

The Dissemination of False News by Advocates: Ethical and Legal Responsibilities in Upholding the Image of the Profession

Putu Riko Ardy Pratama

Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Udayana, Denpasar, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Putu Riko Ardy Pratama, rikoardypratama30@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The spread of fake news by advocates has become an important issue in the digital era that can damage the image of the legal profession. This study aims to identify the ethical and legal responsibilities that advocates must adhere to and analyze the impact of fake news dissemination on the profession's image. The method used is a normative legal approach, analyzing applicable codes of ethics and regulations. The analysis results show that non-compliance with ethical codes can lead to disciplinary sanctions and negative stigma against the legal profession. This study recommends the need for ongoing education, transparency, and responsible use of technology by advocates, as well as strengthening reporting mechanisms by professional associations. With a commitment to ethics, advocates can enhance public trust in the legal system.

INTRODUCTION

The dissemination of false news has become an increasingly pressing issue in this digital era. With the ease of access to information through social media, false news can spread rapidly and widely, often causing significant negative impacts on individuals and society. For instance, misinformation about an event or an individual can trigger unrest, hatred, and even conflict within communities. Research shows that hoaxes are often related to sensitive issues such as politics, religion, and health, which have the potential to provoke anxiety and incite hatred in society (Putri et al., 2024). In addition, false news can unfairly damage a person's reputation, create lasting stigma that is difficult to erase, and disrupt social harmony (Putra, 2024). In this context, it is important for the public to be more critical in filtering the information they receive, in order to avoid the negative impacts that may arise from inaccurate news (Marsha & Setiawan, 2023).

The complexity of this issue increases when false news involves individuals who are supposed to uphold justice, such as advocates. When advocates, who carry moral and professional responsibilities, are involved in spreading inaccurate information, public trust in the legal system can be seriously undermined (Rahman et al., 2023). This not only harms the individuals who fall victim to false news but can also erode the integrity of the legal profession as a whole. The public may begin to question the credibility of advocates and, more broadly, the legal system itself (Susanti & Nurmiati, 2022). Therefore, it is essential for the legal profession to uphold ethics and integrity in every action and to take an active role in educating the public about the importance of verifying information before disseminating it (Ahmad & Hotimah, 2018).

Advocates hold a vital role within the legal system, serving as legal representatives for clients and as a bridge between society and justice. In carrying out their duties, advocates are not only responsible for defending their clients' interests but also for upholding the principles of justice and integrity (Spaltani, 2019). The image of the legal profession is heavily influenced by the behavior of advocates, meaning that the actions of a single individual can have a widespread impact on public perception of the profession as a whole (Suherman, 2022). If an advocate is involved in the dissemination of false news, it is not only the individual's reputation that is at stake, but the overall image of the legal profession may suffer significant damage. The public may begin to doubt the reliability and credibility of advocates as guardians of justice, which could ultimately lead to growing skepticism toward the legal system as a whole (Triadi & Rangoraja, 2024).

The dissemination of false news by an advocate not only violates the code of ethics but may also lead to serious legal consequences. Codes of ethics for advocates typically establish standards of conduct that must be followed, including the obligation to provide accurate and reliable information (Latupeirissa et al., 2021). When advocates spread false information, they risk not only losing their license to practice but also facing disciplinary actions from professional associations. Violations of the code of ethics can create a negative stigma toward the legal profession as a whole, potentially harming other advocates who remain committed to integrity and ethical standards (Suherman, 2022). These consequences are not only individual but also collective, as public trust in advocates and the legal system can be drastically diminished (Pora et al., 2022). Society tends to view the legal profession as a unified entity; therefore, the misconduct of a single individual can tarnish the reputation of the entire profession (Arrozi, 2021).

