Management of Communication Strategy by the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember in Enhancing Journalism Professionalism and Quality in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

Rapid technological developments require journalists not only to convey information accurately and quickly, but also to adapt to various emerging technologies in order to maintain professionalism and journalistic quality. This study aims to analyze the management of communication strategies implemented by a journalistic organization in addressing the challenges posed by digital transformation. Using a qualitative approach, this study explores various organizational efforts to improve member competence through journalism training programs, the utilization of digital media for education and information dissemination, and the strengthening of collaboration among journalists. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The findings indicate that the organization has successfully managed digital technology to build an adaptive, participatory, and sustainable journalistic ecosystem. This strategic management approach not only enhances journalistic skills but also reinforces solidarity in facing global challenges in the media landscape. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the urgency of innovation and digital transformation in the management of communication strategies within journalistic organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) of Tapal Kuda Jember is a professional organization that plays a strategic role in fostering and developing the quality of human resources in the field of television journalism in the Tapal Kuda region. IJTI serves not only as a gathering place for journalists but also as an institution responsible for improving the competence and

professionalism of its members. This is crucial given that the rapid development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the media landscape, including the working methods of journalists and the public's information consumption patterns.

The digital era brings both challenges and opportunities for journalism. On the one hand, digital technology facilitates rapid and widespread access and distribution of news. However, on the other hand, it demands that journalists adapt to these changes to remain relevant and professional. Journalists are required to master various digital platforms, multimedia reporting techniques, and understand the dynamics of interaction with audiences who are now more active in providing responses and criticism. Furthermore, maintaining journalistic ethics and reporting integrity has become increasingly crucial amidst the proliferation of unverified information and the potential for the spread of fake news (Susanto & Wibowo, 2021).

In this context, the communication strategy of professional organizations such as IJTI is crucial in equipping its members with adequate skills. This communication strategy encompasses a variety of activities, from training and workshops, to disseminating information through social media, to establishing collaborative networks with various stakeholders. Previous research has shown that ongoing training and the use of digital media as an educational tool are effective in enhancing journalist professionalism (Santosa, 2020; Karunia et al., 2024). Furthermore, collaboration between organizations and the use of digital platforms can strengthen professional networks and improve the quality of reporting.

Another relevant study is Yanilah's (2022) study, which examined organizational communication in implementing the work program of the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) in Tebing Tinggi City. Her research found that effective communication fosters good coordination among members, ensuring smooth program implementation. Furthermore, Banjac et al. (2024) examined digital communication patterns within journalistic organizations and highlighted the importance of technological adaptation to maintain professionalism in the digital age. These studies demonstrate that effective organizational communication, adapting to technological developments, significantly impacts the success of improving the quality and professionalism of journalists.

However, most previous studies have focused on communication strategies at the national level or at the large organizational level, leaving a gap in understanding the implementation of communication strategies at the local level, such as that undertaken by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember. Local organizations have distinct characteristics and challenges, including limited resources and

access to technology, which influence how they implement communication strategies. Therefore, it is important to examine in depth how IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember designs and implements effective communication strategies within the local context and the dynamic digital era.

Based on the description, the research problem formulation is as follows: first, what communication strategy is implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember in improving journalist professionalism in the digital era? Second, what obstacles and challenges does IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember face in implementing this communication strategy? Third, how is the organization's efforts to optimize the journalistic quality of its members through communication strategies amidst the dynamics of information technology developments?

This study also aims to identify the obstacles and opportunities faced by the Jember Tapal Kuda Journalists Association (IJTI) in improving the journalistic quality of its members. By understanding these factors, the organization can develop a more targeted and sustainable approach. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide insight into the role of professional organizations in maintaining journalistic integrity and ethics amidst the pressures of increasingly fierce and rapid competition for information.

Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the development of organizational communication and human resource management theory in the context of digital media. By focusing on the communication strategies implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember, this research fills a theoretical gap that has previously been limited to general studies without considering local and specific contexts. This approach is also relevant for providing practical recommendations for other professional organizations facing similar challenges in navigating digital transformation.

This research was compiled with due regard to applicable scientific writing principles, including the use of formats and citation styles that comply with current academic standards. Through a systematic approach and in-depth analysis, it is hoped that the results of this study will provide new insights and serve as a useful reference for the development of journalistic practices and communication strategies for professional organizations in the digital era. Thus, this research contributes to enriching the body of knowledge in the fields of communication and journalism, particularly in the context of adapting to ever-evolving technological changes.

