



ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN SHAPING THE IDENTITY OF FEMALE CADRES BASED ON KOHATI VALUES

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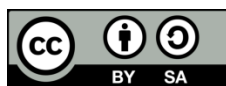
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ABSTRACT

This study explores how organizational communication shapes the identity of female cadres in Kohati HMI Medan Branch through the value of #KohatiBerprinsip. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with twelve cadres at branch and commissariat levels and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal three key communication channels: structural, cultural, and digital communication. These channels create an integrated ecosystem that supports the internalization of Islamic, intellectual, and women-oriented values, forming the foundation of female cadre identity. The value of #KohatiBerprinsip operates as an identity framework embedded in formal training, leadership practices, and informal narrative interactions. However, challenges remain, including uneven information flow, differing interpretations of values, and digital information fatigue. Overall, organizational communication plays a strategic role in strengthening the identity of female cadres as principled and empowered Muslim women, though improvements in communication design and consistency of value-based narratives are needed.

Keywords: Organizational Communication, Cadre Development, Kohati.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational communication plays a central role in shaping and sustaining the identity of a social group (Al Mahameed & Abras, 2025; Huda, 2024). As emphasized by Silviani, (2020), communication is the essence of an organization, for without communication, no structured or coordinated activity can exist. It serves as the adhesive that enables coordination among individuals and facilitates the creation of shared meaning among members (Cheng et al., 2024; Kišjuhas, 2024). In the context of

women's cadre-based organizations such as Korps HMI-Wati (Kohati), communication is not merely a tool for coordinating activities but also an instrument for constructing cadre identity that reflects the organization's values, norms, and ideology.

As part of the Islamic Students Association (HMI), Kohati positions internal communication processes as the core of fostering intellectual Muslim female cadres (Rahimi & Muhammad Din, 2024; Suryaningsi et al., 2023). At the branch level, the value of #KohatiBerprinsip is carried as a symbol of cadre formation rooted in Islamic principles, intellectuality, and womanhood. This value illustrates how organizational communication operates through recurring symbols, messages, and interactions, resulting in a consistent cadre identity (Keshtiban et al., 2023; Sadikin Bintang & Akbar, 2025). This aligns with Alhaidan, (2025), who assert that organizational communication functions as a mechanism to direct member behavior in accordance with values internalized through the organization's structure and culture (Dalimunthe, 2022).

In the process of female cadre formation, communication plays a crucial role in cultivating collective awareness and a sense of belonging to the organization. Nurdin (2020) found that in women's religious organizations such as Muslimat and 'Aisyiyah, the effectiveness of leadership communication determines the success of cadre development because it serves to build trust, loyalty, and social competence among members (Ritonga et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Siska (2022) shows that the communication strategies employed by Fatayat NU leaders are able to form militant cadres through effective message management, the use of appropriate media, and intensive interpersonal communication (Dalimunthe et al., 2020).

Although several studies have examined communication in Islamic women's organizations, none have specifically explored how Kohati's organizational communication shapes female cadre identity based on the value of #KohatiBerprinsip. This absence constitutes the research gap addressed in this study namely, the lack of scholarly discussion on how Kohati's distinctive values are reproduced through internal communication practices and how these processes shape the identity of female cadres at the branch level.

Building on this gap, the present study seeks to examine in depth how Kohati's organizational communication contributes to the formation of female cadre identity grounded in #KohatiBerprinsip. The analysis focuses on internal communication

mechanisms, patterns of relationships and interactions among members, and the processes of value internalization within cadre formation activities (Ritonga et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this study contributes to organizational communication scholarship, particularly through the application of the Organizational Network Theory (Katz & Kahn), Organizational Culture Theory (Deal & Kennedy), and Structural Functionalism (Miller & Poole, 2024; Ndubuisi & FNisafetyE, 2025). This study demonstrates how these perspectives collectively explain the formation of female cadre identity in a modern religious organization (Wang, 2024). Such contributions broaden theoretical understanding by showing that organizational identity is not only shaped by formal structures but also by symbolic communication practices and relational dynamics among members.

Practically, this study provides more detailed insights into communication strategies that can strengthen the development of female cadres in Kohati, particularly through consistent messaging, a more inclusive internal communication design, and the use of digital media to enhance organizational attachment. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for improving cadre development policies and internal communication quality within Kohati and other women's organizations. In conclusion, this study enriches the understanding of how organizational communication shapes the identity of female cadres in Kohati and reaffirms that communication is not merely the transmission of information but a means of building shared meaning, reinforcing values, and fostering collective belonging that forms the foundation of principled cadre character.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm with in-depth interviews as the main data collection technique (Creswell, 2021). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore meanings, experiences, and identity-construction processes among Kohati female cadres regarding the value of #KohatiBerprinsip.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving a total of twelve participants, consisting of seven branch-level cadres and five commissariat-

level cadres in Medan City. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria that they had been active as Kohati cadres for at least one year and had participated in cadre development programs where the value of #KohatiBerprinsip was emphasized.

