



## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE NORTH SUMATRA KPOTI ORGANIZATION IN REVITALIZING TRADITIONAL SPORTS AMIDST THE CURRENT OF MODERNIZATION

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the organizational communication strategies of KPOTI North Sumatra in revitalizing traditional sports amid the currents of modernization. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and a single case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and media documentation. The data analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that KPOTI North Sumatra implements a hybrid communication strategy combining face-to-face interaction and digital media. Cultural campaign messages such as "Lestari Budayaku, Bugar Bangsaku" (Preserve My Culture, Strengthen My Nation) were used to engage the younger generation through social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube. Supporting factors include the creativity of the social media team and cross-sectoral collaborations, while challenges include limited funding and declining youth interest in traditional games. This study concludes that organizational communication strategies grounded in local cultural values and adaptive digital approaches are crucial for cultural preservation in the modern era.*

**Keywords:** *organizational communication strategy, hybrid communications, KPOTI, traditional sports, digital generation, cultural preservation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional sports are expressions of local culture that hold educational, recreational, and social values. They are not only a form of entertainment but also serve as a medium for character building, strengthening cultural identity, and maintaining social cohesion. However, a recent phenomenon is the marginalization of traditional sports due to the increasingly widespread

dominance of digital culture. The younger generation tends to be more familiar with online games and digital content, shifting interest in traditional physical activities that were previously deeply embedded in Indonesian social life (Sonjaya, Arifin, & Pratiwi, 2020).

Field conditions indicate that digitalization has influenced the recreational preferences of the younger generation. A 2024 APJII survey noted that 79.5% of Indonesia's population is connected to the internet, with the majority of users being Generation Z and millennials. This lifestyle shift has resulted in a reduction in social spaces for local cultural interactions, including traditional games and sports. Organizations such as KPOTI (Indonesian Traditional Games and Sports Committee) in North Sumatra attempt to address this challenge through various outreach programs and cultural festivals. However, budget constraints, low youth participation, and weak communication strategies have prevented program outcomes from being optimal (Nainggolan et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have examined the role of traditional games in developing children's character (Mahfudz & Nurrachmad, 2024; Yudiwinata & Handoyo, 2014) and the educational function of games as an alternative to children's dependence on gadgets (Sonjaya et al., 2020). However, most of these studies emphasize the pedagogical and anthropological aspects of games, without specifically discussing how cultural preservation organizations' communication strategies work in managing and promoting cultural revitalization programs. Research by Ohorella et al. (2024), which highlights the preservation of dance culture through digital media, is inspiring but not fully relevant to the context of traditional sports.

Based on this literature review, a research gap appears to exist regarding KPOTI's organizational communication strategies, particularly at the provincial level, such as North Sumatra. The limited exploration of the role of organizational communication in constructing narratives, managing campaign messages, and utilizing digital media to build public engagement presents an academic gap that needs to be filled. This research focuses not only on program descriptions but also on an in-depth exploration of the strategic dimensions of public communication as a foundation for successful cultural revitalization in the digital age.

The novelty of this study lies in its holistic approach to the communication strategy of KPOTI North Sumatra, emphasizing the dimensions of digitalization, cultural messages, and collaboration between actors. This research also presents a triangulation analysis using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and online media documentation, a technique rarely used in similar studies. By combining theories of organizational communication, digital communication, and the diffusion of innovation, this research offers a new perspective on how community-based institutions can survive and thrive in the digital ecosystem.

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to develop cultural communication strategies that adapt to the characteristics of the digital

generation. Without structured and communicative interventions, intangible cultural heritage such as traditional games is threatened with extinction. Therefore, this study is important not only as a scientific contribution to the development of organizational communication theory and cultural preservation, but also as a practical guide for KPOTI, educational institutions, and local governments in designing cultural revitalization strategies that are relevant to the challenges of the times (Harahap, Riski, & Siregar, 2022; Rogers, 2003).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the communication strategies of the North Sumatra KPOTI organization in its efforts to revitalize traditional sports amidst the tide of modernization. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand meanings, perceptions, and social dynamics in depth based on narrative data (Moleong, 2018). This research focuses not only on the process of delivering communication messages but also on the values, norms, and institutional strategies that shape interactions between the organization and the public.

