

Needed Current Characteristics of a Good Iranian Graduate in Journalism and Media Studies

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the current characteristics of a 'Good Iranian' graduate in the field of journalism and media studies in Iran using the qualitative research method of thematic analysis. The study's population consists of 45 master's degree students in journalism, promotion, communication, and cultural studies at the Soore University of Tehran who have been working in the media for at least two years after earning their bachelor's degree. A sample of 25 purposefully selected students was considered for unstructured interviews. Results showed five (5) comprehensive themes and 11 organizing themes characterizing a good graduate. The comprehensive themes constituted observing professional ethics while respecting ethics and objectivism in reporting events; being brave, having the courage to enter events such as war, earthquake, flood, etc., and having the intuition to reach, know, and locate news and news event to find the subject; being professional with subject knowledge, able to prepare material and increase others' knowledge; being competent in digital journalism, expressed in terms of cyberspace presence and functionality skills in this space; and, literate with international involvement, equipped with competencies in foreign languages, dealing with global organizations such as UNESCO, and being acquainted with journalistic events of the world.

Keywords: good graduate, competencies, professional journalism, international recognition, digital journalism, Iran

1. Introduction

With the advancement of the press in Iran and the world, the issue of journalism education has been under the spotlight. Journalism education was experientially developed in the United Kingdom, while the United States of America taught journalism experiences in colleges, and France provided a combination of experience and education.

The newspaper's source, as it is known today, is Europe. However, it did not take shape until the eighteenth century. "In 1775, newspapers printed on a regular schedule (weekly, tri-weekly, or daily) could be found in cities throughout England and North America, not to mention Scotland, Ireland, and the West Indies" (Slauter, 2015, pp. 1-2); wall posters being the forerunners of the newspaper in Europe, were published first in Venice in 1566. Aliaksandrau (2013) posits, "The first newspaper ever, *Notizie Scritte* (Written notices), launched by the government of Venice in 1556, completely justified its name; was handwritten and noticed – not only by Venetian citizens of the time, but it was also widely accepted to have been the first paper to be sold – for a fee of one coin, called a 'Gazeta.' So not only did it give a name to newspapers, but it also turned news into an industry" (p. 34).

"Thirty copies of this newspaper, the *Gazette*, are kept in the Library of Florence" (Parthasarathy, 2002, p. 7). On March 11, 1702, "the first daily newspaper in London, the 'Daily Courant,' was published whereby the newspaper E. Malta printed and published it, but it did not last more than a few days and was closed. Nonetheless, Samuel Bakli completely revived it and became a prominent newspaper" (Ibid, p. 10). Moreover, in that period, good journalists were writers best known as novelists. It is worth mentioning that in the eighteenth century in England, writers and journalists such as Daniel Defoe (author of *Robinson Crusoe*), Jonathan Swift (author of *Gulliver's Travels*), and Henry Fielding came to the fore. Defoe is perhaps the most prominent journalist of his time (McKay, 2008). He was the publisher and editor of the weekly *Review* magazine. In the

beginning, well-known essay writers such as Steele and Edison began publishing *Tatler* and *Spectator* (Milbourne, n.d.). Later on, Dr. Samuel Johnson continued his work on *The Rambler* and *The Idler*. Johnson himself was one of the first parliamentary news reporters (Folkenflik, 2022). Parthasarathy (2002) says:

"No one in the literate society of the early eighteenth century considered journalism to be all the more interesting and all-profitable. Among the many people who later became novelists, essayists, and even playwrights and poets, they found themselves writing articles for newspapers and calling themselves journalists for a long time. Over the years, they have helped to improve the standards of writing and reporting to a higher degree" (Ibid, p. 10).

The first proposal to separate communications from the literature group happened on March 25, 1913, at the General Conference of the New England and North Atlantic. Proponents of this separation case have been working to make the actual transcript available online. They had acquired new sciences like psychology that could fully justify the separation of communication from literature (Mohsenianrad, 1994, p. 8).

Altbach (1987) asserts that "The starting point for academic journalism training should be pursued in communication education. A new way to teach communication began in the United States. At the time, Harvard University was founded. That year, a communications training course for Christian missionaries in the United States was organized. The language used was Latin, and students were required to use communication methods in a deductive framework to defend Christian ideas (p. 42).

