

Media Brand Reputation in the Digital Milieu: The Effects of Online News Ethics and Logic on Media Brand Image

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ABSTRACT

The reputation of media, especially online media, has lately been receiving considerable attention due to the high numbers of hoaxes and twisted facts in news reporting, causing the credibility to be undermined. Online media are considered only to pursue clicks and shares to reap ads, disregarding aspects of news ethics and logic. News ethics and logic are, in fact, constituents of media brand behaviour. In contrast, brand behaviour per se is a dimension of brand image, meaning that news ethics and logic have implications for the reputation and image of the reporting media. This research examines the following consequences: 1) Do online news content ethics, news context ethics, and news logic significantly positively affect shaping media brand image? 2) Which dimension has the most robust relationship and effect? Using an explanatory survey method, we gathered data through questionnaire dissemination to 74 online news active reader-respondents in Indonesia. The research showed that 1) online news ethics and logic are positively and significantly influential to media brand image, 2) news logic had the most significant effect, followed by news context and content ethics. It signals that aspects of coherence, accuracy, and manipulation in online news are the most 'disturbing' to readers and might harm the media's image. Other aspects include news placement, layout, links in the news context ethics, and verbal, visual, and style elements in news content ethics. Various implications of these results are discussed systematically in journalism practices and media brand reputation.

Keywords: *Media brand reputation, media brand image, online media, news ethics, news logic.*

INTRODUCTION

As part of news behaviour in the media, aspects of ethics and logic in news reporting come to be important to study. Various dimensions of online news ethics and logic as media brand behaviour have been discussed by Wijaya (2019), according to whom news content ethics includes news verbal, visual, and style aspects; news context ethics includes news placement, layout, and links; and news logic includes news coherence, accuracy, and manipulation. As news behaviour, these dimensions of ethics and logic are part of media brand behaviour, giving implications for brand image as brand behaviour is one of the dimensions of brand image (Wijaya, 2013).

Borden and Tew (2007, in Wilkins & Christians, 2020) state that the news behaviour is significantly correlated with the behaviour of the individuals behind the news, in this case, journalists and other media practitioners involved in the news making process. Thus, if a piece of news is a collective and/or systemic product, then news behaviour reflects collective and/or systemic behaviour. However, what happens thus far, and is worth attention particularly in the context of media branding, is that although news is produced individually, almost all the news pieces presented before news consumers feature media brand markers

(which can be translated into collective markers allied in a media agency), except of course for news products that are spread by netizens, or what is commonly referred to as citizen journalism. Such a media brand (Malmelin & Moisander, 2014) becomes integral to the name of the news website, logo on the webpage, and is mentioned on search engines such as Google or in social media discourse rooms (Chan-Olmsted, 2011).

It is thus almost inevitable that improper and unworthy news behaviour becomes a highlight, not to mention an 'object of public's scorn'. Being improper and unworthy is often linked to the extent to which the news seems ethical and logical (Wilkins & Christians, 2020). Unethical news practice is present in the way immoral events are described in detail, disclosure of family members' identities and things that are sensitive on the basis of ethnicity, religion, race, and group differential (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013), unethical commentary (Haridakis, 1999), corrupt communication (Wijaya, 2022), and disturbing advertisements and links (Vobic, 2014), while illogical news practices typically arise in the falsehood, inaccuracy, manipulation, and hyperbolising of stirring news (Rafter & Knowlton, 2013; Voorhees & Keith, 2015; Wijaya, 2019).

It is a shame that unethical practices in online media news reporting are still widespread. One possible reason behind such practices is pragmatism on the part of many media practitioners who make every effort to find justification in the name of information speed (Maryadi in Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013) and actuality as part of the advantage or value of a news report. With the development of information technologies, this desire of 'news speed and actuality' grows harder to control because with only a single click a piece of news can instantly be spread widely.

Nonetheless, whether one realises it or not, ethical and logical behaviour that is reflected in a presented news product has an impact on the reputation of the media itself, and such reputation will have an implication for consumer preference in news consumption and even for loyalty to the media's brand (Lischka, 2015). Therefore, whether a piece of online news is ethical or not, or whether it is logical or not, in terms of both news content and news context, plays a critical role in the shaping of a certain image pertaining to a media brand (Malmelin & Moisander, 2014; Lischka, 2015; Wijaya, 2019). This research intended to test such an assumption through hypothesis testing on the relationship and effect of news content ethics, news context ethics, and news logic on the shaping of a media brand's image. This research endeavored to see which dimension has the strongest relationship, thereby presenting a strategic reference in media branding activities and providing an important insight into studies on media management (brand communication) and media content branding.

Specifically speaking, this research was to answer the following questions: 1) Do online news content ethics, news context ethics, and news logic significantly positively affect shaping media brand image? 2) Which dimension has the most robust relationship and effect?

