Gender Communication Strategies for Women's Empowerment: Evidence from Community Programs in Indonesia

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Abstract
This research examines the importance of gender communication within the Program for Enhancing the Role of Women toward Healthy and Prosperous Families (P2WKSS) in Karangsatu Village, Bekasi. This program is a key effort aimed at empowering women and reducing poverty. Using the Delphi Method, the study involved a group of experts and community members through three repeated rounds to pinpoint, improve, and reach an agreement on the key components of the program. The results show that P2WKSS has effectively

changed women's roles from being home caregivers to becoming economic participants, business owners, and decision-makers, which in turn has positively impacted local development. Effective methods of communication—utilizing face-to-face persuasion, casual meetings, and digital tools like WhatsApp—were identified as vital in promoting inclusivity and building trust, even though cultural and language obstacles persist. Symbolic resources such as uniforms, memberships in cooperatives, and stories of success acted as motivating instruments that strengthened women's identities and their ability to work together. Recognizing gender sensitivity, health programs, and collaboration among various stakeholders were found to be essential for the ongoing success of the program. The research results indicate that P2WKSS is not just a project focused on welfare; rather, it is a comprehensive empowerment system. This shows that empowering women, when integrated with communication, governance, and local economic structures, can lead to significant and lasting social change.

1. Introduction

Gender equality and women's empowerment constitute a global agenda that remains a priority in sustainable development. The United Nations reports that despite significant progress in education and health, women in many countries continue to face limited access to economic resources, political representation, and public decision-making (UN Women, 2025). These barriers are rooted in socio-cultural norms that restrict women's roles, thereby reinforcing cycles of inequality and poverty (Bedford, 2024). In this context, gender-sensitive communication is essential to ensure women have equal access to information, can participate actively, and gain fair representation in public spaces (Alrefaei et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, gender inequality remains evident, as reflected in women's lower levels of economic and political participation compared to men (BPS, 2024). To address these challenges, the government has launched various community-based empowerment programs that emphasize capacity building, strengthening household economies, and eliminating gender-based discrimination (Rejbiani et al., 2021). Bekasi Regency is one of the implementation sites, with Karangsatu Village designated as a pilot location. In this village, women's empowerment is promoted through skills training, health education, and active participation in local development planning. These initiatives position women not only as beneficiaries but also as key actors in driving social transformation and improving family welfare (Ruja et al., 2024; Dhungana et al, 2023).

Karangsatu Village, representing Bekasi in the P2WKSS (Program for Enhancing Women's Role Toward Healthy and Prosperous Families), was selected to participate in the 2024 West Java provincial competition (Nurpribadi

& Rulianti, 2025). Its achievements include the development of infrastructure such as playgrounds and green open spaces, as well as health education initiatives focused on reproductive health and nutrition (Nurpribadi & Rulianti, 2025; Cordes & Marinova, 2023). At the same time, women's empowerment programs—such as training in handicrafts and food processing—have strengthened household economic stability (Syuhada et al., 2023). These outcomes align with the P2WKSS mission, which emphasizes that empowering women directly improves quality of life and, in turn, enhances family welfare (Syuhada et al., 2023).

Previous research has highlighted the role of communication strategies in increasing the effectiveness of women's empowerment programs, such as through the design of relevant messages and the use of appropriate media to reach target groups (Ogbari et al., 2024; Yulianti, 2024). Other studies have applied the Harvard Analytical Framework to map gender differences in access to and control over resources, thereby informing more equitable communication interventions (Salsabila, 2024; Showkat et al., 2024). Participatory communication approaches have also been widely studied as a key factor in community-based development, where women's active involvement fosters program ownership and sustainability (Ambler, 2021; Malahati et al., 2023). Furthermore, research has shown that empowering women through enhanced communication capacity contributes significantly to poverty alleviation by expanding access to economic opportunities and strengthening bargaining power within families and communities (Kabeer, 2005; Syuhada et al., 2023). However, most of these studies focus on program outcomes and socio-economic impacts, without formulating specific gender communication strategies built on stakeholder consensus (Angelita, 2025; Huang et al., 2023).