Mohsenianrad (1994) posits that "after World War I, the first higher education schools for journalists were founded. For example, the London School of Journalism began in 1919 with the help of well-known British editors. Later, a three-year journalism course was offered at the Faculty of Anthropology of the University of London. Also, a one-year journalism training course was authored in 1949 and taught to students from English-speaking countries and colonial countries at the London Polytechnic. Specialized fields of journalism were also created" (p. 9). Dunn (2018) reports, "Around 1868, in the United States, Robert E. Lee, President of Washington College, encouraged journalism education to restore the southern states and progress for regional newspapers" (p. 8). Moreover, Folkerts, Hamilton, and Lemann (2013) report, "By the 1860s, some university educators were discussing the training of journalists as a way of improving journalistic behavior, and universities began to experiment with courses" (p. 10). Time elapsing, the foundation of formal journalism programs mushroomed throughout the United States of America, as reported by Folkerts et al. (2013) and illustrated in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. The foundation of journalism programs in the USA

- [1] From 1870 to 1900, the number of editors and journalists increased by a factor of three, and Journalism courses at universities began to appear.
- [2] By 1900, courses were offered at Cornell and Washington College, at public universities in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri.
- [3] In 1903, the wealthy publisher Joseph Pulitzer announced a significant gift to Columbia University to establish the school of journalism and a series of prizes for journalists.
- [4] In 1908, the University of Missouri established the first separate academic unit with a specific degree in journalism.
- [5] By 1910, departments or schools of journalism were initiated at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Washington, and New York University.
- [6] Journalism programs were in effect by 1920 at public universities in Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Ohio.
- [7] Columbia University, a private university, opened its School of Journalism in 1912.
- [8] Northwestern University opened its School of Journalism in 1921.

Source: Folkerts et al., 2013, p. 8.

After World War II, Mohsenianrad (1994) reports, "In 1948, the University of Georgia established the specialty of editing. In 1955, 2048 students of journalism schools in the United States graduated. Since 1960, the

specialties of agricultural journalism and engineering journalism have been established at Iowa State University. In 1986, the number of journalism faculties reached 107" (p. 9).

1.1 Journalism Education in Iran

Mazrooei, Sabahi, and Zanconato (2019) quote excerpts from Shahidi's (2007) book and assert that the "first training course for journalists was organized in Tehran in 1939 by the Ministry of Culture and had among its teachers some of the leading literary figures of the time. In 1965 the publisher of the newspaper *Keyhan*, Mostafa Mesbahzadeh, set up a College for Social Communication Sciences, with four years of bachelor's in arts (BA) courses in journalism, photography, public relations, translation, and filmmaking. In 1969 the Higher School of Cinema and Television was founded, with the ownership of the State television and radio corporation. By the end of the 1979 revolution, all universities were shut down to enforce a policy for the elimination of secular and leftist elements among teachers and students. It was only in the 1980s that education in journalism reemerged, for the first time with courses organized by the Department of Social Communication Sciences at the Allameh Tabatabai University, controlled by the State" (para 1).

Mohsenianrad (1994) reports that the "statute of the Higher Institute of Press and Public Relations was approved in the autumn of 1967, and later renamed the Faculty of Social Communication Sciences. On June 1, 1971, the first group of students in the journalism department graduated. On average, about 30 students graduated each year. Also, on January 1968, 13 journalism students graduated from the Faculty of Literature of Tehran University, being the first Iranian graduates to study journalism. On March 1968, the National Television Training Center of Iran was opened and considered a local center for internships and theoretical training. It also acted as a platform for the foundation of the Higher School of Television and Cinema. On August 1970, the first entrance exam of the above-mentioned high school was held with the participation of 700 volunteers, of whom 60 were accepted" (Ibid, p. 13).