Focusing on the communication strategy of the Jember Tapal Kuda Journalists Association (IJTI), this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of local professional organizations in enhancing journalist professionalism amidst the dynamics of the digital era. This research is expected to serve as a foundation for developing more effective and contextual policies

and programs to improve journalist capacity, as well as strengthening the role of professional organizations as a key pillar in maintaining the quality and integrity of journalism in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the communication strategies implemented by the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember in an effort to improve the professionalism and quality of journalism in the digital era. The descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to describe organizational communication phenomena in detail and contextually according to real conditions in the field. Data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with administrators and members of IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember who are considered to have competence and experience related to organizational communication strategies. In addition, direct observation of communication activities and training carried out by the organization was also conducted to enrich the data. Secondary data in the form of organizational documents, activity reports, and relevant supporting literature were also analyzed as a complement.

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, selecting informants who were considered to have the most understanding and direct involvement in the implementation of the Jember Tapal Kuda IJTI communication strategy. This approach aims to ensure that the data obtained is truly representative and in-depth in accordance with the research focus. Data collection was carried out through several main techniques, including in-depth interviews aimed at obtaining detailed information regarding communication strategies, obstacles, and efforts to improve journalistic professionalism. In addition, participant observation was conducted by researchers directly observing the communication process and the implementation of organizational activities related to improving journalistic quality. Furthermore, documentation in the form of collecting official documents, activity records, and other supporting materials relevant to the research object was also used as data sources.

Data analysis was conducted using interactive analysis techniques developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which include three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. This analysis process was carried out repeatedly and systematically to find effective organizational communication patterns and understand the meaning of the strategies implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember. The paradigm used in this

study is the constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes the subjective meaning of communication actors within the organization. This paradigm is considered appropriate for the research objective of understanding how IJTI members interpret and implement communication strategies in the context of journalistic professionalism in the digital era.

By using these methods and approaches, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the organizational communication strategies implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember and its contribution to improving the quality and professionalism of television journalists amidst the dynamics of digital transformation. This approach is also expected to provide a strong foundation for developing organizational communication practices in the context of the ever-evolving digital media.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
Innovation in Communication Strategy of IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember in Improving the Professionalism of Digital Journalists

In facing the dynamics of technological developments and changing communication patterns in the digital era, professional journalist organizations such as the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember are required to make comprehensive adjustments to their communication strategies. This research focuses on three main, interrelated problem formulations that serve as the foundation for the organization's success in improving journalist professionalism. First, an analysis of the communication strategy innovation implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember in response to the challenges of the digital era. Second, an identification of the obstacles and challenges faced in implementing this communication strategy. Third, a study of efforts to optimize journalist capacity through an adaptive communication approach relevant to technological developments and member needs. These three aspects integrally form a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the strategic role of communication in strengthening journalistic professionalism in the Tapal Kuda region.

The development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes to the global media landscape, requiring professional journalist organizations such as the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember to adopt and develop innovative and adaptive communication strategies. Journalist professionalism in the digital era is no longer solely determined by conventional technical skills, but also by the ability to adapt to new platforms, understand the dynamics of online information, and maintain integrity amidst the flood of information. Therefore, this study positions the analysis of

communication strategy innovation as a key pillar in understanding how IJTI Tapal Kuda systematically responds to and manages this transformation to improve the quality of journalism in its region (Mahfud Sunarijie, interview, 2025; Kompasiana, 2024).

One of the most significant manifestations of strategic innovation is the Jember Anti-Hoax Community Education (J-Emas) program, a collaborative initiative between the Tapal Kuda Institute of Journalists (IJTI) and the Jember Regency Government. This program is designed as a comprehensive journalism education program for the general public, particularly citizen journalists, with the aim of equipping them with the skills to produce and present valid and responsible information. This initiative is oriented not only towards improving technical skills but also towards fostering ethical awareness in the dissemination of information.

