



The Practice of Media Education and Media Research: A Review on Five Asian Countries

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Abstract

This research paper presents and discusses the results of Media education and Media research practices in five Asian countries. This paper reviews the development and implementation of media education and media research practices in five Asian countries, i.e., India, China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. The paper reviews the following issues: media education, media research practice, and the need for collaborative efforts in research. The review analysis reveals that media education and media research practices in five Asian countries often lack media education, media research, media information, and instructional practices. Still, it is also a rapidly developing part of the curriculum. More vital collaboration between teachers and researchers may be needed that leads to effective media practice.

Keywords: Media; Media education; Media Research; Asian countries; Pedagogy; Media pedagogy; Educational reforms; Government policy; Media industry; Media academia; Collaborative research

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Introduction

Media education in Asian societies is relatively young, but is developing rapidly. While the dominant models of media education in the world are broadly Western and drawn mainly from English-speaking countries, the question is: how are Asian societies developing and implementing media education?

This paper reviews five Asian countries, namely India, China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. India and China were chosen as they have the world's most extensive education system, and Singapore was considered the best worldwide in today's date. Japan and South Korea were chosen who lead the way in the area of media products. Many research articles, review articles, short reports, and policy documents were reviewed regarding the development of media education [1-6].

Media Education in India

In India, media education has been completed for almost a hundred years. But it has not yet been freed from the duality, whether technical or ideological education. While the duality of technology and ideology is the cause of the marginalization of media education, on the other hand, the government neglected,

and apathetic attitude of media institutions is blurring the pictures of media education.

Based on a long journey of media education in India, it can say that media education has not been able to progress as much as it should have done. There has been a quantitative growth in media education, but the lack of quality is enough. Lacks of resources are another significant issue and challenge towards media education in India. If seen, even today, media education has not met the standards of education. If compare it to other subjects then this serious subject has not been given as much attention.

Despite the connection with human sensibilities and social responsibility, media education in India is not what it should get. There are many reasons behind this. Therefore, this study has tried to know the reason behind this as we know that media education in India connects two sectors: media academia and the media industry.

If we look back in history, it is found that there is a flourishing of media education in India (Desai, 2008). Despite the long journey of media education in India, it has not yet gained professional education. Also, it is in duality, whether it is professional or traditional, or vocational education. The lack of mutual support of media academia and the media industry in India is one of the issues and challenges of media education in India [7,8].

At the same time, media institutions are not preparing the syllabus as per the requirements of media industries. When students leave media institutions and go to a media house, the knowledge they learned in the institutions was unsatisfactory. So there is a gap between media institutions and the media industry. Today, there is a need to consider the Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary model approach of media. Media education should be out from the Arts and Social Sciences and develop as a separate discipline. Along with this, media education institutes should prepare syllabus and curriculum as per the actual needs of media industries [9-12].

Media Education in China

Media education started lately in mainland China. In 1994, Shangzhou Xia, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, introduced media education into China for the first time (Xia, 1994). And in 1997, Wei Bu traced the evolution of the concept of "media education" in western countries and analysed the significance of media education, content and implementation, and method Bu, 1997). After that Wei Bu continued to explore media education, she set up the "medium-class" channel named "Youth Corner" in China Youth Internet. This is an effective way to introduce media knowledge to young people. In this case, young people have asked many questions through this platform. For example, Could we believe the news? What is a journalist doing as usual? And how does the advertisement work? This FAQ encourages young people to learn more about the media.

In 2000, the Shanghai Municipal Commission of the China Communist Youth League investigated youngsters in Shanghai through qualitative and quantitative study and reported that rational understanding of media for young people was more limited. They were lack knowledge of media ethics relatively, comparing with other age groups. In China, media education has not been able to progress [10].

Media Education in Japan

Media education is undergoing rapid changes in Japan and elsewhere in the industrialized world, particularly the increase in multi-media technologies and digital services. The importance of the media for everyday life in modern, industrialized societies is reflected in an ever-increasing number of publications on the media, media ownership, and media control.

In addition, the media's roles for political and social change, their function as a promoter of commercialism, their importance for information and entertainment, and the media's use of language are some topics that have been and continue to be widely discussed. "Media studies" is a large and continuously growing interdisciplinary field of research that touches upon political science, sociology, psychology, linguistics, discourse analysis, and cultural studies.

