

## Digital Sensemaking and Shared Leadership among Women Posyandu Cadres

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### ABSTRACT

Community-based health volunteer organizations have emerged as critical yet undertheorized sites of organizational communication, particularly in the Global South. This study examines how digital sensemaking processes contribute to the emergence of shared leadership among women Posyandu cadres in Pejaten Barat, South Jakarta, Indonesia. Adopting a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis involving six cadres at Posyandu Nangka II. Guided by Weick's Organizational Information Theory and the shared leadership framework, the study analyzes how cadres interpret, negotiate, and retain organizational information through both face-to-face interaction and WhatsApp-mediated communication. The findings demonstrate that WhatsApp functions not merely as a message channel but as a digital sensemaking arena, enabling cadres to reduce equivocality, coordinate activities, and construct shared understandings of tasks and responsibilities. These processes facilitate the distribution of leadership functions beyond formal hierarchical structures, allowing active members to assume coordination and decision-making roles when formal leadership is absent or passive. The study argues that shared leadership in this context emerges through continuous communicative practices rather than formal authority. The novelty of this study lies in extending Weick's sensemaking framework into digitally mediated, women-led volunteer settings—a context that has received limited attention in organizational communication research. Findings offer practical insights for strengthening women's participation, coordination, and leadership capacity in community-based health programs through digital communication platforms.

## INTRODUCTION

Community-based volunteer organizations occupy a critical yet theoretically underexplored position in organizational communication scholarship. In the context of Indonesia's national maternal and child health infrastructure, Posyandu—Pos Pelayanan Terpadu (Integrated Service Post), represents one of the largest community health volunteer networks in the developing world, comprising over 300,000 units staffed almost exclusively by women volunteers (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2011). These units deliver essential frontline services including child growth monitoring, immunization, nutritional supplementation, and maternal health counseling. Yet the organizational communication dynamics that sustain them particularly how informal leadership emerges and how information is collectively managed remain poorly understood in the international literature.

Existing scholarship has approached Posyandu primarily through public health and epidemiological lenses, addressing cadre performance metrics, community participation rates, and service coverage (Silalahi et al., 2023; Julianti & Oktavianty, 2025; Sulaeman, 2022). A narrower body of communication research has examined cadre-community interaction (Novrianti & Achmadi, 2021; Sri Agustina & Bahtiar, 2025) and organizational communication effectiveness within individual units (Fajriyah et al., 2023). These studies, however, have predominantly treated communication as a measurable outcome variable rather than a constitutive process. Critically, none has examined how digitally mediated communication, particularly the pervasive use of WhatsApp, reconfigures information processing and leadership distribution in volunteer health organizations.

This gap is theoretically significant for two reasons. First, Karl Weick's Organizational Information Theory (OIT) posits that organizations are not static structures but ongoing communicative accomplishments: sensemaking processes by which members reduce equivocality, the inherent ambiguity of organizational information, through enactment, selection, and retention (Weick, 1979; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015). While OIT has been productively applied in corporate and institutional settings, its extension to digitally mediated, volunteer-based community organizations remain limited. Second, the rise of mobile messaging platforms as primary organizational coordination tools introduces a new empirical and theoretical dimension: digital sensemaking arenas in which ambiguous information is collectively interpreted, roles informally negotiated, and leadership exercised by those with initiative rather than positional authority.

The second theoretical gap concerns shared leadership. Whereas conventional leadership research privileges vertical, authority-based models, shared leadership theory recognizes that leadership functions may be dynamically distributed across team members based on situational need, relational trust, and individual competency (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Carson et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2014). In volunteer organizations where formal authority is often diffuse and nominal leaders may be passive, shared leadership can be the primary mechanism ensuring organizational continuity. However, the communicative processes through which shared leadership emerges in such settings, particularly through digital mediation have not been theorized in the organizational communication literature.