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Online News Ethics and Logic

It is a norm that a journalist ideally relies on the knowledge that he/she gains through close verification (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001 in Elliot, 2020), in which case he/she must procedurally follow certain standards to create and communicate the knowledge of the social world, including reliability, truthfulness, and independency. The end-point of this effort is people's meaningful participation in the public realm (Elliot, 2020), and for this reason, a journalist must have a moral commitment in the normative sense to the news performance

and behaviour that he/she produces. In reality, however, such verification principles are often overlooked, especially by online journalists (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013). In effect, fact misperceptions and misinterpretations abound (Maryadi in Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013) and subsequently, beyond question, unethical news products are vastly bred.

Wijaya (2019) in his recent research mentioned a few ethics dimensions related to online news contents from news consumers' perspectives, namely news verbal, visual, and style aspects. In the news verbal aspect, consumers see unethical news reporting practices in the form of rude, vulgar, tendentious, provocative, and sensational language that seems to be 'too selling'. In the news visual aspect, unethical practices take the form of photos of victims in criminal events, photos of suspects, potentially pornographic images, illustrative photos, and offensive memes. In terms of news style, consumers regard unethical practices to be present in the detailed narration of adultery or homicide scenes, disclosure of family members' identities, judgment by media, presentation of news reports that are insult- and defamation-toned, and news framing from child-unfriendly angles, in the sense that misinterpretations may arise if the news is read by children or teens that are limited in their knowledge due to their limited experiences.

Meanwhile, the ethics dimension related to online news context includes placement, layout, and news and non-news links that appear in the news narration. Placement usually is related to ill placement of advertisements that causes readership to be disturbed and to ill placement of the comment column, causing it to be hard to find thanks to improperly arranged ads and other articles. This is also related to chaotic layout as well as news narration text segmenting or partitioning that leave the impression of incompleteness. It is often bothersome to readers as it causes some inconvenience. Regarding links, usually there are links of other news titles and hypertexts that distract readers' attention and concentration.

In addition, hyperlinks of spam and promotions are also starkly disturbing as they are often intrusive to readers and negligent of consumer rights, while no facilities for easy and speedy closure of spam and promotion pop-ups are provided. Instead, they often come with animations that make it even troublesome for consumers to close such promotion pop-ups. Vobic's research (2014) sheds light on the weak points in online journalists' mindsets in conceptualising hypertexts, so using hypertexts will only reduce the social relevance of the news. Instead of giving attention to public interests, the use of hypertexts is considered more as a form of news commercialisation.

The research by Wijaya (2019) also unveiled various illogical forms of online news in aspects of either coherence, accuracy, or manipulation. The coherence aspect encompasses meaning coherence in a news title, coherence of the news title to the content, significance of symbols and identities, and relevance of symbols and identities. The accuracy aspect takes the form of false data, outdated data, false pictures, outdated pictures, and unverified data. Meanwhile, the manipulation aspect is in the form of public deceptions and hoaxes, hyperboles, 'misleading' news titles, presenting quoted opinions to appear like facts, and twisted news.

Thus, it is almost inevitable that improper and unworthy news behavior becomes a highlight, not to mention an 'object of public's scorn'. Being improper and unworthy is often linked to the extent to which the news seems ethical and logical (Wilkins & Christians, 2020). Unethical news practice is present in the way immoral events are described in detail, disclosure of family members' identities and things that are sensitive on the basis of ethnicity, religion, race, and group differential (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013), unethical commentary

(Haridakis, 1999), corrupt communication, and disturbing advertisements and links (Vobic, 2014), while illogical news practices typically arise in the falsehood, inaccuracy, manipulation, and hyperbolising of stirring news (Rafter & Knowlton, 2013; Voorhees & Keith, 2015; Wijaya, 2019).

b. Brand Image and Media Reputation

The media industry has numerous famous brands, some of which even join the line of prominent, high-valued brands in the 100 most valuable global brands (Interbrand, 2016), such as Google, Facebook, Disney, Discovery, Thomson Reuters, and MTV. We also know some iconic brands like National Geographic, BBC, Time, The New York Times, and The Economist whose recognition and credibility are time-tested (Tungate, 2004). In the Indonesian context, people certainly know Tempo, Femina, Kompas, Republika, TVRI, RRI, Prambors, Detik, and many more in the company of the Indonesian people from time to time. Indeed, media brands have become inseparable to society's life and have even become identity construction channels in social relations which are referred to by Bourdieu (1986) as a cultural modality, in which one's social class is judged by, among others, what media (brands) he/she consumes.

It is fair to say that media branding has become a critical issue to study. It is the more so amidst the lately increasingly rapid communication technology advancements, which makes the competition landscape between media brands more dynamic. Some media branding researchers like Malmelin and Moisander (2014) posit that to study media as a brand, it will take a sound understanding of the media's brand environment, specific features, and even surrounding complexity as a strategic business entity.

