or premature judgment.

**Mission and purpose** – The top block of the pyramid which Clark describes as the journalist's exercise of craft that is oriented to the interest of the public.

In Australia, Tanner et. al. (2013), proposed a relational model – a set of graduate attributes for the networked journalist – for standards enforcement and curriculum renewal, relying heavily on industry input. They wrote: "Relational model is one which constantly stresses the need to map and evidence the relationships between generic attributes and disciplinary capabilities; the relationship between skills and knowledge and their application; the relationships between disciplinary communities, professional bodies and industry; and the relationship between macro course structure and micro subject design" (Tanner et al., 2013)<sup>20</sup>.

This set of graduate attributes [see Table 1] was borne out of a number of critical findings from interviews by Tanner et. al (2013) with academics and industry practitioners. They notably found disconnects between the industry and academia: "The industry does not appear to have much insight into the structure of the programs on offer... or that they cannot necessarily agree on what should be taught (either in terms of practical subjects or theory)." Nevertheless, there was agreement that the industry and universities "need to work more closely, with a belief that the industry could have broader input into program design and revitalization." This set of graduate attributes developed by the Australian journalism scholars also recognized the rapid changes in journalism and journalism education as a result of technological upheavals.

<sup>20</sup> S. J. Tanner, M. O'Donnell, T. Cullen, K. Green, "Graduate qualities and journalism curriculum renewal: Balancing tertiary expectations..."

Table 1. Graduate attributes of a networked journalist (Tanner et. al, 2013)

Graduate Attributes	Journalists' skills				
	Access/ Observation	Selection / Filtering	Processing / Editing	Distribution / Platforms	Reception / Interpretation
Public service	Negotiate access	Prioritize for relevance and impact	Process for clarity and impact	Maximize reach and access	Facilitate active citizenship
Objectivity	Seek range of sources	Represent diverse points of view	Fact-check and verify	Produce non-sensationalized (stories) but impactful delivery	Ensure transparent accountability for journalistic practices
Autonomy	Balance access and independence	Provide independent critical analysis	Undertake independent critical analysis	Negotiate commercial imperatives and potential conflicts	Ensure transparent accountability for journalistic practices
Immediacy	Negotiate timely access to information	Use varied technologies / platforms to minimize intrusive gatekeeping	Use layered processes and delivery methods to ensure different story iterations to ensure immediacy in breaking news	Use multiple technologies and varied story iterations	Facilitate active, engaged feedback loops
Ethics	Protect source confidentiality and journalistic independence	Ensure respect for minority and diverse viewpoints	Ensure respect for minority and diverse viewpoints	Maximize reach and access	Develop engaged community

## Research approach

This paper presents preliminary results from in-depth interviews with 11 journalism educators and practitioners across multiple platforms, using the interview guide developed by Tanner et. al. (2013). The respondents were chosen for having 10 years of more of experience in journalism practice and/or education. The first part of the interview guide focused on the aspects in which journalism schools in the Philippines are excelling or lacking. The second part was directed solely to journalism educators, focusing on the competition between journalism programs. The third part was designed to encourage respondents to discuss the debate over whether journalists need to have a theoretical background. The last part focused on discussing whether a mismatch exists between journalism educators and practitioners.

The in-depth interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns



within data.” The first step of the analysis was the reading and re-reading of the transcripts. The data was then categorized into groups while relevant points were noted. The next step required the development of broader themes relevant to the research topic. A review of whether the themes were logical and distinct from each other followed. The fifth step was to identify the “essence” of what the themes were about. (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 92). The final stage was the write-up or the narrative of the entire process.

A consent letter and a robotfoto were provided to each respondent, which means they were given the choice to participate or not to the in-depth interview. For the sake of confidentiality and privacy of each respondent, no precise identification was made in the study; instead the respondents were only named as; R1, R2, R3 and so on.

In this study, various aspects of journalism education programs in the Philippines were discussed in detail from the perspectives of the industry and the academe. Through the in-depth interviews with veteran journalists and educators, the study focused on determining the strengths and weaknesses of journalism programs, and the elements of sound journalism education that meet industry needs and that conform with outcomes-based education.