This study addresses both gaps by investigating how digital sensemaking contributes to the emergence of shared leadership among women Posyandu cadres. The empirical site is Posyandu Nangka II in Pejaten Barat, Pasar Minggu, South Jakarta, a community health post that presents an analytically compelling case. Preliminary observation revealed a discrepancy between formal organizational structure and actual communicative practice: while the unit's Chair is formally designated as the primary coordinator, the Secretary, Treasurer, and active member cadres collectively perform the communicative work of coordination, information management, and decision-making, frequently directing the formal leader rather than receiving direction from her. WhatsApp group communication functions as the primary arena through which this collective sensemaking unfolds.

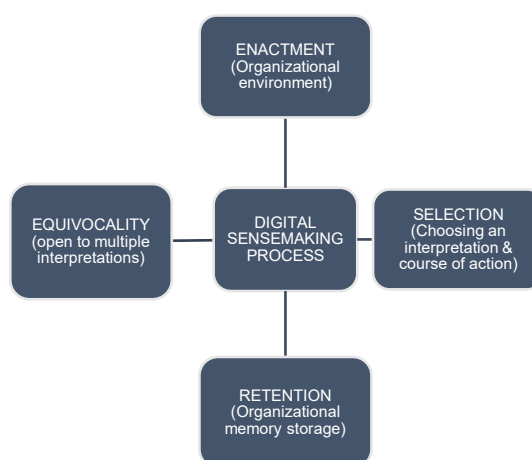
This study makes three contributions. Theoretically, it extends Weick's OIT into digitally mediated community organizations, demonstrating how the enactment-selection-retention cycle operates across hybrid communication channels in a women-led volunteer context. It also bridges OIT with shared leadership theory, offering an integrated framework for understanding how communicative sensemaking and informal leadership co-constitute one another. Empirically, the study enriches understanding of Posyandu organizational communication dynamics while also contributing to broader international conversations about digital organizing in community health settings (Rohmani & Utari, 2022; Fajriyah et al., 2023). Practically, findings offer

actionable implications for health administrators and community development practitioners seeking to leverage digital communication platforms to strengthen women's leadership in community-based programs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Organizational Information Theory and Sensemaking

Karl Weick's Organizational Information Theory, first formalized in *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (1979) and later refined in subsequent work (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015), constitutes one of the most influential frameworks in organizational communication. Central to Weick's ontology is the rejection of organization-as-structure in favour of organizing-as-process: organizations are not stable entities but ongoing accomplishments produced through communicative action. The central challenge organizations face is equivocality, the condition in which information is simultaneously interpretable in multiple ways. Unlike uncertainty, which can be resolved through information acquisition, equivocality demands communication: interpretive negotiation among members to arrive at shared meaning (Morissan, 2020).



**Figure 1.** Organizational Information Theory and Sensemaking chart

In figure 1, Weick conceptualizes this sensemaking process through three stages. Enactment refers to the active construction of organizational environment through interpretive attention and action—members do not passively receive reality but selectively enact the informational environment they attend to. Selection involves choosing among competing interpretations and courses of action, reducing equivocality sufficiently to enable coordinated behaviour. Retention involves the preservation of interpretive schemas, successful routines, and organizational memory, ensuring that effective responses need not be reconstructed from scratch in future encounters with similar situations (Khomsahrial, 2015). Critically, the three stages are recursively interconnected: retained schemas influence what is enacted, enacted situations generate information for selection, and selection outcomes accumulate into retention. Weick's framework thus positions communication not as the vehicle of organizational life but as its constitutive substance (Pace & Don F. Faules, 2019).

OIT has been applied across diverse organizational settings; crisis management, healthcare coordination, military command, and educational administration. However, its application to community-level, volunteer-based organizations, and specifically to those where digital platforms mediate sensemaking—remains underdeveloped. This study responds to that gap by examining OIT processes in a setting where equivocality is structurally endemic: a volunteer organization with diffuse authority, part-time membership, and significant reliance on asynchronous digital communication.