From consumers' perspective, we can study media brands as a construct that brings about any public connotation related to emotional meanings, styles, and cognition, consciously or subconsciously (Siegert et al., 2015). Media brands can also be interpreted as a continuous, reliable, and credible market signal in easing the information asymmetry between media agencies and media consumers (Siegert, 2015). In this context, the consistency between the brand promise and the brand behaviour in the field, or between the expectation created and the actual experience of the consumers, will build the media's brand reputation, which is reflected in the compatibility between brand identity and image.

Therefore, media brand image comes as crucial. Brand image represents the whole perceptions on the brand that are formed from information and knowledge pertaining to the brand (Aaker in Plumeyer et. al., 2019; Wijaya, 2013). Brand image has an implication for the reputation and credibility of a brand, which later will "guide" consumers to try or use a good or service product, hence resulting in certain brand experience that will determine whether they will become loyalists to the brand or none other than opportunists who easily switch to other brands (Wijaya, 2013). Mowen and Minor (2001) simply define brand image as a collection of associations related to a brand that are formed in the minds of consumers. Otherwise, brand image is a particular form or picture of a trace of meaning left in the minds of consumers (Wijaya, 2013), which subsequently will steer the consumers' attitude to a brand.

Wijaya (2013) then explains some dimensions that potentially build brand image, namely brand identity, brand personality, brand association, brand behaviour, and brand competence. Brand identity is a physical identity associated with a brand or product that makes it easy for consumers to recognise the brand or product or tell it apart from other

brands or products, such as logo, color, packaging/paging, location/address, the identity of the company under which it exists, slogan, or characteristic feature, among others.

Meanwhile, brand personality is the typical character of a brand that forms a certain personality as in the case of humans, making it easy for consumers to differentiate the brand from other brands within the same category. As to brand association, Wijaya (2013) defines it as specific things that fit or are always associated with a brand due to a repeated, consistent activity or due to a phenomenon, which covers historical, figural, beneficial, physical, and tactical association.

The next dimension is brand behaviour, which is the behaviour of a brand's attributes, including the behaviour of brand communication and interaction with consumers in offering its benefits and values, the behaviour of the brand through the product or program that it offers, the behaviour of the human resources/employees and the employers/executives/elites/owners, and community behaviour related to the brand (Wijaya, 2013; Foltz, 2022). Lastly, brand competence refers to specific competence, specialty, and ability of a brand in giving its consumers a specific benefit and solution, driving the consumers to trust and rely on the brand (Wijaya, 2013; Xue et al., 2020).

c. Hypotheses

In previous research, Wijaya (2019) proposed under some theoretical assumptions that online news ethics and logic as media brand behaviour have an implication for media branding. Likewise, Lischka (2015) demonstrated that ethical and logical behaviour has an impact on the preference for and loyalty to a media brand. Furthermore, Singh, Iglesias, and Batista-Foguet (2012) indicated a strong relationship of the perceived ethicality of a brand to trust and affection for the brand. Meanwhile Fan (2005) observed a relationship between ethical branding and a company's brand reputation, where unethical behaviour of the company will damage or even destroy the whole intangible assets of the company.

Similar findings were reported by Hoq, Ali, and Alwi (2010) that there is a positive mediating impact between an ethically-perceived brand and the company's reputation. A separate study by Hamidizadeh, Karimi, and Rezaei (2014) showed that perceived business ethicality has a positive effect on the perceived responsibility, activity, and emotionality of a company, while responsibility and activity have a positive effect on brand equity. Carrigan and Atalla's study (2001) showed an effect of ethical awareness on purchase decisions, while Wijaya and Nasution (2022) reported a correlation between personal branding in social media and communication corruption, which is one of the ethical aspects of communication fraud.

The studies above, although not precisely identical, have a close thematic proximity to the present research, especially when it comes to the relationship between ethics and brand or branding. Therefore, this research assumed that:

Ha1 - Online news content ethics, be it in the news verbal, visual, or style aspect, has a significant positive relationship and effect on media brand image

Ha2 - Online news context ethics, be it in the aspect of placement, layout, or links in the news report, has a significant positive relationship and effect on media brand image

Ha3 - Online news logic, be it in the aspect of news coherence, accuracy, or manipulation, has a significant positive effect on media brand image

METHODOLOGY

a. Procedure

This causal research used a quantitative-explanatory approach as it attempted to explain the relationship of two variables or more (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The strategy employed was to conduct a survey on a sample as a representative of a population. In this research, the population was online news active readers-consumers in Indonesia. Sampling was performed using Tabachnick and Fidell's formula (2021), namely $n > 50 + 8m$, where n was the sample size and m was the number of independent variables. Since the research employed 3 (three) independent variables, then the minimum sample size was as follows: $n > 50 + (8 \times 3) = 74$.

In this research, 76 sample units were gathered. Therefore, the minimum size according to the formula above was met. Sampling was carried out using one of non-probability sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling. This technique was used as the population was neither fixed nor certainly known. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that is based on particular considerations or criteria (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The criteria of respondents in this research were as follows: a) active online news readers; b) access and read online news, either via mobile phone or via personal computer, at least once a day; and c) pay attention to issues of news ethics and logic as well as media brand image.

