



Marital Communication and Opinion Leadership among PKK Cadres in East Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

The Province of DKI Jakarta has more than 110,000 active PKK cadres distributed across various administrative levels, playing a strategic role in empowering families and communities. However, the link between marital communication in the domestic sphere and cadres' effectiveness as opinion leaders in the public sphere remains underexplored. This study offers a novel perspective by linking family-based marital communication to PKK cadres' leadership engagement in the community. This location of this study was in East Jakarta, a highly populated urban area with prioritized stunting prevention programs. This study utilized secondary quantitative data from 100 PKK cadres in Duren Sawit Subdistrict, East Jakarta, employing a descriptive quantitative approach. The variables examined include marital interaction with dimensions of love, directing, respect, note domineering, note hostility, and note submissive, as well as social participation with dimensions of need assessment, leadership, resource mobilization, and management. The results indicate that most PKK cadres exhibit moderate to high levels of family communication patterns with an average score of 80.5, with love and respect as the highest dimensions, while note domineering recorded lower scores. Meanwhile, the level of social participation among cadres was in the moderate category with an average score of 62.4, with management scoring relatively higher compared to leadership and resource mobilization, which remained low. The findings highlight that harmonious interpersonal communication within the family serves as an important foundation for PKK cadres to build their roles as opinion leaders in community empowerment. This study is expected to enrich the discourse in family communication and community-based public relations while providing practical recommendations for the government regarding the integration of interpersonal communication training within PKK cadre empowerment programs at the community level.

Keywords

PKK cadres, marital communication, social participation, opinion leadership, community empowerment

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INTRODUCTION

The Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK—*Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*) cadres function as frontline actors in community-based development initiatives, carrying out direct communication and empowerment efforts to support family welfare and behavioral change at the household level (Fitriyanti et al., 2020). According to Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare, PKK cadres are classified as social workers who carry out social services and problem-solving tasks, with competencies obtained through education, training, and field practice. PKK cadres play an essential role in supporting government-led family health and community empowerment initiatives, especially through stunting prevention programs that rely on their communication capabilities and active engagement with local households (Kesumasari et al., 2020). As women who are socially recognized

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as key partners in government-led empowerment programs, their role highlights the importance of communication competence in bridging institutional messages and grassroots needs (Rodiah et al., 2019).

At the same time, PKK cadres experience a dual responsibility as wives and mothers in the domestic sphere while acting as agents of social influence and opinion leaders in the public sphere (Aziz, 2023). Effective marital communication becomes essential in reducing conflicts and strengthening family support, enabling women to participate more actively in community-based programs (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Although training has been shown to improve cadres' capabilities in early detection of stunting and strengthen their functional roles in community health programs (Tampake et al., 2021), limited research has examined how interpersonal communication within cadres' marital relationships influences their confidence and effectiveness as opinion leaders, particularly in densely populated urban environments where dual role challenges are more pronounced.

Several studies emphasize the importance of PKK cadre contributions to community empowerment through effective interpersonal communication. For example, a mixed-method study by Widiastih et al. (2025) revealed that cadre knowledge, roles, and skills significantly influence the effectiveness of stunting prevention initiatives yet many cadres still lack adequate training and competencies. Similarly, Tampake et al. (2021) demonstrated that structured training improves cadres' ability to detect stunting risk factors in toddlers, which is critical for early intervention. In regions where cadres are actively engaged, community health outcomes tend to improve, especially when cadres receive ongoing support and capacity building (Miranda et al., 2025).

Beyond their biomedical duties, cadres often act as communication bridges between health services and families using their interpersonal communication to counsel parents, deliver nutrition education, and motivate health-promoting behaviors. Such roles require not only technical skills but also interpersonal and relational communication abilities. However, while many studies confirm the impact of cadre training on stunting outcomes, there remains a gap in literature regarding how intra-household interpersonal communication, particularly marital communication among female cadres, affects their capacity to serve as opinion leaders and sustain community health efforts. The gap of this research intends to address, especially in dense urban environments where dual domestic and community roles intensify.