However, media education in Japan has not received adequate attention from scholars within Japanese Studies. The lack of interest is evident from the relatively small number of non-Japanese researchers on the media in Japan, compared with other core areas of Japanese Studies, such as politics, history, art, or literature [11].

Media Education in Singapore

Various government agencies have also introduced a slate of media education programs targeted at the general public. Some notable government-initiated campaigns include IDA's Infocomm My Way, a media campaign, a dedicated web portal, and advertising collaterals such as posters in subways and on food court tables, and road shows raise the observability and visibility of new technologies (IDA Singapore, 2008).

The campaign covered online safety, e-government services, and commercial online services such as online auctions. The MDA has also introduced the on-going Media Action program, which attempts to raise Singaporeans' knowledge and skills levels relating to new media. Hence, courses are conducted at affordable prices to ramp up public interest and increase skills levels in blogging, digital photography, computer animation, etc. (Media Development Authority, 2006b). However, while these campaigns have focused intensely on the functional literacy of Singaporeans, the critical media literacy aspect has not received as much emphasis [12-14].

In this regard, two organizations made great strides in raising public awareness of critical media literacy – the Parents' Advisory Group for the Internet (PAGi) and Touch Community Services (TCS). The now-defunct PAGi conducted multilingual Online Safety Workshops for parents, ran a popular website providing online safety tips and resources, and conducted road shows at schools and workplaces to spread the word on safe and beneficial Internet use (Media Development Authority, 2005). It was subsequently subsumed under the National Internet Advisory Council's Community Advisory Committee, which has since been replaced by the Internet and Media Advisory Committee (INMAC), whose remit is to advise on media literacy programs and related policies (Government of Singapore, 2007a).

It should also be noted that the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts set up a high-level Advisory Council on the Impact of New Media on Society (AIMS) in 2007. Comprising community leaders, academics, senior civil servants, journalists, and CEOs of significant media and telecommunication companies, AIMS has been tasked with preparing a landmark policy paper to advise the government on how best to regulate new media so that it is societally beneficial, facilitating public expression and creativity and stimulating the growth of the interactive and digital media sector while considering the ethical and social implications (Government of Singapore, 2007b). The establishment of INMAC and AIMS signals the Singapore government's realization that new media can have a significant societal impact which must be monitored and managed through the promotion of critical media literacy.

Media Education in South Korea

Media education in South Korea has developed in a very independent, sui generis manner. It arose from the television viewers' movement, which was launched in the early 1980s to achieve viewer sovereignty over public broadcasting. In 1980, an authoritative regime led by military leaders came to power and tightened its control over the press. Out of the struggle against

political oppression, a civic movement arose to reject paying the subscription fee of KBS (Korea Broadcasting System), which was and still is Korea's leading public broadcaster. Beginning in April 1986, this campaign, The Movement against KBS Subscription Fee, was led by religious organizations (including Christian and Catholic) and women's organizations [15].

It was supported by as much as 80% of the Korean population for approximately three years. During the campaign, media activists transformed the issue into a nationwide television audience movement. Religious groups such as YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and women's organizations such as Korean Women link actively raised the television audience's awareness. Content analysis, critical analysis, and active participation were the main approaches used to educate television viewers. In this way, the history of media education in South Korea is rooted in this civic movement of television viewers [1, 2].

In the late 1980s, South Korea succeeded in achieving a peaceful transfer of political authority. This political change remarkably improved the freedom of the press due to the introduction of more commercial television channels and less pressure on public television. These changes in the political and media environments affected media education practices in that civil society associations began to focus more on the education of children and young people rather than on the education of television viewers. School teachers began to teach media education, albeit mainly through unsystematic, extra-curricular activities.

Since the mid-1990s, young people's interest in film and video production has increased with the widespread use of digital camcorders. Many youngsters have learned video production skills at a low cost in youth centers run by local governments. In response to young people's interests in film and video production, the YMCA in Seoul has held the yearly Youth Video Festival since 1998 (Seoul YMCA, 2007). The Korean Society of Media Education began to hold its national conference on media education in 1997 to provide a forum for teachers, practitioners, activists, and academics to share their experiences and discuss the issues.

Practice of Media research in India

According to Senior Media Prof. K. V. Nagaraj, Head of Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar, Assam, in his article, the professional research organizations came into the scene only in the 1970s. The ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) was perhaps the only source of circulation data considered authentic. Historically, academic research in journalism per se was not a phenomenon till the 1970s.

Some research efforts in journalism could be seen in other social sciences, which were inter-disciplinary, either in history or political science or English literature. Many of the early teachers who took an interest in teaching journalism were from English literature.