Screening questions following the criteria above were presented prior to the questionnaire items in order to ensure that the respondents met the research criteria. The questionnaire was developed with Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = doubtful/neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree) and was disseminated online for one month by including a Google Docs link for questionnaire completion via e-mail and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Line. Data analysis was conducted as a multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS 22 to see whether this research was significant, hence capable of supporting the hypotheses both partially and simultaneously.

b. Instrument Testing

Fourteen statements were constructed to represent each dimension of the variables in reference to theories and concepts from previous research (Appendix Table 8). The constructs in the news content ethics variable were the news verbal, visual, and style dimensions, the constructs in the news context ethics variable were the news placement, link, and layout dimensions, and the constructs in the news logic variable were the news coherence, accuracy, and manipulation dimensions (Wijaya, 2019). The constructs in the media brand image variable included the dimensions of brand identity, personality, association, behaviour, and competence (Wijaya, 2013).

Prior to testing of the hypotheses, a validity test was first conducted on 30 respondents using the Pearson Correlation method, in which case a construct would be said valid if its r_{count} was greater than the r_{table} , namely 0.361. From Table 1 it is known that the r_{count} ranged between 0.403 (personality dimension construct) and 0.873 (news visual dimension construct), meaning that all constructs had r_{count} greater than the r_{table} (0.361). In other words, all constructs were declared valid and thus feasible to use in the next stages.

Table 1: Validity Testing Results

Statements	Variables			
	<i>News Content Ethics</i> <i>r count</i>	<i>News Context Ethics</i> <i>r count</i>	<i>News Logic</i> <i>r count</i>	<i>Media Brand Image</i> <i>r count</i>
News Verbal	.635			
News Visual	.873			
News Style	.763			
Placement		.808		
Links		.607		
Layout		.556		
Coherence			.524	
Accuracy			.612	
Manipulation			.579	
Identity				.617
Personality				.403
Association				.665
Behaviour				.712
Competence				.778

Note: The questionnaire was tested on 30 respondents at $r_{table} = 0.361$

Meanwhile, reliability testing was conducted with Cronbach’s Alpha to identify whether the instrument items were positively correlated with one another. A research instrument is said to be reliable if the Cronbach’s Alpha (α) coefficient is greater than or equal to 0.70 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). The results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Testing Results

	News Content Ethics	News Context Ethics	News Logic	Media Brand Image
Reliability	$\alpha = 0.93$	$\alpha = 0.87$	$\alpha = 0.84$	$\alpha = 0.94$

According to the table above, the reliability testing yielded Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients above the alpha coefficient of 0.70, exactly within the range 0.84–0.94, so the instrument was declared reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Descriptive Analysis

There were 100 targeted respondents to the questionnaire that was disseminated online via e-mail and social media channels like WhatsApp, Line, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, but 93 gave their responses. However, after checking, it was found that only 76 respondents responded positively to the opening screening questions (answer ‘Yes’ to the question: “Are you an active online news reader?”). Out of the 76 respondents, 2 were considered invalid as they admitted having not read the description of the first question session, hence falsely interpreting the questionnaire statements. Therefore, the number of questionnaire responses that were complete and considered worthy to analyse was 74.

Based on the results of the demographic and geographic analyses, it was revealed that many of the respondents were women, aged 26–30 on average, and graduates of undergraduate programs, employed, and domiciled in Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi). These results showed that the demand for information through online media was mostly from the productive-age segment with high education level, which

was filled by urban-suburban people. Russ-Mohl (2013) stated that the upper-middle class is a segment with a high demand for information quality, and, therefore, based on this research, it can be said that they have an awareness of the issues of online news ethics and logic. It is interesting that women (although with a slight gap) were found to have a greater awareness than men, at least in reference to the respondents' data description. Women, as stated by Dawson (1995), do tend to be sensitive to dilemmatic issues related to ethics.

Table 3: Demographic and geographic data

	<i>Gender (%)</i>	<i>Age (%)</i>	<i>Respondents Distribution</i>		
			<i>Education (%)</i>	<i>Profession (%)</i>	<i>Region (%)</i>
Men	48.1				
Women	51.9				
<17		18.1			
17–25		24.7			
26–35		32.8			
36–45		12.9			
46–55		10.2			
> 55		1.3			
< Senior high school			8.4		
Completing senior high school			24.4		
Undergraduate			43.5		
Postgraduate			23.7		
Employed				39.7	
Self-employed/entrepreneur				7.6	
Student				29	
Others				23.7	
Jabodetabek					55.7
Java					18.3
Sumatera					5.3
Kalimantan					3.8
Sulawesi					6.9
Bali-Nusa Tenggara					4.6
Maluku-Papua					5.3

Meanwhile, based on their responses, the respondents generally responded positively to the statements in the questionnaire with scores above 3, meaning that their responses were leaning toward agreement, and they even showed their full agreement with the statements regarding news context ethics with a score of 4. Such high scores showed that issues of online news ethics and logic as well as issues of media branding, especially in relation to media brand image, are important issues to online news readers. Other than by educational background, respondents' awareness was also probably influenced by the recently rampant discourse of hoaxes.