The Head of the Tapal Kuda IJTI, Tomy Iskandar, explained that the implementation of the J-Emas program will involve three pillars in each sub-district in Jember. These pillars are tasked with providing in-depth education on the entire process of developing information content, from narrative planning and accurate scriptwriting to rigorous data validation, to editing and ethically presenting information to the public. This holistic approach ensures that citizen journalists have a comprehensive understanding of the news production cycle.

Mahfud Sunarijie added, "We recognize that the role of journalists has gone beyond simply delivering news, now encompassing the crucial responsibility of maintaining the credibility of information amidst the rapid digital flow. Through J-Emas, we strive to empower the public to avoid being easily trapped by hoaxes and to contribute positively to a healthy and trustworthy information ecosystem". This statement underscores IJTI Tapal Kuda's vision of placing media literacy and verification as the primary foundation of their communication innovation.

In addition to public education, IJTI Tapal Kuda also forges strategic partnerships with higher education institutions, such as Nurul Jadid University. This collaboration facilitates Islamic communication and broadcasting students to gain hands-on journalistic experience in the field, mentored by professional journalists. This collaboration encompasses various aspects, from testing students' journalistic work to involving journalists in educating the next generation.

The use of social media platforms is also a vital component of IJTI Tapal Kuda's innovative communication strategy. Social media serves not only as a channel for disseminating information and education, but also as an effective means of strengthening professional networks and facilitating interactions between members and stakeholders. This digital approach enables the

organization to reach a wider audience and accelerate the dissemination of relevant information.

Another relevant innovation is the implementation of mobile journalism (mojo) training, which teaches members to effectively and efficiently utilize mobile devices in news reporting and production activities. This training is highly relevant to the demands of contemporary journalism, which requires speed, flexibility, and adaptability in the field. Mahfud Sunarijie added, "This mojo training significantly improves the technical skills of our members and accelerates the process of producing high-quality news".

The focus on strengthening journalistic ethics through regular discussions and seminars is also a crucial pillar in the IJTI's innovative communication strategy. This aims to maintain the integrity and professionalism of journalists amidst various challenges, including the dissemination of inaccurate information and sensational news that can damage the media's reputation. Strengthening these ethics is considered a key bulwark in maintaining public trust.

Comprehensively, the innovative communication strategy implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember demonstrates the organization's commitment to facing the challenges of the digital era with a multifaceted approach. Through public education programs, strategic partnerships with academic and government institutions, optimal use of digital technology, and strengthening professional ethics, IJTI has succeeded in creating a journalistic ecosystem that is adaptive, professional, and oriented towards the quality of valid and reliable information.

Dynamics of Challenges and Mitigation Strategies in the Implementation of Local Journalistic Organizational Communication

The implementation of the communication strategy by the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) of Tapal Kuda Jember faces a complex spectrum of challenges, rooted in the dynamics of the digital media industry and the local characteristics of the Tapal Kuda region. One fundamental challenge is maintaining journalistic integrity and credibility amidst the proliferation of digital information, particularly the rise of fake news (hoaxes) and disinformation that is easily spread through various social media platforms. This condition requires IJTI to continuously improve the capabilities of its members in conducting strict fact-checking and maintaining ethical reporting so that the information conveyed remains accurate and accountable.

Mahfud Sunarijie asserted, "The biggest challenge we face is not the technology itself, but rather how we equip each member with the sharp discretionary skills to sort out correct information and maintain professionalism amidst the pressure of speedy news delivery". This statement explicitly

underscores that IJTI's top priority is developing critical capacity and strengthening the foundations of journalistic ethics in response to a volatile and distorted information environment.

The next substantial challenge is optimizing internal communications management amidst a relatively complex organizational structure and the geographic distribution of members across the Horseshoe Region. This geographic disparity can often hinder smooth program coordination, dissemination of critical information, and building internal cohesion. To address this challenge, IJTI proactively strives to improve internal communications mechanisms through the implementation of strategic digital technology solutions and the development of a strong communication network among members.

Furthermore, developing human resources that are adaptive to technological changes and digital media trends is a crucial focus. IJTI members have varying educational backgrounds, experiences, and levels of technological literacy. This heterogeneity demands the design of individually tailored and inclusive training and mentoring programs to ensure that all members can adopt new skills and adapt to innovations in the media industry.

