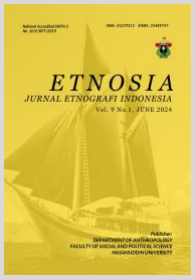
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# Representation of Organizational Culture and Communication: An Ethnographic Study on Intergenerational Women's Leadership in a Nursing Home

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**ABSTRACT**

Organizational culture in social service institutions is not merely a static administrative framework, but a living system of shared meanings constructed through daily interactions. While studies on nursing homes have documented various institutional frameworks, research that specifically examines organizational culture through the intersection of intergenerational women's leadership and cultural transmission within a historically rooted, female-exclusive nursing home remains scarce. This study addresses this gap by exploring how intergenerational women's leadership shapes the representation of organizational culture and communication practices at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, an institution that has maintained a unique intergenerational women's leadership model since 1947. Specifically, this study aims to analyze this representation through Edgar Schein's three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. Using a qualitative approach with an ethnography of communication lens, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentary studies. Data were analyzed using a qualitative flow model, structured around Edgar Schein's three-level framework of culture. The findings reveal that the institution's resilience is sustained through four interconnected dimensions. *First*, intergenerational women's leadership serves as the historical and relational foundation of the institution, positioning leaders as guardians of tradition rather than mere administrators. *Second*, this leadership fosters a distinct organizational culture built upon shared values of gotong royong, sincerity, and respect for the elderly's dignity. *Third*, this culture is enacted through communication practices that are highly dialogical, egalitarian, and rooted in collective decision-making, creating a family-like atmosphere

among administrators, staff, and residents. *Fourth*, these dynamics are systematically manifested through Schein's three levels of culture: spiritual artifacts that build sisterhood, the espoused values, and the basic underlying assumption that caregiving is an act of sacred devotion. Consequently, the integration of these four dimensions allows the nursing home to preserve its historical identity across generations.

## 1. Introduction

Organizational culture is frequently perceived merely as a set of formal rules written on paper. In reality, it is the product of shared learning that evolves through interactions among its members, extending beyond formal regulations and dynamically constructed through everyday practices and the formation of shared meanings (Schein & Schein, 2017). This dynamic is particularly contrasting within social service institutions in Indonesia, notably in nursing homes, where professional work must align harmoniously with the values of devotion (care work). A unique example of this is the Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi; an institution established during the independence era (1947) that remains as a cultural heritage site enlivened by intergenerational women's leadership.

The survival of the Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi for over seven decades indicates that its organizational culture is not merely a static set of rules, but a conscious process of value inheritance. The values of devotion instilled by the Budi Istri organization since its inception have established a robust emotional foundation for its administrators, with women's leadership playing a central role not merely as formal administrators, but as guardians of tradition who ensure that caregiving values are preserved across changing eras. This affirms that the true strength of a social institution lies in its capacity to nurture noble values amidst the demands of modern management.

The uniqueness of this practice is further emphasized by an organizational structure entirely run by women, under the auspices of the Budi Istri organization, and specifically dedicated to serving elderly women. This gender exclusivity creates a highly specific space where professional work is measured not merely by formal operational standards, but by the depth of relationships akin to sisterhood. The value of 'caregiving' as the organization's identity is reflected in communication patterns characterized by empathy and kinship, which emerge naturally as the women share similar experiences in managing the emotional aspects of elderly care (emotional labor). This is what distinguishes the Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi from other institutions; the organizational culture here is not solely an administrative matter, but a social bond that enables the values of devotion to persist across generations.

The leadership pattern that prioritizes relational bonds and kinship at the Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi aligns with the findings of Gipson et al. (2017) on women leader's tendency to cultivate a collaborative work atmosphere. In the social service sector, this approach is crucial because managing a nursing home

is not simply an administrative task, but about managing emotions and human interactions, as reinforced by Baines & Armstrong (2019), who argue that the core of care work lies in the profound empathy demonstrated by the administrators. This gives rise to a compelling discussion regarding how such highly personal caregiving values can remain consistent as they are passed down to a younger generation of management.

