

THE EXPRESSION OF
MILLENNIAL FEMALE
JOURNALISTS' IDEALISM:
experiences of female
journalists in Surabaya,
Indonesia

by Ridwan 2 Ridwan 2

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**THE EXPRESSION OF MILLENNIAL
FEMALE JOURNALISTS' IDEALISM:**

*experiences of female journalists in
Surabaya, Indonesia*

ALI NURDIN, SULAEMAN SULAEMAN AND M. RIDWAN

ARTICLE

THE EXPRESSION OF MILLENNIAL FEMALE JOURNALISTS' IDEALISM:

experiences of female journalists in
Surabaya, Indonesia



ALI NURDIN¹

UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya – Jawa Timur – Indonesia

ORCID: 0000-0002-7175-0752

SULAEMAN SULAEMAN²

State Islamic Institute Ambon, Ambon – Maluku - Indonesia

ORCID: 0000-0003-4175-7715

M. RIDWAN³

State Islamic Institute Ambon, Ambon – Maluku - Indonesia

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ABSTRACT – The existence of women can be actualized through the expression of idealism in the journalist profession. This study aims to describe the expression of idealism and the construction of the identity of millennial female journalists. The study was qualitatively conducted by interviewing ten women journalists using the snowball sampling technique and through analysis based on identity theory. The results indicated that the expression of millennial female journalists' idealism was enacted via subtle news language, perspectives, or angles prioritizing women's feelings, the capability to master media technology, and overall professionalism. Outwardly, millennial women journalists were shown to construct their identities by dressing in typical business dress, acting with confidence, and playing the role of a journalist. This media management system was revealed to shape the journalists' self-constructions of their professional identities as the expression of idealism.

Key words: Identity construction. Female journalists. Media. Millennials.

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1 [UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya – Jawa Timur – Indonesia](#). Email: ali.nurdin@uinsby.ac.id

2 [State Islamic Institute Ambon, Ambon – Maluku – Indonesia](#). Email: sulaeman@iainambon.ac.id

3 [State Islamic Institute Ambon, Ambon – Maluku – Indonesia](#). Email: ridwaniain1968@gmail.com

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A EXPRESSÃO DO IDEALISMO DAS JORNALISTAS MILLENNIALS: experiências de mulheres jornalistas em Surabaya, Indonésia

RESUMO – A existência de mulher ⁶⁹ pode ser atualizada através da expressão do idealismo na profissão de jornalista. Este estudo tem como objetivo descrever a expressão do idealismo e a construção da identidade de mulheres jornalistas millennials. O estudo possui caráter ⁵⁸ qualitativo e foi conduzido por meio de entrevistas com dez mulheres jornalistas, a partir da técnica de amostragem em bola de neve. As análises foram baseadas na teoria da identidade. Os resultados indicaram que a expressão do idealismo das jornalistas millennials foi representada pela delicadeza da linguagem noticiosa, perspectivas ou ângulos que priorizam os sentimentos das mulheres, a capacidade de dominar a tecnologia midiática e profissionalismo em geral. Externamente, as jornalistas millennials constroem suas identidades vestindo roupas tipicamente relacionadas ao universo dos negócios, agindo com confiança e desempenhando o papel de jornalistas. Esse sistema de gerenciamento de mídia revelou-se para moldar as autoconstruções dos jornalistas de suas identidades profissionais como expressão do idealismo.

Palavras-chave: Construção de identidade. Jornalistas femininas. Mídia. Millennials.

LA EXPRESIÓN DE IDEALISMO DE LAS PERIODISTAS MILLENNIAL: experiencias de mujeres periodistas en Surabaya, Indonesia

RESUMEN – La existencia de la mujer puede actualizarse a través de la expresión del idealismo en la profesión ⁶⁵ periodística. Este estudio tiene como objetivo describir la expresión del idealismo y la construcción de la identidad de las periodistas millennial. ⁶³ El estudio se realizó de forma cualitativa entre ⁶⁶ diez mujeres periodistas utilizando la técnica de muestreo de bola de nieve y mediante análisis basados en la teoría de la identidad. Los resultados indicaron que la expresión del idealismo de las periodistas millennial se promulgó a través de un lenguaje sutil de las noticias, perspectivas o ángulos que priorizan los sentimientos de las mujeres, la capacidad de dominar la tecnología de los medios y el profesionalismo general. Exteriormente, se demostró que las mujeres periodistas millennial construyen sus identidades vistiéndose con el traje típico de negocios, actuando con confianza y desempeñando el papel de una periodista. Este sistema de gestión de medios se reveló para dar forma a las autoconstrucciones de los periodistas de sus identidades profesionales como la expresión del idealismo.