To effectively mitigate these challenges, the Tapal Kuda Institute of Technology (IJTI) implemented a comprehensive collaboration and synergy strategy with various stakeholders. This partnership included local governments, educational institutions, and law enforcement officials. Support from the Jember Regency Government, particularly in providing physical facilities such as shared offices and training spaces, proved essential in optimizing limited resources and strengthening IJTI's institutional legitimacy among the public and strategic partners.

Collaboration with educational institutions, such as Nurul Jadid University, and the Jember Police Resort in organizing mobile journalism training, is a concrete manifestation of efforts to increase the technical capacity and professionalism of its members. This collaborative approach not only expands the organization's network but also opens access to resources, expertise, and training infrastructure that IJTI may not have internally.

Another adaptive mitigation strategy is tailoring training and communication methods to the characteristics of members. The use of a blended learning model, which combines face-to-face sessions with online modules, allows members with varying levels of technology access to still participate and optimally benefit from training. This methodological flexibility is crucial to ensuring inclusivity in competency development.

Continuously strengthening media literacy and journalistic ethics is also an integral component of the mitigation strategy. IJTI proactively educates members and the public about the importance of verifying information, critically analyzing media content, and upholding standards of news integrity. These efforts are essential to maintaining public trust in journalism and strengthening professionalism amidst an increasingly complex and biased information environment.

Comprehensively, the dynamic challenges faced by the Jember Tapal Kuda IJTI focus more on qualitative aspects such as effective communication management, holistic human resource capacity development, and affirmation of journalistic ethics. Through integrated and collaborative mitigation strategies, the organization is effectively able to overcome these obstacles and implement its communication strategy to support and strengthen the professionalism of its members in the digital era.

Optimizing Journalist Capacity through an Adaptive Communication Approach in the Digital Era

Optimizing journalist capacity is a strategic priority for the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember, realized through the implementation of an adaptive and responsive communication approach to the evolution of digital technology. This organization regularly holds various competency development programs, including intensive training, workshops, and thematic discussions that discuss contemporary issues such as the principles of press freedom, upholding journalistic ethics, and exploring technological innovations in news production and dissemination. These activities serve not only as a medium for knowledge transfer but also as a forum for constructive dialogue that strengthens members' commitment to the quality and integrity of journalism.

One crucial agenda underscoring this commitment was the IJTI 26th Anniversary Commemoration Workshop in Lumajang. This event was not merely a celebration, but a strategic forum designed to strengthen solidarity among members and reaffirm commitment to professional standards. Discussions at the workshop included in-depth analysis of relevant issues, such as the revision of broadcasting regulations and challenges to press freedom, enabling members to gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal, social, and political contexts that influence their current journalistic practices.

In addition to face-to-face activities, IJTI extensively utilizes social media platforms as its primary means of internal and external communication. Social media is used multidimensionally: as a channel for disseminating up-to-date information, as a tool for continuing education, and as a platform for expanding

and strengthening professional networks. This approach significantly enhances a work culture that is innovative and responsive to technological changes, while facilitating the real-time exchange of information and best practices among members, which in turn improves the quality of collective reporting.

The collaboration with Nurul Jadid University on the journalism internship program is an integral component of the capacity optimization strategy. Through this initiative, students gain valuable opportunities to engage directly in news reporting and production activities in the field, under the intensive guidance of professional journalists. This program not only enriches students' practical experience but also significantly contributes to the development of competent, adaptable journalistic human resources ready to face the complex challenges of the digital era.

Technical skills development is also a key focus, realized through mobile journalism (mojo) training. This training is designed to equip members with the ability to effectively utilize mobile devices in the reporting and news production process. These skills are highly relevant to the demands of modern journalism, which prioritizes speed, efficiency, and flexibility in the field. Mahfud Sunarijie emphasized, "Mojo training substantially helps our members adapt to the latest technology, which in turn improves the speed and quality of news production".

Beyond just technical aspects, IJTI also places a strong emphasis on strengthening journalistic ethics and integrity. This is achieved through regular discussions and seminars addressing the code of ethics and principles of professionalism. This approach serves as a crucial foundation for members to not only be technically proficient but also possess a strong moral awareness and uphold the values of truth and objectivity in carrying out their profession.

Comprehensively, the adaptive communication approach implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember has successfully created a dynamic, innovative, and quality-oriented capacity-building ecosystem. Through various training programs, strategic partnerships, the use of digital technology, and ethical affirmations, the organization has produced journalistic human resources who are not only technically competent but also possess high integrity and adaptability.

