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## The Role Of Tapal Kuda Television Journalists Association In Transforming University Students Into Competent Journalists

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the communication strategies implemented by the Tapal Kuda Jember Television Journalists Association in presenting local television news content. The background of this study stems from the need for journalist organizations to adapt amid the dynamics of media digitalization, audience fragmentation, and demands for journalistic professionalism. The strategic organizational communication approach is used as a theoretical basis to understand how organizational structures, communication channels, and feedback mechanisms are built to achieve the goal of presenting informative and relevant news to the local public. The research method used a qualitative descriptive design with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, observation of organizational activities, and analysis of internal documentation. The results of the study show that the communication strategy of IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember includes vertical, horizontal, and collaborative communication patterns among its members to ensure consistency in news presentation, strengthen journalistic professionalism, and preserve local identity in content production. Internal evaluation mechanisms and routine coordination were also found to play a role in improving the effectiveness of information dissemination and editorial decision-making. This study concludes that the organizational communication strategy implemented by IJTI Tapal Kuda Jember has a direct impact on the quality and character of local television news. These findings contribute theoretically to the study of strategic organizational communication and offer practical recommendations for journalist associations and local television stations in improving coordination, content quality, and media sustainability at the regional level.

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### Keywords

Journalism Association, Transforming University Students, Organizational Communication Strategy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The In an increasingly sophisticated global era where information moves quickly with widespread media coverage, the journalism profession plays an important role in maintaining and preserving the



quality of news publications, media credibility, and public literacy. Global pressure for the rapid dissemination of information can increase anxiety about misinformation and disinformation, so journalists must be able to uphold integrity, accuracy, and ethics to emphasize urgency (Freiling et al. 2023). The existence of trained journalists who are sensitive to local and global contexts is key to maintaining democracy, good governance, and public access to reliable and accurate information (Chan et al. 2026).

In many parts of the world, journalism education is evolving to respond to the challenges of digital disruption due to media transformation, where news consumption is no longer limited to traditional media such as newspapers and television, but has spread to online and multi-platform platforms. This requires journalists to have competent skills (Katzenberger 2024).

In Indonesia itself, the need for competent journalists is urgent. Basic journalistic competencies show that journalism training at the school and university levels can improve writing and news content production skills, as well as shape an understanding of journalistic ethics (Saggaf et al. 2021). This confirms that journalism education/training interventions can be one solution to strengthen the capacity of the younger generation in the media field.

A competent journalist is characterized by their abilities and skills in the journalistic process, from data collection to the accurate presentation of information to the public (Fazri et al. 2022). Competent journalists have excellent news gathering skills and well-trained writing skills. In the context of modern media, competent journalists not only rely on writing and interviewing skills, but are also required to master technical skills, such as operating coverage equipment such as cameras and microphones, as well as understanding the techniques of image capture and audio recording that support the visual quality of the news. In addition, competent journalists must be able to understand editing logic, the structure of television news writing, and content adaptation to various digital platforms. These skills are very supportive in ensuring the quality of news that is informative, interesting, and in accordance with media industry standards (Taslimahudin et al. 2025).

Thus, competent journalists are individuals who integrate technical abilities and skills to produce high-quality work (Fazri et al. 2022). This combination of skills ensures that the news production process can take place professionally and responsibly.

However, the literature also shows that relying on classroom or extracurricular theory without structured and intensive training is often insufficient to produce ready-to-use journalists ((Severijnen and de Haan 2024). Students interested in journalism, such as those in campus communities, sometimes find it difficult to obtain adequate practical experience, equipment, and technical knowledge in broadcasting, as competent journalists do. This shows that campus communities and theory alone are not enough without the support of systematic and professional training and mentoring programs(Severijnen and de Haan 2024).

In response to these challenges, various models of journalism training and competency development have recently emerged, including creative journalism training for school students, training for non-commissioned students (Taslimahudin et al., 2025), and efforts to develop editorial staff to improve the quality of news broadcasts (Fadilah & Hanoselina, n.d.). On the other hand, the transformation of work practices in the media world, especially television, has been triggered by media convergence, where television journalists now need to take on many roles such as reporters, cameramen, editors, and even multiplatform content creators (Syamsuddin and Sonni 2025) .

However, most of these studies and interventions focus on high school students, general university

students, or campus media in general, but few specifically explore the role of local journalism professional organizations (e.g., regional television journalist communities) in transforming students into competent television journalists (Fazri et al., 2022). In other words, there is a research gap on how organizations such as the Tapal Kuda Television Journalists Association, as an example of a local organization that has contributed to the transformation process, in terms of training, mentoring, professional networks, and field news coverage.

Local professional organizations can serve as a bridge between academia or education and the professional media world (Solkin 2022). They have the potential to shape the identity of competent journalists who are locally sensitive, understand multiplatform media, and adhere to journalism ethics in a regional context. Without in-depth research on the role of such organizations, we cannot know their effectiveness, challenges, or potential contributions to the regeneration of journalists.

Therefore, this study aims to empirically examine the role of the Tapal Kuda Television Journalists Association in transforming students into competent journalists. This study is expected to show how the structure, programs (Fowler-Watt 2023), practices, and networks of this organization support the transformation process, as well as how the local context (region) influences these dynamics.

With this focus, this study is expected to contribute theoretically through a new understanding of the role of local professional organizations in journalist regeneration, as well as practical benefits in the form of recommendations for journalism education, media organizations, and human resource development policies in local media (Fazri et al. 2022).