The core problem addressed in this study lies in the absence of a structured, validated, and consensus-based gender communication strategy to support community-based women's empowerment programs (Juddi, 2024). While earlier studies have underscored the importance of communication strategies, the use of the Harvard Analytical Framework, and participatory communication, they often remain at the level of descriptive impact or normative analysis without offering concrete, implementable strategies (Khethiwe, 2023). As a result, program implementation in the field tends to be sporadic, reliant on the intuition of practitioners, and insufficiently responsive to the needs of vulnerable women (Ilham & Andri, 2020). This gap is particularly evident in Indonesia, where the interconnections between gender communication, women's empowerment, and poverty alleviation are often discussed descriptively but rarely translated into actionable frameworks (Lwamba et al., 2022). To address this, the present study asks: *What gender communication strategies should be prioritized to enhance women's empowerment in community-based programs, based on expert and practitioner consensus?* This question is further explored through examining inclusive message design, effective communication channels, participatory mechanisms for vulnerable

women, coordination patterns among actors, and performance indicators that link communication strategies to empowerment and poverty alleviation goals (Oktavia & Alfirdaus, 2024). The study also investigates how expert assessments of importance and feasibility evolve across Delphi rounds, and the contextual factors influencing consensus (Tang, 2022). Thus, the research goes beyond empirical description by generating a validated, applicable, and replicable framework for gender communication strategies that can strengthen the effectiveness of women's empowerment programs (Yusoof, 2022).

The theoretical framework integrates five conceptual foundations. First, communication strategy theory emphasizes that communication in development programs must be systematically designed through message planning, media selection, and interaction patterns tailored to audience characteristics (Susianti, 2024). Second, the Harvard Analytical Framework provides an analytical lens for understanding differences in access, control, and division of labor between men and women, ensuring communication strategies promote fairness in information distribution and participation (Bryda & Costa, 2023). Third, participatory communication theory underscores the importance of active community involvement—especially women—in program design, implementation, and evaluation, transforming communication from a top-down process into a dialogical and inclusive one (Zhu et al., 2022). Fourth, the concept of women's empowerment positions communication not merely as information transfer but as a tool to enhance women's capacity, confidence, and bargaining power in decision-making (Suharnanik, 2022). Fifth, poverty alleviation theory links gender-sensitive communication to improvements in welfare through greater access to economic resources, education, and health (Lestari, 2021). Integrating these five perspectives enables this study to formulate communication strategies that are not only technically effective but also transformative, positioning women as central actors in empowerment and as drivers of socio-economic change at the community level (Hasibuan & Deni, 2024).

This study carries both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it enriches the scholarship on gender communication and women's empowerment by offering a communication strategy framework grounded not only in established theories but also validated through expert consensus (Diprose, 2023). In doing so, it addresses a gap in the literature, which has tended to remain descriptive and normative, and contributes to the development of more applicable and replicable models of gender communication in community empowerment (Ambler, 2021). Practically, the study provides concrete guidance for program designers and implementers at the village or community level (Chen, 2024). The resulting consensus-tested strategies can serve as a reference for crafting gender-sensitive messages, selecting appropriate communication channels, ensuring inclusive participation, and setting measurable communication performance indicators (Chen, 2024; Yulianti et al., 2024). Consequently, this study directly contributes to

enhancing the effectiveness of women's empowerment programs, strengthening community capacity, and ultimately advancing poverty alleviation efforts at the grassroots level (Showkat et al., 2024).