Previous research on the dissemination of false news (hoaxes) has been analyzed by several studies. First, (Priambada, 2022) examined the dissemination of criminal sanctions for hoax spreaders, focusing on the legal regulations that can be applied to such violations. This study highlighted the obstacles in criminal law enforcement against the spread of false news, including limitations in human resources and facilities available to law enforcement agencies. While the study provided important insights into the challenges of legal enforcement, it did not delve deeply into the role of advocates in the socialization and prevention of hoax dissemination. This creates an opportunity for the present study to explore how advocates can contribute to enhancing legal awareness in society regarding the spread of false information. Second, the study by (Marsha & Setiawan, 2023) analyzed judges' considerations in cases of false news dissemination that resulted in public unrest. This research showed how judicial decisions can be influenced by the social context and behavior of the offender. However, it did not specifically address how advocates can influence the legal process, either through client defense or public education. Therefore, the current study aims to broaden the focus by examining the role of advocates within the legal context and its impact on the image of the legal profession.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that there is no significant overlap with previous studies, as this research specifically focuses on the ethical and legal responsibilities carried out by advocates as legal professionals. This study seeks to fill the existing gap by examining in depth the ethical and legal obligations of advocates in addressing the dissemination of false news, as well as its impact on the professional image of the legal field. This research not only aims to provide new insights into the role of advocates in the context of false news dissemination but also to offer constructive recommendations to enhance the integrity and reputation of the legal profession in Indonesia. Through this approach, it is expected that this study will contribute meaningfully to understanding the dynamics of hoax dissemination and the role of advocates in maintaining public trust in the legal system.

The objective of this research is to identify the ethical and legal responsibilities that must be upheld by advocates and to analyze the impact of false news dissemination on the overall image of the legal profession. By understanding these responsibilities, it is hoped that advocates will become more cautious in sharing information and committed to preserving the integrity and reputation of their profession. This research also aims to provide constructive recommendations for advocates to perform their roles ethically and professionally, thereby reinforcing public trust in the legal system and the legal profession as a whole.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a normative legal approach by examining legal rules, legal principles, and relevant legal doctrines to address the legal issue raised in this study, namely the dissemination of false news by certain advocates and the ethical and legal responsibilities in upholding the image of the profession. The type of research used is descriptive, aiming to organize and classify the

phenomena of problems encountered in the context of legal and ethical conduct of advocates.

This study adopts three main approaches. First, the statutory approach involves the analysis of provisions in Law Number 18 of 2003 concerning Advocates, as well as the code of ethics issued by advocate organizations. Through this approach, the study highlights legal regulations governing the behavior of advocates and their obligation to disseminate accurate information.

Second, the conceptual approach is used to explore concepts related to advocates' ethical responsibilities. This includes an understanding of integrity, honesty, and professionalism in legal practice. This approach aims to define and comprehend the ethical norms that should guide advocates in carrying out their duties. Third, the case approach provides insight into the practice of disseminating false information by certain advocates. This research investigates several relevant cases, both at the local and national levels, to analyze how such actions are addressed by the legal system and existing codes of ethics. Through this approach, the researcher aims to identify patterns and impacts of false news dissemination within the context of legal advocacy.

The data sources used in this research consist of secondary legal materials, including laws and regulations, books, journals, and previous research that support the analysis.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ethical Responsibility of Advocates

The ethical responsibility of advocates is a fundamental aspect of legal practice, aimed at safeguarding the integrity and reputation of the profession. The code of ethics for advocates serves as a guideline that regulates their conduct in carrying out their duties, ensuring that they operate within the moral and legal boundaries established by the profession (Pratama et al., 2023). This code of ethics not only includes the obligation to maintain client confidentiality but also emphasizes the importance of providing accurate and non-misleading information. Non-compliance with these norms can result in the loss of public trust in the legal profession, which in turn may undermine justice and compromise the integrity and security of the legal system itself.

