



Electronic Journalism : Researching the Issue of Balance Between Media Credibility and the Application of Legal Accountability



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Abstract

Electronic journalism has played a crucial role in the rapid dissemination of news. In the age of modern technology, the media landscape has become a prominent topic of public discussion due to the vast amount of news being circulated, attracting both supporters and skeptics. Amid this information overload, the challenge of balancing media credibility with legal accountability has emerged, particularly regarding the freedoms and limitations of journalistic practices in reporting news and the extent of verification before it is presented to the public. This issue will be examined in this research paper.

Keywords

Electronic journalism;
Media credibility;
Legal accountability;
News;
Media.

الصحافة الإلكترونية: البحث في مسألة التوازن بين المصداقية الإعلامية وتطبيق المساءلة القانونية

الكلمات المفتاحية

الصحافة الإلكترونية؛
المصداقية الإعلامية؛
المساءلة القانونية؛
الأخبار؛
الإعلام.

ملخص

لعبت الصحافة الإلكترونية دوراً مهماً في نشر الأخبار بوتيرة سريعة، حيث أنه في عصر التكنولوجيا الحديثة أصبح المشهد الإعلامي يتصدر حديث العامة من الناس نظراً للكم الهائل من الأخبار المتداولة، بين مؤيد ومكذب لها، وفي هذا الزخم المعلوماتي ظهرت إشكالية التوازن بين المصداقية الإعلامية والمساءلة القانونية بين حرية وحدود الممارسة الإعلامية في نقل الأخبار ومدى تدقيقها قبل طرحها للرأي العام، وهذا ما سنتم دراسته خلال هاته الورقة البحثية.

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I- Introduction :

Modern technology has dominated various important sectors in the country, with the media sector being one of those targeted by the wave of digital transformation for various reasons. The most significant of these is the enhancement and development of media work in accordance with the modern era's updates in conveying events from the field to the public's mind through media institutions, thanks to news channels. Electronic journalism has played the biggest role in highlighting this event, becoming a primary means of disseminating information and exchanging opinions in digital spaces. With the increasing technological advancement and the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, news has invaded the realm of modern media dramatically, becoming easily and quickly accessible, which has created interaction between it and public opinion, leading some to believe while others doubt its authenticity.

In light of the dominance of electronic journalism in the media landscape, voices have risen regarding the idea of media credibility due to the news inflation of the same event with different, sometimes contradictory ideas and expressions. This makes this study particularly important in affirming media credibility and enforcing legal accountability for false news.

This study aims to explore and define the relationship between media credibility and legal accountability in light of the reliance on electronic journalism. It seeks to identify the key feelings surrounding the shift toward ensuring media credibility and avoiding the spread of fake news that misleads public opinion. Additionally, this balance aims to analyze the legal framework governing the media to reach recommendations for improving media practices, affirming credibility, and ensuring the provision of reliable information rather than false news to the public.

This study is based on a set of main hypotheses, the most important of which are:

- Achieving a balance between media credibility and legal accountability requires studying the reality of media credibility and analyzing the legal framework of media work according to the updates of the legal system in this regard.
- The emergence of electronic journalism has contributed to the unprecedented spread of news across various media outlets, generating public calls to affirm media credibility and impose legal accountability on those disseminating misleading news to public opinion on many important issues in the country.
- Working to enhance legal accountability directly reflects on the support of media credibility for electronic journalism, and balancing freedom of expression with individual rights can improve the quality of the media content presented to the public.

This scientific paper addresses a series of questions related to the ethical, legal, and digital dimensions regarding electronic journalism in general and the relationship between media credibility and legal accountability in particular. These can be summarized in the research problem of how to achieve a truly effective balance between media credibility and the necessity of legal accountability amidst the diverse spread of news across various digital spaces. This calls for imposing strict penalties on those promoting misleading news to the public, which threatens national sovereignty, digital sovereignty, and media credibility to ensure the quality of news.

Discussing the issue of balance between media credibility and legal accountability in the context of media dominance requires a comprehensive methodological plurality between description, analysis, and conclusion, to define the reality of media credibility through the practice of media work via electronic journalism, as well as analyzing legal texts and the legal framework governing this field. It is essential to identify the foundations and controls of legal accountability for both journalists and media institutions, particularly concerning the dissemination of misleading and false news.

Addressing the various issues raised by this topic requires establishing a dual plan based on two main axes: the first deals with the issue of news dissemination in the age of speed, while the second is dedicated to studying the reality of media credibility within the Algerian legal system.

