

## Interaction and Communication in IbuSibuk Community as a Factor for Empowering Women in The Digital Era

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**Abstract:** This research focuses on the Ibu Sibuk community, an online community that empowers mothers to become influencers and resellers through social commerce platforms. The background of this research includes the community's goals, the platform's success in attracting members and brands, and the members' experiences in using communication technology to interact in the community. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design to understand the role of the IbuSibuk community for women who already have a family and are mothers. The research informants consisted of two members and two administrators of IbuSibuk, who were selected through a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through face-to-face or online interviews, literature reviews from academic journals, and website information. The research results show that IbuSibuk is an online community that helps working mothers earn extra income as influencers by connecting them with various brands. This community empowers mothers economically through the programs and activities offered but also faces technological barriers such as network and digital literacy issues and the potential for fraud. Nevertheless, technology within IbuSibuk extends its reach and facilitates offline activities such as product launches. Overall, IbuSibuk serves as a bridge between brands and influencers, empowers mothers economically, and creates a supportive and motivating environment for its members.

**Keywords:** IbuSibuk, Online Communities, Communication Technology, Women Empowerment, Infulencer

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini berfokus pada Komunitas IbuSibuk, sebuah komunitas online yang memberdayakan ibu-ibu menjadi influencer dan reseller melalui platform social commerce. Latar belakang penelitian ini mencakup tujuan komunitas, keberhasilan platform dalam menarik anggota dan brand, serta pengalaman para anggota dalam menggunakan teknologi komunikasi untuk berinteraksi dalam komunitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus untuk memahami peran Komunitas IbuSibuk bagi perempuan yang telah memiliki keluarga atau ibu-ibu. Informan penelitian terdiri dari dua anggota dan dua pengurus IbuSibuk, yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara tatap muka atau online dan studi pustaka dari jurnal ilmiah dan informasi di website Komunitas IbuSibuk. Hasil penelitian ini adalah IbuSibuk merupakan komunitas online yang membantu ibu-ibu bekerja atau mendapatkan penghasilan tambahan sebagai influencer dengan menghubungkan mereka dengan berbagai brand

dalam kampanye. Komunitas ini memberdayakan ibu-ibu secara ekonomi melalui program-program dan kegiatan yang disediakan, namun juga menghadapi kendala teknologi seperti masalah jaringan dan literasi digital, serta potensi penipuan. Meskipun demikian, penggunaan teknologi dalam IbuSibuk memperluas jangkauan dan memfasilitasi kegiatan offline seperti peluncuran produk. Secara keseluruhan, IbuSibuk berfungsi sebagai jembatan antara brand dan influencer, memberdayakan ibu-ibu secara ekonomi, dan menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung dan memotivasi anggotanya.

**Kata Kunci:** IbuSibuk, Komunitas Online, Teknologi Komunikasi, Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Dan Infulencer

## Introduction

This research highlights an online community that can empower women online, namely IbuSibuk. Orami, a digital parenting startup, launched IbuSibuk, a social commerce platform, to enable mothers economically by turning them into nano-influencers and resellers. The background of research on the concept and purpose of the IbuSibuk Community and its constraints is a critical study to understand how this community functions, the goals to be achieved, and the obstacles faced in the management and use of technology. Komunitas IbuSibuk is a community dedicated to mothers with busy schedules and dual roles as mothers and professionals. The main goal of this community is to empower mothers economically and socially by becoming an influencer who collaborates with brands on various campaigns. IbuSibuk provides a platform for mothers to connect, share experiences, and support each other. Its members come from different backgrounds and statuses, such as working mothers, homemakers, single mothers, or newly married.

IbuSibuk is a social commerce platform that helps homemakers become nano-influencers and resellers, connecting them with brands to promote products through various campaigns. This platform has successfully attracted more than 50,000 members from different regions in Indonesia and has more than 200 brands and more than 1500 influencer campaigns (Arnetta, 2022; Sirclo, 2023) to increase the brand's product awareness. As a mother, boredom can be felt in daily routines, but by becoming a busy influencer mother, mothers can fill their time with practical activities and generate additional income from home. Indirectly, IbuSibuk serves as a forum for women's empowerment online.