The success of Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi in maintaining its existence is intrinsically linked to the natural intergenerational transmission of values among its administrators. Research indicates that when younger members actively acquire knowledge from their seniors, it significantly boosts their innovative work behavior and ensures institutional stability (Wang et al., 2023). In the context of Panti Budi Pertiwi, this Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer (IGKT) is not merely technical but involves the transmission of core compassionate values. The women's leadership here exhibits an inclusive communication pattern, where the transfer of knowledge and caregiving ethics occurs through natural daily interactions, reflecting intergenerational knowledge transfer as a pivotal mechanism for organizational sustainability (Fasbender & Gerpott, 2022; Şensoy & Polat, 2025). The senior generation serves as bearers of experience while the younger generation drives renewal and adaptation, with age differences enriching service strategies rather than creating distance. These dynamic warrants deeper examination to understand how an organizational identity established since the independence era remains relevant and collectively internalized by the current generation of administrators.

The various caregiving values and kinship bonds that have endured for decades are manifested in tangible cultural representations, evident in how the women leaders at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi employ symbols, greetings, and decision-making styles that reflect the Budi Istri organizational identity. By comprehending cultural representation, this research can dissect how these values are not merely slogans but a collective identity that unifies the vision across generations of management, essential to understanding how a traditional institution preserves its authentic character amidst modernization.

To capture the depth of meaning within these interactions, the ethnography of communication approach is highly relevant, allowing researchers to directly observe how intergenerational communication patterns at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi are practiced in daily life, from formal coordination to personal interactions while caring for the elderly. This aligns with the findings of Folta et al. (2012) who highlight the importance of communication and sensitivity to community values as drivers of organizational sustainability, revealing how this communication sensitivity serves as the primary tool in maintaining the spirit of sisterhood and organizational culture.

Beyond daily interactions, the historical aspect constitutes a crucial element in representing the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi. A review of newspaper archives from 1947 reveals that the founding spirit of the Budi Istri organization established high moral standards for women's roles in the social sphere, making this long history a compelling reason for

intergenerational administrators to preserve the women-exclusive service model, ensuring that every communication policy today reflects the founders' noble ideals, continually adapted to contemporary needs.

Another uniqueness of this nursing home is how the female-dominated space creates a more inclusive and empathetic atmosphere, where administrators frequently position themselves as surrogate families for the elderly residents. This study therefore utilizes the organizational culture framework proposed by Edgar Schein who argues that culture is a collection of beliefs and ways of thinking collectively learned within an organization (Schein & Schein, 2017). Through its three levels, namely artifacts (visible elements), espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions, this study analyses how women's leadership at Panti Budi Pertiwi represents and preserves its organizational identity through daily communication practices.

A substantial body of scholarship has examined the individual dynamics of organizational culture (Astuti, 2022; Putri & Yusuf, 2022; Schein & Schein, 2017), women's collaborative leadership styles (Fletcher, 2004; Folta et al., 2012; Gipson et al., 2017), and the mechanisms of intergenerational value transmission (Fasbender & Gerpott, 2022; Wang et al., 2023). While these studies have advanced our understanding of institutional frameworks, research that integrates these separate domains within a historically grounded, female-exclusive nursing home remains visibly scarce. This empirical gap is particularly pronounced within the Indonesian socio-cultural landscape, where elderly care carries deep moral and communal dimensions (Triratnawati & Winarni, 2025). Therefore, this study aims to analyze how intergenerational women's leadership shapes the representation of organizational culture and communication practices at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, interpreted through Edgar Schein's three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. By doing so, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how historical narratives and gender identity serve as a driving force for the sustainability of an empowered and humane social organization in Indonesia.

## 2. Method

This qualitative research was conducted at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, located in Bandung, West Java. The site was purposively selected as it is one of the oldest nursing homes in Indonesia, established in 1947 and managed by intergenerational women's leadership under the auspices of the *Budi Istri* organization. This study employs an ethnography of communication approach to understand how organizational culture is represented through daily interactions. The data collection process commenced in October 2024 through periodic field visits to capture organizational dynamics within their natural setting.