I.1.News Dissemination in the Age of Speed

The media landscape in the modern era is characterized by a unique specificity due to the increasing news volume resulting from the multitude of information and its rapid dissemination. Electronic journalism has emerged as a primary means to support this landscape. However, this is now linked to the accuracy of media discourse, oscillating between belief and skepticism within a rapidly circulating news cycle across modern media platforms and television channels, including social media. This will be elaborated in the first part, addressing media credibility in the context of digital journalism, as well as the features or characteristics of the latter in the era of media speed.

1.2. Media Credibility from the Perspective of Digital Journalism Reality

Media credibility is considered a fundamental element of the media landscape, especially in the age of digital journalism, where challenges related to the spread of fake and unreliable news have increased significantly. Digital media now faces immense pressure in practice to maintain media credibility in terms of integrity and the quality of information presented to the public, as well as its processing within media institutions, ultimately aiming to build public trust amid increasing news competition and economic pressures from influential institutions in the age of information digitization.

In other words, media credibility is a complex, multi-dimensional concept closely linked to the motivations of media users when selecting news sources. Credibility can predict or be influenced by these motivations, significantly affecting users' reliance on media and their intentions to reuse it, particularly in the age of electronic information. This makes it a crucial factor in the context of news media, where researchers focus on various aspects of credibility, such as the source and medium, which are vital elements of media credibility. Some have noted confusion between these concepts due to the ambiguity of defining the information source, which can be an individual, a group, an organization, or a media channel (Doan, Thanh-Binh, 2023, p. 05).

Thus, discussing the accuracy of rapidly disseminated news in recent times requires understanding the credibility of its source, followed by the credibility of the medium through which it was obtained.

A. Source Credibility

Source credibility can be defined as a perception held by the recipient. Some researchers use the term "source credibility" to denote the positive characteristics that influence the recipient's acceptance of the media message. The intelligence, mood, and goodwill of the source or sender are evaluated in this context. Conversely, some researchers consider source credibility to be an inherent characteristic of the sender, and moreover, a universal trait of sources regardless of their specific contexts (Matthias, Jörg, 2007, p. 232).

The level of credibility that a news source enjoys among the public is reflected in the professional character of the journalist or the media outlet itself (Bracken, 2007, p. 723). In the context of electronic journalism, source credibility is influenced by several factors, including the speed of access to information or news among people. Many media institutions and news channels strive to present news before any other news organization to be the first to report on a given issue. For example, Al Jazeera has taken the lead in covering the Iranian-Israeli conflict, providing real-time updates and rapidly conveying news from the scene to the audience, relying on digital journalism supported by electronic foundations.

This necessitates analyzing source credibility through the following aspects :

- The Issue of Prioritizing Speed in News Dissemination Over Source Verification :

Modern electronic technologies have fundamentally altered the landscape of media events. Digital journalism is characterized by the abundance, density, and rapid flow of information, unlike traditional print journalism. It allows for a diversity of information usage and control over its trajectories and directions. Media organizations have always sought new ways to leverage technological advancements to enhance the tools used in news presentation and the methods of page production in terms of volume and timing. With the benefits gained from technological advancements in the media field, organizations have been able to gather information remarkably, leading to what is termed the age of information and new media we live in today. Digital journalism has become a new mass communication medium that plays a vital role in shaping the dimensions of social, economic, and cultural reality quickly, relying on modern technology (Al-Watan newspaper, 2016).

Conversely, this speed is one of the most prominent features of electronic journalism, allowing journalists to publish news in record time compared to other newspapers. However, it poses significant challenges to the credibility of information. The desire for breaking news may lead to the dissemination of inaccurate or incomplete information, increasing the likelihood of errors. Additionally, the speed of news dissemination contributes to the spread of false and misleading news on social platforms, making it challenging for recipients to distinguish between facts and rumors. For this reason, journalists need to develop effective verification mechanisms to ensure the accuracy of information before publishing it, highlighting the importance of balancing speed and content quality to ensure source credibility and avoid the issue of prioritizing speed over verifying source credibility (Al-Watan newspaper, 2016).

_ Considering Credibility and the Necessity of Content Quality in Electronic Journalism

With the spread of fake news and weak oversight of online content, credibility has become one of the most pressing issues facing electronic journalism, affecting source credibility. Maintaining integrity and news quality has become essential to

sustaining public trust. Rapid technological developments, such as the use of artificial intelligence and virtual reality techniques in enhancing the media landscape, require significant investments to develop content and integrate it with these modern technologies. In electronic journalism, source credibility is influenced by several key factors, the first of which is the speed of news dissemination, which can sometimes lead to the hurried verification of information, negatively impacting the accuracy of published news (Jamal, 2025).

