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An Evaluation of Fulfillment of Press Freedom as the Intrinsic Values of Psychological Contract of Macau Journalists After the Passing of Civil Protection Law under the Background of Economic Success With Once Over 75% Government Approval Rate

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Abstract

The research is conducted with background that Macau government has had positive satisfaction rate from 1999 to 2018. According to Macau annual survey by HKU's public polling survey released in December 2018, Macau government received with highest satisfaction rate of 75.8% in 2014 and 62.6% of Macau residents evaluate the policy of the Central Government on Macau after the Handover to be very good and quite good. 62% of Macau residents rated trust in the Beijing Government in 2018 with highest rate at 79.9% during the research period. The Macau's GDP per capital recorded USD of USD 83,000 per capital in 2019 from USD15,000 in 1999 during the research period. Macau has no independence ranking on the league table the reporter without border ranking. The Article 27 of Macau Basic Law guarantees that Article 27 Macao residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly, Of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike. On 10th June 2019, in order to prevent the spread of rumours, fake news or misinformation during emergency situations, the Legislative Assembly (AL) 1st Standing Committee passed the Civil Protection Law which defines crimes against public security, order and peace in sudden incidents of public nature, with a previous draft predicting a possible prison sentence of up to three years for spreading false, unfounded and biased news. This paper aims to apply requirements used by the reporter without border for measurement of the editorial independence to obtain the perspective of Macau Journalists towards the degree of press freedom in Macau and whether the organizations they work for fulfill the press freedom as the intrinsic values of Psychological Contract on their employment contract after the passing of this law. 10 news workers from Macau local media organizations were interviewed anonymously for this research.

Keywords: Press Freedom, Macau Journalists, Civil Protection Law

Introduction

The research is conducted with background that Macau government has had positive satisfaction rate from 1999 to 2018. According to Macau annual survey by HKU's public polling survey released in December 2018, Macau government received with highest satisfaction rate of 75.8% in 2014 and 62.6% of Macau residents evaluate the policy of the Central Government on Macau after the Handover to be very good and quite good. 62% of Macau residents rated trust in the Beijing Government in 2018 with highest rate at 79.9% during the research period.¹

The Macau's GDP per capital recorded USD of USD 83,000 per capital in 2019 from USD15,000 in 1999 during the research period. Macau has no independence ranking on the league table the reporter without border ranking. The Article 27 of Macau Basic Law guarantees that Article 27 Macao residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly, Of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike.

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This paper aims to apply requirements used by the reporter without border for measurement of the editorial independence to obtain the perspective of Macau Journalists towards the degree of press freedom in Macau and whether the organizations they work for fulfill the press freedom as the intrinsic values of Psychological Contract on their employment contract after the passing of this law. 10 news workers from Macau local media organizations were interviewed anonymously for this research.

How does psychological contract theory applied in Macau Media industry

Ideology-infused psychological contract is one of the constitutive elements of the psychological contract theory. Development in the ideology infused psychological contract opened up many new opportunities to examine the intrinsic values for employer to evaluate successful fulfillment and adaptation for an employee to integrate into the general ideology of an industry and a company.

According to the summary from BBC over the Macau Media industry , it notes that *The local government is the main media player in Macau; it runs terrestrial TV and radio stations and subsidises the press.*

The law provides for freedom of expression and the media express a range of views. However, the local government "occasionally sought to restrict this right" the US Department of State said in its 2018 human rights assessment. It said that media sometimes self-censor.

Macao Daily News - main daily, Chinese-language Va Kio Daily - Chinese-language Hoje Macau - Portuguese-language daily Jornal Tribuna de Macau - Portuguese-language daily Ponto Final - Portuguese-language daily Macao Daily Times - English-language MacaoNews - online news in English, Chinese	Press
Teledifusao Macau - operates Chinese and Portuguese-language networks Macao Asia Satellite TV (MASTV) - private	Television
Radio Macau - operates Chinese and Portuguese-language networks Radio Vila Verde - private	Radio

¹ <https://www.hkpop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/macau/>

The 10 interviewees have worked in the above-mentioned media organizations over 2 years. Civil Protection Law to the Legislative Assembly (AL) 1st Standing Committee, made amendments with Article 25, which proposes a prison sentence for spreading rumours, fake news or misinformation during emergency situations.

Passed in 10th June, 2019, the article 25 of the Civil Protection framework proposal defines crimes against public security, order and peace in sudden incidents of public nature, with a previous draft predicting a possible prison sentence of up to three years for spreading false, unfounded and biased news.²

This study is to apply the model used by Vincent Lam et, al (2019) from measurements used by the Reporter without Reporter for the measurement of fulfillment of the press freedom as the intrinsic values of Psychological Contract on their employment contract in Hong Kong for the replica research in Macau after the passing this act. The model is based on the Rousseau (2001) conceptualization of psychological contract to examine whether there an intrinsic value of expectation for employer and employee to form psychological contract for the successful employment relationship.