2. Method
2.1 Research Design

This research employed the Delphi Method, a structured and iterative technique designed to achieve consensus among experts on complex issues (Makhmutov, 2021). The method was considered particularly suitable for this study because strategies for gender communication in the P2WKSS program involve diverse stakeholders with differing perspectives. Unlike traditional surveys that measure frequency of responses, the Delphi approach enables the systematic refinement of expert judgments across multiple rounds, thereby generating reliable consensus on strategies that are both contextually relevant and practically applicable (Cuhls, 2023). The research flow chart (Figure 1) illustrates the systematic progression of the study, beginning with the identification of the research problem and gap, followed by the development of objectives, literature review, and methodological design. Through three Delphi rounds, expert inputs were refined, analyzed, and consolidated into a consensus framework.
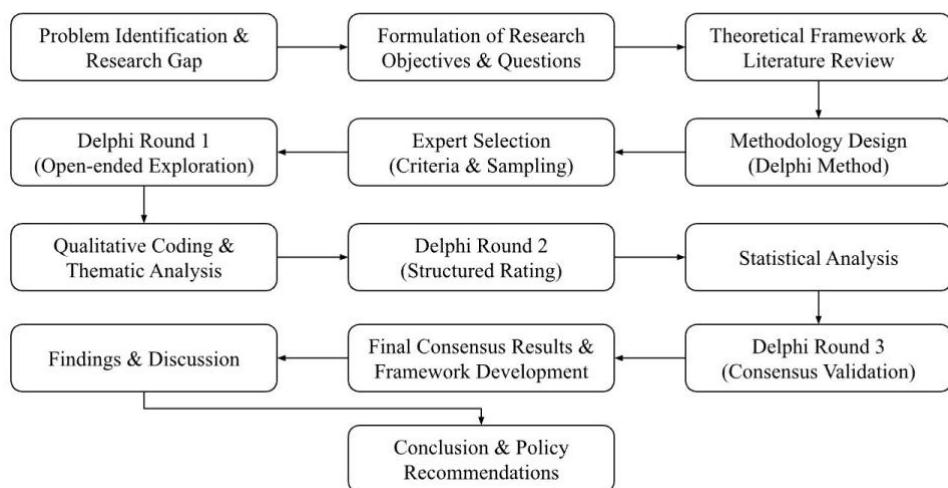
Figure 1. The Research Flow Chart

2.2 The Delphi Process
2.2.1 Selection of Experts

Experts were selected using purposive sampling. Clear criteria were applied to ensure credibility and relevance: (1) minimum of five years of professional or leadership experience in women's empowerment, community development, communication, health, or MSMEs, (2) occupation of an academic, professional, or governance role directly connected to P2WKSS or similar programs, (3)

demonstrated contributions to gender equality initiatives, either through leadership, community roles, or scholarly work, (4) contextual knowledge of Karangsatu Village or Bekasi's P2WKSS implementation, and (5) willingness to participate in all three Delphi rounds.

A total of nine experts were engaged (village head, PKK leader, P2WKSS leaders, Posyandu representative, cooperative representative, two MSME members, and a communication expert). This resolves earlier inconsistencies, ensuring alignment between the descriptive text and Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informants

No.	Position	Initial Name
1	Head of Village	S
2	Head of Family Welfare & Empowerment Organization	SK
3	Head of P2WKSS	Y
4	Deputy Head of P2WKSS	DW
5	Head of Posyandu	E
6	Cooperation Representative	S
7	MSMEs member	D
8	MSMEs member	S
9	Communication Expert	GA

2.2.2   Round 1 – Exploration

An open-ended questionnaire was distributed to capture a broad range of views (Makhmutov, 2021). Responses were thematically analyzed using a four-step coding process: (1) transcription and open coding of keywords, (2) grouping into categories, (3) clustering into higher-level themes (e.g., communication strategies, symbolic resources, empowerment, gender sensitivity), and (4) refinement to construct the structured items for Round 2 (Cuhls, 2023; Tambun, 2021).

2.2.3   Round 2 – Refinement

Based on Round 1 themes, a structured questionnaire was developed. Experts rated the importance, relevance, and practicality of items on a Likert scale (Cuhls, 2023). Statistical measures (mean, median, interquartile range [IQR], and standard deviation) were used to assess the level of agreement (Makhmutov, 2021).

2.2.4   Round 3 – Consensus

Experts were provided with summarized feedback from Round 2 and asked to re-evaluate their ratings (Makhmutov, 2021). This iteration allowed them to reflect on group perspectives while maintaining independence of judgment. Items that reached the consensus threshold of ≥70% agreement or IQR ≤ 1 were retained as final outcomes (Cuhls, 2023).

Table 2. Competences Category

No.	Competences	Consensus
1	Gender Communication	5
2	Participation	5
3	Empowerment	5
4	Health & Social	5
5	Governance and Stakeholder Synergy	5
6	Sustainability & Impact	5

2.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data from Round 1 were analyzed through thematic content analysis, ensuring that emergent categories were grounded in participants' narratives (Makhmutov, 2021). Quantitative ratings from Rounds 2 and 3 were examined using descriptive statistics. The stability of consensus across rounds was used to confirm the robustness of findings (Cuhls, 2023).