Informants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, comprising a total of six participants to ensure both depth and representativeness of information. This cohort includes a senior administrator serving as the institutional secretary and guardian of tradition, an operational staff member

responsible for daily administrative operations, and four caregivers representing the entire caregiving staff on the ground. All four caregivers were included in this study, as they constituted the entire caregiving staff employed at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi at the time of data collection, with their tenure ranging from 4 to 26 years. This range of experience allowed the study to capture caregiving perspectives from both newer and long-serving staff, further strengthening the depth and credibility of the data obtained. The caregivers' accounts were primarily utilized for data triangulation purposes, serving to validate and cross-check the information obtained from the key informants rather than as primary sources of analysis. The limitation diversity of the informants' backgrounds aims to obtain a comprehensive overview of the process of value transmission within the organization. The detailed profiles of the informants are systematically presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informants

| No. | Pseudonym | Institutional Role | Gender | Tenure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ratna | Institutional Secretary | Female | 31 Years |
| 2 | Hendra | Operational Staff | Male | 21 Years |
| 3 | Sari | Caregiver | Female | 12 Years |
| 4 | Dewi | Caregiver | Female | 26 Years |
| 5 | Rita | Caregiver | Female | 4 Years |
| 6 | Ayu | Caregiver | Female | 25 Years |

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentary studies. Interviews were conducted to explore the administrators' espoused values and basic underlying assumptions, while field observations were performed to observe cultural artifacts in the form of verbal and non-verbal interactions within the institution's daily activities. We also conducted a document review of the organization's historical archives from 1947 to strengthen the historical analysis. To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, source triangulation was applied by systematically cross-checking data across these multiple collection methods and informant categories (Patton, 2015). All collected data were qualitatively analyzed using the interactive flow model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which encompasses three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

To systematically address the research objective, namely analyzing how intergenerational women's leadership shapes the representation of organizational culture and communication practices at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, the analytical process is organized around four central themes that directly correspond to the structure of the article's discussion: (1) the patterns and dynamics of intergenerational women's leadership as the contextual and historical foundation of the institution; (2) the formation and maintenance of organizational culture; (3) the communication practices through which this culture is enacted and sustained in daily interactions; and (4) the mapping of these cultural manifestations through Edgar Schein's three-level framework

(artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions) as the analytical lens used to address the research objective.

Ethical considerations were maintained by providing explanations regarding the research objectives and obtaining informed oral consent from the informants prior to data collection. We ensured that their presence in the field did not disrupt the comfort of the elderly residents. To strictly protect participant privacy and maintain research confidentiality, all informants are referred to using pseudonyms throughout this report, ensuring that the presentation of field data preserves both the anonymity of the participants and the integrity of the information provided.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The findings are presented according to four interrelated themes that collectively address the research objective of this study, namely how intergenerational women's leadership shapes the representation of organizational culture and communication practices at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi. The discussion begins with intergenerational women's leadership as the contextual and historical foundation of the institution, followed by an analysis of the organizational culture it produces, and the communication practices through which this culture is enacted in daily interactions. Finally, these findings are synthesized through Edgar Schein's three levels of culture (artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions), which serve as the analytical framework for understanding how this culture is represented and sustained across generations.

- **Intergenerational Women's Leadership**

Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi has been consistently led by women across generations. This institution, dedicated to elderly care services, is inseparable from the historical roots of a women's organization named Perkoempoelan Boedi Istri, now known as the Budi Istri organization. Founded on December 19, 1947, at the residence of R.A. Hilman Djajadiningrat in Bandung, this organization emerged from the spirit of post-independence Indonesian women to take an active role in the social sphere, specifically aiding those living in vulnerable conditions. In her founding speech, Mrs. K. Gadroen, as the Chairperson of the Central Committee, stated that Boedi Istri aimed to create a decent and dignified life for all by focusing on the homeless, orphans, the elderly, and people with disabilities (Algemeen Indisch Dagblad De Preanger Bode, 1947). This commitment to the elderly reflects an institutionalized form of filial piety, a core cultural value in Indonesia. As highlighted by Triratnawati & Winarni (2025:48), the practice of caring for the elderly is not merely a social service but a manifestation of deep-rooted respect and moral obligation toward older generations, ensuring they live with dignity.

