

# CHANGING ROLES OF PHOTOGRAPHER IN MEDIA: EVOLUTION AND METHODS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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**Abstract.** Photojournalism has evolved significantly with the advent of digital technology, encompassing three primary components: digital picture editing, online news video creation, and amateur photography. This profession is rooted in core journalistic values essential for democratic societies, including public service, ethics, impartiality, autonomy, and immediacy. Photography serves as a vital tool in mass media, capturing real-time events and providing reliable factual information. The role of a photojournalist is rigorous and focused. They must determine which scenarios to document for historical record. In the digital age, professional photographers face unique challenges and responsibilities. Their duties extend beyond just taking photographs; they engage in digital image processing and video production, ensuring that their visual content meets the standards of quality and relevance expected in contemporary media. Their work not only influences public perception but also shapes societal narratives. In today's digital landscape, professional press photographers are tasked with digital image processing, video production, and managing user-generated content. This study aims to explore the function of photojournalists in contemporary media communication, understand the shifts within the press photography industry, and identify strategies for navigating the digital environment. Utilizing qualitative research methodologies, findings are based on observational techniques, interviews with industry practitioners and academics, and analysis of relevant documents. The significance of this research lies in enhancing the understanding of professionalism in press photography amid ongoing technological advancements. The rise of citizen photographers equipped with smartphones and social media platforms has intensified competition within the field. In conclusion, by adapting to new storytelling methods and embracing innovative technologies, photographers can maintain their relevance and impact within journalism. The evolution of their roles underscores the necessity for versatility and adaptability in a rapidly changing media landscape. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper comprehension of the new meanings and interpretations within the field of press photography.

**Keywords:** *newspaper, digital era, professionalism, photojournalist, social media, citizen photojournalism*

## Introduction

Newspaper photojournalists are seen as individuals who gather and ethically and objectively capture current political and sociocultural environments. The newspaper photographer's responsibility was to capture the events as they unfolded. Because the recorded material may affect society, it should be viewed as historical property rather than just something to be watched once. In the current digital era, three primary criteria are used to evaluate a press photographer's professionalism: digital picture processing, video creation, and reader evaluation of the "user-generated images" that are published in the newspaper. Press photographers now face different challenges in the digital era than their forebears did. When performing their duties, today's practitioners need to be

quick on their feet and able to quickly adjust to changing circumstances. In order to cover news items promptly and properly, they must be perceptive, clever, and imaginative. This is how visual journalists and ordinary photographers differ from one another. Visual reporters are more interested in the context of the photo, whereas photographers merely take pictures. Photography in the pre-digital era is reminiscent of the large, mechanical cameras of the past, when dark rooms were required for processing film, prints, and manual photo editing.

Today, the cell phone's single central processing unit does all of that magic, and it lets you do even more. Nowadays, a professional photographer's worth is only found in their work description. A lot of the restrictive obstacles that kept this honorable profession exclusive to a small number of people were lifted when the digital camera was introduced to the market. Due to digital technology, this profession is now accessible to anyone, and the expensive barriers have virtually disappeared. Photography has evolved from a tool for professionals to a popular pastime for everyone. As previously stated, anyone may now become a photographer due to the availability of digital tools and skills. According to Sontag (2008) words in her book, "On Photography", "Photography which was initially an art activity but a massive shift of technology in the production industry resulted in a pile of amateur photographers (netizens), photography has become an art form for the mass media but most people do not practice it as an art form." Rather, it evolved into a social custom for important occasions like weddings. As more people gained interest, photography became more widely accepted to the point that tasks which were previously only available to professional photographers could now be accepted by anybody with a basic understanding of the medium. In comparison to amateurs (netizens), press photographers require to have a higher level of credibility since there are so many photographers in today's digital world. We will learn about the modern press photographer's job and how they: (1) perceive, (2) overcome, and (3) apply their talents in the rapidly evolving field of digital photography in this study.