## Strengths of Philippine journalism programs

**Balanced.** Philippine journalism programs, according to respondents, offered well-versed curricula that gave equal emphasis on the teaching of news and features. Most respondents agreed that programs equally provided courses in news writing and feature writing. One respondent said that aside from news and feature writing, students were given the opportunity to learn literary writing and study humanities, as well.

“[In my university], it is balanced. We teach news writing first for them to be adept. It is only then we teach them news features.” [R4]

“...the introduction to journalism already covers parts of news writing and feature writing and they are more of into... the deeper discussion of two separate courses for news and feature writing so I guess that is fine.” [R7]

**Ethical.** One respondent said that journalism graduates from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) were known to embody good character and behavior, and know how to control their use of language. Meanwhile, another respondent said that UST stood out among any other universities when it came to student character.

**Public perception.** Some respondents claimed that journalism students from state universities in Manila were more vocal and engaged in political issues in the

country. Meanwhile, two respondents said that journalism students from UST were heavily grounded on philosophy and ethics.

"I think here at the University of the Philippines (UP) and at PUP, there is more exposure [to social realities]. No offense to UST [but there's not enough exposure] to social reality because of the nature of students there." [R7]

"I've had very little ethical problems and moral problems when it comes to Thomasian journalists, so that basically creates [a notion that] the foundation has been perfectly laid out." [R9]

"[That's your strength because the approach is] very philosophical, very humanistic... I think it helps UST graduates appreciate their work more in that sense." [R8]

**Diverse career paths.** Aside from the journalism field, most respondents believed that programs prepared students for various industries, as well, such as public relations, corporate jobs, and even marketing. However, one respondent said that it should not be an issue; instead, graduates should focus on serving the public.

"The ideal is for you to join the news or TV but you know, the reality of the situation is that there's not too many openings and then of course life happens." [R8]

"Secondarily, for marketing, advertising, [and] public relations. Writing is required in everything that you do." [R2]

"It's all about shaping public opinion so we can look at journalism as a career but don't get me wrong but, we would rather look at it both as a career and as a commitment to serve the people." [R7]

## Weaknesses of Philippine journalism programs

**Language.** Respondents believed that Philippine journalism programs should give more emphasis on the students' grammar and sentence structure. One respondent specifically pointed out that students were weak when it came to subject-verb agreement.

"...I handled many graduating students who have problems in basic grammar – subject-verb agreement. And I believe that should be strengthened in the Journalism program." [R2]

**Writing skills development.** Since there is a weak foundation on grammar, more than half of the respondents believed there was less emphasis on the development of writing skills in journalism programs.

"Not enough. I think the program is coming short in general." [R1]

"Not enough to become a writer. [Why is it that in practice, they are not good writers]? So, [there's a] disconnect. Not enough focus [on writing skills]." [R5]

“[They are poor students. Grounding should be in high school].” [R4]

**Curriculum.** The respondents considered Philippine journalism programs to be too theoretical, which meant graduates were not prepared for real-world situations. Due to the quick pace of the industry in terms of technology, the respondents thought that this resulted in programs unable to keep up with the ever-changing technological landscape.

“I think the curriculum that time did not really prepare me that well for the realities of breaking in industry that actually thrives on visuals [and] pivot speed...” [R5]

“[Only a few are adapting to changes in the industry, such as technology].” [R4]

“Bulk of the education should be exposure to the real world.” [R10]

“Mostly, students get their know-hows from books, but rarely from experience or from the industry itself...it’s not easy for them to really penetrate the industry.” [R11]

When asked for the ideal distribution of theory and practice courses, most respondents answered 50 percent on theory, and 50 percent on practice. For one respondent, what was more important was how a program would integrate its courses.

“Not an issue of percentage but how you integrate all of them in the courses because you can integrate the three things: theoretical, empirical, and normative standards of journalism in all of the courses most especially in introduction to journalism.” [R7]

In terms of general education courses, most respondents suggested that 50 percent to 74 percent should be devoted to journalism courses – both theory and practice. A respondent said that general education in a journalism degree should conform to journalism education, meaning they should complement each other.

**Educators.** Another weakness of Philippine journalism programs according to the respondents was the lack of educators who are also practicing journalists. A respondent said that there was a lack of educators who were experts in both theory and practice. An educator however pointed out that faculty members who were practitioners were unavailable most of the time due to their work, which was a problem as there was a tendency for classes to be cancelled.