Palabras clave: Construcción de identidad. Mujeres periodistas. Medios de comunicación. Millennials.

1 Introduction

The number of female journalists in Indonesia, based on data from the Indonesian Journalist Alliance (AJI) in 2012, was low compared to that of male journalists. The comparison level is that for every ten journalists in Indonesia, there are two to three female journalists; for every 1.000 journalists, there are 200–300 female journalists (Luviana, 2012, p. 9). This percentage (30%) of female journalists in Indonesia does not meet the gender equality standards established in other parts of the world.

The realm of journalism is filled with difficult struggles, including interacting with potentially challenging or antagonistic sources. In the beginning, the realm of journalism was mostly filled with men seeking to conquer and obtain such sources, thereby producing news considered to be valid and trustworthy. Along with other societal developments and changes, women also began to play a role in enlivening the realm of journalism. In the history of the media, women have shown their success in this field, which was once dominated by men. Nevertheless, women continue to negotiate and struggle in the industry, taking on the role of journalists in an atmosphere of cultural inequality between men and women (Clifford, 2008, pp. 175-177).

The rapid development of journalism has led to competition among media outlets and businesses. This atmosphere has resulted in increased pressures and struggles for journalists in the face of media and audience demands. In the interest of pragmatic media, war journalism versus peace journalism was born (Nurdin, 2016, p. 65). Peace journalism thus became an option for voicing aspirations or beliefs without violence (Aluç & Ersoy, 2018, p. 195).

However, the development of print media has stagnated along with the rapid development of internet-based media. Print journalism is experiencing a crisis due to the technological onslaught, economic power, and new culture based on internet technology (Alexander, 2015, p. 9). The professionalism of internet-based media is questioned by the validity of their instant data sources. In one event, online media can report their news without seeing the whole aspect of the news (totality news), but piece by piece of information obtained is reported for 24 hours (Nurdin, 2018, p. 136).

The reality of journalism practices, as mentioned above, has resulted in specific challenges for idealistic millennial female journalists who were born in the era of rapidly developing communication technology. Based on the results of existing research, women in China have redefined the roles and rights of women in all spheres of life, including the public sphere as journalists (Ma, 2005, p. 56).

Women there appear to be an inseparable part of broadcasting radio, television, print media, and online media (Gill et al., 1989, pp. 121-122). However, the more traditional journalist profession faces severe challenges from social media journalists who increasingly undermine the existence of media journalists (Varol & Uluturk, 2020, p. 83) and the demands of the journalist profession.

The ways that the dynamics of global interests affect the reliability of sources and their information (Woo, 2006, pp. 12-13) is a sociological issue. Nevertheless, values, ideologies, and cultural empathy continue to be developed in society (Revers, 2009, p. 272), particularly by women's rights activists and journalists. The country's political system also plays a role in constructing ideas (Bahramitash, 2003, p. 551) of women's rights and the role of the press, with the government and the media positioned as enemies engaging in mutual criticism and attack (Bates, 2001, p. 43).

This is a significant obstacle inhibiting the media (Kim, 2003, p. 345) from expressing their beliefs and desires, and the media has largely become a space of journalist rhetoric free from neither individual nor biased values nor interests (Bucar, 2013, p. 191). In Brazil, as in China, a national discussion on the equality of women's roles in journalism is needed (de Jorge & Adghimi, 2013).

The results of the present study indicated that the challenges faced by millennial journalists are highly dynamic. Every country or region has a character base that influences the ways media develops, and millennial female journalists continue to respond to challenges present in the media landscape through their skills, including the agility to respond to the difficulties they encounter.

This study was conducted based on the phenomenon that the potential of female journalists has influenced the dynamics of print and electronic media in Surabaya, Indonesia. Female journalists have the same role as male journalists in the era of information disclosure. The idealism of female journalists to take part in coloring the flood of media information. The novelty of this study is its success in exploring women's idealism in the circles of print, electronic, and online media journalism. This study aimed to describe the expression of idealism and identity construction of millennial female journalists from the perspective of identity theory.

2 Literature review

In general, journalism can be defined as the process of someone finding information regarding an event that has happened or is happening and then delivering this information through the

media. The idea of the news based on “who, what, when, why, and how” (Nurdin, 2018, p. 137) has long been a standard of journalism around the world, and this concept continues to persist in news media today.