Boedi Istri's social commitment was promptly actualized through concrete action with the establishment of a shelter for the homeless, inaugurated in early January 1948 under the name Roemah Pertoeloengan Boeah-Batoe. During this

inauguration ceremony, prominent female figures such as Mrs. H.A. Male Wiranatakoesoema attended as the Chairperson of the Bandung Branch of Boedi Istri and delivered an address. In her speech, she expressed the hope that social initiatives like this shelter would receive broad support from the Indonesian public, particularly through private initiatives, so that services for vulnerable groups could reach further. Her presence reaffirmed the strategic position of women in social leadership post-independence and demonstrated how values of empathy, collective work, and public service had become the primary foundation of the women's movement under the auspices of Boedi Istri (Nieuwe Courant, 1948; De Locomotief, 1948).

The existence of Boedi Istri from the outset reflected the collective consciousness of Indonesian women to become primary actors in social development. As published in the Algemeen Indisch Dagblad De Preanger Bode archive dated December 30, 1947, the Boedi Istri organization would "focus entirely on the social sphere", emphasizing that "those who have no clothes must be clothed, the hungry must be fed, and those without shelter must be given a place to stay." This demonstrates that from its inception, the organization did not only attend to the basic needs of vulnerable communities but also instilled social responsibility as a core value.

Furthermore, the active participation of female figures such as Mrs. K. Gadroen, Mrs. H.A. Male Wiranatakoesoema, and others in the establishment of Roemah Pertoeloengan Boeah-Batoe in Bandung illustrated the tangible role of women in building social support systems at the local level (Nieuwe Courant, 1948). The values instilled by Boedi Istri since the beginning, such as empathy, social responsibility, and collective work, did not cease as a spirit of the past but became a tradition and a sustainable heritage of values. This legacy continues to live within institutional practices. The shelter that once stood as a form of community care has now evolved into an organized elderly care system, namely Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, which preserves the initial spirit of the women's movement through intergenerational women's leadership.

Thus, the women's leadership that continues to this day is not merely a structural matter, but a part of the continuity of empathy, collective responsibility, and social action embedded in its foundational history. Based on the researcher's interview with Ratna, the institution's secretary who has served for over two decades, it was confirmed that the organizational structure has been filled by women since the beginning. This provision is reflected in the organization's Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART), which indeed designed the institutional structure to be managed by women. This serves as an essential foundation for understanding how organizational culture is consistently formed and inherited. Furthermore, the leaders or central board members who manage the nursing home are members of Boedi Istri and consistently pass the leadership relay to women across generations. Leadership built in this context is not merely administrative but value-based, being rooted in care, compassion, and a long-term commitment to social service.

The female leaders at the nursing home are not only responsible for operational management but also for building warm emotional relationships with the staff and the elderly. In an interview, Ratna explained that they position the staff as their own younger siblings and the elderly as mother figures, reflecting a kinship approach in their leadership. This leadership pattern illustrates how values of empathy, protection, and solidarity are transmitted across generations, not merely through policies but also through daily practices. Hamid et al. (2020:333) emphasize that the success of a family's or organization's economy is often attributed to the wife's or woman's capability in managing harmony and welfare. This is in line with the thoughts of Fletcher (2004), who suggests that leadership approaches based on relationships and values are often inherent in women's leadership practices and have the potential to create a more inclusive and transformative work environment. These values continue to live and shape consistent work patterns, making the organizational culture at the nursing home a space filled with warmth and mutual respect.

This is further reinforced by Hendra, a senior operational staff member who has served for approximately 21 years, who emphasized that the spirit of service practiced everyday stems from the exemplary role and dedication of the female leaders at the nursing home. He stated that the staff, including himself, regard the leadership as mother figures, and women's leadership has never been an issue, even for male staff members. This testimony shows that the style of women's leadership in the nursing home is not only accepted but also respected across genders and generations. This finding aligns with the study by Folta et al. (2012), which indicates that in the context of public service organizations, female leaders often implement transformational and collaborative leadership styles by building a shared vision, maintaining a collective spirit, and fostering supportive working relationships.