“...teachers who are not practicing journalism were very weak in writing the journalistic style...they write in academic style which is sometimes very wordy or which are not direct to the point.” [R2]

“I still have to be part of the industry while I teach. [That’s] one of the things that improves the lecture.” [R8]

“Our faculty, if they would be practitioners, they’re not available. Sometimes, or most of the time. Okay, because they have to cover a news story, they have a developing story. That’s our problem.” [R11]

**Lack of screening.** One respondent said a major weakness of Philippine journalism programs was the lack of aptitude test or screening for applicants. In most schools, an applicant must only pass the entrance exam to be admitted.

“I think, a very rigorous screening should be undertaken to ensure that these people have learned the basics before learning journalism... journalism is [no longer an] academic course. It’s half-academic, and half-practical. Half-theory, half-craft.” [R1]

**Programs and graduates in numbers.** Asked if there were too many or too few journalism programs in the Philippines, the respondents were divided. When it came to the number of journalism graduates, several respondents said there were too many graduates in the current environment.

“...[too many graduates, in fact journalism graduates become production people, and go behind the camera].” [R5]

“In the current environment, it’s too much. But it’s a chicken and egg thing, if you don’t produce that much in journalism, if you just – [fill the need] then you cannot expect – [it’s difficult to gather] momentum to change journalism.” [R9]

“[Too much because] graduates are going to call centers or going to PR. [I know a lot of people who were doing good in TV or print but joined the PR industry because the money is there].” [R2]

**Manila-centrism.** Most higher education institutions were based in Metro Manila, majority of the respondents noted. One respondent said that UP was the standard of Philippine journalism education while UST, the country’s oldest journalism school, stood out when it came to producing graduates of good character.

“UP is a standard... I’ve always had a soft spot for UST [because I like the attitude of the students]. [UST students are] open to learning.” [R3]

“I think some of the best journalism schools are still based, and that is sad, really, in Manila, and each have their own strengths. So, I think UST and UP still are on top of everyone’s list [when it comes to] journalism.” [R9]

## Match and Mismatch

Based on the study of Tanner et. al (2013)<sup>21</sup>, an animus existed between practitioners and educators in Australia. Is this also the case in the Philippines? Some respondents agreed that such animus existed because there were faculty members in journalism programs who were not practitioners.

**Keeping up with industry expectations.** Seven respondents were positive that programs catered to the needs of the industry. However, one educator said

<sup>21</sup> S. J. Tanner, M. O’Donnell, T. Cullen, K. Green, (2013). “Graduate qualities and journalism curriculum renewal: Balancing tertiary expectations...”

that programs were not aligned all the time as some students had received little training outside the four walls of the classroom.

“[It depends on the mission and vision statement of the university. If the school is highly focusing on entrepreneurial skills], you would be training your students to become managers and entrepreneurs.” [R4]

“The problem with schools like Ateneo, UP, UST, or La Salle, [they are not] attuned. [There’s very little outside training].” [R3]

**Internships and employment.** All respondents were in favor of compulsory internships for journalism students, as it was a necessity and a crossover phase from theory to practice. Some organizations, these respondents noted, also used internships to test the suitability of candidates for newsroom jobs.

“I think that’s a must... [there should be a good internship program] because [it is where] the student is able to transition from theories to practice.” [R2]

“[That is where they will be exposed to the industry while they are still studying], they’ll have an idea what to expect.” [R5]

“When I fill a vacancy [in the staff], I only look for UST graduates... I do it because I really believe in Thomasian journalists.” [R9]

**General disappointment.** Due to Philippine universities’ meticulous requirement for aspiring teachers, some practitioners were unable to join the academe for lack of post-graduate degrees.

“Why won’t you allow so many people to help the journalism program of UST?... [Why do you require] MA [degree] and everything, and we all know why that’s happening, we all know. That’s just because it helps bump up UST’s standing.” [R9]

“That’s the problem when teachers are not practitioners. And a lot of universities for one reason or another [are cutting costs]. [That should not be the case. They’re armchair journalists].” [R3]

“[It’s difficult if the teacher does not have practice, they don’t seem to know the industry and they rely on books and don’t write. It’s difficult, they seem to live in a] world of make-believe.” [R4]

**Bridging the gap.** While there’s tension between the industry and the academe, respondents insisted that they work hand-in-hand to produce better-quality journalism graduates. A respondent also suggested adding education courses to journalism curricula.