In addition, several studies have been conducted on women's empowerment. Barus, R. K. I. (2015) writings on women's empowerment through the Family Welfare Empowerment Drive Team (PKK) can increase the role of women in community development programs and their economic capabilities. Next, according to Pratami, A. H., & Nurbani. (2017)., the primary purpose of empowerment is to overcome poverty and improve the welfare of poor women who are members of cooperatives. Furthermore, the writings of Alatas dan Sutanto discuss the importance of new media in the contemporary

cultural era, where new media has the potential to empower and liberate individuals and groups from domination and subordination. Cyberfeminism emerged as a practiced movement that offered ideas for releasing women from patriarchal power through interaction with new media. Interaction with new media can be a means to fight for equality so that women can be empowered. In addition, women's empowerment can strengthen the family as a mitigation effort in the economic sector.

The issue of women's empowerment was also raised in the writings of Saharani et al. (2023). The paper discusses Symbolic Convergence Theory, which explains how individuals in communication form small groups that link together to spread fantasy, focusing on the 'Puan Bisa' community. The community's founders wanted to apply the imagination of women's empowerment, and the community board members played the role of critical actors in spreading the fantasy through social media and online meetings. Women's empowerment is conveyed through three pillars: mental health, career, and self-empowerment. It is passed on as a chain of fantasies through empathic communication to form a rhetorical community. The community's founder acts as an essential figure in the lofty vision, uses digital media as a backdrop, and receives positive support from his community in spreading the fantasy message.

The development of the digital world with technological advances has led to the development of digital media, such as websites and social media. In one case, "Perempuan Bercerita" as a digital platform uses these advancements to empower women through capacity building, knowledge sharing, inspirational stories, and programs for women, including victims of violence, to increase digital literacy and the ability to analyze information from digital platforms (Anggreni, Indria Nora, Sunita, & Nurhasanah, 2022). However, communication technology also raises new issues, particularly about digital literacy. Research from Hanis & Marzaman (2020) shows that the PKK (Family Welfare Movement) program has many benefits for women's empowerment in villages but still faces obstacles such as low community capacity and lack of knowledge of technology. From this point of view, technology has become common in a community. Technology plays a vital role in empowering women through communities. Utilizing this technology is a good thing in increasing women's capacity for productive activities (Handarkho, Herawati, Widyastuti, Wulandari, & Arifin, 2014).

In this research, studying online communities such as IbuSibuk with offline activities can provide a deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges of using technology in community management. This research can also discuss technology's positive and negative impacts in supporting mothers to become influencers, increasing member engagement, and overcoming barriers. Thus, the background of this research can provide vital information to understand the dynamics and role of the Ibu Sibuk community in promoting the role of mothers as influencers and professionals.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the role of the IbuSibuk community in building meaningful communities for women who already have families or are special mothers. The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand mothers' experiences, perceptions, and interactions in the community. The research design used in this study is a case study.

Table 1. List of Informants

Details	Detail Informants			
	N1	N2	N3	N4
Gender	female	female	female	female
Age	32	27	25	23
City	Semarang	Palembang	Yogyakarta	Tangerang
Status	Member of IbuSibuk	Member of IbuSibuk	Administrator of IbuSibuk	Administrator of IbuSibuk

The informants in this study were two IbuSibuk members and two IbuSibuk administrators. These data are attached to Table 1. Participants were selected through purposive sampling techniques with inclusion criteria of mothers who play an active role in society and use communication technology to interact. This study involved four people who were members of the IbuSibuk community, and the names and other identities of the participants were masked with initials or other codes to protect the personal confidentiality of the interviews. While joining the IbuSibuk community, the four resource persons collaborated on the same program using technologies such as WhatsApp, Telegram, ZOOM, and the Orami application.