2.4 Validity and Reliability

To strengthen methodological rigor, the Delphi study employed: (1) rigorous expert selection, ensuring participants' relevance and expertise, (2) anonymity, preventing dominance of high-status individuals (e.g., village leaders) over grassroots voices (e.g., MSMEs), (3) iterative feedback, allowing reflection and refinement of opinions, and (4) objective statistical criteria (median, IQR, consensus threshold) to determine agreement. These measures collectively enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the results (Cuhls, 2023).

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from Universitas Sains Indonesia's ethics committee. Informed consent was secured verbally and in writing, with participants assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, with all data stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. Special attention was given to cultural sensitivity by ensuring that communication respected local gender norms while avoiding reinforcement of stereotypes. This was essential given the hierarchical relationships between participants and the sensitive nature of gender roles within the community.

3. Results

3.1 Round One: Identification of Key Themes

The initial Delphi round, conducted through interviews with stakeholders from PKK, cooperatives, village leaders, Posyandu, and UMKM groups, identified various aspects of gender communication strategies in the P2WKSS program in Karangsatu Village. Four main themes appeared consistently among the informants. The findings highlight several critical dimensions of women's empowerment within the P2WKSS program. Representation of women reflects a

significant shift in gender roles, with women evolving from traditional caregivers confined to the domestic sphere into active economic participants and community leaders. This transformation is reinforced by language and communication methods that emphasize clarity, persuasion, and contextual relevance, often facilitated through WhatsApp groups and direct interpersonal dialogue, which ensure inclusivity and accessibility. Equally important is the role of symbolism in empowerment, where uniforms, logos, training equipment, and personal success stories serve as tangible markers of change, strengthening both individual motivation and collective identity. Finally, gender sensitivity and inclusivity are embedded in program design through practical adjustments such as flexible scheduling, the involvement of family members, and open dialogue with partners, thereby accommodating women's dual responsibilities in both domestic and public spheres. Collectively, these dimensions demonstrate how empowerment is achieved not only through economic and social interventions but also through cultural recognition and the restructuring of gender relations.

The first round generated a wide range of insights from stakeholders. Through thematic coding, seven major themes emerged: (1) representation of women, (2) communication strategies, (3) symbolic resources, (4) gender sensitivity, (5) health and social aspects, (6) governance and stakeholder synergy, and (7) sustainability, as illustrated in Figure 2.
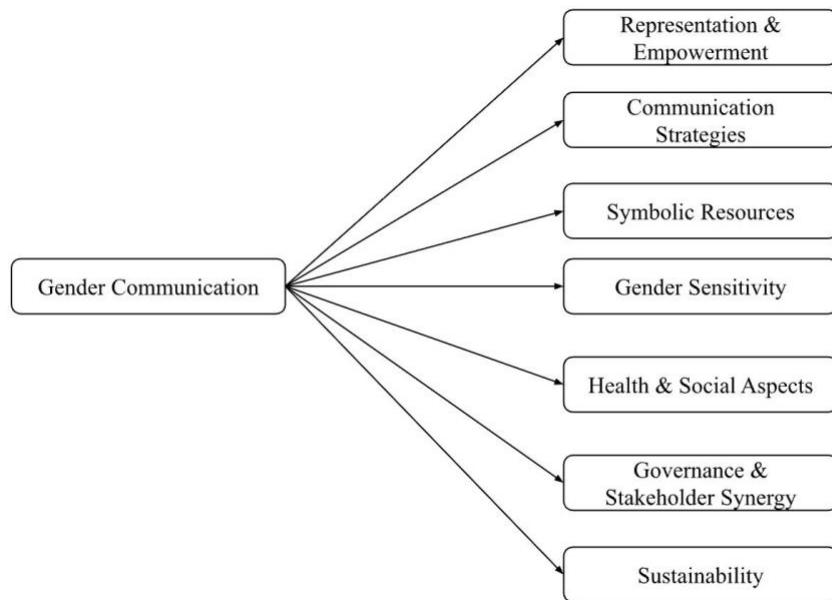
Figure 2. The Tematic Relationship Diagram

For example, women were frequently described as evolving from traditional caregivers into entrepreneurs and community leaders, while symbolic items such

as uniforms and cooperative memberships were cited as motivators of identity and engagement. These findings were consolidated into indicators, which are presented in Table 3. Table 3 highlights the breadth of issues raised by informants rather than prioritization.