Theoretically, This study is grounded in Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, 1934), which explains how meanings of social roles are constructed through everyday interactions within the family, and Opinion Leadership Theory Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955), which describes how PKK cadres mediate information between the government and communities. From a community-based public relations perspective (Grunig, 1992), their effectiveness as opinion leaders depends on two-way communication that builds trust and encourages participation.

However, while communication plays an essential role in both family and community spheres, limited research has examined how marital communication shapes the confidence and social participation of PKK cadres as opinion leaders, particularly in densely populated urban environments like East Jakarta, where social complexity and dual-role demands are more intense. East Jakarta was chosen as the study site because it is the most populated administrative area in Jakarta (Arbani et al., 2019)—and continues to face priority public-health concerns such as child stunting (Riznawati & Eryando, 2023). The large and diverse population creates a more complex environment for PKK cadres to balance domestic responsibilities and community engagement, making these communication challenges highly relevant to the aims of this study.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between the quality of interpersonal communication between spouses and PKK cadres' engagement in community empowerment activities, contributing to a deeper understanding of family-community communication dynamics and informing future empowerment strategies in urban areas.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive analytical approach to interpret the dual roles of PKK cadres as opinion leaders within their communities in relation to their interpersonal communication within the family domain. The research focused on describing the communication patterns between PKK

cadres and their spouses, as well as the cadres' level of social participation as a reflection of their public communication functions in community empowerment activities. This approach allowed the researcher to thoroughly describe the existing conditions based on available data without reprocessing the original dataset.

The data used in this study were sourced from secondary data obtained from prior research (Aspary et al., 2020), which involved 100 female PKK cadres in Duren Sawit, East Jakarta. Secondary data were chosen because the dataset was originally designed to measure marital communication and cadre participation, making it highly aligned with the current research focus. A sample size of 100 participants is methodologically acceptable for descriptive-analytical research in social sciences and meets the rule-of-thumb threshold for ensuring stable and interpretable statistical patterns (Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). This sample also represents the majority cadre positions at the *dasawisma* and neighborhood levels in East Jakarta, ensuring contextual relevance to grassroots PKK functions.

Data collection in the original research was conducted using structured questionnaires that had been validated by experts in communication and family studies to ensure the clarity and relevance of the questions to the context of PKK cadres. The questionnaires underwent pilot testing to confirm the participants' understanding of the items, resulting in accurate and relevant data aligned with the research objectives.

The subjects of this study were active PKK cadres who held roles at the *dasawisma*, neighborhood (RT/RW), and sub-district levels. The inclusion criteria required that participants be married women, actively serving as PKK cadres, and willing to complete the questionnaires in full.

Measurement of variables in this study covered two main aspects: 1) Marital interaction, measured across six dimensions: love (nurturing), directing (friendly dominance), respect (friendly submissive), note domineering (hostile dominance), note hostility, and note submissive (hostile submission). Each dimension was assessed using frequency-based options (never, rarely, often, always) to capture the intensity of interactions between cadres and their spouses within the household. 2) Social participation of cadres, measured across four dimensions: need assessment, leadership, resource mobilization, and management. These dimensions reflected the level of involvement of PKK cadres in PKK activities, their leadership in organizational tasks, their contributions in providing or lending physical and non-physical resources for PKK activities, and their involvement in managing PKK programs.

Instrument validity was ensured through expert validation and pilot readability testing prior to data collection, while instrument reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, with all dimensions yielding coefficients above 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The reliability and expert-validated instruments ensure internal consistency, while the contextual match between data and research area supports external validity.

The research steps in this study included reviewing the secondary dataset, classifying the data based on the dimensions of marital interaction and social participation, and organizing frequency and percentage distribution tables to facilitate interpretation of the findings. The analysis involved describing communication patterns within the family and the tendencies of social participation among PKK cadres as a form of community-based public communication. Visual tables were utilized to clearly present the distribution of communication patterns and the levels of social participation of PKK cadres.

Through this method, the study aims to provide an in-depth depiction of how the interpersonal communication of PKK cadres within the family contributes to their effectiveness as opinion leaders in community empowerment initiatives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of PKK Cadres in East Jakarta

East Jakarta, the most populous and largest administrative city in DKI Jakarta Province, has 3.1 million residents across 10 districts and 65 sub-districts (Arbani et al., 2019). Within this structure, 715 PKK administrators operate at the sub-district level, implementing the organization's 10 core programs on family and community empowerment.