Prof. Nagaraj expresses the quality of Ph.D.'s in journalism and mass communication does not meet the strict parameters of international standards. Often they are products of 'cut-and-paste' business drawn from Internet sources. Original research

does occur, but here again, the number of quality efforts is far and few.

When it comes to quantitative techniques and their application, it is merely duplication or multiplication of what has already been done. Even qualitative research is far from satisfactory. There exists an urgent need to train a dedicated band of researchers in universities [15].

Practice of Media research in China

According to Li, Communication as a discipline has experienced the three most significant phases in China. Phase I was from 1981 to 1989, when communication was first introduced to China with a significant focus on the initial conceptualization of the field. Scholars endeavoured to achieve this goal by importing and translating Western, especially American Communication studies. Phase II was from 1990 to 1996, which was also the exploratory phase of Communication studies in China. Scholars strived to localize the study to meet the demand of the Chinese news industry. 1997 to 2003 constitutes Phase III, the innovation and evaluation phase. Communication finally escalated to the senior subject in 1998 and prospered. From 2005 to the present, the scope and scale of media and communication studies in China expanded dramatically.

Media convergence, national image, media industry, and Internet Communication became cutting-edge topics in the past few years. During these phases, Chinese scholars have constructed their own conceptualization of "Chinese Communication." At the macro level, it refers to Communication knowledge disseminated, expanded, and applied in China. The meso level implies systematic integration of Communication knowledge and Chinese politics, economy, culture, history, society, education, and philosophy. At the micro-level, it indicates a study on Chinese Communication theories, methodologies, and historical trajectory.

However, as Shan pinpointed, communication studies were born out of luck because it was neither channelled to sociology nor immersed in information science. The only discipline that embraced this forlorn infant was journalism. Yet, according to Shan, Chinese Journalism ran out of steam before the birth of communication studies. This was due to the long-lasting debate on whether Journalism could be counted as an independent subject. Consequently, during the 1980s, Chinese journalism was detached from rational analysis and explanatory power.

Shan and Shao summarized the top five impediments for Communication studies in China. First of all, up till now, most Communication theories and practices are developed under Western influence, and the mission of "indigenization" has never been accomplished. Therefore, the mismatch of borrowed theory and local practices is becoming more evident in various fields. Secondly, the methodology system is still disorganized.

Currently, three types of methodology dominate Chinese academia, and each has its problem. To begin with, the boundary between case study and pure description is still vague. Most studies only utilize Chinese examples to prove Western theories without further contemplation. Then in recent years, Chinese scholars are obsessed with quantitative methods without employing

advanced statistic testing. The last type of methodology, which is prevalent yet not fully proved scientific, summarizes personal working experience and thoughts.

Thirdly, most studies are reactive and lagging behind the digital era. Fourthly, Chinese Communication studies are still shackled by ideology, especially in interpersonal and organizational communication. Lastly, academic norms have not been formalized yet. Thus Chinese scholars are caught in the middle of Western theories and Chinese reality [16].

Practice of Media research in Japan

A significant part of mass communication research in Japan has been conducted by universities and research institutes established by media associations. In 1932, the nation's first journalism department was established at Sophia University, which offered courses and lectures related to mass media studies. Its annual publication, *Communication Kenkyu* (Communications Research), sometimes carries articles written in English.

In 1949, Tokyo University established the Institute of Journalism, now called the Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies. The institute's journal used to be called *The Bulletin of the Institute of Journalism*. However, in 1981, it was renamed *The Bulletin of the Institute of Journalism and Communication Studies*. Now known as *The Bulletin of the Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies*, its articles are frequently referred to.

Keio University established its Institute for Communications Research in 1961. It publishes two periodicals: *The Bulletin of the Institute for Communications Research* and *Keio Communication Review*, which is published in English. The above three departments or institutions are the early founders devoted to mass communication studies in Japan. Today, the study is widespread, with more than thirty universities and colleges with departments or institutes related to mass communication research [17].

Research institutes established by media associations have made essential contributions to mass communication research in Japan. As early as 1946, NHK, the public service broadcasting corporation in Japan, established the Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (BCRI). The institute is the largest organization in Japan and has conducted much empirical, theoretical, and fact-finding research.