“I think instead of quarreling with each other, maybe we should collaborate so that we can come up with graduates who will really reform the roles of the journalist.” [R6]

“There’s always tension between the two, but we try to bridge the gap [through] common campaigns.” [R7]

"[Why don't we provide units in] education, knowing that someday, these students, when they graduate, would not end [up] as journalists, they would be educators." [R11]

***Willingness to forge relationships.*** Journalism practitioners expressed their willingness to have a closer relationship with universities offering journalism programs. Some respondents were open to delivering lectures and teach on a part-time basis. Some respondents said they were willing to help in setting up a news laboratory.

"I think one of the things that we want to establish is the creation of a news lab... you create something like the students have to go through 100 hours, additional 100 hours of news lab within the school where students just experiment on everything in journalism." [R9]

"I can help you set up [the news laboratory], I can help you set it." [R1]

## Elements of sound journalism education

All respondents believed that news judgement and reporting were the most important elements of sound journalism education.

"...it fulfills the purpose of journalism, which is to have the public come up with informed decisions." [R6]

"...making sure that people, the right people are heard. That the voice of the voiceless are heard." [R9]

"It [news judgement and reporting] sounds do simple but it's very complicated. It sounds like it requires like a few of your skills, but it requires everything. In fact, your wholeness as a journalist starts with news sense." [R10]

Respondents also considered language and storytelling as significant elements of sound journalism education. Language and storytelling are basic forms of communication between journalists and the public. Respondents thought that journalists should be able to create well-structured stories to inform the public effectively.

"The ability to communicate starts with language...the only way you can be understood is if you have the mastery of the language and storytelling." [R9]

"No matter how informative [the story is], [If the structure is not good], it could be hard to read and [it won't be appreciated]." [R6]

Analysis and interpretation were deemed important by the respondents. A respondent said that it gave journalists an edge over bloggers and citizen journalists. Another said analysis and interpretation should include critical thinking and deep understanding of facts and social situations.

"At a time when facts are readily available online and [anyone can deliver] raw information, [that is what sets] journalists [apart], [the] analysis [and] interpretation [of] events based on facts." [R6]



Respondents also emphasized technological competency. Due to the paradigm shift from print to digital or online media platforms, respondents believed that journalists should be able to adapt to the trend. A competent journalist should at least be knowledgeable on how to take photos and videos. Respondents also said a competent journalist should have basic skills on layout and design.

“Multimedia is the thing. If you limit yourself to just one skill, then you won’t progress as fast as you could. But if you know a lot of skills, you are putting more value to yourself.” [R2]

A competent journalist, as mentioned by respondents, is one who always aims for the higher purpose of journalism. For the respondents, a sense of mission and purpose was one of the most important components of sound journalism education. This component includes the ethical and moral sense of a journalist, as well as his initiative to serve the public.

“You have to know what you are doing [journalism], [who] are you doing it for, and why are you doing it. You have to know...the reason for your existence.” [R2]

#### Other competencies

Aside from the Pyramid of Journalism Competence by Clark, the respondents laid out other elements of sound journalism education that meet industry needs and that conform with outcomes-based education.

**Research skills.** Research should be an innate skill of a journalist. However, some respondents said there was still room for improvement on the research skills of journalism students. In contrast, one of the respondents said that one state university boasts that it offers a lot of research-related courses in their curriculum.

“I think there should be more units devoted to research methodology particularly in the systematic way to get information.” [R7]

“Nape-pwersa lang ‘yung students gumawa ng research sa kanilang thesis writing courses. Maybe some subjects may also want to consider encouraging students to also produce scholarly articles on top of journalistic output.” [R6]

“Dapat i-hammer talaga ‘yan sa curriculum-- ‘yung research field. Hindi basta research, proper research, proper attribution of data, what information to get.” [R3]

**Preference on generalist and specialist skills.** When asked if the respondents preferred a graduate with generalist or specialist skills, most answered that they preferred generalists, pointing out that it should be beginner’s level for a journalist. Generalist skills, as defined by the respondents, are the capabilities of graduates to be assigned to any beat with little-to-no difficulty in adapting to specialist skills.