The ease of publishing content on the internet and social media platforms contributes to the spread of false information, posing a serious threat to the credibility of digital journalism and affecting news quality. As the number of sources increases, it becomes challenging for recipients to sift through correct and incorrect information. Conversely, electronic journalism allows for direct interaction between readers and journalists, which can enhance content credibility. This interaction helps develop news and enables journalists to respond to public interests. Journalists must verify news sources and information before publishing and utilize available verification tools to ensure content accuracy and transparency regarding information sources. The news gathering process is also a crucial element in enhancing credibility (Al-Watan newspaper, 2016).

B. Credibility of the Medium

The credibility of the medium in media work refers to the credibility of a larger entity encompassing the concept of media, which branches into media systems and independent channels, such as print journalism, television, and radio. Thus, media credibility is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon. It can be distinguished by two main dimensions : the first focuses on the credibility of the channel, which emphasizes the characteristics of media institutions as professional organizations that provide news, while the second pertains to studying the type, form, and nature of the medium used to broadcast or publish the message, such as comparing television to print journalism or radio (Guy, 2010, p. 03).

Moreover, this credibility also pertains to the level of public trust in it as a news source. It is not only linked to individual sources but also reflects public perceptions of the media outlet and their feelings about it. Research has identified three main components of communication medium credibility : competence, trustworthiness, and impartiality, along with the absence of personal sensationalism and vitality. These components include several overlapping sub-elements, such as courage, delivering the latest news, having a distinctive personality, and a commitment to community care (Rabah, Touati, 2022, p. 370).

However, in the context of electronic journalism, these mediums face numerous challenges, as the public relies on their perceptions of media outlets as news sources. This makes it essential for these mediums to demonstrate a high level of competence and accuracy amidst diverse news sources and the prevalence of fake news, all while managing some bias against the speed of news dissemination. This analysis can be summarized in the following points :

- Diversity of Sources Due to Information Variety :

With the rise of electronic journalism, the diversity of news sources has significantly increased. This diversity makes evaluating the credibility of each medium critically important. Given the presence of multiple digital platforms and satellite channels providing varied news information, the audience must be aware of the importance of carefully assessing sources and distinguishing between accurate and erroneous information before making judgments. While some platforms offer precise and reliable content about a particular event, others may promote misleading or inaccurate information. Therefore, with the vast amount of information available online, it becomes challenging to filter through data, sources, and news claims to distinguish the true from the false. This overwhelming amount of information complicates the fact-checking process for media professionals, yet it remains a fundamental part of the journalistic process. Thus, it is crucial for recipients to develop their skills in verifying information and distinguishing trustworthy sources from those lacking credibility (Journalisme, 2024).

_ Misleading Information Between Credibility and Denial

As previously mentioned, the multitude of news sources results in a diversity of information, which raises the issue of fake news among the audience receiving information amidst the dominance of electronic journalism in media work. This poses a real threat to the credibility of digital journalism in the digital age. Moreover, anyone can now publish information quickly, increasing the likelihood of misleading information circulating. Here, visual content, especially videos, plays a significant role in modern storytelling. However, manipulated images and videos are often used to deceive the public. For instance, fake videos can be doctored to misrepresent events, while images may be taken out of context or digitally altered by sophisticated systems and algorithms. Therefore, verifying the authenticity of visual information is as important as verifying textual information. This necessitates that media outlets make diligent efforts to validate facts and combat fake news by investing in verification methods and employing specialized teams for research and fact-checking, as well as supporting legal deterrents to minimize misleading information that negatively affects public awareness (Journalisme, 2024).

Bias and Media Credibility

Bias is one of the main challenges facing the credibility of media outlets, as political or commercial agendas can influence how news is presented. This is especially true in the age of globalization and its implications across various fields, leading to the distortion or misrepresentation of information. Therefore, media outlets must be cautious about bias in their news coverage and should strive to convey news from the scene accurately and neutrally. Journalists need to be aware of potential biases in their sources and take steps to mitigate them, such as conducting interviews with sources to gather information and verify facts. Media institutions should also aim to present diverse perspectives in analyzing documents, reports, and data to enhance integrity in media work, avoiding the rush to publish news without verifying reports, and ensuring that content does not favor a specific group by adhering to neutrality and balance (Sarah, 2025).