One of the core principles in the advocates' code of ethics is the obligation to act with integrity. Integrity encompasses honesty, transparency, and compliance with applicable laws. Advocates are expected to consistently provide accurate and non-misleading information, both to their clients and to the public (Moorhead & Hinchly, 2015). In this context, advocates must recognize that every statement and action they take carries wide-reaching implications. When advocates are involved in spreading false news, they not only violate the code of ethics but also damage the overall image of the legal profession. This can potentially create a negative stigma that undermines public trust in the legal system and harms other advocates who are committed to ethical practice (Loacker, 2023). Therefore, it is essential for advocates to carry out their practice with a strong sense of responsibility and awareness of the broader implications

of their actions, in order to safeguard the integrity of the profession and maintain public trust.

Ethical violations often carry serious consequences. For example, an advocate who disseminates false information may face disciplinary sanctions from legal professional associations, which can result in the revocation of their license to practice or the imposition of administrative penalties (Sinaga, 2020). In some cases, such actions may also lead to legal proceedings, depending on the extent of the harm caused such as financial loss or reputational damage to affected individuals or entities (Sitoresmi, 2019). Therefore, a deep understanding of ethical responsibilities is essential for every advocate, as it not only protects them professionally but also contributes to the trust and integrity of the legal system as a whole (Tambunan et al., 2024).

An analysis of the advocate's code of ethics reveals several specific obligations that must be upheld. One of the key responsibilities is the duty to avoid conflicts of interest. Advocates must ensure that they do not become involved in situations where personal or financial interests could influence their professional judgment (Sinaga, 2020). In the context of false news dissemination, advocates must ensure that the information they convey is not influenced by the interests of particular parties, as this could harm clients or the public (Aprita & Mulkan, 2022). Moreover, advocates are expected to commit to verifying information before disseminating it, thereby preventing the spread of inaccurate or misleading content. In doing so, advocates can serve as guardians of truth and justice, helping to foster public trust in the legal profession. This responsibility includes an awareness of the potential impact of every action and decision taken, which ultimately reflects the integrity of the legal profession itself (Suryono et al., 2020).

Cases of ethical violations by advocates often draw public attention and can significantly undermine public trust in the legal profession. One notable example involves an advocate identified by the initials FO. In this case, FO was allegedly involved in unethical conduct during courtroom proceedings, including the dissemination of information that harmed other parties and potentially influenced the course of the legal process (Israhadi, 2020). Such actions not only breach the professional code of ethics but can also have far-reaching negative consequences for the overall image of the legal profession. This case raises concerns that it may foster a perception that advocates are untrustworthy, thereby fueling public skepticism toward the legal system (Duarte et al., 2023). In



this context, the public may begin to question the integrity and professionalism of all advocates not just those directly involved in misconduct. The allegations against FO include behavior considered detrimental to the opposing party, which may affect the outcome of the case and lead to a sense of injustice.

Figure 1. Advocate Climbs on Table During Court Proceedings

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab3hH0Ejwjk>, February 7, 2025

Figure 1 shows a screenshot capturing the moment when an advocate climbed onto a table during a court session recess. This incident drew widespread attention, particularly among legal practitioners in Indonesia. The act was deemed highly inappropriate and unreflective of the ethics and conduct expected from a legal professional, especially within the courtroom setting.

This phenomenon highlights the critical importance of ethics and integrity in the practice of law. When an advocate who is supposed to act as a guardian of justice is involved in misleading behavior or misconduct, the harm goes beyond the individual or entity targeted (Eren, 2014). It also has broader implications for public trust in the judicial system. Such actions may discourage people from seeking legal assistance, ultimately undermining the enforcement of law and justice. Therefore, incidents like this underscore the urgent need for stronger ethical education for advocates, along with stricter oversight of legal practice to safeguard the reputation of both the profession and the legal system as a whole (Vionita & Sintia, 2024).