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1978, there was an acceleration in the establishment of educational institutions and an expansion of communication and journalism education in the media education center, colleges, and universities in Iran. Mazrooei, Sabahi, and Zanconato (2019) contend that "By 2019, there are six universities teaching journalism: Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran University (also owned by the State), Sooreh Institute of Higher Education (private), Kerman Institute of Higher Education (private), the public Payame Nour University, that offers courses in journalism in 24 branches around the country, and the Iran Broadcasting University, affiliated to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) that has branches in Tehran, Qom, and Dubai and is specialized in TV and radio journalism and directing" (para 1).

Of the dozens of graduates of the previously mentioned institutions, only a few entered the labor market. The reason for not attracting them is the weakness of the press, among other factors. Mohsenianrad (1994) notes,

"In Iran, as well as in many developing countries, the graduates of these universities were not attracted to the press. The weakness of the press and their lack of relative independence, the low ability to pay appropriate salaries to these graduates, and the lack of other specialties in the field of social sciences and humanities in these countries were among the main reasons for the lack of attraction" (p. 9).

Ziabari (2018), an American Middle Eastern Network for Dialogue at Stanford (AMENDS) fellow, comments, "Journalism in Iran is a big misunderstanding that will not be clarified because there's no such a thing as independent journalism. There is no trace of serious journalism aimed at challenging the authority and posing serious and fundamental questions that lead to the resolving of major economic, social, and political problems" (para 5). On the other hand, leading columnist Abbas Abdi of 'Etemad' one of the current reformist papers in Iran posits "The fact that Etemad has survived for more than two decades, so far is in itself a success. What makes this effort worthwhile is the daily's commitment to reflect the truth." This actually supports the quest for this paper in identifying what competencies may be fomented to cultivate professional journalists who are able to deal with the existing dynamics of the culture and country governance and create journalism that speaks the language of the people. Notwithstanding, other researchers stress the impact of the country's governance on the manner in which reporting is done in Iran. Makki (2016) posits that "crime reporting incorporates extended chronologically-organized records of events and bear a strong resemblance to "traditional" types of storytelling such as narrative and exemplum. Politics reporting operate with a highly impersonalized style, a "journalistic voice" even more constrained evaluatively than the 'reporter voice' style which has been associated with 'Objective' hard news reporting in other languages. It is proposed that at least some of these features may be explained by reference to the continued influence of political/religious authorities on media organizations in Iran."

Looking at the different facts reported in the above-mentioned literature, there is no doubt that the media in Iran is under scrutiny, there is a weak press, a strong governing culture, and country governance that somehow draw narrow paths for practicing a completely free independent press. Nevertheless, the existing political stressors as a result of the years-long embargo and the negative propaganda from the Western countries toward events inside Iran which are mostly measured with double standards create even more pressure on the policymakers in institutions of higher education on what type of curricula are designed with what competency outcomes that guarantee graduate students to be employable. However, with the existing evidence (Garshasbi, 2023) of Iran's world-class universities and the aggressive successful research in all fields including social sciences, the opportunity to train and graduate professional journalists become stronger.

Based on the above, this paper raises a research concern: "Does attracting graduates in the weak press be considered a good support of the current need for graduates' characteristics, which in many cases will strengthen the press and their growth?" The obvious response here is yes. Having university graduates and professionals with updated and upgraded competencies would serve the current media and communications sector irrespective of the state of the press, especially if such a sector is looking for improvements to walk along the dynamics of the profession.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most journalism students in Iran are not employable in media organizations after graduation. A few researchers have suggested several factors that cause this problem, including the decrease in number of professional journalists due to the failure of academic training. Professionalism among the graduates of journalism and media studies is weak, i.e., weakness in "the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a professional person" (Merriam-Webster, 2022, professionalism entry). To this end, recognizing the characteristics of a successful graduate can establish a good pattern for journalism and media students, and following a well-defined characteristics pattern increases the cultivation of good graduates for media organizations in the community.

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of this study is to identify the success characteristics needed by graduate students for employment in journalism in Iran.