### ***Literature review***

Unlike earlier times, the digital technology allows press photographers to post and publish their work from anywhere, according to Utusan Malaysia Photo Editor. Before a shot could be submitted for approval, it would take hours for it to be developed and processed. The news photographer is now at the editor's disposal. Because of the time limits and demands of reporting news in real time, they are more akin to management. Time is money, as the Photo Editor of The Malaysian Insight pointed out, thus employees of a news outlet must react quickly and take decisive action. A trending story could become dated in a matter of minutes with any delay. I agree with your statement, as does the NSTP Photo Creative Editor. He agrees that even while technology makes our jobs easier, press photographers nonetheless have extremely rigorous schedules in the digital age. They have to compete with social media, where a story may become viral in seconds and be seen by millions of people worldwide straight away. Even on their website or news portal, the local newspaper will never be able to match such reach. The press photographer's ability to compete depends on the quality of what they produce. The Star's assistant photo editor certifies that no digital editing was done on the images before submission. Their camera's lenses capture the scene exactly as it is, with no filters. News organizations and photojournalists need to adapt to the societal shifts in photography (Kalazić et al., 2015). According to digital cameras, cell phone

cameras, picture blogs, and other gadgets can all be utilized to spread the idea that photographs are the preferred medium for a younger population.

The Chief Editor of Malaysia Gazette claims that since photography lends credibility to the job it captures, it is a professional occupation. They provide a similar role in presenting facts in an ethical manner to news writers. In addition to capturing the subject, they also require social interaction to uncover the important genuine truth. Digital technology may be more detrimental to the photography industry than beneficial since it allows everyone to have the ability to report news, even in spite of the culture that upholds the integrity of a photographer's ethics. One example of this is the paparazzi, who reject the right to privacy in favor of acting as reporters and capturing and documenting everything they want. Anyone with a working camera can adopt the position of a reporter. In chapter book Walden (2010) Henri Cartier-Bresson notes that photography is more like a documentary photographer from the viewpoint of a photojournalist. He highlights the fact that pictures serve as life journals. Every moment is photographed and recorded as a still life from the viewpoint of the individual. According to Shao and Dong (2016) in photography, if professional conduct, responsibility, autonomy, and devotion play a major role in their employment. Greenwood (1957) asserts that social work has five primary features from an ethical standpoint: (i) Systematic Theory; (ii) Integrity; (iii) Community; (iv) Code of Conduct; and (v) Culture. Despite the ambiguity and inconsistency of the code of ethics that applies to all media practitioners, Malaysian photojournalists are nevertheless required to abide by the Media Act by Ibrahim (2003). To meet modern demands, these ideas must be reevaluated. One such decision is the Emergency Ordinance Special Powers (No.2) 2021.

### ***Problem statement***

Today's professional press photographer has to face increasing challenges such as time constraints, increasing workload, occupational hazards, and demanding employers that the identity of their profession needs to be reevaluated based on Greenwood and Reinardy (2011). The rise of citizen photojournalists equipped with mobile phones challenges the traditional role of professional photojournalists, as they can perform many similar tasks. This situation raises questions about the uniqueness and essential nature of the services provided by professional photojournalists. While professionals defend their status through their skills and values, resource-constrained news organizations increasingly solicit and publish images taken by citizen journalists (Mortensen and Keshelashvili, 2013). With the encroachment of the new media on traditional media's territories, the professionalism of press photographers needs to be examined so that the editorial stance has more integrity, open and holding fast to the ethos of journalism: truth, precise, objective, and neutral. In reality, press photographers in the digital era should not be beholden to archaic principles because they need to move on with the times (Ali et al., 2012).

### **Materials and Methods**

This research applies in-depth interviews, content analysis, participant observation and updating the finding". This aligns with the goal of the research. Studying the function of press photographers in the digital age, assessing how the profession has

changed, and figuring out what professional press photographers are doing well in the current digital environment are the three main goals of this research.

*IN DEPTH INTERVIEW -> CONTROL ANALYSIS -> PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION = UPDATING THE FINDING*

This research, which focuses on the descriptive study, utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary sources of information include self-observations, interviews, communication with editors, photojournalists, journalists, academicians, and local and online media. The Star, The New Straits Times, Utusan Malaysia, BERNAMA News Agency, and AFP (France-Press Agency) are just a few of the newspapers and news organizations from whom journalists and editors were interviewed. The Malaysian Insight, Malaysia Kini, and Malaysia Gazette are the online news portals from which journalists and editors were interviewed.