The resource person revealed the benefits and obstacles experienced while joining the Ibu Sibuk community. Therefore, the researchers want to investigate the informants' experiences of joining the IbuSibuk community. The data collection techniques in this study are interviews and literature review. Structured interviews were conducted with research participants to understand the communication patterns formed through technology in the Ibu Sibuk community. The interviews are conducted face-to-face or through a mutually agreed online communication platform. Secondly, this study also used books and literature as complementary data sources. Data from academic journals relevant to the research topic and information from the IbuSibuk Community on the website.

## Results and Discussion

### Community and Communication Technology

In this part, we present some previous research focusing on virtual communities Pratami & Nurbani (2017), who raise the issue of group communication patterns in the virtual community of WomanDiri women. They show that communication patterns are determined by factors such as group structure, roles of group members, group norms and values, and the experience of group members in communication. This community of women has high levels of emotional support and open communication patterns, but face-to-face interactions could work better. Writing from Jaya (Jaya, 2020) shows that the use of information technology in organizational communication in the campus environment of STAIN Gajah Putih can increase communication effectiveness. Information technology accelerates communication, increases access to information, and facilitates collaboration between individuals and departments on campus. The results showed that information technology positively affected organizational communication effectiveness, with respondents reporting higher energy, better access to information, and easier collaboration.

Further research by Megasari, Purnawan, and Pradipta (Megasari, Purnawan, & Pradipta, 2017). They found that interpersonal communication patterns in the Vespa community, particularly in KUTU Vespa Region Bali, are essential in maintaining group solidarity. Communication takes place through regular meetings, online discussions, and joint activities. The exact identity as a Vespa owner also plays a role in strengthening group solidarity. This research highlights the importance of effective interpersonal communication and shared identity in maintaining group solidarity within the Vespa community. This article highlights that the Vespa community holds regular meetings and online discussions to strengthen ties within the community.

Furthermore, an article by Wiguna, Priyowidodo, and Hadi (Wiguna, Priyowidodo, & Hadi, 2021) examined the virtual communication patterns of GUPDI ministers from Surakarta Pasar Legi Jama'at through WhatsApp social media. The servants used WhatsApp to communicate with their congregations through short messages, files, conversation groups, voice calls, and videos. The primary purpose of this communication is to provide church information and spiritual support to the congregation. WhatsApp facilitates virtual communication, increases congregational satisfaction, and strengthens the bond between pastors and congregations in church activities.

The explanation above shows that technology can help women get involved in an online community. Women tend to choose independent work and work from home, especially when they want to get out of a patriarchal household environment. Although initially worried about being left behind, women now surpass men in Internet use (Goyal, 2011). From previous research, it can be concluded that communication in virtual groups has a pattern that is determined by factors such as group structure, member roles, norms, values, and communication experiences. Communication technology plays a vital role in virtual groups and organizations. A community is a group of individuals who interact and gather in the same area or environment to achieve common goals and meet individual needs. Virtual groups, such as women's support groups, show high levels of

emotional support and open communication patterns. Still, face-to-face interaction remains essential for the transmission of values and community focus.

Information technology, as in the STAIN Gajah Putih campus environment, can improve the effectiveness of organizational communication by speeding up processes, increasing access to information, and facilitating collaboration. Effective interpersonal communication and shared identity are essential in maintaining group solidarity in the Vespa community. Meanwhile, virtual contact by GUPDI pastors via WhatsApp helps provide church information and spiritual support to congregations, increasing satisfaction and strengthening the bond between pastors and congregations.

Changes in people's communication patterns and methods are caused by communication technology, which facilitates interaction between senders and receivers of messages, discussions, and transmission of various types of images, voice data, and text, which is the content of new media (Juditha, 2020). Social media chats such as WhatsApp and Telegram also allow for forming different communication patterns within a community, varying depending on the community's goals and characteristics. The use of digital communication platforms and technologies expands the scope of communication. Engaged members of the community believe that their contribution to social relations is essential through creating content and online activities that support the transition of offline interactions to new media within the community (Epranata & Bangun, 2022). Thus, the more users are engaged and accustomed to using the technology, the more likely it is to be used in the long term within a community (Utomo, Kurniasari, & Purnamaningsih, 2021).