### Shared Leadership in Voluntary Organizations

Shared leadership represents a fundamental reconceptualization of leadership from a property of individual designated leaders to a dynamic, relational process distributed across organizational members (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Rather than residing in a single hierarchical authority, leadership functions, including direction-setting, coordination, motivation, and decision-making, are exercised by multiple individuals according to situational relevance and demonstrated competence (Carson et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2014).

The concept has gained particular traction in team-based organizational forms where interdependence is high and formal hierarchies are either absent or insufficient to coordinate complex work (Hoch & Kozlowski, 2014).

Research has consistently demonstrated that shared leadership enhances team performance, particularly in knowledge-intensive and adaptive task environments (Wang et al., 2014). In healthcare settings, shared leadership among clinical teams has been associated with improved decision quality, higher safety culture, and better patient outcomes (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016). In community-based organizations, where volunteer commitment and capacity vary, and formal authority is often nominal, shared leadership may represent not merely a performance advantage but a structural necessity, the default mode through which organizations sustain themselves when formal leadership is insufficient.

Critically, the communicative mechanisms through which shared leadership emerges remain underspecified in the literature. While structural factors such as team size, task interdependence, and leadership development have been examined (Carson et al., 2007), the role of communicative sensemaking, specifically the processes through which members collectively interpret situations, negotiate roles, and construct shared understanding, in generating shared leadership has not been theoretically developed. This study argues that Weick's sensemaking framework provides precisely the conceptual tools needed to analyse shared leadership as a communicative achievement rather than a structural condition.

### **Digital Communication and Organizational Coordination**

The proliferation of mobile messaging applications particularly WhatsApp, which commands over two billion active users globally and has achieved near-universal penetration in Indonesian community organizations has transformed the communicative infrastructure of many organizations (Church & de Oliveira, 2013; Ghannam, 2018). WhatsApp group functionality enables asynchronous multi-party communication, persistent message archives, and multimedia sharing, making it a powerful platform for organizational coordination. Research has documented WhatsApp's use in healthcare coordination (Ganasegeran et al., 2017), educational administration (Bouhnik & Doshen, 2014), and community activism (Semaan et al., 2014).

From an organizational communication perspective, WhatsApp groups function as what Yates and Orlikowski (1992) termed communicative genres: typified, socially recognized communicative actions in recurrent situations. In organizational contexts, WhatsApp groups facilitate both formal information transmission and informal sensemaking: members use them not only to share decisions but to discuss, debate, clarify, and negotiate meaning. This dual function positions WhatsApp as more than a communication channel it constitutes a digital sensemaking arena in which equivocality is actively reduced through collective interpretation.

In Indonesian community organizations, where face-to-face meeting opportunities are constrained by cadres' multiple domestic and social obligations, WhatsApp has become the primary medium through which coordination, decision-making, and organizational memory are maintained. Prior research on Posyandu communication has noted the use of WhatsApp for information relay (Fajriyah et al., 2023), but has not analyzed its role in the deeper sensemaking processes that Weick's framework illuminates. This study addresses that analytical gap, treating WhatsApp not as a communication tool but as an organizational arena in which sensemaking and shared leadership actively emerge.

### **Posyandu as an Organizational Context**

Posyandu units constitute a distinctive organizational form that challenges conventional organizational communication frameworks developed primarily for formal, profit-oriented institutions. As community-based, volunteer-staffed, state-adjacent organizations, they operate at the intersection of civic society, public health infrastructure, and informal governance. Their organizational structure, comprising a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and member cadres, is formally prescribed by Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior guidelines (Kemenkes RI, 2011; Kemendagri RI, 2011), yet in practice, organizational life unfolds through informal communicative relationships that frequently diverge from formal role prescriptions.