The importance of integrity in legal practice cannot be overstated. Advocates who are committed to ethical principles are more likely to build strong, trust-based relationships with their clients and the public. This trust is an invaluable asset in the legal profession and can significantly influence an advocate's success in practicing law (Vionita & Sintia, 2024). When clients feel secure and trust their advocate, they are more likely to be open and honest, which in turn enables the advocate to provide more accurate and effective legal advice. Conversely, the dissemination of false and misleading information can damage these relationships, create a toxic environment within the legal practice, and potentially hinder public access to justice (Xudaybergenov, 2023). In the long term, a strong commitment to integrity and ethics will be a key factor in shaping an advocate's reputation and the sustainability of their practice, as well as in maintaining public trust in the legal profession as a whole.

In addition, ethical education and training for advocates are of paramount importance. Professional ethics programs must be implemented continuously to raise advocates' awareness of their responsibilities (Fathony et al., 2023). This education should not only cover a thorough understanding of the code of ethics but also include discussions on ethical dilemmas that may arise in daily legal practice. With a deeper understanding of ethical standards and professional responsibilities, advocates are expected to avoid actions that could harm both themselves and the profession. Training programs should also encourage interaction between senior practitioners and younger advocates, allowing real-life experiences to be shared and learned from. This approach helps to cultivate a culture of integrity and accountability within the legal community (Fathony et al., 2023).

Strict oversight of advocate behavior is also essential to prevent ethical violations. Legal professional associations must establish effective mechanisms for reporting and addressing breaches of the code of ethics (Pujaka et al., 2023). These mechanisms should be transparent and accessible to all parties, ensuring that the public and clients feel safe in reporting misconduct without fear of retaliation. With proper oversight in place, advocates will be more motivated to adhere to the ethical and legal norms that govern their profession. Furthermore, involving independent third parties in the monitoring process is crucial to ensure fairness and objectivity. Thus, a combination of continuous ethical education and rigorous oversight is expected to create an environment that supports ethical and professional legal practice. This will not only strengthen the integrity and reputation of the legal profession in the eyes of the public but also foster greater trust between advocates and their clients.

In a broader context, the ethical responsibilities of advocates also have a significant impact on the overall image of the legal system (Glosoff et al., 2012). When advocates act with integrity and adhere to the code of ethics, they contribute to the development of a fair and transparent legal system. Their ethical conduct not only builds trust with clients but also reinforces public confidence in legal institutions (Xu et al., 2024). This is crucial for maintaining social stability, as a society that trusts its legal system is more likely to be law-abiding and cooperative.

On the other hand, unethical conduct by certain advocates can severely damage public trust in legal institutions and the judiciary. When the public witnesses unethical behavior or corruption within the legal profession, they may become skeptical and lose faith in the system's ability to uphold justice (Downe et al., 2013). Such conditions can lead to the loss of legitimacy of the legal system, where people feel they will not receive the protection or justice they deserve. Therefore, the ethical responsibility of advocates is not merely an individual matter it is closely tied to the image of the legal profession and the justice system as a whole. Understanding and adhering to the code of ethics is a crucial step in preserving the integrity of the legal profession. It ensures that advocates can perform their duties effectively and remain unaffected by false news or misleading information. Moreover, ethical advocates can serve as role models, inspiring their peers to follow the same path and contributing to the development of a stronger legal culture (Xu et al., 2024). By building a trustworthy and credible reputation, advocates not only protect themselves but also help strengthen the legal system in which they operate, ensuring that justice can be consistently and effectively upheld.

Legal Responsibilities of Advocates

The legal responsibilities of advocates are a crucial component of legal practice, relating to adherence to applicable laws and regulations. Every advocate is obligated to understand and comply with the legal provisions that govern their conduct. Advocates are expected to uphold the integrity and reputation of their profession by prioritizing both ethics and law in all aspects of their practice, including the management of information that could mislead the public. In

Indonesia, **Law Number 18 of 2003 on Advocates** serves as one of the key legal frameworks that outlines the rights and obligations of advocates. Among these is the legal duty to provide legal assistance in a fair and non-deceptive manner, especially in *pro bono* cases for underprivileged communities (Wardana et al., 2022). This obligation encompasses the responsibility to act within the boundaries of existing legal frameworks and to avoid actions that could harm others or society at large (Lukman et al., 2020). Such standards are essential to ensure that the legal profession remains trustworthy and operates with integrity.