### Concept and Purpose of IbuSibuk Community

A community created by Orami, the IbuSibuk Community, is for mothers with busy schedules and working mothers and professionals. These communities provide a platform for mothers to connect, share experiences, and support each other. In addition, IbuSibuk is a community that connects brands with mothers who become influencers (momfluencers). Many mothers in Indonesia become content creators or nano-influencers to earn extra income through social media and their network of friends (Masduki, 2022).

IbuSibuk already has around 70,000 female members, with about 30,000 active members. The requirements to become a member of IbuSibuk are actively using social media such as Instagram and TikTok and wanting to earn extra income. The members of this community come from different cities in Indonesia and have different backgrounds. There are working mothers, homemakers, single mothers, and newlyweds.

Orami has an app that offers features and services specifically designed to meet the needs of mothers. One is the IbuSibuk community, which connects mothers with brands to work together. Various activities can be done through the application: affiliate, product review, giveaway, e-commerce review, referral, survey, self-development, service review, and event attendance. Ibu Sibuk is originally from the Orami community and focuses on Parenting. However, it later evolved into two separate assemblies, Parenting and Ibu Sibuk, which focus on economic empowerment for mothers. IbuSibuk aims to provide

opportunities for homemakers to earn extra income by becoming influencers and resellers and providing exclusive training for self-development (Arnetta, 2022).

The IbuSibuk community has development programs such as IbuSibuk Academy, IbuSibuk30 Days Challenge Make Over Instagram, IbuSibuk Masterclass, and IbuSibuk Talk. Those programs help mothers become influencers with photography, videography, editing, make-up, personal branding, and maximizing content. This activity is carried out regularly, and mothers participate online. However, starting in May 2023, some offline activities will be carried out with brands in collaboration with IbuSibuk.

### **IbuSibuk as a Bridge between Brands and Influencers**

In IbuSibuk, mothers only need to prepare gadgets and social media, then register and join campaigns according to their interests to benefit from this program (Bundadzakiyyah, 2022). IbuSibuk offers various programs and courses to improve the quality of mothers' content and videos. This will enable them to become quality influencers to attract collaboration with multiple brands (Aprilyani, 2022; Nisriyana, 2022). Technology has changed the way marketing and advertising works. IbuSibuk is an agency that connects brands with influencers (mothers) for collaboration. Brands can ask IbuSibuk for advice on influencer criteria that suit their needs, such as the number of followers and the age of children. This helps brands without the hassle of searching for a Key Opinion Leader (KOL). This allows mothers to work with brands that meet the required criteria (Isrinur, 2022).

Ibu Sibuk acts as an intermediary between brands and influencers. They organize various activities, such as promotions, allowing members to participate in campaigns with different brands. In addition, IbuSibuk offers a variety of weekly class programs with different themes. Due to its popularity, they are focusing on the TikTok platform and have even invited external sources to train mothers. IbuSibuk also provides its members with challenges and tasks to improve the quality of the content. IbuSibuk includes classroom programs and activities to develop mothers' skills in using technology and social media. This program helps to provide new knowledge and skills so that mothers can be more independent and effective in their careers as influencers. Ibu Sibuk is essential in economically empowering mothers and providing support and opportunities to contribute through social media and become potential influencers invited to collaborate with a brand.