Research on Posyandu communication has consistently identified gaps between formal structures and actual communicative practice. Fajriyah et al. (2023) found that communication in Posyandu units studied in West Java remained predominantly top-down and formally centralized, limiting cadre participation and reducing organizational effectiveness. Rohmani and Utari (2022) demonstrated that leadership communication style significantly predicts cadre performance, with more participatory styles associated with higher

performance outcomes. Sulistira et al. (2023) established that active acceptance communication characterized by empathic listening, clarifying questions, and rephrasing strengthens teamwork in volunteer organizations. Taken together, these studies establish that communication quality is central to Posyandu organizational performance, while leaving largely unexamined the emergent, informal, and digitally mediated processes through which effective communication is actually accomplished in practice.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2018), selected for its capacity to generate theoretically rich insights into complex communicative processes within a bounded organizational unit. The case study approach is particularly appropriate here because the phenomena under investigation organizational sensemaking and shared leadership emergence are contextually embedded processes that cannot be meaningfully separated from the organizational setting in which they occur (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Posyandu Nangka II in Pejaten Barat, South Jakarta, was selected as the empirical site through purposive sampling based on its organizational distinctiveness: preliminary observation indicated a clear divergence between formal leadership structure and actual communicative practice, providing a theoretically productive site for examining informal leadership distribution and digital sensemaking.

### Population and Sampling

The study population comprised the six active cadres of Posyandu Nangka II: the Chair (Ketua), Secretary (Sekretaris), Treasurer (Bendahara), and three member cadres. All six cadres were women volunteers ranging in organizational tenure from two to ten years. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, prioritizing informants who held formal organizational roles and had direct involvement in communication and coordination processes. The key informant was the Secretary, who had served for over nine years and was identified through preliminary observation as the primary driver of organizational communication. Supporting informants included the Chair (two years' tenure) and the Treasurer (ten years' tenure). Theoretical saturation was assessed during analysis: data collection continued until no new themes emerged from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Triangulation using multiple data sources and methods provided additional assurance of analytical completeness.

### Research Procedures

Data were collected through three complementary methods over a period of four months (September 2025–March 2026). In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with three key participants; the Secretary, Chair, and Treasurer as well as one service recipient (*ibu balita*) who had observed cadre communication behaviour over an extended period. Interview protocols were guided by the three stages of OIT (enactment, selection, retention) and by shared leadership indicators including role distribution, decision-making patterns, and communicative initiative. Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia; excerpts translated for this article were verified for accuracy by the research team.

Non-participant observation was conducted during six monthly Posyandu activity sessions (October 2025–March 2026), allowing direct documentation of in-situ communication patterns, coordination behaviors, and leadership enactment. Observational field notes focused on information flow, role-taking, and communicative initiative. Document analysis included examination of WhatsApp group communication records (with participant consent), organizational schedules, activity reports, and the formal organizational structure chart. The documentary evidence enabled triangulation of self-reported communicative behaviors with observable organizational practices.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis informed by an OIT-derived coding framework. Initial open coding identified communication patterns, information-processing episodes, and leadership behaviors. Axial coding organized these into categories aligned with the three OIT stages. Selective coding then examined relationships between sensemaking processes and shared leadership emergence. Member checking was conducted with key informants to verify the accuracy and interpretive plausibility of preliminary findings.

### Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles for qualitative social research involving human participants. Before data collection, all participants provided informed consent and were briefed on the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality protocols, and their right to withdraw at any time. All names

used in this article are real names, retained with participant consent, as the cadres requested to be identified by their actual names as community volunteers. WhatsApp communication data were accessed solely with explicit participant permission and used exclusively for analytical purposes. Data are securely stored and not publicly distributed in an identifiable form.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Organizational Communication Patterns at Posyandu Nangka II

Communication at Posyandu Nangka II operates through two primary channels: WhatsApp group messaging and face-to-face interaction. The organization maintains two WhatsApp groups; one exclusively for the six cadres and one shared with service recipient mothers, reflecting deliberate separation of internal coordination from external community communication. Internal coordination via WhatsApp includes scheduling activities, distributing task assignments, relaying instructions from the Puskesmas (Community Health Center) and the sub-district, and informally discussing operational decisions. Face-to-face communication occurs primarily during monthly activity sessions and in informal gatherings, typically held at a cadre member's residence after activities conclude.