This study involved 100 married female PKK cadres from 24 sub-districts, most of whom (92%) are housewives with an average age of 30.7 years (≤ 10 years marriage) and 47.9 years (> 10 years marriage). Cadres had an average PKK service duration of 1.6 years for the younger group and 9.5 years for the older group. Educationally, over half completed high school, and economically, younger cadre families had higher average incomes. In organizational roles, 35% served as core administrators, while the rest participated as working group members.

This profile contextualizes the cadres' dual domestic and public roles within East Jakarta's dense urban environment, forming the backdrop for examining their marital interaction patterns, social participation level, and roles as opinion leaders.

Marital Interaction Patterns

Marital interaction is a key aspect in understanding how PKK cadres manage their dual roles within the domestic and public spheres. This section presents a detailed analysis of each dimension of marital interaction among PKK cadres in East Jakarta and compares the findings with previous studies and relevant theories.

Previous research indicates that the first decade of marriage is a critical period for marital quality and stability, often characterized by declining satisfaction and increased risk of conflict, which tends to stabilize or improve after ten years (Lavner et al., 2014). Therefore, the division of PKK cadres into groups of ' ≤ 10 years' and ' > 10 years' of marriage in this study is theoretically grounded, allowing the analysis to capture potential differences in marital interaction and its influence on public participation. **Table 1.** Distribution of Marital Interaction Dimensions among PKK Cadres

Dimension	≤ 10 years marriage (Mean)	> 10 years marriage (Mean)	Interpretation
Love (Nurturing)	89.4	85.9	Very high
Directing (Friendly Dominance)	78.0	75.1	Moderate
Respect (Friendly Submissive)	87.2	86.4	Very high
Note Domineering (Hostile Dominance)	63.2	64.0	Moderate
Note Hostility	89.7	90.5	Very high
Note Submissive (Hostile Submission)	72.4	75.9	Moderate
Overall Mean	80.4	80.6	High overall marital interaction

Source: Adapted from Aspary et al. (2020)

High scores in Love (Nurturing) indicate consistent demonstrations of affection, supporting findings from Suryani et al. (2023), who revealed that emotional warmth within families enhances spousal support, facilitating women's active participation in community empowerment programs. Roman et al. (2023) also emphasized that nurturing interactions within households reduce stress, strengthening readiness for social engagement.

Moderate levels in directing (Friendly Dominance) behaviors align with Chace et al. (2022), who found that assertive but supportive spousal communication facilitates decision-making for women in leadership within community health initiatives. Tjahjana et al. (2022) noted that Indonesian women often balance assertiveness within culturally expected norms when engaging in leadership roles within family structures.

High levels of mutual Respect (Friendly Submissive) confirm the findings of Kiruthika & Geetha (2024), which showed that respectful spousal communication correlates with increased family support for women's public roles. Ang & Lai (2023) similarly noted that mutual respect in marriages supports women's confidence in public decision-making roles in Indonesian communities.

Moderate levels of assertiveness behaviors reflect culturally negotiated power dynamics within households, which can shape women's confidence in community decision-making roles and leadership involvement (Mohajer & Singh, 2018). This aligns with Delatorre & Wagner (2018), which highlights that moderate conflict in marital interactions can lead to improved problem-solving skills for women.

High scores indicating low Hostility within families resonate with Firdaus et al. (2024), who emphasized that harmonious family communication enhances women's psychological readiness for community involvement. Shen et al. (2017) similarly identified that families practicing open, low-conflict communication facilitate women's active participation in neighborhood-level social activities. Moderate Note Submissive (Hostile Submission) within marriages aligns with Gammage et al. (2020), who discussed that strategic compliance within family decision-making can maintain harmony while allowing women to engage in community roles. Dery et al. (2022) found that balanced submissive behaviors can foster mutual support, essential for community leaders operating in family-centric societies.

The findings in this section confirm the Symbolic Interaction Theory (Mead, 1934), illustrating how daily spousal interactions shape the self-concept and psychological readiness necessary for broader community participation. While this study also considers how interpersonal family communication may influence women's roles as opinion leaders, this connection will be further explored in the following section

Social Participation Levels

Active participation in community programs is an essential indicator of PKK cadres' effectiveness in implementing family and community empowerment initiatives. This section examines the social participation levels of PKK cadres in East Jakarta, structured by dimensions of need assessment, leadership, management, and resource mobilization.