Table 4: Responses to Research Statement Constructs

Variables	Responses						Total (%)
	Mean**	SD* (%)	D* (%)	N* (%)	A* (%)	SA* (%)	
News content ethics	3.66	2.1	12.6	25.8	35.5	24	100
News context ethics	4.00	0.04	4.06	9.8	57.1	29	100
News logic	3.89	0.03	0.07	17.6	54.2	28.1	100
Media brand image	3.78	1.04	6.06	21	41.3	30.6	100
Total score	3.82	0.18	5.72	18.5	47	28.6	100

*SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), N (Neutral), A (Agree), SA (Strongly Agree), **Scale 1 (SD) to 5 (SA)

Going into a greater detail it is seen that the highest score for the response ‘strongly agree’ was attained by the media brand image dimension (30.6%), and the next highest scores were gained by the news context ethics (29%), news logic (28.1%), and news content ethics (24%) dimensions. This indicates that news readers had a high level of awareness and found it easy to identify elements of brand identity, brand personality, brand association, brand behaviour, and brand competence (Table 8 on the Appendix provides the details of the research statements). Media practitioners should learn to take into consideration these factors as media branding has a critical implication for media management (Doyle, 2015).

News context ethics also raised a concern to online readers. The fact that this independent variable gained the highest percentage showed that issues related to news placement, layout, and links are not to be overlooked by media practitioners. The assumption saying that ‘what matters is the content’ apparently must be overruled since media professionalism is also judged from the aesthetics and creativity involved in the presentation of the media content (Krebs, 2015), meaning that comfort, convenience, and flexibility are determinant to the improvement of news legibility. Readers’ complaints often revolve around the profusion of links and banner ads as well as disturbing hypertext links, but journalists are low in their awareness of this issue (Vobic, 2014). Besides, native advertising which currently is a trend in online news reporting has also turned into an ethical burden that remains subject to heated debates among media management practitioners and researchers (Matteo & Zotto, 2015). As for news content ethics and news logic, although there were not as many respondents expressing strong agreement with statements in these variables as in the rest of the variables, these issues (especially news logic) scored the second highest in the response ‘agree’ (54.2%).

b. Analysis of the Effects of Online News Ethics and Logic on Media Brand Image

This study aims to answer the questions: 1) Do online news content ethics, news context ethics, and news logic have significant positive effects on the shaping of media brand image? 2) Which dimension has the strongest relationship and effect? The statistical data from the F test showed a high significance level ($0.000 < 0.05$), while the F_{count} was well above the F_{table} ($88.354 > 2.53$). There is evidence that at least one independent variable affects media brand image.

Table 5: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	758.087	4	182.024	88.354	.000 ^a
	Residual	138.773	69	1.125		
	Total	896.860	73			

^a Predictors: (Constant), News Content Ethics, News Context Ethics, News Logic

The coefficient of determination analysis using adjusted R-squared, as shown in Table 6, yielded a score of 0.835, meaning that around 83.5% variations of the variable media brand image could be explained by the variations of online news ethics and logic variables while the remaining 16.5% was explained by other factors unexplored by this research. The variables employed in previous research which were relevant to ethics issues in relation to brand image or the relation between consumer and brand might be factors or variables that are involved in this 16.5% representation, including company social responsibility (Popoli, 2011) and moral norms (Dunfee et al., 1999).

Table 6: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.925 ^a	.858	.835	1.457

^a. Predictors: (Constant), News Content Ethics, News Context Ethics, News Logic

^b. Dependent Variable: Media Brand Image

Results of the t test can be seen in Table 7. At a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 5\%$), the t_{table} was 1.9944. The t_{count} of the variable news content ethics (x_1) was $2.808 > t_{table}$, with a significance level of 0.005, that was smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$. This value indicated that news content ethics, be it in the news verbal, visual, or style aspect/dimension, had a significant positive effect on media brand image. Therefore, H_{a1} was accepted.

The t_{count} of the variable news context ethics (x_2) was $3.485 > t_{table}$, with a significance level of 0.001, that was smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$. This value indicated that news context ethics, be it in the news placement, layout, or links aspect/dimension, had a significant positive effect on media brand image. Therefore, H_{a2} was accepted.

The t_{count} of the variable news logic (x_3) was $5.063 > t_{table}$, with a significance level of 0.000, that was way smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$. This value indicated that news logic, be it in the news coherence, accuracy, or manipulation aspect/dimension, had a significant positive effect on media brand image. Therefore, H_{a3} was accepted.