One of the primary legal responsibilities of an advocate is to refrain from disseminating false information. The act of spreading fake news by an advocate can lead to serious legal consequences, not only for the individual advocate but also for the clients they represent. If it is proven that an advocate was involved in the dissemination of misleading information, they may face legal sanctions, including criminal or civil charges, which could severely damage their reputation and career (Arianto & Djajaputra, 2025). Advocates must not only possess a strong understanding of the law but also maintain awareness of the broader impact of their actions. Every action and statement made by an advocate must reflect responsibility and professionalism. Moreover, such conduct can result in their clients facing more severe legal complications, including losing a case or suffering financial losses. Ultimately, the legal responsibility of advocates requires a high level of diligence, caution, and ethical judgment. It is not only about avoiding legal violations but also about contributing to the integrity and credibility of the justice system as a whole (Palgunadi, 2018).

In the legal domain, advocates bear a significant responsibility to protect the interests of their clients, meaning that every action and statement they make must be lawful and compliant with existing regulations. When advocates choose to disseminate inaccurate information, they not only violate professional codes of ethics but also risk facing legal action from clients or third parties who may suffer harm as a result (Mamonto, 2021). This underscores the obligation for advocates to ensure that all their conduct within legal proceedings is legitimate and does not breach the law (Septanti et al., 2023). Violations of ethical or legal standards can result in a range of sanctions, including fines, suspension or revocation of their license to practice, or even criminal charges – depending on the severity of the offense. Beyond the individual consequences, such irresponsible behavior can seriously damage public trust in the legal system and the advocate profession as a whole, reinforcing the critical need for professionalism in legal practice.

Legal regulations governing advocate behavior also include provisions related to conflict of interest, particularly those involving clients and the general public. Advocates are expected to avoid situations that could compromise fairness or introduce bias into legal proceedings (Sinaga, 2020). They are also required to maintain transparency in professional relationships that could affect their objectivity. In this regard, advocates must always place their clients' interests above personal gain, reflecting their commitment to the ethical standards of the profession (Mamonto, 2021). Breaching this principle can not only lead to legal sanctions but also diminish public confidence in the legal

profession. When society observes advocates engaging in conflicts of interest or acting out of personal motive, it may foster skepticism and doubt toward the integrity of the justice system. Transparency and proper management of competing interests are therefore essential in maintaining the reputation of the profession and upholding the credibility of legal institutions (Hidayat, 2023).

For example, an advocate involved in the dissemination of inaccurate information may face sanctions from professional associations, such as the revocation of their license to practice or monetary fines. In this context, the use of social media to spread hoaxes highlights the need for lawyers to exercise extreme caution with the information they share, as even a minor error can lead to serious legal consequences (Liliana et al., 2022). This demonstrates that the repercussions of such actions are severe, and it is crucial for advocates to uphold both integrity and legal compliance in their professional conduct (Aprita & Mulkan, 2022). The dissemination of inaccurate information by an advocate not only damages their personal reputation but also contributes to public doubt about the entire legal profession. Society tends to perceive the legal profession as a unified entity; thus, the misconduct of a single individual can tarnish the reputation of the entire field. This underscores the importance of applying strict ethical principles in legal practice. By doing so, advocates not only protect themselves from legal risks but also contribute to maintaining the honor and credibility of the profession as a whole.