Nevertheless, the development of communication technology has influenced the direction of media development. Technology innovations have changed and continue to impact the patterns of journalists’ work, including formatting, newsroom structures, and the relationships between journalists and the public (Pavlik, 2000, p. 229). The presence of online media-based news has eroded the vitality of print media (Noam, 2019, p. 440), with some news ventures only having ever existed via electronic technology. News that is disseminated based on social media has also become a strong mode of news information, including community-based or citizen journalism, participatory journalism, collaborative journalism, and network journalism. These developments have changed perceptions of reporting held by the media industry, as well as the public (Kramp & Loosen, 2018, p. 206). Mainstream media journalism, electronic or print, relies on algorithms attuned to real-time information and facts, while online-only media journalism is largely supported by automated algorithms programmed via internet technologies (Lemos & Domingo, 2021).

At times, print media, television, film, and online media still represent women as helpless or depict them through the construct of oppressed women (de Jorge & Adghirni, 2013; Radak, 2019). News is constructed by journalists who are influenced by their socio-cultural contexts at the time events (or news) occur (Golin & Cardoso, 2009, p. 69), and so these images of women reflect both the media and society from which they come. The media has the power to organize, edit, and elaborate messages as they wish.

The power of the media is still largely in the hands of men who continue to view women first through the dimension of physical beauty. Audiences continue to enjoy media without gender-sensitive construction. The media has become a stage for role-playing and competition among individuals, communities, and countries (Adhikari, 2017, p. 160). An individual form can be in the form of a female journalist who conveys the aspirations of the community. As part of society, women are a source of information, ideas, and hope for improved gender equality and equity, but the state also has a role

in protecting the rights of civil society in social life.

The relationship between journalism and reality must be based on ethical awareness so that a journalist understands the dimensions of humanity necessary to the ethical practice of journalism (Harcup, 2020, p. 85). Female journalists must thus be positioned as people with the ability to advocate for women's empowerment through the media (Endong, 2017, p. 173). Holding the strategic position of a writer in the media provides a significant opportunity for a woman to optimize her role in realizing the goals of women's emancipation, while at the same time reinforcing the community knowledge orientation toward gender sensitivity.

The study of women in various scientific dimensions has often been undertaken to provide perspectives on the potential of women and to challenge gender inequality, specifically concerning men. Historically, female journalism began when women continued the work of their dead male relatives and husbands. In Western Europe, Sophie Morsing ran a newspaper in 1658 after her husband's death. In Sweden, Margareta Momma ran a newspaper in 1738, Anna Hammar-Rosén in 1773 and 1795, and Catharina Ahlgren published a newspaper in Swedish in 1782 (Beasley, 2020, p. 1).

However, inequality between female and male journalists continues to exist around the world. In Japan, male journalists dominate over females, with female journalists reporting feeling less comfortable in their positions as journalists (Ishiyama, 2013, p. 404). In Australia, female journalists have lower salaries than male journalists (North, 2013, p. 333). In Brazil, there is an ongoing national discussion about the equality of men and women in the journalistic profession (de Jorge & Adghirni, 2013). However, in Russia, female journalists hold almost equal positions with men in terms of decision-making (Nastasia & Bondarenko, 2013, p. 66).

To develop their identities as journalists, women build relationships with the media (Gill et al., 1989, pp. 121-122), sometimes intending to show their ability to report dangerous situations, such as civil wars (Valis, 2017, p. 549), and their competence in terms of writing what they believe regardless of their personal safety (Lawler, 2008, p. 517).

Millennial female journalists born between 1980–2000 are very familiar with technology in all aspects of their lives (Nuridin,

2019, p. 134). Millennials are adept at using information technology to analyze future trends, express their ideas creatively, and innovate (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010, p. 226). Thus, millennial female journalists need a space in which they can express their idealism in the world of journalism.

Millennial women have taken their personal beliefs, including idealism, independence, creativity, and innovation, into the realm of journalism, including online-based media pursuits. This is the idea of millennial women that is now largely expected in the world of journalism.