2.2 Features of Credibility in News Dissemination

In an era where electronic journalism has emerged, the digital news information has spread tremendously, thanks to its characteristics and features that facilitate the effective dissemination of news without distortion. We can summarize these characteristics as follows :

A. Media Credibility as a Trait of the Source and Audience Perception

Some researchers believe that credibility is built within the recipient, influenced by their acceptance of both the speaker and the message simultaneously. This perception has notably impacted subsequent research on media credibility, which has sought to provide evaluations of individuals regarding sources, classifying them between high and low credibility. This approach has made media credibility a unidimensional concept based on a binary evaluation of the objective characteristics of the source, such as role and social status. Consequently, credibility has been viewed as a fixed trait of certain sources rather than a judgment that can change over time. This ambiguity has contributed to a lack of understanding that considers credibility a variable linked to the communication process and its conditions, making it subject to criticism by researchers (Rabah, Touati, 2022, p. 370).

In the age of rapid news dissemination and the emergence of electronic journalism, media credibility has become more important than ever. Journalists are now required to ensure the accuracy of information alongside the reliability of sources, and to continually update news through regular assessments as new information becomes available, aligning with developments in the media landscape regarding the news. This approach keeps the audience continuously engaged with the news and responsive to their various inquiries.

B. Congruence Between Celebrities and the Nature of Advertised Products

The hypothesis of congruence between celebrities and products states that the effectiveness of advertisements depends on the alignment between the celebrity's image and the message of the advertised product. In other words, the success of this congruence is linked to how well the brand, including its name and qualities, aligns with the characteristics and image of the celebrities. When celebrities who closely match the product are used in advertisements, the highest level of impact and credibility is achieved (Azab, 2011, p. 13-14). The fundamental idea behind celebrity advertisements is to transfer the admiration associated with the celebrities to the brands they endorse. Studies have shown that exposure to negative information about a celebrity adversely affects consumers' choices regarding the advertised products, as the actions of celebrities become closely linked to the brand they promote (Kim, June-Hee, 2007, p. 312).

Conversely, a comprehensive approach to explaining the effects of advertisements focuses on the congruence between the advertiser and the brands as well as their advertising message. This congruence is achieved when the relevant characteristics of the advertiser closely align with the brand's attributes (Fleck, Michel, Zeitoun, 2014, p. 86). In this context, credibility directly affects public trust and is closely related to it in the media space, as credibility affirms the verification of the information obtained before it is disseminated to the audience through news channels or social media. This reduces the spread of false news, and the careful selection of celebrities directly reflects the media image, particularly regarding the level of public knowledge about the advertising personality.

C. Smart Journalism Adapting to the Fourth Technological Revolution

The term « artificial intelligence journalism » refers to media's reliance on artificial intelligence technology and innovations from the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such as high-definition 3D imaging, high-speed internet, and robotics, to produce its own media content. Advanced technology applications allow media institutions to automate various journalistic activities using artificial intelligence, including data gathering related to events, analyzing, verifying, and producing news content. Robot journalism is a concept closely related to artificial intelligence journalism and refers to journalism that uses this technology to create news content and articles based on pre-existing templates and large volumes

of data. This data is processed and learned from to produce news and reports at incredible speeds without human involvement (Rabah, Touati, 2022, p. 372).

This raises the question : How can electronic journalism be smart and distinctive in conveying information and disseminating news amidst diverse media sources and numerous news channels ? Smart journalism is characterized by its direct reliance on artificial intelligence technologies, including AI tools for developing media content in terms of form and substance, as well as word selection. Furthermore, it assists journalists in their tasks, such as sound verification and image quality enhancement according to the advancements of the Fourth Technological Revolution. This achieves speed in news delivery in a unique and attractive manner, as media institutions can now process vast amounts of information and analyze it in mere moments, facilitating the timely presentation of comprehensive reports to the public

I. 2. The Reality of Media Credibility in the Algerian Legal System

In the modern era, media institutions have become the focus of public discourse, as media credibility plays a crucial role in promoting democracy and citizens' rights in Algeria, especially in light of the recent constitutional amendment in 2020. Laws and regulations are now playing a major role in regulating and organizing the media process in a way that minimizes credibility violations in news dissemination while ensuring a degree of freedom that supports journalists in accessing news sources and diversifying their means of obtaining information. However, in the modern era, the media faces significant challenges related to censorship and the balance between restriction and freedom in practicing media work. This necessitates an analytical study of Law No. 23-14 concerning media to understand media freedom in regulating the reality of credibility between speed and information accuracy.