Legal sanctions for advocates who violate statutory provisions can vary, ranging from administrative penalties to criminal prosecution (Aprita & Mulkan, 2022). For instance, an advocate involved in spreading false news may face disciplinary action from a professional association, such as license revocation or fines, and could also be subject to trial in a court of law. This highlights the critical need for strict adherence to professional ethics. Violations of the code of ethics such as conflicts of interest or breaches of client confidentiality can have damaging effects not only on the individuals or clients directly involved but also on the broader perception of the legal profession. Such misconduct risks eroding public trust and diminishing the overall credibility of the legal field (Saputra & Victoria, 2023). Through strict discipline and a deep understanding of both ethical and legal responsibilities, advocates can fulfill their role as dependable pillars of justice within the legal system. Upholding these standards is essential not only for personal and professional accountability but also for maintaining the honor and trustworthiness of the legal profession as a whole (Marsha & Setiawan, 2023).

Moreover, advocates must understand the fundamental legal principles underlying their responsibilities. Principles such as **justice**, **transparency**, and **accountability** serve as the foundation for every action taken by advocates in their legal practice. *Justice* requires advocates to act with objectivity and impartiality, ensuring that all parties are treated fairly. *Transparency* compels advocates to communicate clearly and openly with clients and other parties, so that every action and decision can be understood and justified. *Accountability* demands that advocates take responsibility for their actions – both to their clients and to the broader public. Awareness of these legal and ethical responsibilities

helps advocates make wiser, more professional decisions, thereby strengthening public trust in the legal profession. In the long term, a commitment to these principles contributes to the development of a more just and reliable legal system – one in which every individual feels respected and protected. Advocates also have a duty to report any legal violations they become aware of, including those committed by colleagues or other individuals involved in legal proceedings. By reporting such misconduct, advocates play a role in upholding the rule of law and maintaining the integrity of the legal system. This action not only reflects a strong commitment to professional ethics but also serves as a preventive measure to stop further violations that could harm clients or the wider public. The importance of legal and ethical education cannot be overstated in the context of an advocate's legal responsibilities. Educational programs focused on legal understanding and professional ethics should be provided on an ongoing basis to ensure that advocates remain informed about current legal developments. With quality education, advocates will be better equipped to fulfill their legal obligations, including a deep understanding of recent legislation, best practices in client representation, and awareness of the ethical implications of their actions.

The Impact of Spreading False Information on the Image of the Legal Profession

The spread of false information by rogue advocates can significantly damage the image of the legal profession. When advocates – who are expected to uphold justice engage in the dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information, it creates a negative public perception. Public trust in both advocates and the legal system may decline, ultimately undermining the core functions of the legal profession itself. In this context, false information can tarnish an advocate's reputation and generate a broader stigma toward the profession, causing society to question the integrity and professionalism of legal practitioners. One of the most apparent consequences is the erosion of public trust in advocates. People may become hesitant to seek legal services if they believe advocates lack integrity or engage in unethical practices. As false news spreads, public skepticism may extend beyond the individuals involved, casting doubt on the entire legal profession. This mistrust can lead to a decline in the number of clients seeking legal assistance, affecting both the sustainability of legal practices and advocates' livelihoods.

Another consequence is the intensification of negative stigma toward the legal profession. When an advocate spreads false news, it reinforces stereotypes of lawyers as untrustworthy or profit-driven individuals. This stigma can hinder advocates who are committed to practicing ethically and professionally, making it more difficult for them to gain public trust. Furthermore, the spread of false information can impact the judicial process itself. When the public loses confidence in advocates and the legal system, they may hesitate to report legal violations or seek justice. Advocates who spread misinformation also risk facing legal repercussions. In addition to disciplinary actions from professional associations, they may face legal claims from parties harmed by their actions.

This not only harms the individual advocate involved but also contributes to a deteriorating public perception of the entire profession.

False information can also damage the advocate client relationship. When advocates are involved in spreading inaccurate information, clients may feel unsafe or lose confidence in their ability to represent their interests. This lack of trust can result in lost clients and threaten the advocate's practice. Doubtful clients may seek legal representation elsewhere, potentially leading to reduced income and a damaged reputation for the advocate.