3 Methodology

This study aimed to describe female journalists' expressions of idealism and identity construction. A qualitative research method (Sulaeman et al., 2021, p. 501; Ridwan et al., 2020, p. 712) was used, exploring and describing the experiences of millennial journalists in the media industry through oral, written, and behavioral expressions. The research was conducted in 2019 with the research target of millennial female journalists in Surabaya, Indonesia. Informants were selected using the following criteria: female gender, experience as a journalist for at least three years, and between the ages of 20–30 years. Initially, the determination of informants was carried out using a purposive sampling technique and following the selection criteria. Furthermore, using the snowball sampling technique, participant determination was based on information from the first interviewee, continuing to determine the proceeding participants.

Chart 1*Informant data*

| No. | Informant Name | Media | Work experience |
|-----|----------------|--|-----------------|
| 1. | Trisun | The daily newspaper 'Radar Bojonegoro' | 10 years |
| | | The daily newspaper 'Surabaya Pagi' | |
| | | The daily newspaper 'Metro' | |
| | | The daily newspaper 'Duta Masyarakat' | |
| 2. | Alhaj | Presenter / Reporter TV9 | 3 years |
| 3. | Mongra | The daily newspaper 'Surya' | 4 years |
| | | The daily newspaper 'Jawa Pos' | |
| 4. | Agsan | Metro TV Journalist | 5 years |
| 5. | Cinlat | SBOTV Journalist | 4 years |
| | | The daily newspaper 'Jawa Pos' | |
| 6. | Ama | Metro TV Journalist | 3 years |
| 7. | Rubul | SAKTI TV Journalist | 3 years |
| 8. | Adinwa | The daily newspaper 'Jawa Pos' | 3 years |
| 9. | Rekaja | The daily newspaper 'Jawa Pos' | 3 years |
| | | Perempuanriang.com | |
| 10. | Unfa | Saranaselarasmedia.com | 3 years |
| | | Presenter / Reporter TVRI | |

Data was collected by interviewing ten millennial female journalists about their experiences expressing their idealism as journalists and how they construct their identities as female journalists. The names of the participants in this study were included under pseudonyms (Chart 1). Qualitative procedures were used to elaborate on the data collected, group it according to specified categories, perform analysis, and produce research findings.

4 Results

Everyone has a way of constructing themselves when interacting with their environment, including journalists. In the world of journalism, there can be a clash between the values of idealism and practice as a journalist (Dierickx, 2020, p. 435). The results of this study describe the expression of idealism and identity construction of millennial female journalists in Surabaya, Indonesia.

4.1 The expression of millennial female journalist idealism

The journalist profession does not differentiate between men and women. Journalism knows only professional work in accordance with the media management system that is used. A journalist does not work alone in producing news. Other parties who participate in the process of media production, namely people who are in the structure of the media organization, and even media audiences, can build relationships with the media through contributing constructive news thoughts (Kramp & Loosen, 2018, p. 207).

The division of work in media organizations does not distinguish between men and women. There are codes of ethics and professional standards that are carried out in journalism. However, in reality, different news is produced when males or females are involved in the production. Whether journalists realize it, there are inherently different points of view expressed when news is written by male and female journalists. Male journalists tend to write stories about violent events; however, the majority of female journalists have written about issues affecting women and their lives (Luviana, 2012, p. 109). The difference in news production results can be seen in terms of the language used, perspectives provided, and delivery techniques. News written by female journalists has specific characteristics in the use of language, being more organized, emphasizing aspects of feeling as a woman, and reporting from the perspective of a woman. It is recognized by an informant as follows:

In the news coverage, for example, in the coverage of incidents of a homicide conflict, male journalists take the viewpoint of reporting from the aspect of the process of murder and its legal impact; however, I, as a female journalist, take the viewpoint of aspects of how a murderer can commit a heinous act of murder. (Agsan, personal communication, November 10, 2019).

Another interviewee indicated that reporting on conflicts is what differentiates the characteristics of male and female journalists, with male journalists tending to protect female journalists from such potential danger as a form of solidarity among journalists. Protection for female journalists is also provided by groups of female journalists if gender bias is being enacted in the workplace. This informant said:

In my opinion, seen from the duties and obligations as a journalist, basically between female and male journalists are the same, no different. How do interviews and lobbying does not make any difference? This is in Surabaya, I don't know in

other areas. Male and female journalists work to protect each other in the event of violence against journalists. (Mongra, personal communication, November 05, 2019).