2.1. Legislative Regulation Under Organic Law No. 23-14 Concerning Media

In 2023, the Algerian legislator took an important step in the field of media by establishing a comprehensive and detailed legal framework to organize media duties. This involved various legal provisions, starting with defining principles and rules that govern media activity and practicing it freely, and ending with the repeal of all provisions contrary to this organic law, particularly Organic Law No. 12-05. The applicable texts remain in effect until the corresponding regulatory texts are issued. This legal design is structured into seven chapters as follows :

- **Chapter One : General Provisions**

This organic law aims to define the principles and rules that govern media activities, specifying the definition of media activity as any dissemination of news, images, and opinions, and any broadcasting of events, messages, and ideas through any written, electronic, or audiovisual medium directed at the public or a segment of it. Media activities are to be exercised freely within the framework of the constitution and applicable legislation, while respecting Islam, national identity, national sovereignty, and human rights. Media activities may be conducted by media outlets affiliated with public bodies, political parties, associations, as well as individuals and Algerian companies, provided that the shares are nominal, as per legal texts from 1 to 4.

- **Chapter Two : Media Activities**

This chapter addresses both print and electronic journalism, setting the conditions for practicing this activity according to the respective laws, from establishment to audiovisual activity, which is regulated according to the conditions specified in the relevant law, as outlined in articles 5 to 8.

- **Chapter Three : Common Provisions for Media**

Every media outlet is required to demonstrate ownership of purely national capital, and at least half of the editorial staff must be professional journalists. The lending of names for the purpose of establishing a media outlet is prohibited, as is receiving funding or financial assistance from foreign entities, in accordance with the provisions of articles 9 to 12.

Chapter Four : Mechanisms for Regulating Media Activity

This is considered the most important chapter of the law, as it stipulates the establishment of an independent authority to regulate both print and electronic journalism, alongside a national independent authority to regulate audiovisual activities, as per the provisions of articles 13-14.

- **Chapter Five : The Journalism Profession and Professional Ethics**

In this chapter, unlike the others, the journalistic activity is defined, and the conditions for recognizing a journalist as a professional are specified. This aligns with the constitutional amendment that guarantees freedom of expression while ensuring the protection of journalists from various forms of violence and threats in accessing information. Furthermore, it establishes a Higher Council for Professional Ethics, which includes rules that must be adhered to, in articles 15 to 36.

- **Chapter Six : The Right to Reply and Correction**

The Algerian legislator continues to elaborate on the provisions of this law to support media credibility. Under articles 37 to 43, individuals or entities have the right to respond to various false or misleading claims, and media outlets must publish corrections in case of errors, detailing the procedures related to exercising this right.

- **Chapter Seven : Offenses Committed in the Context of Media**

The legal provisions in this chapter focus on various offenses and crimes that media professionals may commit, including false news that threatens media credibility, illegal funding, and name lending. Penalties for various offenses related to media activities are specified in legal articles 44 to 56.

2.2. The Practice of Electronic Media Between Freedom and Restriction

The Algerian legislator has sought to ensure media credibility and protect it from the dominance of false news in the era of electronic journalism by establishing a set of guarantees through which media work can thrive and improve the pace of news dissemination. Simultaneously, a set of regulations has been put in place to support this goal and regulate legal accountability.

A. Guarantees for Media Activity to Support Media Institutions in Rapid News Access

The Algerian legislator has ensured that media activity is surrounded by a set of legal guarantees, relying on the constitution, to guarantee the application of these guarantees to electronic media activities. These guarantees aim to enhance the freedom of access to information and facilitate the rapid and efficient dissemination of news, contributing to greater transparency and strengthening the role of media in society. This is in line with Article 54 of Presidential Decree 20-442 regarding the 2020 amendment. The most important guarantees include :

- **The Journalist's Right to Access Information Sources and Non-Disclosure of Their Sources :**

The right of journalists to access information sources means enabling them to view all non-restricted documents without barriers that hinder the flow of information. Algerian law, in Article 32 of Organic Law 23-14, obligates all bodies, administrations, and public institutions to provide journalists with access to information, regardless of its nature and activity, thereby enhancing citizens' right to know the news (Khawadjia, Zaamouh, 2024, p. 175). However, this principle is not absolute, as a list of exceptions is outlined in Article 33 of the same law concerning information that includes news related to national defense, state security, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity. These broad and vague criteria indicate the potential for disproportionately impacting the exercise of freedom of expression. The exceptions also encompass news related to the conduct of preliminary and judicial investigations and the legitimate interests of institutions, raising questions about the extent to which access to information is guaranteed.