## **Results and Discussion**

Since the public's trust is built on these values, photographers and press journalists need to uphold high standards of ethics in their work. When content is sent over news portals faster than traditional newspapers can do, a lot of changes are brought about by the digital era. This is the point at when the public's attention is drawn to the press photographer's work. The caliber and honesty of their job serve as the society's yardstick for measuring their professionalism. The article furnished is a good example of how the professionalism currently practiced by the industry is questioned by the general public (*Figure 1*). Due to their focus on obtaining the best photos, photographers in the mosque failed to follow Covid-19 SOP procedures exemplified by the subject of their focus. This captured moment by a mosque officer naturally became a hot topic in the sphere of public opinion. In Malaysia, the ethics of Malaysian journalists is applied in line with the National Philosophy (Rukun Negara).

## Bila jurufoto media utamakan 'place first, shoot later'

Mohd Naim Aziz 6 months ago 2 min read 201



GAMBAR sekumpulan jurufoto media didakwa melanggar SOP penjarakan sosial semasa merakam solat Jumaat pertama ketika PKP di Masjid Negara, kelmarin. - Foto: Media Sosial

*Figure 1. When A Media Photographer Prioritizes, Position First, Shoot Later.*

Malaysian journalists shall follow the principles and objectives as described in the National Philosophy: (1) To realize its role in contributing meaningfully towards the country's nation-building To be fully committed to fostering national harmony among races in Malaysia; (2) To realize the dangers of communism, racism, and religious zealots towards the stability and safety of the nation; (3) To realize the importance of liberalism, tolerance, democracy, and the free role of traditional journalism in providing news and facts responsibly and truthfully without fear and favor to the Malaysian public; (4) To realize that honest journalism is an asset to the nation; and (5) To realize that no one is barred from entry in the profession of journalism. To realize the role of journalists in shaping the formulation of national policy, Therefore, following the Malaysian Journalist Ethics: (1) The task of the journalist is to report the truth and respect for the right of the public to truth; (2) In pursuance of this duty the journalist will defend the twin principles: freedom in the honest collection and publications of the news; and the right of fair comment and criticism; (3) The journalist will use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs, and documents; (4) The journalist will do the utmost to rectify and current any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate; (5) The journalist will observe professional secrets regarding the source of information obtained in confidence; (6) The journalist will be honest in discharging his duty and avoid plagiarism, calumny, slander, libel, and unfounded accusations and avoid acceptance of bribery in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression; (7) The journalist will avoid reporting news that is racist and extreme that is against the multi-racial community ethics of Malaysia; and (8) The journalist

recognizes the law and principles of Malaysia that are in the jurisdiction of his profession.

## **Conclusion**

The author is able to evaluate and comprehend the significance of professionalism in today's digital world for press photographers due to the findings of this research. This will broaden their thoughts and originality for their photography works, which will aid them with their career duties. The significance of this study also advances knowledge and interpretation in the area of press photography. The press photographer has seen many changes in this digital age, particularly in the areas of ethics and honesty. The media's organizational structure, the function of ethics, journalists' independence, educational background, professional experience, and dedication have all been impacted overall (Mäenpää, 2014). Press photographers now have to be more aware of their surroundings and the demands placed on their expertise in the digital age. Real-time demand will require them to move quickly while recording and publishing news footage. However, this doesn't stop them from editing the pictures to undermine their integrity and reputation. When it comes to digital photo editing, there are currently no rules or codes of ethics. Training on the specifics of the "Do's and "Don'ts" of picture manipulation is necessary for new press photographers. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission and the Ministry of Home Affairs must continuously keep an eye on the dissemination of news and images that could endanger national unity. For this reason, official legislation were enacted, including the Communication and Multimedia Act of 1998, the Official Secret Act of 1972, and the Sedition Act of 1948. But if professional press photographers in Malaysia adhere to the spirit of the Malaysian Journalists Code of Ethics and the country's National Principles (Rukun Negara), the author thinks they won't be misled.

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## **Conflict of interest**

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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