“Do not tailor the program towards specialism. Any program should be, should be a general.” [R1]

“When you graduate, it doesn’t matter if this person is good in news writing or feature writing what matters is can you do the work? Because we can add to your training we can add to your skills.” [R8]

**Awareness of current affairs.** Majority of the respondents stated that new graduates did not have sufficient knowledge on recent news and current affairs, but there was general awareness, meaning their knowledge on certain news and issues were not that detailed. Journalism students from state universities, according to one respondent, were knowledgeable enough on recent news and current affairs.

“Merong general awareness pero hindi detalyado kasi unless they find it necessary in their jobs, then they compel themselves to be aware [of the issues].” [R4]

“I have doubt that they may have knowledge of many things. But whether that [they] have knowledge of many things, constitute a measure that would make them a good journalist.” [R1]

**Shorthand.** Most of the respondents agreed that learning shorthand for journalists could help in note-taking. One respondent believed that journalists could not always depend on technology. Meanwhile, some disagreed that shorthand was necessary, given the technological evolution and devices available for more efficient data gathering.

“It helps when you know shorthand because not everything can be technology.” [R3]

“Sa panahon ngayon, ‘di na masyadong kailangan yung shorthand kasi yung availability nung laptops, ng tablets, di na siguro kailangan.” [R6]

**Broader areas of professional writing.** More than half of the respondents agreed that journalism programs should explore broader areas of professional writing such as writing for organizations, book publishing, etc. They said these could be added as electives, allowing more opportunities for students to learn different areas of writing. Few respondents, however, thought that it was not necessary for journalism programs to explore broader areas of professional writing as these would only confuse the students.

“It is part of the specialization skill.” [R3]

“No let them [journalism students] learn by themselves. Basta tayo journalism lang.” [R1]

**Introduction to Public Relations (PR).** Most of the respondents agreed that a subject focusing on introduction to PR should be included in the journalism curriculum. Respondents said that it could be an elective and would give more career options to the students. In addition, journalists also often dealt with PRs, therefore such a course would be useful. Some respondents believed that an introduction to PR was not needed.

“Kasi as journalist, ang mga ka-deal din natin ang mga PRs so para at least we got an idea of their work to understand them.” [R5]

“PR should be a separate track. Journalism kasi you are looking for news, sa PR news is being served to you.” [R2]

## Responsive Journalism Curriculum

To create a responsive journalism curriculum that conforms with outcomes-based education and meets industry needs, the following factors need to be taken into account: 1) specialized admission process; 2) teacher selection and training process; 3) equivalency in the CHED policy; 4) improvement of curriculum content; and 5) linkages between the industry and the academe.

In the Philippines, journalism schools only require applicants to pass the entrance examination to be admitted to the program. Although there are few schools that conduct interviews, most questions that are asked are not specific about the applicant's knowledge on journalism. A stricter admission process must be implemented by the institution to filter the applicants, and in the long run, improve the quality of the program. A specialized examination and interview about journalism should be taken by those who aspire to be admitted to the program. In that way, schools will produce the ideal number of graduates who are skilled enough to join the industry once they graduate from journalism school.

Aside from the stringent admission process for applicants, educators should also undergo a selection and training process. Results of the study showed that some animosity existed between the industry and the academe since some educators were not practicing journalists. Educators who were not practitioners tended to teach writing in academic style rather than journalistic. Also, these educators were said to lack insights and experiences that would enhance their students' preparedness for real-world situations. Given these circumstances, journalism schools should consider a refined selection process that would measure knowledge in journalism. Institutions should also provide training programs in enhancing or discovering viable teaching methods.

Due to the CHED's policy that requires a faculty member in the journalism program to at least have a master's degree and a five-year experience in the field, some practitioners are unable to join the academe. Despite the number of practitioners who want to help improve the journalism program, universities have remained firm in implementing CHED's policy on academic qualifications. The policy, unfortunately, limits the number of educators who are also practitioners. Practitioners, however, are already having a hard time obtaining post-graduate degrees due to the time-consuming nature of the journalism profession. With this issue put into consideration, an equivalency policy should be adapted by journalism schools in the country – allowing practitioners to teach even without

post-graduate degrees, as long as they have acquired a certain number of years in the field required by the institutions.