The research method used is a single case study. This approach is considered relevant because it allows for in-depth analysis of a single social unit, namely the North Sumatra KPOTI, as a representative of cultural organizations facing communication challenges in the digital era (Yin, 2016).

The research location is the North Sumatra KPOTI Secretariat in Medan City. The research subjects included core administrators, such as the general chairman, secretary, head of communications and public relations, and active members involved in the planning and implementation of the organization's communication strategy. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, with the following criteria: (1) at least one year of active participation in KPOTI, (2) direct involvement in organizational communication activities, and (3) willingness to provide information openly. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation.

Data collection involved three main methods: (1) in-depth interviews using semi-structured guidelines to explore communication strategies, organizational practices, and challenges faced; (2) participant observation of KPOTI activities, both directly and through digital media; and (3) documentation in the form of activity archives, online media publications, program reports, activity photos, and posts on KPOTI's official social media platforms.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis was strengthened by thematic coding techniques: open coding (identifying initial codes), axial coding (grouping into categories), and selective coding (structuring main themes).

Data validity was maintained through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness approach, which encompasses four criteria: (1) credibility, maintained through data and method triangulation; (2) transferability, maintained through detailed contextual descriptions; (3) dependability, through consistent documentation of the research process; and (4) confirmability, through member checking of the researcher's interpretations by informants.

Research ethics were maintained by providing each informant with an explanation of the research's purpose, procedures, and benefits. Informed consent was obtained prior to interviews, and informant identities were disguised through code names or job titles. All data was used for academic purposes only and maintained professional confidentiality.

### 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This research yielded four main themes that explain the communication strategy of the North Sumatra KPOTI organization in revitalizing traditional sports amidst the tide of modernization. These four themes include: (1) organizational communication strategy, (2) campaign messages and cultural values, (3) cultural revitalization programs, and (4) supporting and inhibiting factors.

These findings were obtained through a qualitative data analysis process using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) model, which consists of the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, as well as coding (open, axial, and selective coding). To enhance validity, cross-source triangulation was conducted using in-depth interviews, social media observations, and online news documentation.

This research reveals that KPOTI North Sumatra has implemented a hybrid organizational communication strategy, combining face-to-face communication approaches in the field with the adaptive use of digital media. This is evident in the statement by the General Secretary of KPOTI North Sumatra, who stated that every in-person activity is always combined with campaigns on digital platforms, particularly Instagram. This approach demonstrates the organization's awareness of the need to reach a younger, more digitally active audience.

One of the main strategies implemented is strengthening the cultural campaign message, packaged in the persuasive tagline "Lestari Budayaku, Bugar Bangsaku." This message is designed to raise collective awareness of the importance of traditional games as both a cultural heritage and an educational medium. The tagline is used not only in verbal communication but also visually in the form of digital posters and social media posts, which consistently appear on KPOTI North Sumatra's various official channels.

KPOTI's communication strategy does not stand alone but is accompanied by a number of collaboratively developed cultural revitalization programs. For example, the establishment of the Folk Games Gallery serves as a center for cultural

education and a space for intergenerational interaction. In addition, KPOTI also initiated training and a folk games festival involving schools, local communities, and the cultural office. In its implementation, cross-sector collaboration has proven to be a key strength of KPOTI, expanding the scope of its activities and strengthening the organization's social legitimacy.

However, despite these achievements, KPOTI North Sumatra faces several structural and cultural barriers. One of the main obstacles is budget constraints and a lack of sponsors, which hinder the program's widespread implementation. Furthermore, the low interest of the younger generation in traditional games poses a challenge. This factor is exacerbated by the dominance of digital lifestyles, which have transformed children's and adolescents' recreational patterns into more individualistic and physically passive activities.

Furthermore, supporting factors that strengthen the effectiveness of KPOTI's communication strategy are the organization's internal solidarity and the creativity of its social media team. This team has successfully produced digital content that is communicative, relevant, and engaging for young audiences. Their ability to transform cultural narratives into visual and interactive forms is a key determinant of the success of conveying cultural messages in the digital era. Local community participation and symbolic support from regional figures also strengthen KPOTI's position in building an inclusive communication network.