Accordingly, the intergenerational women's leadership in this nursing home does not only maintain the continuity of the organizational structure but also nurtures a legacy of values lived in everyday life. This institution has grown not merely as a social institution but as a living space inhabited by humane values. In this context, women's leadership is proven capable of maintaining the work rhythm and organizational harmony sustainably, serving not only as managers but also as moral and ethical references for staff, volunteers, and the elderly residents. As expressed by Faturahman (2018:8), a leadership style that values humane principles and the active participation of organizational members is able to create a stable, supportive work environment oriented toward healthy interpersonal relationships. These findings clarify that the sustainability of women's leadership at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi does not only reflect a consistent organizational structure but also demonstrates the successful transmission of social, empathetic, and relational values that lie at the core of the organizational culture in this institution. The consistency of this leadership across generations demonstrates that the institution has successfully preserved the traditional values of elderly care. This aligns with the findings of Triratnawati & Winarni (2025:49), who argue that even as society modernizes, the fundamental

philosophy of honoring the elderly remains a vital part of the social fabric, adapted here through organized women's leadership. The historical continuity of this women's leadership model is visually documented in the institution's own archival records, as illustrated in Figure 1. This figure captures the founding generation of female leaders at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi whose legacy continues to inform the institution's identity and operational ethos to this day and represents the institution's long-standing leadership heritage.

Figure 1. Historical documentation of women founders at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi.




*Source: Captured from the historical gallery at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi*

Collectively, these findings illustrate that intergenerational women's leadership constitutes the foundational layer through which the organizational culture and communication practices at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi are represented and sustained across generations, a dynamic that is further elaborated in the following sections.

- **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture is a system of shared meaning held by organizational members, formed by values, beliefs, and assumptions developed collectively and passed down from one generation to the next. Within an organization, culture serves as a social glue that directs the attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking of members in facing various internal and external dynamics (Schein in Astuti, 2022:57). Over time, organizational culture becomes more than just a tool for behavioral control; it also becomes an identity that shapes how the organization is perceived by both its members and the public (Putri & Yusuf, 2022:146). In public service organizations, organizational culture can significantly influence the quality of the services provided.

Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi has strong historical roots as part of the Budi Istri organization and its women's social movement, which aims to protect vulnerable groups. By focusing on the homeless, orphans, the elderly, and people with disabilities, the Budi Istri organization is committed to creating a

decent and dignified life for everyone. This spirit was later actualized in a more focused manner through elderly care services with the establishment of the nursing home. Thus, Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi serves as a concrete example of how organizational culture grows from a collective spirit to humanize the elderly. This institutional role has become increasingly vital in modern Indonesian society. The demands of contemporary life often limit family members' capacity to provide direct care for older parents, creating a growing need for institutional support (Triratnawati & Winarni, 2025:49–50). In this context, the nursing home's culture acts as a professional extension of family-based devotion, ensuring that the elderly receive proper care while maintaining their dignity.

The organizational culture in this nursing home is built upon values such as respect for the dignity of the elderly, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), empathy, and sincerity, which live within daily dynamics and serve as guidelines for interaction and work. These values were also emphasized by the institution's secretary, Ratna, who stated that "all elderly must be humanized" This phrase is an expression that reflects the core values in the care approach practiced by the nursing home. This principle does not stop at the level of a slogan but is realized through various activities that encourage the elderly to remain socially, physically, and emotionally active. Activities such as *yasinan* (Surah Yasin recitation gathering), *tahlilan* (commemorative prayer gathering), morning exercise, and routine artistic activities are organized as part of comprehensive assistance. These activities are not merely routines but are concrete expressions of an organizational culture that makes the nursing home not just a place of residence, but a living space that nurtures humane values.

Beyond the activities designed for the elderly, the organizational culture in this nursing home is also reflected in the work methods and relationships established among the administrators, staff, and volunteers. Work methods are developed and maintained not only through formal documents but also through interpersonal relationships that occur daily. Effective organizational culture is evident in trust, open communication, and mutual support between leaders and subordinates (Putri & Yusuf, 2022:147). This is visible in the nursing home's work system, which prioritizes deliberation (*musyawarah*), emotional closeness between administrators and staff, and a warm, family-like work atmosphere.

The senior operational staff member, Hendra, noted that although the nursing home has always been led by women, the leadership style of each generation varies, with some being protective like a mother, some firm and visionary, and others more administrative. These variations in style contribute to the dynamics of the organizational culture in each era, demonstrating that culture is not static but continuously evolves and adapts to the existing context and leadership. Nevertheless, these changes remain grounded in the core values and basic assumptions consistently held within the organization.