1.4 Research Question

What are the current characteristics of a 'good graduate' in journalism and media studies?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Sommerland (1966), writer of the book "Press in Under-developing Countries," a member of UNESCO Communications, one of the designers of journalism education in India, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia, and a member of the International Center for Higher Education in Journalism at the University of Strasbourg," says: "A journalist must have the talent, ability, and competence to capture a variety of information, from Spaceships to economic projects, arts, veterinary medicine, political statements, etc., and be able to put such complex issues into simple language and be able to know the abstract of a discussion and to separate the main concepts from the detailed and vulgar ones. These capabilities are even more necessary in developing countries because many individuals of the mass media audience do not know much about everything. A journalist has to record the events and play the role of an interpreter (Sommerland, 1966: 92-93).

Sommerland writes about the characteristics of good journalism that play a key role in the development of their country: "They need to know their social environment, their traditions, cultures, wants and needs of the people, the forces influencing change, national institutions and organizations, their inferences and sociopolitical development practices, and their political and economic development. Ideally, a newspaper journalist should be a person with a natural aptitude, a journalistic mind (intuition), a research mind, and a person fluent in the language. "In these contexts, he learns professional skills and techniques and brings practical experience" (Ibid: 93).

In the current research, Sommerland's theory has been used to build on comprehensive topics of a good journalism graduate in Iran.

3. Research Methods

This research is exploratory. It uses the method of thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method. Thematic Analysis is the framework of classification, indexing, and content typology of great importance. Thematic analysis is an inductive-analytic analysis in which the researcher achieves analytical typology through

data classification and input and output calibration. This type of analysis primarily seeks to pattern the data (Alhojailan, 2012). In Thematic Analysis, the unit of analysis is more than a word or term; the researcher pays more attention to the context of the data and its subtleties (Namey et al., 2008).

The population of the study is 45 students of master's degree programs in journalism, promotion, communication, and cultural studies at the Soore University of Tehran in Iran who have been working in the media for at least two years after earning a bachelor's degree. Among them, 25 students who were purposefully sampled, were invited for interviews. Nevertheless, to have a clear idea about the reliability of the sample size, the researcher reviewed Hardwick Research's (2022) published resources on the subject. Following the approach used by Hashem et al. (2022) and El Takach et al. (2022), and according to Hardwick, in the case of a population size of ~ 100, a confidence level of 95% [$\alpha=5\%$], and seeking acceptable reliability of $10\% \pm 2\%$, the sample size would be between 25 and 50. Therefore, the resultant sample size being 25 would be about $\pm 10\%$ at the 95% confidence level. Surveying with such a sample would mean that in 90 out of 100 repetitions of the survey, the results will not vary more than $\pm 10\%$. Such reliability would be acceptable in qualitative and exploratory research like this one. Moreover, according to Hejase & Hejase (2013), "using interviews can cover in-depth, wide-range of topics" (p. 112).

Twenty-five unstructured interviews were conducted. For a 'good graduate,' participants stated 185 topics. These were reduced by eliminating duplicate themes and merging similar ones to achieve 42 basic themes, and among these, 11 organizing themes. Finally, five (5) inclusive themes resulted as the defining themes of a good journalism graduate.

3.1 Validity of the Research

The research's validity and reliability were assured using repetitive consultation with professors, consultants, and experts in this field. Their inputs helped eliminate non-valid themes.

4. Findings

In the pilot research, the expected characteristics of a good graduate were: Interest in journalism, high level of scientific and experimental studies, ability to combine practical work with scientific education, having a goal to work in the media of interest, English language proficiency, media literacy, submitting a scientific and applied dissertation, writing a scientific article in the field of journalism problems, having innovation during education and training, and the ability of professional journalism to work in a specialized field. After interviewing students, additional topics were introduced and examined in two areas: The graduate's character and the moral and academic characteristics.

4.1 The Character of a Good Graduate

In defining a journalist, Zelizer (2005) contends that journalism should be his/her first job. A journalist must love his/her work. Love and interest in the profession of journalism make the journalist, while enduring the hardships of work, especially during events such as war, earthquake, flood, etc., and with his/her creativity and professional ability, be able to provide information and solve society's problems and raise awareness.

When asked about journalism, interviewees responded as follows:

It is important to "choose journalism as your first job" (interview No. 9).

So that the journalist:

"Have a lot of interest in his/her work and profession and love it, and exert a lot of effort in the field of interest and field of work. With effort, perseverance, and interaction, the issues and problems in the society, one after the other, are solved" (interview 9).