The damage to the legal profession's image is often magnified by media coverage. News of ethical or legal violations by advocates frequently becomes headline material, worsening public perception. The media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion, and negative news often spreads more quickly than positive stories about advocates who act with integrity. When the media highlights cases involving the spread of false information, the excessive focus on negative conduct can foster the belief that the legal profession is rife with dishonesty and ethical violations.

Concerns are further heightened when considering the public's ability to process information. In today's fast-paced digital age, many people struggle to differentiate between credible news and misinformation. This inability creates an information disorder, where false news about advocates or legal cases is easily accepted as truth. When people lack critical thinking skills to analyze information, they may be swayed by negative media narratives, further worsening the image of the legal profession. This condition presents an additional challenge for advocates and the legal system, as they must work harder to restore trust and credibility in the eyes of the public.

To address these negative impacts, legal professional associations must take proactive measures. Enhancing education and awareness regarding ethics and legal responsibilities is essential to prevent the spread of misinformation. Through proper training and resources, advocates can better understand the importance of integrity and the consequences of their actions on the profession's reputation. These programs should include in-depth discussions on the dangers of disseminating false information and effective, ethical communication practices with both clients and the public.

Therefore, maintaining the image of the legal profession should be a collective responsibility among all advocates. By upholding ethics and avoiding the spread of false news, advocates can contribute to restoring public trust in the legal profession. Awareness of this responsibility should become part of the professional culture, where advocates support and remind each other of the importance of acting with integrity. The public has the right to expect advocates to act ethically, and thus, it is essential for every individual in the legal profession to preserve and strengthen the positive image of their profession.

The Impact of Spreading False Information on the Image of the Legal Profession

The dissemination of false information by unethical lawyers can significantly damage the image of the legal profession. When lawyers who are

expected to serve as upholders of justice become involved in spreading inaccurate or misleading information, it creates a negative perception in the eyes of the public. Public trust in lawyers and the legal system may decline, which in turn can disrupt the core functions of the legal profession. In this context, the spread of false news not only tarnishes the reputation of individual lawyers but also generates broader stigma that causes society to question the integrity and professionalism of the legal field as a whole.

One of the most evident impacts is the erosion of public trust in lawyers. People are likely to hesitate in seeking legal assistance if they believe that legal professionals are lacking in integrity or involved in unethical practices. As false information spreads, the public tends to become skeptical not just toward the individual involved, but toward the entire profession. This can result in a decrease in the number of clients seeking legal services, which ultimately affects the sustainability of law practices and the income of lawyers.

Another consequence is the growing negative stigma associated with the legal profession. When a lawyer spreads false information, it reinforces existing negative stereotypes that portray lawyers as untrustworthy or self-serving individuals. This stigma creates obstacles for lawyers who are genuinely committed to ethical and professional practices and undermines efforts to build a positive public perception of the profession.

Moreover, the effects of false information may extend into the judicial process itself. As public trust in lawyers and the legal system weakens, individuals may become reluctant to report legal violations or seek justice for their cases. Lawyers who are proven to have spread false information may face disciplinary sanctions from professional associations, as well as legal action from parties harmed by their behavior. This not only affects the lawyer's personal career but also contributes to a broader deterioration in the public image of the legal profession. False information also undermines the relationship between lawyers and their clients. When a lawyer is involved in spreading inaccurate or misleading statements, clients may feel unsafe and lose confidence in their lawyer's ability to protect their interests. This distrust could result in the loss of clients and jeopardize the lawyer's practice. Clients who feel uncertain may turn to other legal representatives, leading to reduced income and professional credibility for the involved lawyer.