Furthermore, the IbuSibuk community's existence can also help increase engagement with content produced by one of its members. Technology helps to strengthen members' support and engagement with each other. Good communication between IbuSibuk members reflects the support and attention between fellow members. They support, like, and comment on each other's content or activities. This environment creates a sense of belonging and motivates mothers to continue contributing. Although there is competition between members to win collaborations with brands or prizes from activities, this competition is still healthy and reasonable. In addition, although IbuSibuk focuses on online activities such as TikTok and digital communication platforms, technology also

impacts offline activities. IbuSibuk organizes offline events like product launches and significant events like Kemenppa. Technology can help promote and organize these events to be more effective and organized. Most of Ibu Sibukare's affairs, such as product launches and events during Ramadan, are conducted offline. One of their most significant events is the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia (KemenPPA). IbuSibu also organizes competitions and product reviews to improve the quality of its members. They have nine types of campaigns that go into the development program, such as webinars, talk shows, and challenges to create quality content. For example, momfluencers, mothers who influence others through social media platforms with parenting experiences and product recommendations, are a significant trend in Indonesia. One successful momfluencer, Fikra, owes her success to consistent content development and support from the platform to increase her income and career (Sirclo, 2023).

Research on online communities that have offline events like IbuSibuk can reveal some interesting things. First, online communities like IbuSibuk provide tangible benefits in empowering mothers as influencers. The training programs and activities offered by IbuSibuk help to improve the knowledge and skills of its members in using technology and social media to generate additional income.

Second, online communities like IbuSibuk create an environment that supports and motivates its members. Support and engagement between members can be enhanced through technology, increasing engagement with community members' content. While there is an element of competition to win brand collaborations or prizes from activities, this competition is still healthy and does not damage the relationship between members.

Third, technology also plays a role in facilitating offline events organized by communities like IbuSibuk. Technology helps promote and organize such events to be more effective and organized. This shows how an online community presence can positively impact the real world, allowing members to meet and interact in person. An online community can mobilize and empower women. As written by Anggreni et al. (2022), Perempuan Berkisah helps women use digital media positively and productively, such as empowering women through economic strengthening and accompanying women survivors of violence to recover and be empowered, thus making a positive contribution and increasing women's potential in the digital world. This formed community can serve as a medium of empowerment and a safe space for women to share knowledge and learning (Santoso, Retno, & Sastrosumarto, 2022).

### Dynamics in the IbuSibuk Community

IbuSibuk employs a range of technologies for program management. The organization conducts weekly class sessions centered around themes, particularly on the TikTok platform. Additionally, they facilitate the participation of external speakers by utilizing online platforms such as ZOOM and Google Meet. The utilization of this technology enhances the scope and streamlines accessibility for members of IbuSibuk across



Indonesia. The expeditious advancement of the Internet has exerted a substantial influence on the domains of media, communication, and commerce. In the contemporary era of globalization, electronic commerce (e-commerce) assumes a significant role within the realm of information and communication technology (ICT) development (Aprianto, 2021). Technology and the Internet facilitate communication and empower people, primarily through internet media and digital communication (Saharani, Putri, & Putra, A, 2023).

In the context of IbuSibuk, technology assumes a significant role, including many platforms like apps, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram, which are utilized for communication and activity coordination. IbuSibuk employs technology to provide programs, webinars, and challenges to enhance its members' proficiency as influencers. Communication between members and administrators is facilitated using platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram. Effective communication is sustained within a group by fostering mutual support and providing assistance to one another despite the presence of several individuals. While technology undoubtedly plays a significant part in Ibu Sibuk, it has challenges. These impediments encompass issues related to network connectivity, a restricted proficiency in utilizing programs, and difficulties arising from introducing novel features. This impediment decreases participation among specific individuals in operating technology-based communication channels.

Moreover, the utilization of technology presents many obstacles. A subset of individuals needs clarification regarding the proper utilization of specific applications or platforms, leading to incomplete access to information and the recurrence of inquiries. Administrators should enhance their efforts in elucidating technology or implementing programs that facilitate members' comprehension of its use. This observation underscores the need for more digital literacy among all individuals, resulting in occasional inaccuracies in the submitted information.