The institute publishes *The NHK Monthly Report on Broadcast Research* and *The NHK Annual Bulletin of Broadcasting Culture Research*. Two other periodicals are compiled and published by the Theoretical Research Center, a section of BCRI. One of these, *Hosogaku Kenkyu* (Studies of Broadcasting), carries important articles about theoretical research. The other, *Studies of Broadcasting*, is published in English and contributes most importantly to introducing Japanese mass communication research to the world academy.

National Association of Commercial Broadcasters research institute was established in 1962. It publishes an annual bulletin and many articles on its monthly research report *Gekkan Minpo* (Monthly of Commercial Broadcasting). The institute conducts many large-scale surveys and research. The Japanese Newspaper

Publishers and Editors Associations research institute was established in 1976. It publishes an annual bulletin and many articles in its *Shinbun Kenkyu* (Research on Newspaper). This institute regularly conducts a newspaper readership survey, one of the most important surveys in the country.

Practice of Media research in Singapore

In his review of communication research in Singapore, Kuo (1991) notes that "communication research in Singapore has been carried out by researchers from various academic backgrounds without the support of a strong institutional base, and without an established research tradition" (p. 120). This has led to a dominance of descriptive rather than theoretical or critical studies typically conducted on ad hoc bases [18].

Kuo concludes that "communication research in Singapore is lagging both in quality and quantity" (p. 121). In addition, political communication research has likely been suppressed by Singapore's tight social and political controls and the fact that the parameters for acceptable political debates (known in Singapore as 'out-of-bounds markers') are shrouded in ambiguity. Thus, it is no surprise that very few academics dare to test the boundaries of political deliberation in Singapore (Lee 2005).

Practice of Media research in South Korea

Due to the perceived Western-centrism of the Korean academic community, there is a sort of identity crisis in Korean communication research and social sciences in general. The history of the American impact on the Korean academic community began soon after the Korean War ended, and American sponsored Korean students and scholars migrated to the U.S. for education.

Kang Myung-Koo, one of the leading figures of Korean communication research, mentions that the "absence of present-day realities" is caused by "the internalized imperialist eye among South Korean intellectuals" due to "the colonial structure of knowledge production in South Korea."

Korean media, education, and research have accepted Western models and theories about the media as the ideal with hardly any criticism since the 1960s. As the editors of *De-Westernizing Media Studies* state, there is a growing reaction against the self-absorption and parochialism of much Western media theory. It has become routine for universalistic observations about the media to be advanced in English-language books based on evidence derived from a tiny handful of countries. Yet, the universe is changing in a way that makes this narrowness transparently absurd.

Since the 1980s, within the Korean Academia, Western concepts and theories have been questioned and their adaptability in the Korean context. Many have tried the creative application, complementation, or revision of Western ideas, but there has not been a definite solution. In Kang's view, South Korean theories, per se, are not needed, but researchers who construct their original research questions in the interest of and within the local context are required.

Many Korean scholars believe theories of post-colonialism should be used to provide disclosure of the power relations in Korean academic discourse. In their view, Korean culture has been ignored in Korean communication research as researchers introduce foreign theories straight into the Korean socio-cultural context. Thus, there is a need for painful self-reflection and autonomous theory production [18].

Collaborative Efforts in Research

Collaborative research can be defined as research involving coordination between institutions, researchers, organizations, and communities. This cooperation can bring distinct expertise to a project. Collaboration can be classified as voluntary, consortia, federation, affiliation, and merger and can occur at five levels: within disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, or national vs. international. Collaborative research can exchange ideas across disciplines, learn new skills, access to funding, higher quality of results, radical benefits, and personal factors such as fun and pleasure.

Need of Collaborative Research

Collaboration encourages the establishment of effective communication and partnerships and also offers equal opportunities among the team members. It honors and respects each member's individual and organizational style. Collaboration also increases ethical conduct, maintaining honesty, integrity, justice, transparency, and confidentiality.

Collaboration is essential for Research

- Collaboration is necessary for researchers to address complex research issues that otherwise cannot be addressed by individual researchers. Due to the increased specialization in science, there is a need for individual researchers to keep their activities focused and specialized (Bukvova, 2010; Katz & Martin, 1997). Such focus and specialization would allow researchers to make significant knowledge advancements in their respective fields (Bukvova, 2010). While individual researchers can learn all the knowledge and skills needed to solve a complex research problem, this learning process can be very time-consuming and may prohibit one from being specialized. Thus, when addressing complex issues, researchers need to pool expertise together and obtain cross-fertilization through interdisciplinary collaborations.
- Collaboration is essential for researchers' sustainable development in knowledge creation. The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (2012) points out that knowledge and capacity may be replaced or refreshed at a breakneck pace in a knowledge economy. Thus, continuous learning and knowledge transfer are critical for researchers to remain relevant in their fields in an ongoing knowledge creation process. Such education and transfer may bring together researchers with culturally different ideas, which create conditions for new knowledge creation. Thus, learning and transfer through collaborations lead to research productivity (as indicated by grantsmanship and publications, as a result of knowledge creation) and

help researchers maintain their ability for sustainable development in a knowledge economy.