Observational and interview data consistently revealed a significant divergence between the formal organizational hierarchy and actual communicative patterns. Structurally, the Chair is designated as the primary coordinator responsible for directing cadre activities, liaising with the puskesmas and sub-district office, and ensuring service quality. In practice, however, the Chair occupies a largely receptive communicative position, frequently acknowledging reliance on direction from the Secretary and Treasurer: *"I'm still the new one here, the others who've been around longer already know the flow, so I need to be guided by them too"* (Chair, personal communication, December 2, 2025). The Secretary functions as the primary information hub, receiving external information from institutional partners, re-encoding it in accessible language, and disseminating it to the cadre group. The Treasurer similarly receives and disseminates institutional information independently, frequently reaching out to external contacts on behalf of the organization when coordination decisions require timely responses.

Communication among cadres is characteristically horizontal and participatory. Decisions are reached through collective discussion rather than top-down instruction. Information received from external sources whether about activity schedules, procedural changes, or reporting requirements is shared in the WhatsApp group as a starting point for collective deliberation. The Treasurer described this pattern succinctly: *"Information I receive from the kelurahan or puskesmas I usually send straight to the cadre group so we can discuss it together that way all cadres know and can adjust accordingly"* (Treasurer, personal communication, December 19, 2025). This distributes both information and interpretive responsibility across the cadre group rather than concentrating it in any single role.

#### Digital Sensemaking Processes: Enactment, Selection, and Retention

Enactment at Posyandu Nangka II occurs as cadres actively construct their organizational environment by interpreting information from both external institutional sources and internal situational cues. When instructions from the puskesmas or kelurahan arrive whether regarding procedural changes in weighing equipment, new reporting formats, or special program activities these are not simply received and executed. The Secretary characteristically re-encodes such information in lay language before disseminating it: *"Usually information comes from the kelurahan and puskesmas like invitations or changes in how to use the weighing tools, I re-explain it in detail slowly, so our cadres can understand better, using easy language, through a face-to-face meeting or WhatsApp first to set a schedule"* (Secretary, personal communication, December 3, 2025). This re-encoding constitutes active enactment: the Secretary constructs a version of the organizational environment that is interpretable and actionable for all cadres, regardless of their formal educational or administrative backgrounds.

Situational enactment also occurs during activity sessions, where cadres read environmental cues, service-recipient queues, equipment gaps, personnel distribution and translate them into immediate communicative and behavioral action. Service recipients observed this directly: *"They seem to already move on their own once the activity starts. They seem to know their own tasks, so there's not too much discussion, they just go. At most they ask each other, like, 'Has this been recorded?' or 'Weigh this one first.' If something's*

*unclear, they ask each other directly*" (service recipient Mrs. Asnawati, personal communication, March 3, 2026). Situational reading functions as a form of distributed, real-time enactment, with each cadre continuously constructing her understanding of what the situation requires.

The selection stage is observable in how cadres filter and prioritize information for action. Not all information received via WhatsApp or in person is immediately actioned; cadres engage in deliberative filtering to determine *what* requires prompt response, what can be deferred, and who bears responsibility for follow-up. When ambiguous situations such as uncertainty about the venue for a special Posyandu activity (gebyar posyandu), remain unresolved approaching an activity date, the Secretary and Treasurer jointly escalate through telephone contact to the Chair rather than allowing operational preparation to stall: *"If it's getting close to the activity date and there's still no response no approval both me and the treasurer contact the chair by phone to ask about her availability and discuss what preparations need to be done"* (Secretary, personal communication, December 3, 2025). This selection behavior demonstrates adaptive, collectively negotiated information processing rather than hierarchical instruction-following.