The psychological contract has been further developed by Thompson and Bunderson (2003) through introducing of the concept of intrinsic values of ideology-infused psychological contract. Ideological contract is founded on intrinsic motivation and ideologically infused psychological contracts have implications for perceptions of contract breach and outlined that ideology may infuse into psychological contract to lead to a direct impact on employee's role on an organization.

Thus, (Bingham et. al 2014) suggested that successful fulfillment of obligations from psychological contract is essential for an individual's relationship with his or her employer to form positive attributions of friendship and influence within the organization.

Therefore, this paper only looks at the ideology-infused psychological contract as intrinsic values for the employment bonding creation for the maintain of the same editorial management direction by employer to employee.

Question Setting

This paper takes the widely-used survey from Reporter without Border for the measurement of press freedom index to apply on Macau. Twelve questions were asked to editors regarding their perception of whether their media company remain the same editorial direction with the factors of editorial interference from management and shareholder and government after passing of Civil Protection Law in June 2019.

Question 1

What are the factors apparently preventing the creation of independent, privately owned media? Note: "1" signifies that the factor plays no part in preventing the creation of a media company; "10" signifies that the factor makes forming a media company impossible.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Political factor (political position, closeness to the opposition)										

Question 2

How difficult is it to launch an independent private media company in light of the following constraints? Note: "1" signifies no difficulty; "10" signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Administrative constraints (tax reporting										

² <https://www.al.gov.mo/zh/law/lawcase/387>

procedures, professional competence requirements etc.)										
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Question 3

How difficult is it to launch an independent private media company in light of the following constraints? Note: "1" signifies no difficulty; "10" signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Financial constraints (start-up costs, production costs, bank credit etc.)										

Question 4

Is the process for granting TV and radio licences transparent? Note: "1" signifies no difficulty; "10" signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Is the process for granting TV and radio licence transparent?										

Question 5

What is the extent of official interference in appointments to these posts? Note: "1" signifies no difficulty; "10" signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Directors of the TV and radio regulatory agency (1)										

Question 6

How easy is it for authorities to force the firing of a... Note: '1' signifies that authorities are powerless to force a firing; '10' signifies that authorities can force a firing at will.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
private media executive?										

Question 7 Do private media have to adjust their content in exchange for state subsidies?

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Do private media have to adjust their content in exchange for state subsidies?										

Question 8

Is government advertising distributed equitably among different media? Note: All state paid publicity campaigns in the media should be considered together: public education (health, traffic safety etc.); information (operations of public services, new legislation etc.); employment (recruitment campaigns); public works (bid invitations).

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Is government advertising distributed equitably among different media										

Question 9

Does the government pressure advertisers to favour certain media?

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Does the government pressure advertisers to favour certain media?										

Question 10

Do officials favour certain media (access, interviews etc.) because of...

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
favourable editorial policy?										

Question 11

Do officials favour certain media (access, interviews etc.) because of...

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
financial ties between politicians and media owners?										

Question 12

Do you have any additional comment over the pressure of change of editorial direction?

Response and Analysis

The 10 editors were given the survey and replied on anonymous basis with the following reply:

Question 1

What are the factors apparently preventing the creation of independent, privately owned media? Note: "1" signifies that the factor plays no part in preventing the creation of a media company; "10" signifies that the factor makes forming a media company impossible.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Political factor (political position, closeness to the opposition)	2	8								

Question 2

How difficult is it to launch an independent private media company in light of the following constraints? Note: "1" signifies no difficulty; "10" signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Administrative constraints (tax reporting procedures, professional competence requirements etc.)		9	1							

Question 3

How difficult is it to launch an independent private media company in light of the following constraints? Note: "1" signifies no difficulty; "10" signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Financial constraints (start-up costs, production costs, bank credit etc.)									7	3

Question 4

Is the process for granting TV and radio licences transparent? Note: “1” signifies no difficulty; “10” signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Is the process for granting TV and radio licence transparent?		1	7	2						

Question 5

What is the extent of official interference in appointments to these posts? Note: “1” signifies no difficulty; “10” signifies an insurmountable obstacle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Directors of the TV and radio regulatory agency			4	5						

Question 6

How easy is it for authorities to force the firing of a... Note: '1' signifies that authorities are powerless to force a firing; '10' signifies that authorities can force a firing at will.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
private media executive?			7	3						

Question 7 Do private media have to adjust their content in exchange for state subsidies?

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Do private media have to adjust their content in exchange for state subsidies?			1	1	8					

Question 8

Is government advertising distributed equitably among different media? Note: All state paid publicity campaigns in the media should be considered together: public education (health, traffic safety etc.); information (operations of public services, new legislation etc.); employment (recruitment campaigns); public works (bid invitations).