The differences in leadership styles at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi do not cause a disorientation of values but instead provide a space for collective

learning that enriches organizational practices. In this nursing home, universal values such as empathy, social responsibility, and respect for the elderly are not only inherited symbolically but are actualized through work practices that are adaptive to the context and capacity of each generation of leaders. Furthermore, a strong organizational culture is capable of increasing commitment, forming positive perceptions, and serving as a driver in maintaining service consistency (Putri & Yusuf, 2022:150). This is reflected in the testimonies of the staff that serving the elderly is undertaken not as a burden but as a calling.

Consequently, the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is the result of a blend of inherited core values and the organization's ability to adapt to changes in leadership and social contexts. Values such as empathy, respect for the elderly, and social responsibility are not merely part of history but continue to live in daily work practices. Intergenerational women's leadership plays a vital role in maintaining the sustainability of this culture, making the nursing home not only a service institution but a living space that consistently preserves humane values. This organizational culture, in turn, is not merely an abstract set of values but is actively represented and enacted through the everyday communication practices among administrators, staff, and the elderly, as discussed in the following section.

- **Communication Practices**

One of the distinctive characteristics of the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is the method of communication and decision-making, which is established within a family-like atmosphere. Relationships among organizational members are not rigid or hierarchical but are instead carried out with emotional closeness and mutual trust. The institution's secretary, Ratna, explained that the leadership routinely holds meetings at various levels, ranging from internal and operational meetings to general staff meetings, as spaces for open discussion rather than merely means of formal coordination.

This process demonstrates that communication within the nursing home is not solely top-down but provides space for input from various parties. Issues are more frequently resolved through personal and familial approaches. Consequently, informal communication plays a significant role in maintaining organizational harmony. As the secretary, Ratna does not only perform administrative functions but also serves as a bridge that nurtures relationships and resolves conflicts peacefully and empathetically.

This is reinforced by the testimony of the senior operational staff member, Hendra, during an interview, who stated that the communication style with the leadership is very open and fluid. “Each leader is present about three to four times a week. We can directly convey anything that needs to be discussed.” This routine presence of the leadership is a tangible form of direct involvement and relational closeness, which strengthens trust among organizational members. This attitude also demonstrates that the nursing home's leaders are not merely decision-makers but are also accessible and trusted figures.

Within the framework of organizational communication, the patterns implemented at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi reflect a participatory culture, where communication functions not only as a control tool but also as a mechanism to build social cohesion, mutual trust, and emotional involvement among members. Previous studies highlight that effective internal communication contributes to the development of a positive organizational climate, which in turn fosters trust, motivation, and a sense of belonging, ultimately strengthening employee engagement (Nadales-Gallego et al.:2025). In line with this, a supportive communication climate has also been found to be positively associated with higher levels of employee engagement, as it encourages a sense of belonging and active involvement among members (Mbhele & De Beer, 2021). In this nursing home, these values are evident in the habit of deliberation (*musyawarah*), the routine involvement of leadership in daily activities, and the egalitarian and supportive relationships between administrators and staff.

This communication model shows that decision-making at the nursing home does not solely consider work efficiency but also pays attention to emotional aspects and values of togetherness. Communication is understood not just as a tool for delivering instructions but as a means to build consensus and maintain a supportive work atmosphere. In this context, organizational cultural values influence communication ethics and the way organizational members resolve issues collectively and empathetically.

Relationships among staff are also built upon a strong spirit of cooperation. According to Hendra, if teamwork does not function well, the impact is directly felt by the elderly residents. This statement emphasizes that communication and collaboration are primary prerequisites for operational success and the well-being of the elderly. This dynamic shows that a relational-based leadership style influences open and responsive communication patterns, creating a harmonious and productive work environment.

Consequently, the communication and decision-making system at the nursing home does not only function as a means of administrative coordination but as a way to maintain relationships between administrators and staff humanely. The direct presence of leadership, emotional involvement, and the practice of listening are inseparable parts of a living and growing organizational culture. Here, communication becomes the embodiment of values to maintain the continuity of empathy, trust, and solidarity that have been passed down across generations. This communication pattern is the key to creating a harmonious work environment that supports the sustainability of elderly care services. In this sense, these communication practices serve as the primary vehicle through which the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is concretely represented in daily interactions, a dynamic that is further systematized through Schein's three-level framework discussed below.