Table 3. Identified Themes and Indicators

Theme	Indicators Identified (Round 1)	Source (Informants)
Representation of Women (Showkat et al., 2024)	Women as entrepreneurs, decision-makers, and agents of change; establishment of UMKM (culinary, handicrafts, ornamental plants).	PKK, Koperasi, UMKM, Village Officials
Communication Strategies (Huang et al., 2023)	Door-to-door persuasion; informal gatherings (*kumpul ngerumpi*); WhatsApp groups; participatory meetings (*musyawarah*).	PKK, Posyandu, Koperasi
Symbolic Resources (Lwamba, et al., 2022)	Use of uniforms, training kits (e.g., donut molds, *jamu* kits), logos, and cooperative membership as identity symbols.	Koperasi, UMKM, PKK
Gender Sensitivity (Chen & Barcus, 2024)	Flexible schedules; inclusion of widows; childcare during training; negotiation with husbands.	PKK, Village Officials, Posyandu
Health & Social Aspects (Khethiwe, 2023)	Stunting prevention via Posyandu; awareness of balanced nutrition; solidarity and women's study groups.	Posyandu, PKK
Governance & Stakeholder Synergy (Chen & Barcus, 2024)	Coordination of 27 agencies; involvement of CSR; village government facilitation.	Village Officials
Sustainability (Huang et al., 2023)	Continuity of program beyond CSR cycle; replication of *Rumah Benih* and eco-tourism initiatives.	UMKM, Village Officials

3.2 Round Two: Refinement and Prioritization

In the second round, experts evaluated the importance and practicality of the Round 1 themes. Ratings showed higher agreement on some areas, but variation remained. Representation of women (85% consensus) and gender sensitivity (80%) were prioritized, while symbolic resources received a lower but notable 72% agreement. Persistent challenges were also noted, such as communication barriers for women with limited literacy or reliance on regional

dialects. These results, presented in **Table 4**, show both areas of strong consensus and those where opinions remained divergent.

Table 4. Expert Ratings and Consensus Prioritization

Theme	Round 2 Mean	Median	IQR	Consensus (%)	Interpretation
Representation of Women	4.4	5	0.8	85%	Strong consensus – core pillar of empowerment.
Communication Strategies	4.2	4.5	1.0	78%	Effective; cultural/linguistic barriers remain.
Symbolic Resources	3.9	4	1.1	72%	Gained recognition; seen as motivational identity.
Gender Sensitivity	4.5	5	0.7	80%	Essential for sustaining participation.
Health & Social Aspects	4.4	5	0.9	82%	Highly valued; Posyandu central to stunting prevention.
Governance & Stakeholder Synergy	4.2	4	1.0	76%	Effective multi-actor collaboration, transparency gaps noted.
Sustainability	4.6	5	0.0	90%	Very high consensus – continuation and replication strongly recommended.

3.3 Round Three: Consensus and Stability

In the third round, agreement among experts became consistent, verifying that P2WKSS's most significant features are its gender-sensitive approach and its strategy of using multiple communication channels. Items like symbolic recognition (uniforms, success stories) received increased support after participants rethought peer evaluations, showing a shared understanding of their subtle but significant impact.

Table 4 illustrates how consensus evolved between rounds; experts reconsidered their evaluations in light of group feedback. Agreement stabilized,

particularly on sustainability (90% consensus, IQR = 0), which became the most consistently supported theme. Communication strategies and symbolic resources gained higher recognition compared to earlier rounds, reflecting reconsideration of their motivational value. However, transparency in governance remained a point of lower consensus (76%), indicating continued reservations.

Experts were asked to evaluate the significance and practicality of each theme, and the analysis of mean, median, and interquartile range (IQR) demonstrated a strong degree of consensus across all dimensions. Representation and empowerment (85% consensus) was identified as the most critical outcome, reflecting how women have redefined their roles as economic participants through small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as through leadership positions in the community. Communication strategies (78% agreement) were widely acknowledged as effective tools for fostering inclusion and trust, though cultural and linguistic barriers remain a persistent challenge. Symbolic resources (72% agreement), while initially underestimated, were later recognized as essential drivers of motivation and visibility, serving not only as material support but also as markers of collective identity. Finally, gender sensitivity (80% agreement) was considered indispensable, with experts emphasizing its role in ensuring women's sustained involvement by accommodating their domestic responsibilities alongside community engagement.