The findings of this study were also confirmed through data triangulation techniques from interviews, participant observation, and online media documentation. Consistency emerged in the use of campaign messages, activity narratives on social media, and coverage by online media outlets such as *Analisa*daily and *Sumutprov*. This indicates that KPOTI's communication strategy has been consciously designed and implemented, and is publicly recognized as part of efforts to preserve modern and relevant local culture. Thus, the strategy implemented by KPOTI North Sumatra can be said to be a model of culture-based organizational communication that is responsive to the challenges of the times.

### **Communication Strategy of The North Sumatra KPOTI Organization In Revitalizing Traditional Sports**

The communication strategy implemented by the North Sumatra KPOTI demonstrates a hybrid approach between direct field activities and digital communication. This approach reflects the organization's adaptation to media dynamics and changes in public behavior, particularly among younger generations who are more familiar with technology. This strategy aligns with organizational communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of media selection and message planning (Harahap et al., 2022).

The selection of the campaign message "Lestari Budaya, Bugar Bangsa" demonstrates the use of persuasive messages based on local cultural values. This message is not only informative but also contains emotional impetus that can

shape the public's perceptions and collective identity. This aligns with persuasive communication theory (Mas, 2020), which emphasizes the power of narrative in influencing audience attitudes and behavior.

The involvement of various parties, such as schools, local communities, and government institutions, demonstrates an effective participatory communication strategy. This strategy supports the importance of synergy between an organization's internal and external communications, as explained by Nainggolan et al. (2021). This collaboration also strengthens the legitimacy of the KPOTI program as part of efforts to preserve national culture.

The challenges faced by KPOTI, such as budget constraints and low interest from the younger generation, indicate the existence of structural and cultural barriers. Latief et al.'s (2024) theory emphasizes that an organization's effectiveness is largely determined by its ability to manage these barriers. Therefore, communication strategies need to be designed adaptively and creatively to remain relevant amidst resource constraints.

KPOTI's use of digital media can be analyzed through the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003), which posits that cultural revitalization through media follows the following stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Field findings indicate that KPOTI has utilized social media and digital content to disseminate cultural values, although their use still has room for optimization.

Overall, this discussion confirms that the success of an organization's communication strategy for cultural preservation requires an integrative, participatory, and values-based approach. KPOTI North Sumatra has shown positive progress, although it still faces various challenges that need to be managed with a sustainable strategy.

The implications of these findings point to the need for policies that support cultural preservation organizations in three key aspects. First, local governments need to allocate a dedicated budget for community-based programs to preserve traditional games and sports. Second, regulatory support in the form of local cultural education policies in schools is needed, allowing for the integration of traditional games into the local curriculum. Third, public communication institutions and cultural agencies must collaborate to disseminate cultural campaigns through government social media, thereby strengthening inter-agency communication networks and increasing the visibility of KPOTI activities.

Reflections from this study also emphasize the importance of communication innovation in maintaining the sustainability of local culture. KPOTI can serve as a model for a community-based organization that adapts to digital transformation, provided it is supported by a collaborative policy environment that is responsive to sociocultural dynamics.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the North Sumatra KPOTI's organizational communication strategy for revitalizing traditional sports employs a hybrid approach, combining face-to-face and digital communication. Utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook is crucial for reaching the younger generation and disseminating cultural messages through educational and persuasive campaigns. The tagline "Lestari Budayaku, Bugar Bangsaku" serves as a narrative symbol for building cultural awareness and collective identity.

Collaboration with schools, local communities, and government agencies is key to expanding the program's reach. However, North Sumatra KPOTI still faces obstacles such as budget constraints, a lack of sponsorship, and declining interest in traditional games among young people. Internal organizational support, including the enthusiasm of administrators and volunteers, is a key factor in sustaining its activities.

These findings reinforce theories of organizational communication, persuasive communication, participatory communication, and the diffusion of innovation in the context of cultural preservation in the digital age. This research also illustrates the need for continued adaptive and collaborative development of organizational communication strategies based on local values.

As a follow-up, it is recommended that KPOTI North Sumatra improve the quality and consistency of its digital content with more interactive narratives that align with the characteristics of Generation Z. Digital communication training for administrators and volunteers is also needed. The local government is also expected to provide sustainable budget support and develop affirmative policies related to cultural preservation through education, media, and community activities. For future researchers, this study can be expanded to other regions or compared across regions to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the communication strategies of cultural preservation organizations in Indonesia.

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