One of the weaknesses of Philippine journalism programs is that curricula are too theoretical, leading to insufficient knowledge and skills as well as preparedness for real-world situations. Training sessions outside the four walls of the classroom should be conducted more often, to develop the skills and adaptability of journalism students. Theoretical courses must complement practical courses to ensure a balanced curriculum.

Journalism schools need to have linkages with industry. Aside from the required internship for students that act as a crossover phase from theory to practice, there should also be other activities that involve both the academe and the industry. A news laboratory run by students and supervised by practitioners can help in the development of students' skills and knowledge.

## Discussion

There are several factors for a journalism program to consider in constructing a responsive curriculum that conform with outcomes-based education and meet industry needs. The researchers thoroughly discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism programs here in the Philippines, specifying the areas the programs are excelling and in the areas they are lagging. Also, factors that contribute to the mismatch between the industry and academe were discussed. Lastly, the competencies of journalism graduates were determined through the lens of educators and practitioners. Through thematic analysis, three main themes were developed, namely: 1) strengths and weaknesses of Philippine journalism programs 2) match and mismatch and 3) elements of sound journalism education.

Despite the programmatic constraints that Philippine journalism education face (Gapasin et.al, 2018)<sup>22</sup>, respondents from the industry and academe still believed that programs offered well-versed curricula in news and feature writing. Although Philippine journalism programs were heavy on writing courses and theory, the programs still prepared students for a variety of jobs and industries including broadcasting, corporate communications, public relations, advertising, and marketing. This was in contrast to views that challenged whether journalism programs could sufficiently prepare students in securing a job (Carpenter, 2009)<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> A. R. Gapasin, K. M. Mirandilla, R. S. San Pascual, D. C. V. Sanqui, *Journalism Education in the Philippines*. "Media Asia" 2008, 35(2), 101-109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2008.11726873>

<sup>23</sup> S. Carpenter, *An application of the theory of expertise: Teaching broad and skill knowledge areas to prepare journalists for change*. "Journalism & Mass Communication Educator" 2009, 64(3), 287-304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580906400305>

One of the major points that contributed to the weakness of Philippine journalism programs was the lack of aptitude tests in journalism schools. For one journalist, rigorous screening should be undertaken by applicants to determine who were wholeheartedly committed to studying journalism. Most universities accepted applicants solely from entrance exams that covered basic subjects such as math, science, and English.

Journalism education is heavily centered in Metro Manila, and these institutions produced too many graduates that the industry could not accommodate. Many graduates ended up in a different professions such as public relations and outsourcing.

The second theme revolved around the mismatch between the academe and industry. Some respondents believed that animosity between educators and practitioners existed because some professors and instructors in journalism programs were not practitioners. Some respondents still believed that journalism programs catered to the needs of the industry. In the Australian context, Tanner et al. (2013)<sup>24</sup> found out that a disconnect or a mismatch between the academe and industry was prevalent in Australian journalism. In the Philippines, practitioners were eager to contribute to the betterment of journalism programs.

Compulsory internship was deemed significant by the respondents as it was considered a crossover phase between learning theories and application. There was general disappointment in some universities that required professors to have master's degrees, which meant foregoing some practitioners who were more than qualified to share their knowledge and experiences to students. Respondents hoped that both sides would work hand-in-hand to produce better graduates.

In this study, respondents identified the skills in Roy Peter Clark's Pyramid of Journalism Competence that journalism programs ought to include in the curriculum. All respondents deemed news judgment and reporting as the most important elements of sound journalism education. These skills focus on the ability of the journalists to observe keenly and immerse themselves with social reality to determine what are newsworthy events. The respondents also gave importance to language and storytelling as these are basic forms of communication between journalists and the public. Respondents agreed that analysis and interpretation set journalists apart from bloggers and citizen journalists. Due to the shift from print to digital, proponents believed that technological competency was of significance, especially in the digitally networked world. Lastly, respondents agreed that being a competent journalist was not solely based on their skills, rather it was also based on their characteristics and behavior. The respondents believed that competent journalists gave importance to sense of mission and purpose.