It is evident that Algerian legislation has expanded the imposition of secrecy on many types of information and documents under the pretext of national security and the country's higher interests. Therefore, there is an urgent need to achieve a balance between the public's right to know and the authorities' right to impose secrecy on certain types of information, where Article 27 recognizes the protection of journalistic confidentiality.

It is noteworthy that the principle of journalists' sources confidentiality has its limits, as evidenced by comparative judicial applications. For example, in the case of *Nordisk Film & TV A/S v. Denmark*, dated December 8, 2005, the issue of a journalist disclosing research results conducted under a false identity to prepare a report on child sexual abuse in Denmark was addressed. The European Court ruled that the journalist's request was inadmissible, and the coercive order issued by local courts constituted a proportionate interference with press freedom. The court affirmed that the public authorities' aim was legitimate, justifying the infringement of the principle of journalists' sources confidentiality to prevent serious crimes committed against minors (European Court of Human Rights, 2025).

- **The Right to Be Free from All Forms of Violence, Insult, or Humiliation**

The legislator has focused on protecting journalists from moral and physical assaults according to Article 25 of Organic Law 23-14. Journalists are granted legal protection from all forms of violence, insult, humiliation, or threats while performing their profession. Anyone who insults a journalist through derogatory remarks or hurtful statements during their work or in that context is subject to penalties according to the Penal Code. Clearly, this legal protection afforded to journalists contributes to enhancing the speed of news access in the field of media by providing a legally secure environment that enables and encourages them to seek and obtain the latest updates, even in potentially hazardous conditions, such as during wars, demonstrations, or gatherings. This leads to a faster flow of information to the public.

- **The Right to Refuse Publication of Any News to the Public**

In the context of ensuring media credibility and the rights of journalists, every piece of news published or broadcast by a media outlet must include the name of its author or refer to the original source if it is quoted from another media outlet, as stipulated in Article 21 of Organic Law 23-14. According to Article 28 of the same law, any journalist working for a media outlet has the right to refuse the publication or broadcast of any news carrying their signature if substantial changes

are made to it without their consent. This aligns with Article 02 bis of the French law amended by Law 2016-1542 dated November 14, 2016 (Légifrance, 2020).

- **The Right to Training and Development**

According to Article 31 of the same law, providing training and journalistic development is considered a fundamental guarantee that enhances the competencies and skills of journalists working in electronic newspapers. It stipulates that the employing body is obliged to ensure continuous training and to improve the level and update the knowledge of journalists and media professionals. In return, they must demonstrate this process annually to the authority regulating print and electronic journalism or to the national independent authority regulating audiovisual activity, depending on the nature of the activity.

This means that journalistic training and development are essential to ensure media credibility and avoid future legal liability. Moreover, it supports and enhances the speed of news access and dissemination to the public by enabling journalists to acquire new research and analytical skills, allowing them to skillfully integrate modern technology and digital media tools. Additionally, good training increases planning and organizational skills and helps avoid errors and violations, whether disciplinary or criminal.

- **The Journalist's Right Not to Be Prevented from Publishing Their Work**

The Algerian legislator has established a set of regulations as a means to ensure media credibility and enhance the quality of information in the era of electronic journalism. Various legal systems agree on the journalist's right to publish information obtained from reliable sources, and authorities cannot prevent publication under constitutional provisions. However, certain news cannot be published or even accessed by journalists, particularly concerning heads of state or foreign governments, as stipulated in Article 48, which also includes members of diplomatic and consular missions. Any insult directed by a media outlet towards foreign leaders or members of these missions accredited to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria is punishable by a fine ranging from one hundred thousand dinars (100,000 DZD) to five hundred thousand dinars (500,000 DZD).

In the context of insulting a foreign head of state, the Paris Court of Appeals issued a ruling in 1997 under Article 36 of the Law of July 29, 1881, convicting the publisher and a journalist from *Le Monde* for insulting King Hassan II of Morocco after publishing an article containing a secret report implicating the king's entourage based on information from the Geopolitical Drug Observatory (OGD). However, the European Court confirmed that organizing the offense of insulting heads of state in French legislation violates freedom of expression, contrary to Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Dirk, Tarlach, 2015, p. 102).

B. Restrictions on Media Activity as a Mechanism to Ensure Credibility in News Dissemination

Credibility is the foundation of public trust in accepting news published through television channels or Facebook pages. In the era of electronic journalism, there has been a growing need to restrict media work, limit the rights granted to journalists or media institutions, and impose certain administrative and penal sanctions in order to achieve media credibility, avoid legal accountability, and strike a balance between freedom of expression and the necessity of providing accurate and reliable information.