By Round Three, a stable agreement was reached on the majority of items. For instance, "the ability to communicate effectively in response to women's needs" and "the ongoing support of programs" received a strong consensus (Mean 4 2–4 6; IQR ≤ 1). Specifically, the role of Posyandu in the prevention of stunting (Mean 4 5; Median 5; IQR 0) and in the continuation and expansion of programs (Mean 4 6; Median 5; IQR 0) was assessed as highly significant.

3.4 Conceptual Framework
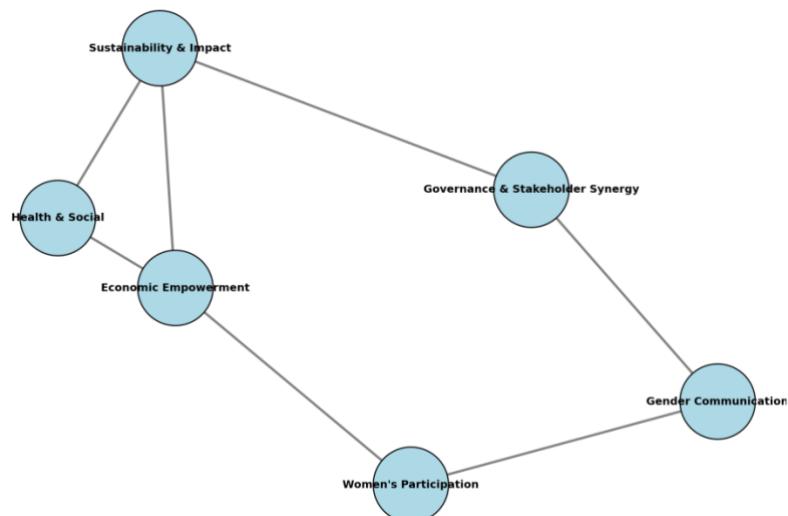
Figure 3. Conceptual Framework Diagram

The final themes were integrated into a conceptual framework (Figure 1), showing interconnections between communication, participation, empowerment, and sustainability. While Figure 3 visualizes consensus outcomes, it should be read as a synthesis rather than a definitive model, as certain dimensions (e.g., governance transparency) remained contested.

3.5 Synthesis of Key Findings

Progression across the three rounds shows a movement from broad idea generation to refined agreement. By Round 3, the strongest consensus centered on representation of women, sustainability, and gender sensitivity, highlighting their critical role in empowerment. At the same time, lower consensus areas such as symbolic resources and governance transparency indicate ongoing debate and contextual challenges. Overall, the Delphi process revealed both convergence and divergence, offering a balanced picture of strengths and tensions within the P2WKSS program.

4. Discussion

The study set out to explore how gender communication strategies shape empowerment in the P2WKSS program. The findings show that consensus converged on women's representation, sustainability, and gender-sensitive approaches as the most critical strategies. These directly address the research question on how communication contributes to empowerment by confirming that inclusive practices and recognition of women's roles are central to program effectiveness.

4.1 Gender Communication

The findings indicate that P2WKSS has created a communication system that addresses the needs of women effectively. Information is shared in clear language, facilitated by WhatsApp groups and personal engagement, which corresponds with participatory communication approaches (Huang et al., 2023). However, cultural obstacles continue to be a limitation, highlighting the necessity for ongoing convincing methods to guarantee meaningful—not just official—engagement (Huang et al., 2023).

4.2 Women's Participation

Participation forums, such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Posyandu sessions, and women's study groups, were evaluated as very effective in fostering engagement. Nonetheless, the comparatively modest score of 3.8 on "women's voices in decision-making" indicates the ongoing existence of systemic obstacles. This indicates that although the number of participants is significant, their actual impact on governance is still restricted (Chen & Barcus, 2024). It is advised to conduct a thorough mapping of women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM) to enhance the foundation for evidence-based policy (Chen & Barcus, 2024).