The damage to the legal profession's image is often amplified by media coverage. Stories about ethical violations or misconduct by lawyers frequently make headlines, which further deteriorates public trust. Media has a powerful role in shaping public opinion, and negative news tends to spread faster than positive stories of lawyers acting with integrity. When media outlets focus excessively on these cases, it can create a perception that the legal profession is rife with dishonesty and ethical breaches. Additional concerns arise when considering the public's capacity to critically evaluate information. In today's digital era, the rapid flow of information makes it difficult for people to distinguish between factual news and misleading content. This lack of critical literacy contributes to an environment of information disorder, where false narratives about lawyers or legal cases can easily be perceived as truth. This

condition creates additional challenges for legal professionals, who must work even harder to restore public trust and credibility.

To mitigate these negative impacts, legal professional organizations must take proactive steps. Strengthening ethics education and raising awareness of legal responsibilities are essential to preventing the spread of false information. Providing adequate training and resources will help lawyers better understand the importance of integrity and the consequences of their actions on the profession's image. These programs should include comprehensive discussions on the legal and ethical implications of spreading false information, as well as strategies for communicating clearly, responsibly, and ethically with both clients and the public.

Ultimately, maintaining the image of the legal profession is a collective responsibility. Upholding ethical standards and avoiding the dissemination of false information are crucial efforts in rebuilding public trust. This awareness must become part of the profession's culture, where lawyers support and remind each other of the importance of acting with integrity. The public has the right to expect lawyers to behave ethically and responsibly; therefore, each member of the legal profession must be committed to safeguarding and enhancing the positive reputation of their profession.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The dissemination of false information by lawyers is a serious issue that can damage the image of the legal profession and threaten the integrity of the legal system. Lawyers bear significant ethical and legal responsibilities, including the duty to provide accurate information and act with integrity. Noncompliance with professional codes of ethics not only results in disciplinary sanctions but can also create a widespread negative stigma that undermines public trust in the legal profession as a whole.

It is essential for lawyers to take an active role in public education, promote transparency, and use technology wisely to minimize the spread of misleading information. Professional associations must provide ongoing training, safe reporting mechanisms, and internal oversight to support lawyers in maintaining ethical practices. By upholding integrity and committing to ethical conduct, lawyers not only protect their individual reputations but also help reinforce public confidence in the legal system. This collective effort is vital to fostering a fair and transparent legal environment where the public can feel secure and protected.

To address the issue of false information dissemination by lawyers, several key steps are recommended. First, continuous ethics education must be provided to strengthen lawyers' understanding of their professional responsibilities. Bar associations should also implement transparent and accessible reporting mechanisms to handle violations of ethical conduct. In addition, lawyers should be encouraged to actively participate in public legal education to raise awareness about the dangers of misinformation. Clear social media guidelines must be enforced to prevent the spread of unverified information. Promoting a culture of peer accountability and integrating ethics

into legal education from an early stage are also crucial. These efforts aim to uphold the integrity of the legal profession and restore public trust in the justice system.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

In facing the challenges of misinformation, both lawyers and professional associations must take proactive steps to preserve the integrity and image of the legal profession. Strengthening the code of ethics is essential, ensuring it is regularly updated to reflect legal developments and contemporary challenges. Ongoing ethics and legal education, through case-based training and practical examples, can foster deeper understanding and prevent ethical violations.

Transparency should be cultivated as a professional culture, encouraging lawyers to communicate openly with clients and the public, thereby reinforcing trust and reducing the spread of false information. Internal monitoring within professional organizations must also be strengthened by establishing ethical committees to oversee conduct and ensure accountability.

Furthermore, lawyers should engage in public education efforts and legal literacy campaigns, using their expertise to inform society and counteract misinformation. Responsible use of technology and social media is also key, ensuring that digital platforms are used to spread accurate and ethical legal information.

Safe and transparent reporting mechanisms should be available for lawyers to report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation. Altogether, these efforts form a collective commitment to ethics, transparency, and responsibility – enhancing public confidence in lawyers and supporting the development of a fair and trustworthy legal system.

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