Another interviewee commented on the previous statement, "Let it be raised and resolved and let us have a prosperous Iran, God willing" (Interview No. 8).

Also:

"Interested in this profession and having a sense of curiosity, perseverance, etc." (Interview No. 7)

Next, comment for interviewees: On the other hand, to enter many events and prepare the story, a journalist must be a courageous person and not be afraid of anything:

"The most important characteristic of a journalist is to have a questioning and critical view in dealing with news and issues and problems, and to look for how and why them, and to be able to give appropriate and logical solutions, and to take steps to solve problems and make them transparent" (Interview No. 20)

Another comment to add: Many journalists are brave in their pursuit of news and information, but they are not brave (do not take risks) in publishing it:

"Be realistic, be brave, write correctly, and stick to each of his writings ..." (Interview No. 21)

"Have courage and boldness in writing" (Interview No. 1)

The interviewer then comments: Such reporters can take risks. The following are the 'good qualities' of a journalism graduate:

"A journalist can take risks and be able to obtain the information he or she needs without fear of experts, politicians, or target individuals" (Interview No. 4)

The interviewer: Having professional Ethics and not invading the privacy of individuals is one of the characteristics of a good journalist that the participants in the research stated:

"Protection of their confidential sources of information, protection, and respect for the intellectual property rights of individuals, adherence to the principles and professional ethics of journalism" (Interview No. 20).

The interviewer: Non-disclosure of the identities of those who provide information to journalists is one of the most critical principles of journalism that any good graduate must adhere to:

"Observing and adhering to fidelity, secrecy, respecting the public interest, and observing the principle of neutrality in presenting reports and news to the target audience and society" (Interview No. 20)

The interviewer: Having a nose for news (intuition) is also one of the requirements of a good journalism graduate in Iran. Kazem Motamed Nejad, a professor of journalism at Allamah Tabatabaei University in Tehran, says about a nose for news: "He/she (the journalist) must have a sharp eye, a strong vision, strong diagnostic power and know what news is interesting, and where, how, and when the news can be obtained" (Motamed Nejad and Monsefi, 1989, p. 136).

The Interviewer: Collecting news is one of the most important characteristics of a journalist. He/she should be able to access news sources with curiosity and the understanding that curiosity is embedded in the journalist:

"Professional Talent: A successful journalist must have the inherent characteristics of a journalistic profession, such as curiosity, etc." (Interview No. 17)

The Interviewer: Identify the news source that is important in identifying and finding the subject:

"The third feature is the ability to identify the correct source for news and reporting" (Interview No. 4)

The Interviewer: In addition, knowledge of new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and how to use them will lead to the progress and success of a good graduate.

"Ability to work with technologies of receiving and sending news (email, fax, working with recorders, voice recorders, cameras, mobile phones, the Internet, networks, and social media, etc.). Familiarity with Cyber-space and the ability to work in this environment" (Interviews Nos. 18 and 23).

"Having basic computer skills, including social media and databases" (Interview No. 8)

The Interviewer: Ability to use new technologies in the field of journalism, such as networking:

"The ability to network and to produce specialized content for any print media, online, social media, etc. are some of the characteristics that a journalism graduate should have" (Interview No. 14)

Also: "Skills in using new technologies, including mobile phones to produce, process, and distribute news" (Interview No. 7)

The Interviewer: Smartphones and the formation of the citizen-reporter have made the use of mobile phones mandatory for good graduates:

"Skills in using new technologies, including mobile phones to produce, process and distribute news" (Interview No. 7)

The Interviewer: Another ability of a good journalism graduate is the ability to work in Cyber-space to organize news in this space as well as digital space:

"Ability to set up online news dominating social networks" (Interview No. 1)

"The ability to use journalistic information on the web and social networks can also be added" (Interview No. 4).