4.3 Economic Empowerment

The Delphi consensus confirms the financial advantages of P2WKSS. Training programs, contributions to corporate social responsibility, and women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises—especially in ornamental plants and food products—improved women's ability to earn income (Showkat et al., 2024). These results indicate that empowerment is integrated within current value chains, rather than being temporary measures, thereby enhancing sustainability opportunities (Showkat et al., 2024).

4.4 Health and Social Dimensions

The program's health initiatives, especially in preventing stunting and the function of Posyandu, received an excellent evaluation (Mean 4.4–4.5). In addition to promoting health, newly created social areas like Titik Nol Ciherang act as facilitators for unity and engagement, combining public health, community connection, and eco-tourism (Khethiwe, 2023). This collaboration enhances the various effects of P2WKSS (Khethiwe, 2023).

4.5 Governance and Multi-Stakeholder Synergy

Governance was assessed as effective (Mean 4.2), although issues related to transparency (Mean 3.7) still exist. The partnership among 27 local agencies, private CSR organizations, and community groups demonstrates an unusual arrangement of resources at the community level (Chen & Barcus, 2024). However, depending on various parties without strong systems for accountability presents risks of disorganization (Chen & Barcus, 2024).

4.6 Sustainability and Impact

Experts reached a strong agreement (Mean 4.6) that P2WKSS ought to be sustained and broadened. The repetition of successful methods like Rumah Benih and women's cooperatives was emphasized as a key strategy (Huang et al., 2023). Collaboration with local economic symbols—such as decorative plant groups and eco-tourism—enhances the long-term sustainability of women's empowerment beyond the duration of program funding (Huang et al., 2023).

4.7 Integrative Analysis

The comprehensive analysis, which merges Delphi consensus with field observations, presents a detailed view of the P2WKSS program's effectiveness in Karangsatu Village. The program shows notable advantages, especially due to its communication strategies that consider gender, extensive backing from various stakeholders, a solid local economic foundation, and creative methods like incorporating eco-tourism to promote social unity and empowerment (Huang et al., 2023). Together, these factors demonstrate the program's ability to connect gender equality with community development (Lwamba et al., 2022). Nonetheless, various weaknesses are still apparent, particularly cultural barriers that obstruct women's complete involvement, a lack of transparency in governance procedures, and inadequate recording of women's contributions in official decision-making settings (Chen & Barcus, 2024). Concurrently, the results underscore notable

opportunities, such as the possibility of replicating the Karangsatu model in various communities, promoting the growth of women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM) to foster economic self-sufficiency, and the advancement of community-based tourism as a strategy for sustainable development (Showkat et al., 2024). However, these opportunities come with urgent challenges. These include ensuring the long-term sustainability of programs without relying solely on CSR funding, integrating gender advocacy into official village governance systems, and strengthening women's real decision-making power in both family settings and formal institutions (Khethiwe, 2023). Collectively, these results indicate that although P2WKSS offers a strong basis for empowerment, its lasting effects will rely on how well it overcomes structural challenges while maximizing its current strengths and opportunities (Chen & Barcus, 2024). The findings comparison table (Table 5) presents the evolution of expert consensus across the three Delphi rounds.

Table 5. Findings Comparison

Theme	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Representation & Empowerment	Identified	85	88
Communication Strategies	Identified	78	84
Symbolic Resources	Identified	72	79
Gender Sensitivity	Identified	80	85
Health & Social Aspects	Identified	76	81
Governance & Stakeholder Synergy	Identified	74	76
Sustainability	Identified	82	90

The comparison of Delphi rounds indicates that expert perspectives converged most strongly on themes directly tied to women's visibility and long-term program sustainability. High consensus on representation and empowerment reflects recognition that women's active roles as decision-makers and economic actors are fundamental to the success of the P2WKSS program. Similarly, the strong endorsement of sustainability underscores the need for strategies that extend beyond short-term program cycles to secure lasting benefits. Conversely, the relatively lower consensus on symbolic resources and governance suggests ambivalence among experts. While symbolic elements (such as uniforms or group identity markers) can motivate participation, their strategic value remains contested. Likewise, governance and stakeholder synergy, though important, were seen as unevenly implemented and subject to local political dynamics, which limited confidence in their effectiveness. These interpretations suggest that gender communication strategies must prioritize inclusive representation and sustainable

mechanisms while continuing to refine symbolic and governance approaches to achieve broader acceptance and impact.