The interviews were conducted online via Zoom and WhatsApp Call to ensure accessibility and to accommodate participants' schedules. A semi-structured interview guide was used, covering themes such as: (1) communication structures within Kohati, (2) value internalization processes, (3) digital and interpersonal communication patterns, and (4) identity formation as female cadres.

All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage procedure, which includes familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. This analytic process enabled the researcher to identify communication patterns and recurring narratives related to identity construction.

To ensure research rigor, triangulation was applied through the comparison of data from different cadre levels (branch and commissariat) and cross-checking emerging themes across participants. Ethical procedures were strictly followed: participants were informed about the research purpose, participation was voluntary, confidentiality was guaranteed, and pseudonyms were used in reporting findings. Overall, the methodological design ensures a credible and in-depth exploration of how organizational communication contributes to shaping female cadre identity based on the value of #KohatiBerprinsip.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Organizational Communication Patterns in Kohati's Cadre Formation

Findings from interviews with Kohati cadres at both branch and commissariat levels in Medan indicate the presence of three dominant communication patterns: structural communication, cultural communication, and digital communication. These patterns do not operate in isolation; rather, they intertwine to form an internal

communication ecosystem that shapes how cadres understand the organization and perceive their roles (Harianto et al., 2023; Ohorella et al., 2024).

a) Structural (Formal) Communication

Formal communication takes place through official forums such as management meetings, plenary sessions, cadre training programs (MAPERCA, LK I, LK II, and LKK), as well as formal decrees and instructions. Information typically flows hierarchically from the branch level to commissariats. One participant emphasized this structure:

“Official information usually comes from the branch through meetings or decrees. At the commissariat, we simply forward it to members,” (P1, Commissariat Cadre).

Analytically, structural communication serves as the backbone of coordination, ensuring decision-making flows smoothly and organizational mandates are consistently disseminated.

b) Cultural (Value-based and Traditional) Communication

Cultural communication appears through symbols, slogans, rituals, and narrative traditions. The value #KohatiBerprinsip functions as a symbol frequently invoked in discussions and activities. A participant described this symbolic function:

“The hashtag Kohati Berprinsip is like a constant reminder for us. Not just a slogan, but a value repeated in every forum,” (P7, Branch Cadre).

Consistent with Organizational Culture Theory (Liu, 2025), cultural communication helps form shared meaning, strengthen emotional ties, and cultivate a collective identity among cadres.

c) Digital Communication

Digital communication is conducted through WhatsApp/Telegram groups, online meeting platforms, and social media content. Digital channels allow fast coordination across commissariats but also create risks of message saturation and digital fatigue. This dynamic was highlighted by a participant:

“WhatsApp groups are fast, but because there are so many messages, I sometimes skip important information,” (P4, Commissariat Cadre).

Analytically, digital communication is effective for rapid, cross-structural coordination but requires message curation to maintain clarity and reduce overload.

d) Synthesis Analysis

Viewed through the lens of Organizational Network Theory (Katz & Kahn), these three patterns demonstrate top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal flows of information, collectively shaping Kohati's internal communication system. Cadre identity emerges from interactions between formal structure, organizational culture, and digital communication practices.

The Internalization of #KOHATIBerprinsip through Communication Processes

The value #KohatiBerprinsip is understood by cadres as representing the organization's three core pillars: Islamic values, intellectuality, and womanhood. The internalization process occurs gradually through:

a) Cadre Training Curriculum

Official training modules cover organizational, leadership, womanhood, and social issues.

One participant noted:

"Every training includes womanhood and leadership materials. That's what made me understand what 'principled' really means," (P11, Branch Cadre).

Analytically, formal training provides a structured foundation for value internalization (Volkova & Plakhotnik, 2023).

b) Leadership Role Modelling

Communication enacted by leaders verbally and nonverbally serves as a strong internalization medium. A participant explained:

"How the leaders handle conflicts becomes an example for us. From that, I learn how to act," (P3, Commissariat Cadre).

c) Storytelling and Informal Narratives

Informal forums, mentoring sessions, and storytelling among seniors and juniors strengthen personal and emotional understanding of values.

As one participant expressed:

"Sharing sessions with seniors feel more meaningful. Their stories make me feel part of Kohati's struggle," (P9, Commissariat Cadre).

Analytically, narrative-based communication aligns with research showing that storytelling builds shared meaning and reinforces collective identity (Khdour et al., 2023).

Formation of Female Cadre Identity Based on Kohati Values

Cadre identity is formed through reflective processes shaped by social interactions, organizational experience, and value internalization. Three identity dimensions emerged:

a) Progressive Islamic Identity

"Kohati teaches us to be Muslim women who are not only ritualistic but also care about women's issues," (P5).

b) Intellectual and Leadership Identity

"After joining the trainings, I became more confident speaking and making decisions," (P6).

c) Empowered Womanhood Identity

"Women's issues are always discussed, so we feel we have an important role," (P2).