For a woman, being employed as a journalist includes a variety of challenges. The profession requires journalists to follow and pay close attention to information development on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, women in journalism often face different limitations than those of their male colleagues. This is in accordance with the recognition informant as follows:

Being a female in journalism is very challenging, at first, my parents forbade me to be a journalist, according to her, being a journalist is a tough job, and requires that we always update news for 24 hours. (Adinwa, personal communication, November 12, 2019)

A journalist's experience reporting events can contribute to the increased knowledge and critical analysis power of that journalist. A journalist's professionalism is built through a wealth of experience and increasing knowledge and will lead them to be a good interviewer, someone who can contribute to the development of critical news, and someone who can write well under pressure. Women journalists need "flying hours" in the "world of journalism" to achieve idealism in the journalistic profession. This statement is recognized by the informant as follows:

To become a professional journalist, I have not yet reached that level, I need a process to become an ideal professional. A professional journalist can be seen from the results of taking pictures and quality scripts. It takes a long process. (Ama, personal communication, November 15, 2019)

Expression is making known ideas and behavior that indicate one's feelings and take place during one's daily activities. Millennial female journalists' expression often takes place through their professional attitudes as journalists, their understandings of stories and information presented in a way that appeals to the public, and their exceptional skills in the news field. The front stage of female journalists is demonstrated using attributes as professional journalists. Journalists depict themselves in their public-facing profiles in such a way that the public believes what they say and write. Outside of media coverage or this public persona, a journalist then returns to her "free" self – perhaps as a wife and housewife. An informant said:

The journalist profession is carried out when working as a journalist. Journalistic work is the front stage of a journalist. However, back to domestic life, the journalist profession is abandoned, becoming then a wife. (Unfa, personal communication, November 01, 2019).

As with all journalists, millennial female journalists lack knowledge in some areas; nevertheless (Van Eperen et al., 2010, pp. 2-4), they continue to have a vision of transforming news by mastering content or coverage and understanding the character of their interviewees so that they may facilitate the most effective interviews. An informant said:

The idealism of journalists must be realized through hard work in news coverage. To achieve that, a journalist must learn a lot of knowledge to provide a balance of information and at the same time be able to 'conquer the' source of news. (Trisuni, personal communication, November 30, 2019).

Millennial journalists have experienced severe challenges, namely the rapid development of communication technology coupled with the overflow of online news. Print media publishing has experienced obstacles in competition with this flood of internet-based news (Alexander, 2015, p. 9). In the industrial era 4.0 and toward 5.0, print media has experienced and will continue to experience stagnation in publishing, given the overwhelming switch to internet-based media formats. Prospects for media development are based on online media, with online radio and television becoming increasingly effective and efficient. An informant said:

Journalists must change the way of thinking in reporting through online media. The process is fast and can be read by the audience directly. Print media will turn into online media. A demand in the era of rapid development of information technology. (Rubul, personal communication, November 20, 2019).

A major challenge for female journalists in the field is the number of journalists. The proportion of female journalists is still relatively small compared to male journalists. Based on data from the Independent Journalist Alliance in 2012, the number of female journalists in Indonesia is 30% (compared to 70% male) (Luviana, 2012, p. 9). The number of female journalists being lower than the number of male journalists impacts the strategic position of women in media management structures. In 2012 in Indonesia, female journalists occupying strategic positions as policymakers in the media made up

only 6% of the total people holding such positions. The other 94% of female journalists still occupy non-strategic positions, including those of field workers like reporters. Such unfavorable positions of female journalists in turn impact media policies that continue not to benefit women (p. 10).

In Nigeria, for example, female journalists holding strategic media positions have not been able to optimize their role as women in realizing women's emancipation in the media industry. The obstacles faced by Nigerian female journalists in increasing the role of women in the field of journalism include strong social fixation, religious dogmas that have indoctrinated the principle of life in society, weak representation of women in media policymaking, and limited funding for gender-sensitive programs (Endong, 2017, p. 167).

The media in general still does not fully support women, including millennial women, often valuing women in terms of appearance and beauty standards rather than intellectual potential and skills. It is recognized by an informant as follows:

During their time as journalists, not many female journalists reported in the field, the majority of which were male journalists. Based on experience as a journalist, the media world is still not on the side of women. There are still many who see women in terms of appearance, not in the skills they have. (Rekaja, personal communication, November 25, 2019).

On the other hand, some women use their bodies as media commodities and benefit from doing so in the form of fame and money (Adhikari, 2017, p. 164). Media that continuously exploits women's bodies do not yet have a strict gender orientation.