- **Schein's Three Levels of Culture**

Edgar Schein (2017), a management expert, developed a model of organizational culture in his book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. This model explains how culture is formed, learned, and maintained within an organization. Schein defines culture as a pattern of basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. These assumptions are considered valid and are taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Schein categorizes organizational culture into three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. These three levels form a comprehensive interpretive structure for analyzing organizational culture, ranging from visible physical manifestations to those deeply embedded in the structure of meaning and belief.

*Artifacts*

Schein & Schein (2017) explains that artifacts are the most visible displays of culture, yet to understand them, we must explore the underlying values and basic assumptions. These include things that can be seen, heard, and felt within an organization, such as clothing, logos, office design, or work traditions. Artifacts can reflect culture, but they do not always reveal the true values. At Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, artifacts appear in the form of routine activities such as *yasinan*, *tahlilan*, morning exercises, and collective artistic activities with the elderly. These activities are not merely agenda fillers but serve as symbols of spiritual, emotional, and social respect for the elderly residents. According to the institution's secretary, Ratna, these activities are conducted regularly and have become a part of collective life, signifying values of empathy and social connectedness lived through routine.

The social structure of the nursing home also reveals symbolic artifacts. The clear division of roles among administrators, operational staff, and caregivers is maintained within a family-like atmosphere. The use of terms such as "client" for the elderly, "employee" for caregivers, and "staff" for operational personnel, while leaders are often positioned as "mother", shows a form of artifact demonstrating that the organizational culture is not merely administrative. Instead, it strengthens the nuances of warm and egalitarian personal relationships.

*Espoused Values*

The second level of organizational culture according to Schein consists of espoused values, which are the principles, standards, or goals that the organization claims as guidelines for decision-making. These can take the form of a company mission, leadership philosophy, or values of cooperation. At the level of values, the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is formed by principles such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), discipline, sincerity, openness, and respect for the dignity of the elderly. These values serve as ethical and operational guidelines consistently practiced by all members of the organization. The organizational culture in Budi Pertiwi is built upon a high work ethic characterized by these values. This aligns with the

findings of Hamid et al. (2020:339), who identify perseverance, awareness, honesty, optimism, and independence as key dimensions of women's work ethic. These qualities are likewise reflected in the daily interactions and responsibilities of caregivers at Budi Pertiwi. Ratna stated that decision-making is always conducted through deliberation (*musyawarah*), avoiding dominance and encouraging participation from all parties. This indicates a strong collective value within their work structure.

These principles are implemented in every daily practice. Hendra, the senior operational staff member, added that the principle of uniformity of treatment is strictly maintained for both staff and the elderly. Everyone is considered equal without special treatment based on status or age. Furthermore, elderly residents who are still healthy are encouraged to remain independent. This reflects that the value of empathy in the nursing home is not actualized in the form of coddling but rather as respect for individual capacity and independence.

*Basic Underlying Assumptions*

The deepest level in Schein's framework is basic underlying assumptions, which are the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs that shape the members' worldview. These beliefs are held firmly by organizational members, often without being consciously questioned, and they tend to be difficult to change because they have become an integral part of how the organization thinks and acts. At Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, there are basic assumptions that serve as the foundation for the daily behavior of the staff. The strongest and most unifying basic assumption is that serving the elderly is the primary objective of the organization. Caring for the elderly is not seen as an administrative or technical workload but as a form of devotion that is inseparable from the institution's identity.

Ratna emphasized that caring for the elderly is not merely the fulfillment of physical needs but is part of respecting human dignity. She stated that all activities in the nursing home are conducted based on the belief in humanizing the elderly holistically, in accordance with the values of social service inherited from the beginning by the Boedi Istri organization.

Echoing this sentiment, Hendra stated that the staff views teamwork as crucial because it directly impacts the well-being of the elderly. For them, disharmony within the team is not just an internal issue but can have a direct effect on the residents. Consequently, all aspects of work are directed toward supporting the overall quality of life for the elderly. In line with Schein's theory, these basic assumptions form the "invisible soul" of the organization, guiding collective action. This is what makes the organizational culture at the nursing home feel stable, meaningful, and capable of being passed down across generations.