Table 7: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.765	1.121		-1.574	.108
	Content Ethics	.370	.121	.271	2.808	.005
	Context Ethics	.447	.102	.369	3.485	.001
	News Logic	.605	.111	.423	5.063	.000

^a. Dependent Variable: Media Brand Image

It comes to be clear now that news ethics and logic factors have critical roles in building a certain image of a media brand, which in turn will influence the media's reputation. This research's results showed that all the variables (news content ethics, news context ethics, and news logic) had significant positive effects on media brand image. This finding agrees with the findings of previous relevant studies, such as those on the effect of perceived brand ethics on company reputation (Hoq et al., 2010) and on the effect of ethical behaviour on the preference for and loyalty to a media brand (Lischka, 2015). Other research states that perceived media accountability depends on public trust in the news quality of a media

(Groenhart, 2012). This research supports Wijaya’s assumption (2019) that news quality as reflected in how ethical and logical a news report is has implications for media branding, especially perceived media brand behaviour.

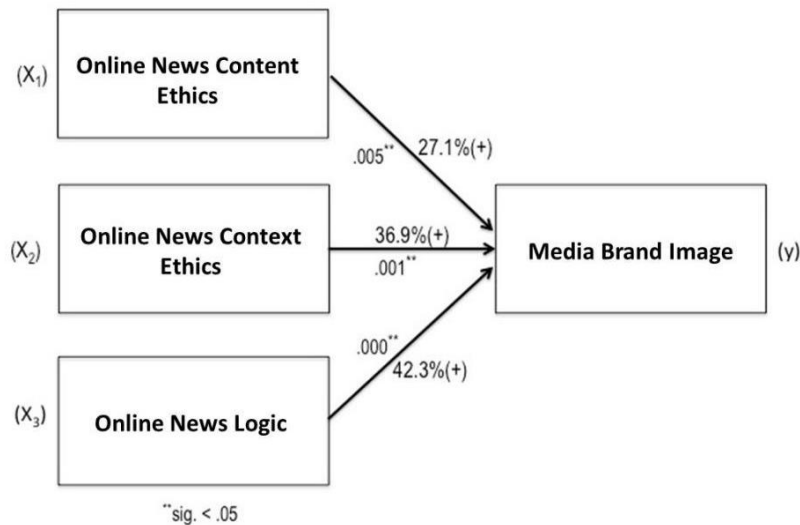


Figure 1: Model of the Effects of Online News Ethics and Logic on Media Brand Image

Meanwhile, as can be seen in Figure 1, news logic had the most significant effect at a rate of 42.3%. This means that paying attention to news quality with an error reduction in relation to coherence, accuracy, and fact manipulation would improve the online media brand image. Similarly, an effect rate of 36.9% earned by news context ethics gives a critical justification to paying attention to the correctness of news ‘reading-friendly’ placement and layout and to reducing news links and ads that disturb reading comfort. No less important, as indicated by an effect rate of 27.1% gained by news content ethics, is that politeness in language use, either in the news title or in supporting visual aspects, in news delivery that is with appreciation of humanity and the sociocultural and ethical values of local communities would give a significant effect on the shaping of a positive media image among consumers. It is this image which then becomes a prominent asset for the building of media credibility and reputation, in which is described by Siegert (2015) as a barometer of how well a media agency meets the expectations of consumers by reducing moral risks.

c. Implications on Media Reputation

Media has two dilemmatic sides: promise and profit (Siegert et al., 2011). Promise is related to the responsibility involved in presenting journalistic contents of quality to create, maintain, and improve the media brand image. Profit, on the other hand, is related to economic success, in which case media as a business institution, as are other companies, attempts to collect as much economic capital as possible to cover production costs and at the same time to meet the needs of the public as media consumers (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Krebs, 2015). Therefore, a media organisation is operated by two objectives that at times compete against one another: journalistic and economistic (Siegert et al., 2011).

Media branding accommodates both. Fulfilling brand promises and media responsibilities through journalistic quality has an implication for media reputation, whereas media reputation has an economic implication, particularly in winning the competition in the

media marketing arena (McManus, 1994; Lobigs, 2015). The journalistic quality reputation and image of a media would spur the creation of journalistic products of quality, and when consumers need it, it is where economic rationalisation comes into play for the media agency to generate profits (Lobigs, 2004 in Russ-Mohl & Nazhdiminova, 2015). It is therefore crucial that the media should communicate its competences and quality to set it apart from its competitors (Krebs, 2015) through positioning reinforcement based on the superior and unique characteristics of the products of the media (McDowell, 2006).

In practice, however, not all media practitioners recognise the importance of media branding, and in the context of online news, to Vivanews executive editors for instance, what matters most is the news title links are as often clicked and shared as possible (Setyadi and Wijaya, 2015; Wijaya et al., 2021). It is no wonder then that clicks and shares have become an obsession to news marketers on online media, just like ratings for television electronic media. For the sake of clicks and shares, many online media journalists neglect ethical factors in their news reporting (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013). This is particularly true with the organisational structure of online news marketing that is biased with an editorial structure (Setyadi & Wijaya, 2015; Wijaya et al., 2021), in which case it opens up the possibility of code of ethics violation in the newsroom (Vobic and Milojevic, 2014) by marrying off news value to selling value, which by McManus (1994) and Cohen (2002) is referred to as “market-driven journalism”.