4.2 Identity construction of millennial female journalists

Clothing can be a symbol of identity, comfort, confidence, and meeting the expectations of one's environment (Noh et al., 2015, p. 6). Clothing or fashion can also symbolize social status. Fashion can also be used to signal gender identity. García-Madrid (2019, p. 12) describes the construction of gender roles and stereotypes in social classes through fashion or clothing and marks social classes. Fashion as a symbol of social class can be used to demonstrate that one belongs to a respected or high class of society. Fashion also

functions as symbols that tell stories about the role of women in society, including depictions of women in literature and art.

Millennial female journalists often construct their identities through the way they dress to avoid verbal and non-verbal harassment when they are engaging in news coverage activities in the field. Their identities are also built through optimal performance as a journalist who is able to function as a mediator among society, the government, and interested private parties, as well as someone who fights for the public good, avoiding personal bias—delivering news that is based on data and facts, not opinion. An informant said:

As a female journalist, the clothes I wear are in accordance with applicable ethical standards. Always wear clothes that are neat and polite, that do not invite the attention of others, and do not cause negative impacts. (Agsan, personal communication, November 10, 2019).

Millennial female journalists construct themselves by instilling self-confidence (Noh et al., 2015, p. 6) in conducting a series of news coverage. Possessing this confidence is important when interacting with society and sources (interviewees). A journalist must not be “inferior” to them. Journalists should feel commensurate in their knowledge of the topic being discussed to be able to provide a balanced view of the topic being discussed. In keeping with this, the identity of female journalists is constructed through the dramaturgy of roles that are being played. Impression management as a professional journalist is optimally demonstrated in the front stage as a journalist (Goffman, 1971, p. 203). Media journalists who perform news coverage in the field play a role in identifying news about ongoing events. In terms of fashion, the requirements are clearly different from television media journalists, who must play a role by putting forward a particular appearance in front of the camera. Constructions built by female journalists can adjust to the roles undertaken in accordance with the tasks assigned by their media organization employers. A television presenter also plays a role with their face, including makeup, which is often discussed in terms of feminism. It is recognized by the informant as follows:

As a news presenter, I always maintain my appearance through fashion, makeup, and according to the rules of the specified media. Working in front of the camera, I must look optimal because I am seen by the audience directly. (Alhaj, personal communication, December 05, 2019).

In addition, a female journalist constructs herself professionally as a professional journalist. Being recognized as a journalist is part of the public recognition of the profession. She is also obligated to maintain a professional attitude and the reputation of the media company for which she works. This was outlined by an interviewee as follows:

The world of journalism has made me a strong woman. This is marked by the ability to divide time, carry out obligations as a journalist, carry out obligations as a woman, at work, at home, with my parents, and also with people around. Despite taking vacations, journalists must remain professional at all times. (Cinlat, personal communication, December 10, 2019).

Placement of the position of a journalist's dramaturgy must be well played (Goffman, 1971). When playing the role of a journalist, a woman must play the role of an intelligent person who understands problems, is able to face obstacles in the field, and has the capability to balance the interviewee's knowledge following the theme of the relevant conversation. Apart from her work as a journalist, she may also return home as a wife, a housewife, or a friend, again becoming herself without thinking about what a journalist should do. Indeed, she is free to do anything without employing the attributes of a journalist. Such is the role-playing or role-switching performed by millennial female journalists in Surabaya, Indonesia.

5 Discussion

Historically, female journalists began to gain space for expression in journalism by continuing the work of the newspapers that had been started by their deceased relatives or husbands (Beasley, 2020, p. 1). Throughout journalism's development, the expressions of female journalists have grown. Not only have women continued their family work, but many have become professionals in a world with increased demand for female perspectives in journalism. The demands placed on female journalists continue to grow, as do the demands for women's equal participation or representation in positions of power and decision-making. For example, women in China continue to fight for equal rights, including the ability to utilize their potential in the public sphere without rejecting their roles as mothers and wives, by offering constructive ideas for establishing these equal rights (Ma, 2005, p. 56).

Over time, women began to build relationships with the media (Gill et al., 1989, p. 121), showing their potential as journalists (Lawler, 2008, p. 517), even in the context of war news reporting (Valis, 2017, p. 549).

The rise of women in demanding rights and equality in the public sphere is a phenomenon across various parts of the world, including Indonesia. Equality mainstream is a major tool in changing the mindset of women when facing opportunities and challenges in the era of globalization, including in the realm of journalism. Journalism offers opportunities for women to maximize their potential. Media can shape social reality with multimedia-based narrative content. Journalism is able to accountably track content over time that has an impact on social change (Koivunen-Niemi & Masoodian, 2020, p. 919).