- **Requirement for Audiovisual Institutions to Comply with Licensing Regulations as a Primary Constraint to Ensure Media Credibility**

The practice of audiovisual activity, including electronic audiovisual content, is subject to a licensing system, which serves as the legal mechanism for establishing television or radio broadcasting services, including web TV services. The license is granted by a decision from the minister in charge of communication based on a candidacy announcement in accordance with the conditions and procedures defined in Executive Decree No. 16-220. Any legal entity wishing to obtain a license must meet the criteria outlined in Article 12 of Law No. 23-20 concerning audiovisual activity, which includes (Article 12, Organic Law No. 23-14, 2023):

Proof of compliance with Algerian law.

Proof that the director of the audiovisual communication service and all shareholders or partners are exclusively Algerian nationals.

Proof that the service director has practical experience in the media field of no less than eight years, evidenced by membership in the social security fund and possession of a higher education certificate.

Proof that the service director and shareholders/partners have civil rights.

That neither the service director nor any of the shareholders or partners has been subject to a final judgment due to corruption or dishonorable acts.

Proof that shareholders and partners born before July 1942 did not have an anti-revolutionary stance as of November 1, 1954.

That the social capital is entirely national.

Proof that there are journalists or professionals in the media sector among the shareholders and partners.

Proof that the shares constituting the social capital are nominal.

- **Restricting Journalists' Work in News Dissemination to Ensure Credibility**

This is addressed in Article 3 and Article 35 of Law No. 23-14 concerning media, which set out a series of obligations as constraints on journalists' activities to ensure the accuracy and precision of news, thereby safeguarding the integrity of media institutions amid modern technological advancements and the rapid spread of news between truth and falsehood. Among the key constraints introduced by these articles are:

According to Article 3, media activities are to be conducted freely within the framework of the constitution and organic law, provided that several fundamental principles are respected, such as Islam, national religious references, national identity, national sovereignty, human rights, and the citizen's right to objective and fair information.

Article 35 specifies journalists' obligations during their work, requiring them to adhere to ethical and professional standards, refrain from publishing false news, endangering individuals, glorifying colonialism, praising racism and violence, exploiting the profession for personal purposes, and respecting children's rights, women's dignity, and individuals' privacy, as well as anything contrary to public order and morality.

Under these restrictions, media work is significantly affected in terms of the speed and manner of seeking and disseminating information to the public. However, on the other hand, these restrictions enhance media credibility by compelling journalists to comply with ethical and legal rules, helping them avoid violations that contradict media work provisions. This reduces the likelihood of publishing misleading or false information without verifying its accuracy and legitimacy, thereby improving the quality of content, which is presented in a manner that respects national identity and cultural constants.

C. Imposition of Sanctions and Procedural Provisions for Violating Legal Rules Aimed at Supporting Credibility in News Dissemination

The pursuit of media credibility is not only achieved through granting rights and imposing obligations but also requires transparency in application and continuous oversight of media activities in the digital journalism landscape. In this context, the Algerian legislator has established a set of legal provisions to regulate this activity, along with a range of administrative and penal sanctions, as well as procedural rules that deviate from the general statute of limitations when crimes are committed in this field. This ensures the credibility of electronic journalism while minimizing the spread of false news and legal accountability as much as possible.

- **Administrative Level**

The Audiovisual Regulatory Authority is responsible for monitoring the compliance of practitioners in electronic audiovisual media with the specific conditions governing this activity. It has the authority to issue warnings to violators to encourage adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Warnings can be issued by the authority independently or upon notification from political parties, professional organizations, or any concerned entity. Additionally, the Algerian legislator stipulates administrative penalties ranging from a complete or partial suspension of the violating program, with the suspension period not exceeding thirty days. Penalties may also include revocation of the license by the competent judicial authority based on notification from the regulatory authority. Moreover, penalties for electronic audiovisual media may include the revocation of registration certificates in certain cases, such as non-compliance with warnings during this period, prolonged cessation of activity, or bankruptcy (Arzeki, 2024, p. 434).

- **Penal Level**

The penalties prescribed for offenses committed within the framework of media activity are characterized by being limited to financial fines, along with measures aimed at partially or wholly suspending activities. According to Article 54 of the Constitution, imprisonment penalties for media offenses are prohibited, meaning that media offenses cannot be subjected to imprisonment. However, the amount of the financial fine imposed by the judiciary varies based on the type of violation.