By utilizing Schein's three-level framework, it is evident that the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is not merely a work pattern formed by habit, but a value system grown from history, experience, and shared beliefs. Artifacts appear in the form of routine spiritual and social activities,

showing the symbolic dimension of the espoused values. Values such as empathy, mutual cooperation, and sincerity become explicit guidelines practiced in daily work relationships. This professionalism is underpinned by a distinct work ethic. Hamid et al. (2020:339) identify perseverance, awareness, honesty, optimism, and independence as key dimensions of women's work ethic, values that are also reflected in the daily practices of caregivers at Budi Pertiwi. Furthermore, this institutional response also mirrors a broader social impulse found across Indonesian communities. Triratnawati & Winarni (2025:45) documented how in rural communities, neighbors voluntarily step in to care for elderly individuals when families are unable to do so, which is a form of social care rooted in communal solidarity. Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi institutionalizes this same spirit, transforming informal community values into a structured and sustainable system of elderly care. Building upon these values, at the deepest layer, the basic assumption regarding serving the elderly as the core of the organization's existence serves as the main driver of all existing dynamics.

These three levels are interconnected and create a work ecosystem that is not only functional but also rich in social meaning. In this context, intergenerational women's leadership is not only responsible for maintaining the nursing home's operational continuity but also for nurturing the cultural values that have lived since the beginning. The consistency in maintaining artifacts, values, and basic assumptions is what makes the organizational culture in this nursing home not only survive but also remain relevant and adaptive amidst social changes. These findings enrich our understanding of how organizations based on empathy and service can maintain their identity and effectiveness through alignment between values, practices, and basic beliefs. In the broader Indonesian context, caring for the elderly is not merely a technical task but carries deep moral and cultural dimensions. As Triratnawati & Winarni (2025:39) note, intergenerational care responsibilities in Javanese society are embedded in inherited cultural values that frame devotion to parents as a moral imperative. A similar ethos is found at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi, where the commitment to humanizing the elderly is rooted not in ethnic philosophy but in the founding spirit, ensuring these traditional values are preserved.

Taken together, these three levels demonstrate that the representation of organizational culture and communication practices at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is not incidental but systematically constructed, enacted, and intergenerationally sustained through women's leadership.

## 4. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is not merely shaped by formal structures and administrative regulations but instead grows from daily interactions rich in humane values, spirituality, and devotion. Through an ethnography of communication approach, this study highlights four interconnected dimensions that sustain the institution: the historical continuity of intergenerational women's leadership, a deeply internalized organizational culture, egalitarian

communication practices, and the systematic alignment of Edgar Schein's three levels of culture.

*First*, with regard to intergenerational women's leadership, the historical continuity since 1947 operates as a vital mechanism for transmitting relational and value-based caregiving ethics, positioning leaders not just as administrators but as moral anchors. *Second*, the institutional organizational culture is organically sustained by collectively internalized values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), sincerity, and deep respect for human dignity. *Third*, these cultural and leadership dimensions are systematically manifested through Edgar Schein's three-level framework. At the level of artifacts, the culture is reflected in spiritual routines, social activities, and relational symbols in daily interactions. Values such as sincerity and respect are explicitly practiced by the administrators and staff, creating a supportive environment. Meanwhile, the strongest basic underlying assumption views caring for the elderly as a form of divine devotion rather than a technical task, serving as the ideological foundation for every organizational decision. *Fourth*, the communication practices serve as a direct reflection of this ecosystem. Communication is conducted within a family-like atmosphere and egalitarian relationships, characterized by a dialogical rather than an instructional approach. The decision-making process is collective and empathetic, where leaders such as Ratna act as figures who nurture social relationships, while staff like Hendra actively reinforce trust, solidarity, and emotional engagement on the ground.

The organizational culture at Panti Sosial Tresna Wredha Budi Pertiwi is a living, dynamic value system formed from the accumulation of history, practices, and shared beliefs passed down across generations. Women's leadership plays a pivotal role in maintaining this continuity, preserving the organization's collective spirit from the independence era to the present day. Future research could further explore the impact of these intergenerational communication patterns on the psychological well-being of the elderly residents or examine how such traditional values adapt to the increasing digitalization of social service management.

## Conflicts of Interest

We, the authors declare no conflict of interest.

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