Journalism has thus far been largely associated with the roles held by men. In Indonesia, journalists widely known by the public are male. The existence of female journalists still does not occupy a strategic and challenging position. Female journalists in the structure of media management are still placed in traditionally feminine positions, such as news presenters in television media, administrators in media management, editorial team members, and makeup artists (Luviana, 2012, p. 10).

Along with the development of communication technology, journalism has shifted from the print media mainstream to online media journalism, and even social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok (Noam, 2019, p. 440; Ramirez, 2021, p. 21). This provides a great opportunity for female journalists to optimize their potential and fight for equal rights in the realm of journalism. Millennial women hold the future and have great opportunities to take advantage of the development of internet-based journalism. This journalism integrates various online media platforms with social media to produce and disseminate news content (Noam, 2019, p. 440). The online media journalist platform rests on the ability to manage each comment from the audience as an interaction taking place in the space between media organizations and audiences (Kramp & Loosen, 2018, p. 206). The success of such media rests on the management of this content, distribution, and the tools used (Noam & Noam, 2019, p. 27).

A challenge for millennial women in internet-based media is the rapidly expanding dissemination of Big Data-based information. Millennial women face three related challenges—those of data, process, and management (Yakobi et al., 2020, pp. 251-253). The

data-based challenges take the form of seven characteristics inherent in Big Data as follows: volume, velocity, variety, variability, veracity, visualization, and value. The process-based challenges include locating and integrating data, changing, choosing the right analysis or presentation model, and analyzing the data to obtain results (Dierickx, 2020, p. 435). The challenges in data management include managing a variety of available data, including its relevance or interest and validity.

There is a clash between the ideological values of journalism and the practice of media technology innovation (Kedar, 2020, pp. 132-146). On the one hand, the ideology of journalism necessitates handling operations in a professional manner; on the other hand, the existence of media technology innovation is sometimes not in accordance with these journalistic ideals. These challenges must be overcome by millennial women if they want to exist in the realm of internet-based journalism. The rise of hoax news through social media and fake news on the internet (Doyle, 2000, pp. 713-714) has become a serious challenge in the development of online-based media. Hoax or fake news is often found in political, regional, national, and international spheres (Rose, 2020, p. 202).

In addition to the technical challenges outlined above, a female journalist also has non-technical challenges that are not encountered by male journalists, namely the idea of their *taqdir* (destiny) as a woman. This often means balancing the roles of wife, mother, working journalist with a busy schedule, finding and reporting on current events. Unlike women who can have these dual roles as journalists and housewives, men cannot perform the role of mother for their children.

The reconstruction of millennial women's identity is needed to fill opportunities and respond to challenges based on online media. Women should not only construct identity through the use of clothing as a symbol of toughness. Journalists as part of media organizations experience the process, production, and interaction among sections. According to identity theory, the identity of female journalists can shift from the construction of individual identities to group identities (Cerulo, 1997, p. 385). In doing their jobs, female journalists may conceptualize their models and the world around them in carrying out one's profession (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 716).

The identity of a female journalist in interaction with her environment is influenced by the culture from which she was born and in

which she was raised. In the process of identity construction, journalists experience cultural clashes with others. The culture that “won” now dominates the construction of journalistic identity and has even destroyed innate cultural identities from birth (Stover & Mann, 2016, p. 69).

Women journalists’ identities cannot be separated from their social characters, cultures, relationships, and self-concepts as female journalists. Identity can be likened to a kaleidoscope of an individual’s life, which is full of color dynamics. Self-identity is influenced by self-concepts and perceptions of others about oneself (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 492).

According to identity theory, individuals have two categories of identity, namely social and personal (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 493). The social identity of a female journalist can be constructed through ethnicity, culture, social status, and the social role attached to the profession. Social identity theory (p. 723) indicates that individual identity comes from one’s affiliation with the group or organization that one follows. The relationship between the individual and the group constructs individual motivation in assimilating with the group and shapes the individual’s self-construction. Personal identity is constructed through relationships with other people or various groups and forms self-identity.

The identity of millennial female journalists is constructed through individual relations with the media organizations that are followed. A journalist who has a self-concept based on ethnic, social, cultural, educational, and gender background may assimilate with the culture of the media organization that is followed. Management systems and media culture also play roles in shaping the identity of female journalists.