Organic Law No. 23-14 concerning media aligns with the Constitution in its content. In defining offenses committed in the context of media activity, it specifies penalties in the form of financial fines as a general rule without establishing or specifying imprisonment penalties in Articles 44 to 52, including legal persons. For example, this law penalizes media outlets that receive funding or financial assistance without an organic connection to the granting entity or from foreign bodies with a fine ranging from one million dinars (1,000,000 DZD) to two million dinars (2,000,000 DZD). Similarly, Article 45 penalizes anyone who lends their name for the establishment of a media outlet with a similar fine, along with the possibility of suspending activities and confiscating equipment. Additionally, fines ranging from one hundred

thousand dinars (100,000 DZD) to five hundred thousand dinars (500,000 DZD) are imposed for any insult directed at foreign leaders in Article 48, and fines from five hundred thousand dinars (500,000 DZD) to one million dinars (1,000,000 DZD) are imposed on those practicing media activities without obtaining the required accreditation as per Article 50, which refers back to Article 20 of the same law.

Moreover, Article 54 establishes a general ruling regarding the statute of limitations for these offenses concerning both public and civil actions related to offenses committed through print journalism, introducing a new ruling that differs from the usual provisions in the Code of Criminal Procedure regarding the statute of limitations for both actions. In this case, the statute of limitations is three months from the date of commission for print media and six months for electronic and audiovisual media, which is a very short period.

These administrative and penal sanctions can be viewed as restrictions on media activities as a means to ensure credibility and a mechanism for verifying and confirming accurate news before it is presented to the public through digital platforms in electronic journalism. This reflects the legislator's commitment to ensuring that media practice occurs within a constitutional and legal framework. The application of these sanctions serves to guarantee the credibility of media work, deter violators from spreading false or misleading information, and enhance legal accountability while promoting media credibility through a balance with legal accountability in presenting reliable content.

II– Conclusion:

In conclusion, I can say that the media sector has undergone a significant digital transformation with the emergence of electronic journalism, which has contributed to the rapid dissemination of news from the field to the minds of the audience across various platforms and age groups. This has conveyed social, economic, political, cultural, and even legal dimensions in the form of events across different digital spaces, resulting in a massive influx of news that is often inaccurate and not sufficiently verified by media institutions. This has led to public outcry regarding the need to confirm media credibility in reporting events accurately, prompting a study of the balance between media credibility and legal accountability amidst the dominance of electronic journalism in the media landscape. This balance involves the speed of information dissemination while allowing a degree of freedom, against the backdrop of imposing restrictions to regulate media work in order to enhance legal accountability and ensure the quality of media content.

• Study Results

_ Electronic journalism has accelerated the transmission of news from the event field to the audience thanks to its characteristics based on modern technological techniques, especially in light of advancements in artificial intelligence.

_ Achieving the idea of balance between media credibility and legal accountability requires harmonizing the practical aspects of media work with the theoretical aspects that guide journalists and media institutions in their practical application.

_ The increase in the spread of false news and the rise of misleading information necessitates analyzing the legal framework governing media work to curb such transgressions.

• Study Recommendations

_ To achieve a balance between media credibility and legal accountability, it is essential to develop legislation related to media work in line with modern technological advancements in this field, thereby imposing penalties involving imprisonment instead of merely relying on financial fines in Law No. 23-14 governing media work, especially for serious violations that threaten state security and stability.

_ It would be preferable to equalize the statute of limitations for public and civil actions related to offenses committed through electronic journalism with the original period in the Code of Criminal Procedure according to Articles 7 to 10, instead of the six-month period stipulated in Article 54 of Law No. 23-14, which is considered short. This aims to ensure that offenders do not escape punishment and thus achieve media credibility while ensuring legal accountability.

_ Enhancing educational integration between media studies and criminal law is advisable, connecting the practical realities of each as a necessity to maintain media credibility. This is because defining the journalist and media institution in terms of deterrence when violating ethical media practices—especially in the digital space—constitutes a clear breach of legal texts that warrant punishment, particularly when disseminating false news that undermines national sovereignty.

_ Efforts should focus on developing means to enhance international cooperation and strengthen national and international support to elevate media work and ensure media credibility amidst effective legal accountability, which can only be achieved through knowledge and experience exchange in the field of electronic journalism and learning from past mistakes.

_ Encouraging innovation and development in media work by investing in modern technology and artificial intelligence techniques to create responsible digital journalism that is legally and socially accountable for the news it publishes, based on the idea of disseminating accurate and high-quality content rather than misleading or false news.

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