Tejedor Calvo and Cervi (2017) analyzed and reviewed a set of ten global highest-ranked universities in media and communications in the last report [2017] of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. The authors

emphasized digital and social media skills as fundamental requirements. In addition, the points asserted by the interviewees are confirmed by Rkein et al. (2019, 2020) who showed that technology literacy and information literacy have become of concern in an era governed by an Information and Communications Technology (ICT)-rich knowledge economy boosted by artificial intelligence. In addition, El Takach et al. (2022) posit that adopting new information and communications technology has obliged changes in journalistic practices and led to new business models and journalistic practices. El Takach et al. assert that "it's inevitable to train journalists continuously and cultivate journalists fit to function within the digital era" (p. 170).

The Interviewer: The journalist's familiarity with world events and significant international issues makes it necessary for him/her to know a foreign language. The interviewees emphasized the following:

"Familiarity with English to receive news from foreign media" (Interview No. 1)

"Fluency in English (the dominant language of the Internet and social networks) is noted and needed" (Interview No. 1)

"Familiarity with one or more foreign languages" (Interview No. 15). One cannot study foreign content without cultural knowledge and familiarity with the date of the event and the news area. So another necessity is expressed:

"Familiarity with world history and the field of news: One of the conditions for a journalist's success is familiarity with world events and their historical background and roots" (Interview No. 15).

4.2 Being Professional

Professional skills resultant of academic and experimental education in Iranian universities can add professionalism to the personality of the interested student so that he/she can easily enter the market as a competent graduate after graduation.

The Interviewer: Part of the professional skills is related to subject recognition. Subject recognition techniques are learned at the university.

According to interviewee No. 4, "The first skill that a few people possess may have been to analyze events, whether political, economic, etc."

The second skill is news production instead of conventional copying.

The third skill is to identify the correct source for news and reporting.

The fourth is having a network of people, i.e., a graduate who can find the right information about the required topics from relevant sources.

The fifth is the ability to properly communicate with the interviewees or the people they want to report on.

The sixth can be referred to as the study of a person on various topics. Accurate and up-to-date information is a characteristic of a professional journalist or on the way to becoming a professional."

An increased emphasis on educating student journalists in information literacy holds the potential to contribute to qualitatively improved journalism. Moreover, knowledge-related work requires thinking, creativity, questioning, interpreting, understanding situations, and adapting to changes (Materska, 2013).

The Interviewer: A good journalism graduate must be able to compile news, conduct interviews, prepare reports, and write articles and commentary during a job interview to be viewed as a professional journalist.

"A journalist should also pay attention to reports, interviews, feature content, soft news, analysis style, and so on. In addition to working individually, he/she has to work in teams and groups in some cases. Paying special attention to deadlines and time of the interview, delivery of materials, etc. Having a personal archive. Practicing the writing profession. Working with a variety of media. Writing in various news formats, including news, interviews, features, etc. While working with a variety of media and formats, choose one as the best format for your career" Interview No. 15).

The Interviewer: Creating content without knowing the internal policies of the workplace media and the prevailing policies in society, such as legal and customary restrictions on the publication of the content can be costly for a good journalist.

"Awareness of national media news policies: Every media outlet has its policies that the reporter must know about and operate within its main framework. Otherwise, he/she will not be able to continue working in that media" (Interview No. 18)

The Interviewer: Most media organizations' content is news and news dissemination. The most salient point in obtaining and arranging news for a professional reporter is to know the criteria for selecting the news or the values of the same news.

"Recognizing news values and having a good pen (i.e., an attractive writing skill) and a large vocabulary to write headlines, reach and know tips, and speed of action in conveying news and reports" (Interview No. 4).

The Interviewer: Knowing the steps of obtaining news, processing, publishing, and recognizing audience feedback is also among the professional principles of journalism:

"Be familiar with the stages of journalism work, which includes: 1- Information gathering, 2- Information processing, and 3- Feedback and observation of the audience's reaction" (Interview No. 8).

The previously stated information-related items are stressed in the literature. "If education for information competencies is necessary for all students in higher education, it is particularly crucial for students preparing for careers in journalism" (Bornstein, 2003).