The idealism of millennial female journalists can gain momentum for expressing their notions and ideas if the relationship between individuals as journalists and the media in which they work has a common platform of journalism. The common perception of the styles and models practiced in journalism can provide a space of expression of great idealism for female journalists. The inequality of the journalism platform between journalists and the media continues to thwart the expression of female journalists’ idealism, reducing its expression and inhibiting its development.

Three key words express the idealism of millennial female journalists in answering the challenges of online media-based journalism. The first is the mindset, which involves understanding online media-based journalism. The mainstream shift from print media to online media requires general knowledge so that

the totality in journalism can be expressed according to the possessed idealism. Second is an identity or the construction of the characteristics of a millennial female journalist. Journalists' idealism must be constructed through the perspective of women, which is also aligned with the capacity of male journalists. Equality in journalism will further produce confidence in female journalists to compete and align their competencies as professional journalists. The third is mastery of internet-based communication technology. Female journalists should master internet applications as an online media base. Mastery of technology can increase the credibility of women in journalism at a pace with advancements and trends in communication technology.

6 Conclusion

This study describes the expression of idealism and identity construction of millennial female journalists in Surabaya, Indonesia. First, the journalist profession per se does not differentiate between the male and female gender. However, the reality is that the expression of idealism can be constructed differently among female and male journalists. This difference in construction is due to socio-cultural backgrounds, education, and the context of the current (news) events. Millennial female journalists express their idealism by constructing their inherent identity as women. The idealism of journalism is expressed through language from the perspective of women (including motherhood), using ethical, refined, and polite language, knowledgeability, and technology-savvy, as well as professionalism.

Second, the identity construction of millennial female journalists moves from individual identities as women to the identities of media groups or organizations. Women's identities are presented through clothing symbols as a precautionary measure against verbal and non-verbal harassment, as female journalists who have self-confidence and are professional and are able to demonstrate their roles as a professional journalist and as a wife and part of their family. Meanwhile, the identity construction of female journalists in media organizations tends to follow the regulations that apply in those media institutions. Nevertheless, identity that is affiliated with media organizations holds the potential for the expression of

differences in identity construction as individuals and as members of media organizations. Media organizations make rules that all female and male journalists must follow. The implications of such regulation of media organizations contribute to the fading of the idealism of female journalists as individuals and to merging into the identity of female journalists as media organizations.

This research produces theoretical implications that the idealism built around women's equality with men in all dimensions of life finds a steep path. The reality is that in many countries, there are still inequalities between women and men in the journalism profession. Men are more dominant in the work of journalists by occupying strategic positions in decision-making. Meanwhile, women occupy roles that are not strategic in developing their ideals as journalists. The primary practical implication of the results of this research is the need for solid encouragement from various elements of the world community so that women are given the same rights and privileges as men in the field of journalism.

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ALI NURDIN⁵⁶. Communication Studies Lecturer at the Da'wah and Communication Faculty of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia. Teaching courses: Introduction to Communication Studies, Interpersonal Communication Theory, Group and Organizational Communication, and Communication Research Methods. A researcher in the fields of social communication, media, organization, culture, and social religion. An activist of social communication and media literacy. Collaboration in the article: conceptualization of the research, theoretical and methodological development, data collection and analysis, writing and editing of the text, general coordination. Contact: ali.nurdin@uinsby.ac.id

SULAEMAN SULAEMAN. Received a Doctorate in the communication science Program from

Padjadjaran University, Jatinangor, West Java, Indonesia, in 2014 with DIKTI scholarship – studying social health representation and the relationship between the people with oligodactyly, the family and the community. He is a lecturer at State Islamic Institute Ambon, Indonesia, Communication Department. Head of Indonesian Communication Association in Moluccas. His works were presented in conferences and published in accredited scientific journals.

Collaboration in the article: conceptualization of the research, theoretical and methodological development, data collection and analysis, writing and text editing, supervision, and text review. Contact: sulaeman@iainambon.ac.id

M. RIDWAN. Obtained a cum-laude Doctorate in civil law from Pattimura State University, Moluccas, Indonesia in 2018. Lecturer at State Islamic Institute Ambon, Indonesia. The focus of his research interest is in the field of Anthropology social, civil law, Islamic law, where his several works were presented in conferences and published in national and international journals. Collaboration in the article: development of theoretical discussion, data collection and analysis, writing and text editing. Contact: ridwaniain1968@gmail.com

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