Table 2. Distribution of Social Participation Dimensions among PKK Cadres

Dimension	≤10 years marriage (Mean)	>10 years marriage (Mean)	Interpretation
Need Assessment	64.4	66.4	Moderate
Leadership	53.3	54.4	Low
Management	69.0	75.2	Moderate
Resource Mobilization	55.6	52.8	Low
Overall Mean	61.9	62.8	Balance in Moderate & Low

Source: Adapted from Aspary et al. (2020)

This dimension of Need Assessment, reflecting cadres' ability to evaluate the effectiveness of PKK programs, scored moderately across both groups. These findings are consistent with Kadar et al. (2023), who found that community health volunteers in Indonesia often lack systematic evaluation skills due to limited training opportunities. Primanda & Fatah (2021) emphasize that capacity-building programs enhance volunteers' skills in conducting effective needs assessments, vital for sustainable community programs.

Leadership scored the lowest among dimensions, indicating limited engagement in leading community activities. This aligns with findings from the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), which indicate that most female volunteers in Indonesia hesitate to assume leadership roles due to cultural barriers (Rahmani, 2023). Bahagijo et al. (2022) noted that leadership training can significantly enhance women's participation in community decision-making.

Scores in the Management dimension indicate that cadres moderately engage in executing and managing PKK activities. This is supported by Araque (2025), who found that community volunteers participate in routine activities but have limited roles in managerial decisions. Widiastih et al. (2025) highlight that effective management by female cadres correlates with successful community health initiatives.

Resource mobilization scored low, indicating challenges in leveraging resources for PKK programs. This aligns with Annisa (2021), who found that female volunteers in Indonesia face difficulties in mobilizing community resources due to limited networks. Indrawarsih & Ratri (2018) emphasize that networking skills are essential for improving program implementation and sustainability.

The data reveal that the majority of cadres across both marital duration groups exhibit moderate overall participation levels, with leadership and resource mobilization as the lowest dimensions, indicating potential areas for improvement.

Role of PKK Cadres as Opinion Leaders

PKK cadres serve as crucial opinion leaders within their communities, bridging formal information sources and grassroots citizens to facilitate behavioral change and community empowerment. According to Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955), opinion leaders interpret and disseminate information, influencing attitudes and behaviors within their networks, they also have a role essential in health promotion and community participation initiatives. Recent empirical evidence shows that community health workers who are embedded in strong social networks and maintain high levels of trust and communication are significantly more effective in promoting health-related behavioral changes among community members (Gadsden et al., 2022).

Opinion Leadership in Community Health and Empowerment

Findings indicating moderate participation and low leadership levels among PKK cadres align with broader challenges faced by community health volunteers in Indonesia, such as limited empowerment in leadership roles and decision-making processes (Adzmy & Disyacitta, 2018). Cadres' involvement in health education and maternal and child health initiatives exemplifies their potential as opinion leaders, despite challenges in assertiveness and confidence due to cultural constraints (Lopuhaa & Ginting, 2024). The low leadership score observed in this study indicates that cadres' potential to influence community decisions has not yet been fully realized despite their central role in program implementation.

Adongo et al. (2013) emphasized that community health cadres significantly influence family planning and maternal health decisions, demonstrating their role as trusted sources of information and behavioral role models in communities. Similarly, Rodiah et al. (2019) found that women's social networks are critical for disseminating health information, with cadres acting as community intermediaries to promote public health behaviors.

Factors Enhancing Opinion Leadership

Several factors play a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of PKK cadres as opinion leaders within their communities. Interpersonal communication skills are essential, as demonstrated by Sekarningrum & Yunita. (2023), who found that communication competence significantly improves community health workers' ability to deliver maternal and child health education effectively in Indonesia, increasing community trust and behavioral adoption.

Equally important is social capital and trust, which serve as key foundations for effective opinion leadership. Strong networks and community trust enable cadres to encourage behavioral change and mobilize participation in empowerment programs (Putnam, 2000).