Post-activity informal gatherings function as the primary site of retention processes. Following each monthly session, cadres convene in relaxed settings, typically a cadre's home, to discuss operational outcomes, evaluate task execution, and identify areas for improvement. This evaluative discourse serves as the *organizational* memory mechanism through which effective practices are consolidated and deficiencies are flagged for remediation: *"After the activity ends, we talk again, giving each other input. Basically, we just communicate, remind each other, help each other, like how to do socialization that's closer among cadres, and dealing with people of different characters. From that I learn to be more patient, adjust my communication style, and build cooperation so Posyandu activities can run better"* (Secretary, personal communication, December 3, 2025). WhatsApp facilitates an additional form of retention: its persistent message archive enables cadres to retrieve prior decisions and information at any point, partially compensating for the absence of formal written documentation.

Retention processes, however, remain incomplete. Task rotation agreements decided in post-activity discussions frequently fail to carry forward into subsequent sessions, as cadres default to familiar roles out of habit or reduced equivocality: *"Usually about task rotation, even though it was explained beforehand how tasks were divided, during implementation, some cadres return to their original position because they forget the assigned tasks"* (Secretary, personal communication, December 3, 2025). The Chair's own role preferences further constrain rotation: acknowledging limited capacity for data recording tasks due to vision impairment and temperament, *she* consistently gravitates toward reception and interpersonal roles. These findings reveal that retention in volunteer organizations is structurally fragile when not supported by formalized documentation mechanisms.

## Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Posyandu Nangka II sustains its organizational functioning not through the communicative authority of its formal leader but through a collectively distributed sensemaking process in which *multiple* cadres continuously enact organizational environments, collaboratively filter information for action, and preserve effective practices through shared evaluative discourse. This pattern is analytically significant in three respects.

**First**, the findings extend Weick's OIT to a previously undertheorized organizational setting. While OIT has been applied extensively in corporate, institutional, and crisis management contexts (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015; Morissan, 2020), its *application* to volunteer-led community health organizations reveals distinctive features of the sensemaking process. In Posyandu Nangka II, enactment is fundamentally collective rather than individual: no single member constructs organizational meaning in isolation. Information from external sources (puskesmas, kelurahan) undergoes multiple interpretive transformations from institutional register to conversational language, from single-recipient communication to multi-party WhatsApp dissemination, from written message to face-to-face elaboration, before it is collectively rendered actionable. This multi-stage, multi-agent enactment process contrasts with OIT accounts that implicitly centre individual cognitive actors, suggesting the need for more explicitly relational conceptualizations of enactment in collective volunteer settings.

**Second**, and centrally, the findings establish that shared leadership in this context is a communicative achievement produced *through* sensemaking processes rather than a structural arrangement or a planned

organizational design. The Secretary, Treasurer, and active member cadres do not hold designated leadership authority; yet they exercise consistent coordinative, directive, and decision-making functions that the formal Chair does not. This leadership distribution is not the product of formal delegation or organizational restructuring but emerges organically from the communicative practices through which sensemaking unfolds: whoever interprets ambiguous information, whoever coordinates collective response, whoever maintains organizational memory through WhatsApp archives and post-activity discussions that person exercises leadership at that moment. This finding aligns with Carson et al.'s (2007) framework linking internal team environment to shared leadership emergence, while adding communicative specificity: it is precisely through the OIT processes of enactment, selection, and retention that the informal leadership functions are constituted and sustained.

**Third**, the findings reveal WhatsApp as a structurally consequential organizational artifact that extends sensemaking processes beyond the temporal and spatial constraints of face-to-face interaction. The WhatsApp cadre group enables asynchronous collective deliberation, distributes the labor of information relay across multiple members, and creates a retrievable organizational archive that partially compensates for the absence of formal documentation. This finding extends Yates and Orlikowski's (1992) genre theory by demonstrating how mobile messaging platforms generate new communicative genres in community organizations' informal yet consequential deliberative spaces in which leadership is exercised without formal authorization. Importantly, the WhatsApp group does not merely transmit decisions made elsewhere; it is the arena in which decisions are made, roles are negotiated, and organizational meaning is constructed.