From here we can understand why unethical and illogical news reports abound. As stated by Siegert et al. (2011), the relationship between journalistic and economic objectives in a media organisation is extremely complex. Sometimes, economic desire and libido prevail or even become overdominant, leading to the disregard of journalistic objectives and essence with quality standards that consider ethical and logical factors in news presentation. Unfortunately, a number of studies demonstrate low levels of awareness on the part of media managers and journalists when it comes to ethical issues (Porlezza & Russ-Mohl, 2013; Andersson & Wiik, 2013) although it is known that journalistic ethics supports media branding in the effort to improve media credibility, especially among the upper-middle segment (Russ-Mohl, 2013). Likewise, the results of this research (in which case from the respondents’ data it is also known that the majority of the respondents were highly educated—indicating that they were of the upper-middle segment, at least from the sociocultural class structure, in Bourdieu’s thesis) showed a significant relationship of news ethics and logic to media brand image. On the other hand, media branding, according to Russ-Mohl and Nazhdiminova (2015), supports journalism and ethical values as long as the practice is smart and elegant rather than degrading the newsroom credibility through marketing interest intrusions.

It is where problems arise. Since the character of the media is more networked and fluid than that of conventional media, online media newsroom instead bears ethical burden twice as heavy as the burden conventional media must bear, not only in relation to ethics in the news editing process (gate-keeper ethics), but also in relation to the public and netizens (relationship ethics), which—as with journalists—at times plays a double role both as information consumers and producers (Singer, 2010). As gate-keepers, both in conventional and in online media, journalists have the responsibility not to allow misinformation and disinformation pass through the gates of media channels.

Therefore, in the information selection, organisation, and dissemination processes, journalists would independently always reflect what are (to be) delivered by positioning themselves as the news consumers. That is the normal ethicisation process in the case of gate-

keepers. However, in the case of online media, this ethicization process must also be relationship-based (Nel et al., 2007) because in the Internet domain, in which information spills all over, what is needed by society is to evaluate and select the information quality, including to choose which information provider or media is to be trusted (Singer, 2010). Therefore, the duty of journalists and the media is not only to supply as much information as possible, but also 'to tell' the public "you can trust me as I have anything that can provide a back-up to the information that I convey" (p. 3). This means that building trust is essential.

To conventional media, trust may be present in the media reputation that has been built over the years (as is the case with *Harian Kompas* or *Republika*), in which case among the parameters are journalistic credibility and quality. However, to online media, truth-telling serves as the main key to trust building (Strömbäck et al., 2020) not only because consumers demand the truth of the information that is delivered by journalists, but also because it can build relationships. Another factor is fairness. Fairness here not only concerns objectivity and covers both sides in the case of gate-keeper ethics, but also concerns ethical reflection that "if I treat you fairly, you will also treat me fairly" (Singer, 2010, p. 3). With ethicization process, both in gate-keeper ethics and in relationship ethics as with this case, journalists and online media will have a favourable image in the eye of the stakeholders, which will in turn build the media's brand reputation across a variety of dimensions.

With regard to reputation, Eisenegger and Imhof (2008) mentioned at least three dimensions of reputation that can be established (by online media), namely functional, social, and expressive dimensions. The functional dimension is related to the objective values of truth, the social dimension is related to the normative values of good, and the expressive dimension is related to the subjective values of aesthetics (beauty). While the first has an implication for public trust, the second does for perceived quality and the third does for the impression of admiration and comfort. In the context of this research, the first can be associated with news logic, the second with news content ethics, and the third with news context ethics.

Online news products which meet standards of ethics and logic certainly put to the forth factual truth, leading to the building of consumer trust in the news presented on the media with the passage of time. As shown by the results of this research, news coherence, accuracy, and manipulation as indicators of news logic had the strongest effect on media image. It is thus recommended for journalists and media practitioners to build their media reputation through news products that are non-manipulative and prioritise accuracy and coherence, both verbally and visually.

Meanwhile, good reputation can be built from the perception of the quality of the presented news contents, in this case normative standards of journalistic professionalism. Krebs (2015) states that journalistic quality is also determined by the social responsibility function of journalistic products, which means that news content ethics serves as a key indicator in the running of such functions. It is for this reason that in order to be evaluated as excellent quality-wise by stakeholders, journalists must improve the content ethics standards in the news products produced, hence leaving no impact on society's 'social damage', e.g., dispute between social groups due to provocative-leaning news either in its verbal, visual, or presentation style aspect, as often happens in Indonesia of late. With today's social media power, 'provocative' news unverified in its truth can even spread far and wide rapidly and massively.