Analytically, these identities support organizational continuity, reflecting the structural functionalist view of values as mechanisms of sustainability.

Dynamics of Participant Engagement as a Reflection of Organizational Communication

Interviews with 18 cadres and one internal administrator indicate a high level of engagement. Although some found the questions challenging, they expressed commitment to participating.

One participant shared:

"The questions were difficult, but I was happy to answer them because this is about Kohati," (P8).

Analytically, this suggests emotional attachment to the organization. However, the researcher also noted the potential influence of relational closeness, which may

introduce bias. To maintain rigor, analysis focused on recurring patterns rather than the speed or ease of participant recruitment.

Challenges and Gaps in Communication Practice

a) Uneven Information Flow

"Sometimes information from the branch doesn't reach us," (P12).

b) Varied Interpretations of #KohatiBerprinsip

"For me, being principled means integrity, but others focus more on womanhood or intellectuality," (P10).

c) Communication Competency Gaps

"Some leaders are actually good, but not confident speaking in forums," (P13).

d) Digital Overload

"There are too many messages in the group, so it's hard to tell which ones matter," (P4).

These findings indicate the need for more structured, dialogical, and curated communication strategies.

Implications and Recommendations

Main Theme	Sub-Findings	Interview Evidence	Analytical Interpretation
Structural Communication	Meetings, decrees, trainings	<i>"Official info comes from the branch."</i>	Maintains coordination & hierarchy
Cultural Communication	Symbols, slogans, rituals	<i>"The hashtag becomes a constant reminder."</i>	Builds collective identity
Digital Communication	WA/Telegram/Zoom	<i>"Too many messages; important info gets skipped."</i>	Effective but prone to overload
Value Internalization	Curriculum, modeling, storytelling	<i>"Senior stories are more impactful."</i>	Values absorbed through repeated interaction
Cadre Identity	Islamic, intellectual, empowered	<i>"We become Muslim women concerned about issues."</i>	Multi-dimensional identity formation

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that organizational communication within Kohati HMI Medan Branch plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of female cadres based on the value of #KohatiBerprinsip. The findings indicate that communication occurs through three primary channels: structural (formal) communication, cultural communication (value- and tradition-based), and digital communication. These three channels are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, forming a relatively functional communication system as described in Katz and Kahn's Organizational Network Theory. Through this system, information, values, and shared meanings are circulated among members.

The value #KohatiBerprinsip is understood by cadres not merely as a slogan or hashtag but as the representation of three core pillars: Islamic values, intellectuality, and womanhood. This value is internalized through cadre training curricula, leadership communication role-modelling, and narrative practices such as storytelling and informal sharing sessions. At the leadership level, "Kohati Berprinsip" is conceptualized as a reminder that every female cadre should possess clear and positive life principles principles that do not harm oneself or others while still allowing room for personal interpretation, as long as it remains within the boundaries of goodness and social benefit. Thus, organizational communication in Kohati functions not only as a channel for transmitting instructions but also as a medium for systematic value cultivation.

The resulting identity of Kohati's female cadres manifests in at least three key dimensions: a progressive Islamic identity, an intellectual and leadership-oriented identity, and an empowered womanhood identity. Cadres view themselves as Muslim women who are not only ritually observant but also socially responsible, intellectually capable, and sensitive to gender injustices. From a Structural Functionalist perspective, these strong value-based identities are essential for ensuring the continuity of Kohati's mission, as they support the regeneration of cadres who can carry forward the organization's agenda.

On the other hand, this study also reveals several challenges within Kohati's communication practices, including uneven information flow between the branch and

commissariats, varied interpretations of #KohatiBerprinsip, limited communication competencies among some leaders, and information fatigue within digital spaces. The high participation rate of interviewees within a short period reflects existing communication networks and close relational ties between leaders and members, but it also signals potential bias when the researcher is part of the organizational structure. Awareness of this relational context is essential to ensure that data interpretation remains critical and proportionate.

Overall, this study concludes that organizational communication within Kohati Medan Branch holds significant potential as a strategic arena for shaping principled, empowered female cadres who are prepared to contribute in public spaces in accordance with Islamic values and Kohati's foundational guidelines. This potential must be supported through strengthened internal communication design (including feedback mechanisms), enhanced communication capacity among leaders as key communicators, consistent management of #KohatiBerprinsip narratives across communication channels, and the provision of dialogic spaces that acknowledge cadres' personal experiences as part of collective learning. With these reinforcements, organizational communication is expected not only to maintain structural order but also to affirm Kohati's female cadres as autonomous, reflective, and socially responsible actors.

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