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Is government advertising distributed equitably among different media				1	9					

Question 9

Does the government pressure advertisers to favour certain media?

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Does the government pressure advertisers to favour certain media?		2	5	2	1					

Question 10

Do officials favour certain media (access, interviews etc.) because of...

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
favourable editorial policy?			6	4						

Question 11

Do officials favour certain media (access, interviews etc.) because of...

Note: '1' signifies a situation in which officials show no favouritism; '10' signifies that favouritism is firmly established.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
financial ties between politicians and media owners?				5	5					

Question 12

Do you have any additional comment over fulfillment of the press freedom as the intrinsic values of Psychological Contract on their employment contract?

News worker 1	Since 1999, Macau has enjoyed economic boom and most people are better off since handover. The general public have strong confidence on the success of Macau and the ability of Macau government. Therefore, the high credibility of Macau government has earned the public trust over its administration and the passing of the Civil Protection Law does not alter any editorial independence.
News Worker 2	All Macau media is closely related to the government and privately-owned media has biggest advertising revenue from either Casinos and government. Therefore, it is better to rely on government for the operation. The general conception of Macau's journalists are to report truth and the government has proven as the most reliable source of information for journalists to cross-reference fact check. There is nothing for the Act to have an impact on Macau's general editorial independence.
News Worker 3	Journalists in Macus consider working in media as only just a job without much ideology values attached. Macau had very difficult economic situation and political instability before Handover. It is important to maintain and treasure the current stability with full collaboration with government. Fake news can risk the stability of society and the Act is good to ensure a transparent and creditable information in circulation.
News Worker 4	Macau has unofficially returned to China in 1960s following the Macau 123 incident in 1967. Since then, all media are all in very close relationship with Chinese government. The situation continues after Macau's return to China in 1999 and until now.
News Worker 5	People believe in fake news only because they have no trust in government. Macau Public has positive Satisfaction rate over Macau government and it is difficult for Macau public to believe negative intentions from government's policy and people in Macau has been taken well carefully by Macau and Central government. It is important to have the Act to protect the social stability of the Society.
News worker 6	There is so much fake news on internet and the jobs of journalists are to ensure the information correctness. The passing of the Civil Protection Law provides good guidance for editorial board in Macau media industry to understand the importance of fact checking before any news published.
News Worker 7	Basically, the major adverting revenue and shareholders of Macau Press is from Government, it is natural for news organization to fulfil their shareholder's requirements. Employers in Media company expect the employees to follow this ideology philosophy and most journalists also believe that it is necessary for fulfil employer's expectations for their job.
News worker 8	The editorial fact-checking system in most Macau media company is to seek

	information confirmation from government so that this is to reinforce the current fact checking system. Most journalists do not expect complete editorial freedom as media company is essentially a business. As long as what is reported is fact, the editorial freedom is enshrined.
News worker 9	Macau has only population of half million, there is really sensitive news so that this is not an issue for journalists. Macau journalists in general have the belief that the current economic success is based on support from Macau and Central government over the Casino business and reporters' job is to ensure the message from government correctly delivered to the society. Future success of Macau is a joint effort between Society, government and Media.
News Worker 10	Macau's news only focuses on Casino industry development, government new policies, relationship with Mainland especially Zhuhai over the Hengqin Development. Macau is in shortage of lands for the housing and people is mostly concerned if Hengqin Island from Zhuhai can offer sufficient lodging for Macau residents and other social benefit policies than political agenda.

Conclusion

The research shows that the journalists do not consider the Act to have any impact on the editorial independence for major press in Macau as the media has long used government as source of information. The general belief is that Macau is a small city with population of half population and the government has successfully delivered economic boom.

That economic improvement has led the general public with strong belief in the ability of government as proven by the polling result of Macau Annual survey by HKU's public polling survey with highest satisfaction rate of 73.7% in 2014 and constant positive rating through out 1998 to 2018. Interviewees believed that the Act to be important to maintain the social stability of Macau. Macau and Central government are highly supportive to Macau so that social stability can not be compromised by fake news and editorial independence is already fully guaranteed by the Basic Law.

Media is either owned by the government or is closely connected with the government through the advertising revenue dependency so that the editorial board has been pro government even since 1960's until now. Journalists believe it is difficult to launch an independent private media company in light of the following constraints because of high financial investment but it is not difficult to obtain license to operate a private media.

Given the small size of market and small population in Macau, there is hardly any sensitive or very important news on domestic issues and the general public is more concerned about the Casino industry development and other Livelihood issues such as housing and land development with economic cooperation with Hengqin Island of Zhuhai.

A common belief of the common editorial freedom in Macau is that the editorial fact-checking system in most Macau media company is to seek information confirmation from government so that this is to reinforce the current fact checking system. As long as what has been reported is fact, the editorial freedom is enshrined.

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