Aesthetical reputation can be built by taking into consideration news context ethics, that is, the placement, layout, and links of the news that will leave readers impressed and in turn affect the positive image of the readers' consumed media. This research has shown that news consumers are highly aware of news context ethics (based on the highest average score of the respondents' responses [Table 4]). Therefore, aesthetical reputation related to news context ethics is crucial to online media. As stated by Krebs (2015), the professionalism of a media, among others, is based on the aesthetic and creative criteria of which impression is built in the appearance of the presented content.

CONCLUSION

The findings prove the importance of considering ethical factors and news logic in building media brand reputation because these two variables have a significant and positive influence on brand image. At least there are two reasons online media should build their brand reputation from news behaviour (as reflected in news ethics and logic) and media brand image. Firstly, amidst the wild cyber culture, the media's only differentiation and distinction that marks quality are to 'behave' ethically and logically in news presentation. By maintaining the news ethics and logic, be it in the news content ethics, news context ethics, and news logic term, online media will be a gem in the mud of freedom that goes too far.

Secondly, amidst the wide spread of fake or low-quality media, the only salvation to online media credibility is building a good, strong brand image as a legitimate (professional) media. Reinforcement of media identity, personality, association, behaviour, and competence as elements of brand image is one of the strategic efforts that lead to improved media reputation. This research has shown how media's news ethics and logic had significant, positive effects on media brand image. Therefore, ethics and logic in news presentation must be an integral part of the strategy to build media brand reputation, particularly to the media in question or universally in creating a healthy, beneficial online media industry ecosystem.

Keeping in mind the limitations of this research, such as the sample size or the number of respondents, and the scope (only one country and one dependent variable), future investigations may explore further the effects of news ethics and logic on media brand preference or brand advocacy. Regarding the importance of news ethics and logic factors, it is also deemed necessary to conduct investigative research in the newsroom related to the ethicisation process in journalistic practices, the awareness and commitment of journalists, marketing managers, media public relations staff, advertisers' perceptions on unethical and illogical news related to media placement, and the role of culture in news ethics and logic.

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Appendix A1

Table 8: Variables and measurement scale

Variables	Scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree: 1–5)
News Content Ethics	1. I have ever at some point in time read news reports that use words that are rude, vulgar, tendentious to corner other groups/parties, or provocative and/or use 'selling' language to influence (<i>News Verbal Aspect</i>)
	2. I have ever at some point in time read news reports that come with pictures/photographs of victims, pictures/photographs of suspects/witnesses of criminal acts, pornographic pictures, illustrations without credits to the sources, and/or impolite memes (<i>News Visual Aspect</i>)
	3. I have ever at some point in time read news reports that describe the details of adultery/killing scenes, disclose the identities of victims/witnesses of criminal acts, contain judgmental contents, feature insults/defamation, and/or are presented as non-child-friendly (<i>News Style Aspect</i>)
News Context Ethics	4. I have ever at some point in time read news reports with disturbing advertisement placement that causes me to feel uncomfortable reading the news reports and/or with commentary column placement in hard-to-notice corners (<i>News Placement</i>)
	5. I have ever at some point in time read news reports with chaotic layout, news reports that are segmented to several pages, and/or news reports that are incomplete on one page (<i>News Layout</i>)
	6. I have ever at some point in time read news reports with links to other news reports that potentially lead to certain perceptions on a news issue and/or with advertisement/promotion links that cause readers to be trapped or mis-click (<i>News Links</i>)
News Logic	7. I have ever at some point in time read news reports that are incoherent between one word and another in the titles, incoherent between the titles and the contents, incoherent between the pictures and the contents, and/or incoherent in their use of certain symbols/identities/genders (<i>Coherence</i>)
	8. I have ever at some point in time read news reports that display wrong data/pictures, outdated data/pictures, and/or data/pictures that are not correctly verified (<i>Accuracy</i>)
	9. I have ever at some point in time read news reports that are sourced from hoaxes, contain exaggerated facts, feature sensational titles while the contents are short, present quotes of opinions to look like facts, and/or contain twisted facts (<i>Manipulation</i>)

Media Brand Image	10. I can recognize the unique logo/color of the media that I read, the website address, the usual topics, the unique news reporting and titling styles, the fonts, and/or the unique news page layout (<i>Identity</i>)
	11. If it is imagined as human being, I can envision the media that I read physically or non-physically or in character as resembling a certain figure (<i>Brand Personality</i>)
	12. If the name of the media that I read is mentioned, I can right away recall its news reporting style, its media background, certain figures associated with it (owners/journalists/characters), and/or its programs (<i>Brand Association</i>)
	13. I can judge the behavior of the media that I read, either through its news products, the way the journalists/employees interact with readers, the way it offers news links/programs, or the behavior of its readers community (<i>Brand Behaviour</i>)
	14. I can perceive the unique expertise/ability/advantage of the media that I read, either physically as in its news quality or non-physically as in its high moral commitment in information presentation (<i>Brand Competence</i>)

Source: Adapted from Wijaya (2019) and Wijaya (2013).