This is essential capital for the Tapal Kuda IJTI in facing the challenges of digital transformation, ensuring the continued professionalism of television journalists, and ultimately, supporting the creation of a healthy and trustworthy information environment in the Tapal Kuda region and beyond. This ongoing commitment to capacity optimization demonstrates the vital role of professional organizations in the ever-changing media ecosystem.

Discussion

The Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember has exemplified how local journalistic organizations can innovatively respond to the challenges posed by the digital media landscape. Through initiatives such as the *Jember Anti-Hoax Community Education* (J-Emas) program, IJTI addresses not only technical competence but also public awareness regarding misinformation, aligning with broader efforts in media literacy to combat the spread of hoaxes in the digital era (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2019).

Their adaptive communication strategy includes the integration of digital platforms to enhance both internal coordination and public engagement. IJTI's use of social media mirrors global trends in journalism where digital platforms are not only used for news dissemination but also for building professional communities and promoting transparency (Newman et al., 2023). This shift reflects the importance of digital competence in modern journalism, where credibility is built not just on facts but also on how journalists engage with their audience (Molyneux & Holton, 2019).

Despite these advancements, IJTI faces structural and human resource-related challenges. The diverse educational backgrounds and levels of technological literacy among members pose barriers to uniform capacity building. As suggested by Singer (2022), ongoing training and hybrid learning methods can bridge these gaps, ensuring inclusive participation and professional development across geographic and demographic divides.

IJTI's collaboration with universities like Nurul Jadid aligns with the concept of "journalism-school partnerships," which are increasingly recognized as effective strategies for mentoring and preparing the next generation of media professionals (Carlson & Lewis, 2020). These partnerships also support professional learning communities where students benefit from real newsroom practices under the supervision of experienced journalists.

Mobile journalism (mojo) training forms another key element of IJTI's communication innovation. Mojo reflects the shift in contemporary journalism that demands immediacy, flexibility, and mobility in news reporting. Research by Westlund and Dörr (2021) emphasizes that mobile-first approaches improve responsiveness and adaptability, especially for local news organizations working with limited infrastructure.

Ethical journalism remains a central focus of IJTI's strategy, underscoring the need to uphold public trust in the face of increasing disinformation. As highlighted by Tandoc, Jenkins, and Craft (2021), continuous ethical reinforcement through seminars and peer discussions plays a vital role in anchoring journalists' responsibilities in truth, fairness, and accuracy.

Overall, the IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember case illustrates how localized communication innovation anchored in digital adaptation, ethical grounding, public education, and strategic collaboration can enhance journalist professionalism in the digital era. Their multidimensional approach ensures that both the public and media professionals contribute to a healthier, more credible information ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the communication strategy of the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda Jember in an effort to improve journalist professionalism in the digital era, several key conclusions can be drawn. First, the innovative communication strategy implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda, including the anti-hoax public education program (J-Emas), partnerships with educational institutions, the use of social media, and mobile journalism training, demonstrates the organization's commitment to facing the challenges of the digital era adaptively and sustainably. This strategy has not only succeeded in improving the technical skills of members, but also strengthens awareness of journalistic ethics and professionalism amidst the rapid flow of digital information.

Second, this study found that the implementation of the communication strategy faced various obstacles, particularly in maintaining the integrity and credibility of news reporting, managing internal communications effectively, and developing human resources capable of adapting to technological developments. IJTI Tapal Kuda addressed these obstacles by prioritizing cross-sector collaboration, adapting inclusive training methods, and continuously strengthening media literacy and journalistic ethics. This integrated mitigation approach enabled the organization to perform its functions optimally and strengthened the position of local journalists amidst the dynamics of digital media.

Third, the research also shows that optimizing journalist capacity through an adaptive communication approach is key to the success of the Tapal Kuda IJTI in developing competent, innovative, and ethical human resources. Through intensive training, thematic workshops, the use of social media, and partnerships with academic institutions, the organization has succeeded in creating a professional development ecosystem that is responsive to the demands of the times. This serves as strategic capital for the Tapal Kuda IJTI to maintain the sustainability of television journalist professionalism while supporting the creation of a healthy and reliable information ecosystem in the Tapal Kuda region.

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