- Collaboration may reduce research costs. Bukvova's (2010) review on research collaboration finds that experimentalists tend to collaborate more than theoreticians. In experimental research, the instrumentations required are getting increasingly complex. Scientific instrumentation costs have jumped considerably with the successive generations of technology. By collaborating, research costs can be shared, and research facilities can be better optimized and utilized.
- Collaboration may enable intellectual companionship as well. The goal of the research is to expand the boundaries of knowledge. As researchers are specialized and focused, their advancement at the frontier of each research field can be lonely. An individual may partially overcome this intellectual isolation by collaborating with others and forming working relationships with them. Since collaboration is essential to communication research, social network theories may have potential application to research management to promote collaborative relations among researchers.

Challenges of Collaboration

Collaborations can be a frequent source of problems. This can be due to many reasons, such as sharing credit and responsibility after joining more than two people for a common purpose. Sometimes, collaborations do not get initiated due to the unwillingness of sharing or working together. Collaborations are often spoiled because of misunderstandings among the participants due to disagreement about what and when to publish and discontent with a slow collaborator. Some challenges are as follows:

Individual challenges

There is a scarcity of competent researchers in India. Most of the researches going on in our country is not methodologically sound. As far as scholarship is considered, it is an individualized endeavour, and academic frameworks for recognition, rewards, and promotions are supposed at the individual level. For the promotion and tenure process, single-authored publications are given more credit as compared to collaborative work. Intellectual property rights are the central issue and occur in various categories of members in collaborative research.

Institutional challenges

This is because of differences in different approaches among the collaborating partners. For example, if collaboration occurs between industry and institutional levels, discrepancies arise between objectives, other hypotheses, cultural differences, and technology issues.

Challenges regarding funds

The most critical challenge is fewer funds granted for research to universities than small elite research institutions. This leads to less focus on research and more on teaching by the universities resulting in separation of education and research. Due to funding restrictions, most of the significant work of Indian research is in the theoretical domain [17-18].

Systematic challenges

In India, the success of the scientists is prioritized by becoming an administrative head in research institutions rather than advancing research. Furthermore, the prevalence of ineptitude among the spectrum has made incompetent scientists strengthen their weaknesses. There is a culture of elitism in our Indian laboratories, where the manual work is done by laboratory assistants and scientists, mostly just command orders.

Conclusion

Overhaul current curricula for a stronger emphasis on practical subjects. The dominant models of media education globally are broadly Western, and most are drawn from English-speaking countries. Media education and media research practices are often deficient in five Asian countries, both in media education, media research, media information, and instructional practices. Still, it is also a rapidly developing part of the curriculum. The current journalism curriculum and teaching approaches are urgently needed. A stronger emphasis on practice training should be the primary aim.

After reviewing many types of research, the major problem of media research practices was the slow growth of the subject field, lack of professionally trained researchers in the field, lack of resources and facilities, financial and physical support to the research program, low priority given to the development of media technology, lack of awareness of the public, what communication research is about. The other factors include bias for audience studies, neglect of development studies, poor methodology, poor findings, and poorly written reports.

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Stronger and greater collaboration between researchers is necessary. The financial commitment, inadequate regulatory frameworks, and diverse interests are the potential challenges in collaborative research. This can be possible if the collaborators respect each other without involving their ego and are willing to give and take constructive criticism without being defensive.

Suggestions

For Media Education

- Current journalism curriculum is urgently needed.
- Innovative teaching approaches and methods are needed.
- Practical training should be required for the media students.
- Need for collaborative efforts between the media industry and media institutions.

For Media Research

- There is a need for cross-disciplinary studies.
- There is a need for nationwide studies.
- There is a need for multi-national studies.
- There is an urgent need for methodology studies.
- There is a need for Development-oriented studies.

For Collaborative efforts in research

- Stronger and greater collaboration between researchers is necessary.
- Collaborators respect each other.

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