The study also reveals a structural vulnerability in retention processes that carries practical implications. The absence of formalized written documentation, such as rotating duty schedules, meeting minutes, or standardized task guides, leaves organizational memory dependent on cadres' personal recollections and habituated practices. The result is a systematic retention gap: task rotation agreements are frequently overwritten by established habits, and newly agreed procedures revert to default patterns under the cognitive load of active service provision. This finding resonates with Fajriyah et al.'s (2023) observation of task distribution imbalances in Posyandu organizations and identifies a specific communicative mechanism, inadequate retention infrastructure, that drives those imbalances. It also suggests a practical intervention point: the introduction of simple formalized documentation tools (shared digital duty rosters pinned within the WhatsApp group, brief post-activity recorded summaries) could substantially strengthen organizational retention without imposing bureaucratic burden on volunteer cadres.

Compared with prior Posyandu communication research, this study's contribution is twofold. Where Fajriyah et al. (2023) and earlier work found Posyandu communication to be predominantly top-down and centralized a pattern associated with reduced effectiveness, the present study documents a contrasting configuration: a unit in which the formal leadership structure is inverted in practice, with communication flowing bottom-up and horizontally. Rather than diagnosing this as organizational dysfunction (a leaderless organization), the OIT and shared leadership frameworks enable its reconceptualization as a form of adaptive organizational resilience: the organization sustains itself through distributed communicative competence when formal leadership is insufficient. This reframing has broader implications for how community health organizations are evaluated and supported: effectiveness cannot be assessed solely against formal organizational charts but must account for the informal communicative architectures through which actual coordination is accomplished.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that digital sensemaking processes are constitutive of shared leadership emergence in a women-led volunteer community health organization. At Posyandu Nangka II, collective sensemaking unfolds across the three OIT stages; enactment, selection, and retention, through hybrid communication channels that combine face-to-face interaction with WhatsApp-mediated deliberation. Leadership is not exercised by the formally designated Chair but is distributed among cadres whose communicative initiative, interpretive competence, and coordinative action constitute the de facto leadership infrastructure of the organization. WhatsApp functions not merely as a message conduit but as the primary organizational arena in which equivocality is reduced, decisions are collectively ratified, and informal leadership is exercised.

The study makes two principal theoretical contributions. First, it extends Weick's OIT to digitally mediated community volunteer organizations, demonstrating that enactment, selection, and retention processes in such settings are inherently collective, multi-stage, and distributed across digital and face-to-face channels. Second, it bridges OIT with shared leadership theory, showing that shared leadership is a communicative achievement produced through sensemaking rather than a structural arrangement, an insight that has implications for leadership theory and for the design and evaluation of community-based organizations more broadly.

Two limitations should be acknowledged. The single-case design, while appropriate for the study's theoretical objectives, constrains the transferability of findings to other Posyandu units or community health organizations with different structural and cultural configurations. Future research should employ multi-site comparative designs to examine whether the communication-shared leadership nexus documented here characterizes Indonesian Posyandu more broadly or reflects site-specific conditions. Second, the study did not systematically analyze the content of WhatsApp messages, relying instead on participant accounts and observational data. Future research employing digital ethnographic methods, including systematic WhatsApp message analysis with participant consent, would provide richer evidence of digital sensemaking micro-processes. Future studies might also extend the analytical framework to examine how gender dynamics, institutional embeddedness, and technological access modulate digital sensemaking and shared leadership in comparable volunteer settings globally.

## DECLARATIONS

### Author Contributions

Author 1: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing–Original Draft.

Author 2: Validation, Writing–Review & Editing, Supervision, Visualization.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Full transcripts are not publicly archived due to participant confidentiality commitments; anonymized excerpts are available upon request.

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