Nevertheless, the board opted to utilize the messaging application Telegram in response. IbuSibuk effectively employs the pinned message functionality inside the Telegram platform to address and resolve issues about communication among its members. This technology enables newly joined individuals to remain updated on crucial information while ensuring they do not overlook vital signals. Furthermore, technology is essential in monitoring and mitigating issues such as fraud. It achieves this by establishing authoritative systems that generate official data, preventing individuals from being exposed to misleading or deceptive information. Utilizing functionalities such as pinned messages inside the Telegram platform facilitates the accessibility of crucial details for newly joined members, obviating the need for repetitive inquiries.

Nevertheless, many challenges are associated with the application's utilization, which hinders specific individuals from using the platform entirely. The challenge related to a less efficient community lies in adopting a hierarchical communication structure (Aslichati, 2011). Therefore, administrators in the IbuSibuk community are called "bumin" ("*Admin Mother*").

The utilization of communication technology enables the expeditious and accurate resolution of problems. Ibu Sibuk heavily relies on technology as the primary mode of communication and platform for overseeing community activities. Technology utilization facilitates enhanced communication efficiency, enabling individuals to engage and actively partake in many activities.

The explanation above elucidates how IbuSibuk uses technology for communication and community engagement. Despite the many benefits technology has bestowed upon society, certain obstacles persist that necessitate resolution to enhance the efficacy of technological utilization within these societies. The utilization of technology inside IbuSibuks exhibits both advantageous and detrimental effects. Technology plays a pivotal role in enabling efficient communication and streamlined organization of activities. However, it also presents challenges in miscommunication and the opportunity for fraudulent actions. An illustrative instance with an informant classified as N1 highlights a significant challenge IbuSibuk encountered: fraud. This pertains to the infiltration of Telegram groups by fraudulent individuals who disseminate misleading information, pilfer member data, and fool them by soliciting substantial payments. To address this issue, IbuSibuk implemented more stringent measures by imposing restrictions on entrance and a registration system, ensuring that only the official IbuSibuk account disseminated verified information to its members, consequently mitigating the proliferation of misinformation. The fraudulent activity is executed with the pretense of being a reputable entity seeking to engage in collaborative endorsement ventures, wherein individuals are requested to provide a substantial upfront payment before any further proceedings.

IbuSibuk employs a systematic approach to problem resolution, which entails the active involvement of member representatives and administrators in the problem-solving process. The discourse encompasses intricate matters about fraud, even at the managerial level of Ibu Sibuk. Furthermore, the organization also offers programs and tutorials aimed at helping its members to utilize various apps and technologies. A subset of individuals demonstrate proficient utilization of technology. However, a distinct portion continues encountering challenges in successfully employing technological tools. While the exact number of members still needs to be fully documented, it is believed that the use of technology has facilitated an increase in the estimated count of active members, ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 individuals, despite the total potential membership reaching as high as 70,000 people. Communication technology can replace traditional media in a wide range of activities. However, its effective utilization necessitates a solid foundation in theory, practical application, and the availability of necessary facilities and infrastructure to ensure optimal utilization (Barus, 2015).

## Conclusion

In general, this research shows that IbuSibuk is an online community for mothers who want to work as influencers or earn extra income. This community is an agency that connects brands with influencers so that mothers can act as influencers and work with different brands on campaigns. IbuSibuk empowers mothers economically through programs and activities such as weekly classes, webinars, talk shows, and challenges to improve the quality of content. Technology plays an essential role in managing these communities, but it also faces several obstacles, such as network issues, lack of digital literacy, and potential fraud. Nevertheless, IbuSibuk's use of technology is helping to expand its reach and facilitate offline activities such as product launches and major events. Overall, IbuSibuk acts as a bridge between brands and influencers, economically empowering mothers and creating an environment that supports and motivates its members. As a result, our study confirms what the Perempuan Berkisah platform already showed: the importance of online communities like IbuSibuk in economically and socially empowering moms. Members are given the tools to become more independent and powerful influencers on social media platforms through the programs and activities put on. Additionally, this online community has the potential to forge solid social ties among participants, which can enhance the quality of content and encourage contributors to keep up their contributions.

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