The cause–and–effect flow diagram (Figure 4) demonstrates the process by which communication strategies build capacity, increase participation, enhance women's representation, and ultimately contribute to empowerment, sustainability, and poverty alleviation. Together, these visuals clarify the methodological rigor, thematic integration, and causal dynamics underpinning the study's findings.

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Communication Strategies   │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │  Builds Capacity
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│   Increased Participation    │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │  Enhances Roles
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Representation &        │
│        Empowerment          │
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              │  Drives Outcomes
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│   Sustainability & Poverty   │
│        Alleviation          │
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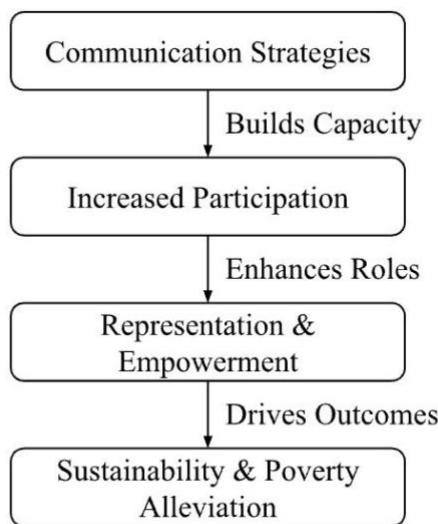
Figure 4. The Cause-and-Effect Flow Diagram

4.8 Contradictions and Limitations

Not all findings aligned neatly. Governance transparency scored relatively low, suggesting that empowerment may advance in practice while formal accountability lags behind. Similarly, symbolic resources were undervalued initially but gained recognition later, showing ambivalence among experts about their significance. These inconsistencies underscore the complexity of empowerment processes and the limitations of consensus-based methods, where dissenting views may be underrepresented.

4.9 Practical Implications

For practitioners, the findings suggest that while sustainability and women's representation should remain central, unresolved issues such as governance transparency must be addressed to ensure long-term legitimacy. Moreover, communication strategies should be adapted to overcome literacy and dialect barriers, ensuring inclusivity for marginalized groups.

4.10 Advancing Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge of gender communication in development programs by demonstrating that empowerment requires both practical interventions (training, economic participation) and symbolic recognition (identity, visibility). By distinguishing between high and low consensus areas, the research highlights where program design is robust and where further innovation is required.

5. Conclusion

This study makes three key contributions. First, it demonstrates that gender communication strategies within the P2WKSS program are central to women's empowerment, with consensus converging on the importance of women's representation, sustainability, and gender sensitivity. Second, it highlights that empowerment extends beyond economic outcomes to include symbolic recognition, identity formation, and inclusive communication practices. Third, it shows how the Delphi method can be used as a structured tool to surface, refine, and stabilize diverse perspectives in community development contexts, making visible both areas of strong agreement and points of tension.

From a theoretical perspective, the study advances understanding of gender communication as a multidimensional process that blends practical empowerment with cultural and symbolic reinforcement. Practically, it offers evidence that development programs should prioritize sustainability mechanisms, ensure gender-sensitive design, and address inclusivity barriers such as literacy and dialect differences. Attention to governance transparency is also needed to strengthen legitimacy. The Delphi approach was particularly valuable in revealing how expert opinions evolved across rounds, enabling the identification of contested areas—such as symbolic resources and governance—that might be overlooked in single-round consultations. This iterative consensus-building provided a richer, more nuanced understanding of gender communication strategies than other qualitative methods alone.

The study was conducted with a small sample of nine experts from a single village, which limits generalizability. Reliance on purposively selected participants introduces potential bias, as certain voices may have been excluded. Furthermore, cultural hierarchies may have influenced responses despite efforts to preserve anonymity. Policy recommendations include embedding gender-sensitive communication as a core component of community development programs, strengthening governance transparency, and investing in sustainability strategies that extend beyond donor cycles. Future research should replicate this approach in diverse settings, expand the expert pool, and test the framework against other empowerment initiatives to assess its wider applicability. In conclusion, while the findings cannot be generalized beyond the Karangsatu case, they provide actionable insights into how communication strategies, symbolic practices, and inclusive design can collectively advance women's empowerment in community-based programs.

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