Leadership training and supportive environments also play a pivotal role in empowering cadres to participate confidently in decision-making processes. Tumbelaka et al. (2018) revealed that leadership and advocacy training programs for female health volunteers in Indonesia enhance their capacity to assume leadership roles in community-based programs, improving their effectiveness in facilitating health initiatives.

Finally, family support emerges as a crucial enabler. Mohajer & Singh (2018) found that spousal encouragement significantly improves motivation and reduces dual-role conflict among women volunteers in Indonesia. Collectively, these findings highlight a key contribution of this study: while PKK cadres possess strong family-based communication foundations, their opinion leadership in the public sphere remains constrained by low assertiveness and limited leadership involvement. In dense urban environments like East Jakarta, dual domestic–public responsibilities intensify this gap, underscoring the importance of strengthening both household relational support and leadership capacity to optimize cadres' influence in community empowerment.

Theoretical Insights Supporting Findings

The findings align with Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) Opinion Leadership Theory, demonstrating that PKK cadres act as local influencers, interpreting and relaying health and community-related

information to their networks. Grunig & Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical communication model further supports the importance of reciprocal engagement between cadres and communities to foster trust and participatory dialogue.

Additionally, Symbolic Interaction Theory (Mead, 1934) explains how cadres' interpersonal family interactions shape their readiness to engage in public communication, emphasizing that everyday family dialogues contribute to cadres' identity formation as opinion leaders. Meanwhile, Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Theory underscores the role of trust and community networks in amplifying cadres' effectiveness as opinion leaders within health and community empowerment initiatives.

These theoretical connections reinforce the central contribution of this study: *marital interpersonal communication functions as a psychological and relational foundation for opinion leadership*, particularly in dense urban environments such as East Jakarta, where the pressure of managing dual roles is more pronounced.

The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to enhance cadres' roles as community opinion leaders, including 1) Training in communication and leadership skills, 2) Structured support for resource mobilization. However, these programs should also incorporate family-based support strategies, such as spousal involvement and peer-based social capital building, to ensure that cadres' leadership roles are sustained despite urban role pressures. These align with findings that show community health workers embedded in trusted social networks are more confident and active in outreach (Gadsden et al., 2022), and that CHWs significantly improve access to health services for vulnerable populations when equipped with proper communication and mobilization skills (Kowalska et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study examined how marital interpersonal communication relates to the social participation of PKK Cadres as opinion leader in East Jakarta. Highlighting the importance of relational support within families in enabling women to manage and balance dual domestic and public roles.

The findings demonstrate that PKK cadres exhibit high levels of nurturing and respect within their marital interactions, which are essential for building confidence and emotional stability, thereby facilitating their readiness to engage in community leadership. Moderate scores in directing and note submissive dimensions reflect the cultural context of gender roles, illustrating the nuances cadres face in asserting themselves while maintaining family harmony. These interpersonal dynamics within the family are closely linked to cadres' ability to function as community opinion leaders, aligning with the principles of Symbolic Interaction Theory and the Two-Way Symmetrical Communication Model.

Regarding social participation, cadres demonstrated moderate levels of involvement in PKK activities, with notable challenges in leadership and resource mobilization. This indicates that while cadres actively contribute to community initiatives, structural and cultural barriers continue to limit their leadership roles. Nevertheless, their consistent involvement in needs assessment and management tasks underscores their commitment to community empowerment, which is a crucial foundation for their roles as opinion leaders.

The unique contribution of this study lies in its integration of family communication dynamics with community-based public relations, offering empirical evidence that effective marital communication enhances cadres' confidence and capability in performing their public functions. These insights practically highlight the need for structured capacity-building initiatives focusing on communication skills, leadership development, and family engagement to strengthen cadres' effectiveness in community-based public relations.

This study has limitations, including the use of secondary cross-sectional data and a geographically limited focus on East Jakarta which may restrict generalizability. Future research could employ larger and more diverse samples, comparative analyses across regions, and longitudinal analyses to assess how improvements in family communication influence cadres' participation and leadership in community initiatives over time. Research that incorporates perspectives from husbands and community members would also provide a more holistic understanding of cadres' influence within community empowerment programs.

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