<sup>24</sup> S. J. Tanner, M. O'Donnell, T. Cullen, K. Green, *Graduate qualities and journalism curriculum renewal: Balancing tertiary expectations...*

Respondents agreed that the industry required other competencies relevant to the technology-driven landscape. Respondents considered research skills to be innate for a journalist. Moreover, respondents preferred graduates with generalist skills, pointing out that journalists should be versatile. Another competency given emphasis was awareness of current affairs. Respondents believed that new graduates lacked skills in this area.

More than half of the respondents agreed that journalism programs should explore broader areas of professional writing such as writing for organizations, book publishing, and the like. In addition, most respondents agreed that an introductory PR course should be included in the curriculum.

Table 2. Learning outcomes in Journalism Education

Generalist Skills	Specialist Skills
News judgment and reporting	Technological competency
Language and storytelling	Sense of mission and purpose
Analysis and interpretation	Shorthand
Current affairs awareness	Research skills

Graduates of Philippine journalism programs are expected to acquire certain skills and knowledge that will prove the effectiveness of the curriculum. These skills are divided into two categories: generalist skills and specialist skills.

Generalist skills consists of the following: News judgment and reporting, language and storytelling, analysis and interpretation, and current affairs awareness. These skills indicate that a journalist who acquires them can adapt at any given beat or work assignment.

News judgement and reporting is a generalist skill as it is the foundation of every journalists in formulating a news story in order to best serve the interest of the public. Another generalist skill is language and storytelling as it is the basic form of communication between the journalists and the public. Also part of generalist skills, analysis and interpretation include critical thinking and deep understanding of facts and social situations. Lastly, journalists should always be updated on news and current affairs.

Specialist skills consists of the following: technological competency, sense of mission and purpose, research skills, and shorthand. These certain skills are not always present within a journalist’s toolkit. In order to acquire these skills, specialize courses should be taken.

Technological competency involves being able to take quality photos or videos and basic skills in layout and design. Although most journalists know how to work the camera, only few can really capture the essence of a particular event.



Not all journalists can work with a computer and have the basic skills in layout and design. Moreover, a journalist who values his or her sense of mission and purpose is one who always aims for the higher purpose of journalism and has the ethical and moral characteristics of a journalist.

Research should be an innate skill for a journalist. Learning research, however, takes a lot of time, patience, and effort. Because of technology, fewer and fewer people are interested in shorthand. Such skill has become rare among journalists.

## Limitations

The study is limited to journalists and educators with at least 10 years of experience in the industry and/or academe. The study only covered certain cities in the Philippines due to the presence of higher education institutions that offer journalism: Manila, Quezon City, and Malolos.

## Conclusions

The study sought to determine the strengths and weaknesses of journalism programs in the Philippines through the views of both the industry and academe. Guided by the Pyramid of Journalism Competence and the Tanner et al.'s (2013)<sup>25</sup> aide memoire on the Graduate Qualities Attributes of a Networked Journalist, the proponents established a variety of competencies that a journalism graduate should possess especially in this age of digital revolution. The study also found that an animus existed between journalism practitioners and educators, similar to Australian findings.

A major strength of journalism schools was their well-rounded curriculum, offering the right balance between news and features, and making graduates more open to exploring other industries aside from journalism. Despite improvements in the curricula, some respondents believed there was a deterioration in the quality of graduates due to the lack of an aptitude test or a rigid screening process for applicants.

The lack of educators who are also practitioners is said to cause a mismatch and animosity between the academe and the industry. Most respondents said that a professor or instructor of journalism should be at least engaged in the current media environment for their lessons to relate with the fast-paced changes of the industry. A university educator pointed out that there is a problem in hiring journalism practitioners as faculty members due to ineffective teaching methods and lack of time.

<sup>25</sup> S. J. Tanner, M. O'Donnell, T. Cullen, K. Green, *Graduate qualities and journalism curriculum renewal: Balancing tertiary expectations...*

The demanding nature of journalism makes it difficult for journalism programs to keep up and adapt with the trends. However, educators believed that the skills taught in universities were still at par with the demands of the industry. Most of the competencies laid out by Clark (2013) in the Pyramid of Journalism Competence were considered important by respondents.

## Recommendations

The researchers suggest conducting in-depth interviews with the program heads of higher education institutions that offer journalism in and out of Metro Manila. Future studies will also benefit by enlisting respondents with longer years of service in the academe, to give a more balanced perspective between journalism practitioners and educators.

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