The Interviewer: One of the skills, unfortunately not considered in journalism courses, is 'short-hand'. Journalism students should learn to collect and write in-class notes so that someday they can write down their words without interruption and correctly during interviews with prominent figures such as the President. The interviewee will not wait nor be asked to stop during the interview for the interviewer to take notes! The difficulty lies in the fact that after writing the news, interviewing, reporting, and especially in writing the commentary and the article, it is essential to observe the editing points and the grammar of the language:

According to Interviewee No. 18,

"1- Familiarity with the rules of writing and Persian literature: It is a must to read books related to grammar and the ritual of writing and spelling. The study should be our first task. It helps a lot to increase our vocabulary and make writing easier.

2- Learning the principles and methods of subject finding, organizing, and editing news, interviews, and reports

3- Recognizing news values

4- Ability to take notes and write short-hand" (Interview No. 18)

It is possible to increase professional journalists' knowledge by studying and getting acquainted with the history and culture of the place of events:

"Familiarity with the humanities and social sciences: The journalist must be familiar with other fields within the humanities and social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, etc. Just learning the techniques and tactics of journalism will not lead to success.

According to Gans (2018), "Sociologists and journalists should occasionally study together. Sociology graduate students and interested undergraduate sociology majors might take courses in journalism schools, particularly on news judgment and reporting. Journalism students would benefit from substantive and methodological courses in sociology. Seminars open to both journalism and sociology students would be especially desirable" (p. 9).

The Interviewer: Having specialized knowledge in one field: In addition to learning journalism, to succeed in journalism, one must also know other fields, such as language, war, human rights, environment, politics, sports, etc.

Familiarity with world history and news: One of the conditions for a journalist to be successful is to be familiar with world events and their historical background and roots" (Interview No. 15)

The Interviewer: In today's world, to reflect on local and national news, good graduates must raise the voice of their community to the world by increasing their knowledge, acting professionally, and increasing their knowledge of the international environment. The power of international recognition is achieved by having knowledge of global organizations and familiarity with global journalism.

"Learning specialized and comprehensive information about the field of international news activity: here we must know deeply and professionally, know the news sources, each field and its related organizations and institutions, and so on. To appear as an international expert in our field" (Interview No. 18).

The Interviewer: It is impossible to know world events without the ability to understand the journalistic practices and policies that govern them.

"One must be able to communicate with journalists from other nations and pursue new training in the world to understand international journalism practices and policies governing world news organizations" (Interview No. 25).

After reviewing and coding in three stages, the basic themes were first identified and then organized, and learning themes were determined according to Table 1.

Table 1. The Stages of Coding and Content Analysis

Basic themes	Organizing themes: Inclusive themes	Organizing themes	Inclusive themes
Orbital duty of honor ethics		Respect for ethics	Observance of professional ethics
Paying attention to legal restrictions (red lines)			
Preservation and respect for individual property			
Privacy			
Adherence to the principles of professional ethics			
Observance of the Ethics of Objectivism		Objectivity	
Neutrality			
Having fairness			
Observance of cultural and social values			
Observance of fidelity			
Be bold		Courage	Be brave
Curiosity			
Sharpness		Intuition relying on inspiration	
Punctiliousness		(Nose for news)	
Having scientific knowledge and academic knowledge		Cognition of the subject	Being professional
Recognize news sources			
Awareness of current events			
Having the power to find the subject			
Having professional skills in arranging news, conducting interviews, preparing reports and headlines		Ability to prepare content	
Having the power of writing, shorthand, and following the rules of writing			
Familiarity with current issues			
Having the power to analyze issues			
Studying and being interested in the profession of educational journalism		Enhancing knowledge	
Familiarity with the history and culture of society			
Full knowledge of cyberspace		Presence in cyberspace	Ability to digitalize journalism
Ability to work on the Internet			
Familiarity with social networks			

<p>Familiarity with social media</p> <p>Ability to work with new digital equipment in digital space (use of the recorder, etc.)</p> <p>Ability to network</p> <p>Generate content in Cyberspace</p> <p>Ability to set online news</p> <p>Having media literacy in the digital space</p> <p>Fluency in foreign languages</p> <p>Familiarity with international news organizations</p> <p>Familiarity with international institutions (such as UNESCO, ITU: International Telecommunication Union, WHO: World Health Organization, etc.)</p> <p>Understanding global events</p> <p>Understanding international news policies</p> <p>Understanding international journalism practices</p> <p>Familiarity with international journalism training centers</p> <p>Familiarity with the ethical charter of journalism in foreign organizations</p>	<p>Have digital skills</p> <p>Online content production</p> <p>Understanding global organizations</p> <p>Familiarity with global journalism</p>	<p>The Power of international recognition</p>
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Accordingly, by analyzing the content of the interview data, graduate students, most of whom have succeeded in working in the media after graduation, have five comprehensive themes. These include professional ethics, courage, professionalism, ability in Digital journalism, and international recognition can be considered for good graduation of journalism and media studies students (Figure 1).

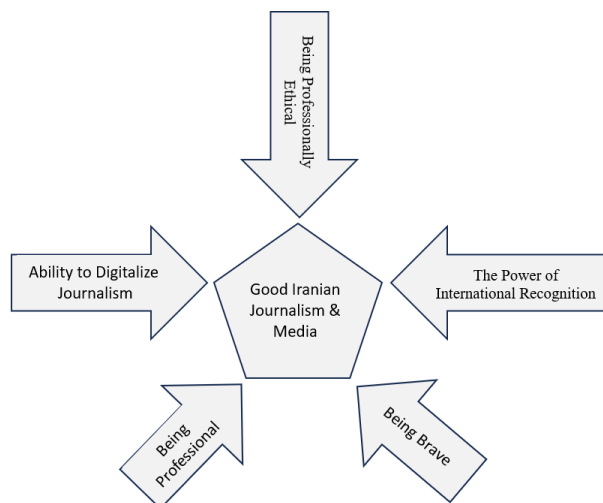


Figure 1. Comprehensive themes of a good graduate

5. Conclusion

In today's world, where we are facing the phenomenon of globalization of news and journalism, in developing countries such as Iran, training good journalists for the media can be a paramount step. Although the decline in newspaper circulation in countries such as Iran is attributed to factors such as the emergence of new media such as social media, increased paper and print costs, increased transportation and distribution costs, and lack of time to read, the fact is that the lack of manpower's professionalism and not having good graduates to attract in the media is one of the most salient media issues in developing countries. In fact, "nearly 4 in 5 employers globally report difficulty finding the skilled talent they need in 2023" (Manpower Group, 2023).

To identify the characteristics of a good media journalism graduate in Iran, the researchers relied on unstructured interviews with 25 graduate students of journalism, cultural studies, propaganda, and communications at Soore University in 2022. The authors classified five (5) comprehensive themes and 11 organizing themes resulting from data coding. These are as follows:

- 1- Observing professional ethics while respecting ethics and objectivism and avoiding subjectivism in reporting events.
- 2- Being brave, having the courage to enter events such as war, earthquake, flood, and ..., having newsworthiness, and knowing the news event and its place to find the subject.
- 3- Being professional includes knowing the subject matter (technical knowledge of the major), the ability to prepare material, and increasing knowledge.
- 4- The ability to manage digital journalism with topics such as the ability to access Cyber-space and having work skills expressed in this space.
- 5- Having international recognition is gained by knowing a foreign language and being literate about world organizations such as UNESCO, the World Health Organization, etc, along with familiarity with journalistic events in the world.

According to the participants in the research, graduates can work with these characteristics as being well prepared in the Iranian media. Nevertheless, according to Aladdine (2022), "Educational institutions should still introduce students to new evolutions of journalism to obtain digital literacy, however, without lessening the presence of traditional skills, especially as core material" (p. 132). Moreover, Higher education institutions (HEIs) should capitalize on collaborative agreements between countries to foster internal progress and share experiences. Iranian institutions may take advantage of the already signed agreements like the one between Lebanon and Iran. Hejase & Alaeddine (2017) confirm the fact that "collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Lebanon in the fields of higher education and scientific research is highly favorable irrespective of both the economic and political conditions in the region" (p. 35). Representatives from both countries' HEIs show mutual assertiveness that their countries have mutual interests and agree on the modes of cooperation. "From the policy point of view, both countries have had active roles in bringing forward mutual projects and initiatives which have been approved by the governments" (ibid). Consequently, graduates are able to share positive and successful journalism educational experiences and best journalism practices.

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