Specifically, this study aims to (1) describe the mechanisms and activities carried out by IJTI to assist students; (2) identify the forms of training, mentoring, and work experience programs provided by IJTI; (3) evaluate the extent to which this involvement is able to produce journalists who meet the standards of journalistic competence. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide empirical evidence of the strategic role of local professional organizations in shaping a new generation of journalists and serve as a reference for the development of journalism training and education programs in the future (Bayani & Fazri, 2022).

## **2. METHODS**

The Contains This study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to describe in depth and factually how the Indonesian Television Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda plays a role in transforming students into competent journalists, without manipulating variables or experimental intervention (Villamin et al., 2025). Qualitative research is a process of understanding social issues based on a holistic description formed by detailed words according to the informant's point of view. Meanwhile, the term descriptive is intended to describe existing phenomena, such as activities, characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities, and differences (Setiawan et al., 2023). The research subjects consisted of students and university students who were directly involved in the training program organized by IJTI Tapal Kuda as mentors or advisors. The type of research used was field research conducted at the IJTI Tapal Kuda Secretariat Office in Jember Regency. Data sources include primary data in the form of observations and interviews. Direct observations were conducted by visiting the IJTI Tapal Kuda Secretariat Office in Jember Regency to directly observe the training and journalistic activities held there, such as news production and field reporting. Furthermore, in-depth and open interviews were conducted with the Chair of IJTI, the Secretary of IJTI, and the

students and university students involved. These interviews aimed to gain a deep understanding of how IJTI Tapal Kuda plays a role in transforming students and university students into competent journalists. This combination of techniques aims to ensure the validity and triangulation of research data. This approach is consistent with descriptive qualitative practice guidelines that emphasize the use of flexible instruments and researchers as the main instruments, as well as in-depth interpretation of the actual social context.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the role of the Tapal Kuda Television Journalists Association (IJTI) in transforming students into competent journalists, particularly in terms of journalistic skills and understanding of professional ethics. The research context is in the Tapal Kuda region of East Java, which geographically and socially has a developing local media dynamic but still faces limitations in terms of professional journalistic resources (Khoiruanisa et al. 2024) (Khoiruanisa et al., 2024).

According to Abir Nabila Asmaul Husna (2025), the training conducted by IJTI Tapal Kuda emphasizes hands-on practice rather than classroom theory, so this study shows that the mentoring mechanism carried out by IJTI Tapal Kuda is systematic, gradual, and based on direct experience. Interview and observation data reveal that mentoring is not carried out through a one-way training model, but rather through a learning approach that emphasizes the learning process through direct experience and real practice (learning by doing) that resembles professional journalistic work practices.

In general, the mentoring mechanism consists of several main activities, namely:

1. Basic and Advanced Television Journalism Training (Educational)

Basic and advanced journalism training organized by the Tapal Kuda Television Journalists Association is a strategic first step in the process of transforming students into competent journalists. Based on data from interviews and observations, this training is designed as a conceptual and technical foundation before participants are directly involved in field reporting practices. Thus, the training is not merely an introductory activity, but rather a process of forming a systematic journalistic framework. This training covers an introduction to the world of television journalism, news values, reporting techniques, script writing, and journalistic ethics (Sunarjie, 2025). This training serves as a gateway for students to understand the framework of journalism before going into the field.

2. Journalistic Content Production Assistance (Facilitative)

Field assistance involves participants directly in news coverage activities. At this stage, professional journalists assist students or university students when covering current events (Iskandar, 2025). Observation data shows that participants not only observe but are also involved in the process of data collection, interviewing sources, and discussing the angle of the news. This assistance enables the transfer of knowledge that is difficult to obtain through theoretical learning alone, so that students apply all of their learning to news production as a whole through the following stages:

- a. Projection (Coverage Planning)

In this stage, the entire group holds a joint meeting. The purpose of coverage planning is to make news projections in the format of Coverage Team and Production Team assignments.

b. News Gathering (Field Coverage)

News gathering is an important stage in the news production process (Ruhama et al., 2024). In this stage, the team in charge will conduct direct coverage in the field to obtain accurate data, facts, and information through field notes and interviews.

c. News Rundown Preparation

After the news from the coverage has been collected, the production team in charge of compiling the news script creates a structured news rundown, starting from the bumper, high lead, opening, lead-in, come break, to the opening.

d. News Anchor (News Presenter)

This stage involves filming the presenter delivering the news in the studio in a communicative, professional manner that meets television news broadcasting standards (Septiasmara et al. 2023).

e. Voice Over (News Narrator)

The voice-over stage is the stage of explaining the visual news that has been compiled in video form . Voice-overs serve to clarify the flow of information, provide clear context to the images (Shin 2022), and reinforce the delivery of the news message so that it is easily understood by the audience (Messaris and Abraham 2001), .

f. Editing

The news editing stage is the final process of coverage before it is published as an informative, interesting, and broadcast journalism-compliant television news package (Maulana 2025) . During the editing process, editors use video editing software, namely the Adobe Premiere application, in which there are several things that editors must do, as follows:

Lower The creation of news lower is an editing process with the aim of presenting television news visuals that display additional information such as the name of the source, the source's position, the location of the coverage, the news title, and the reporter's identity, so that viewers can clearly understand the context of the news broadcast (Chavez et al. 2024).

Rough Cut News, The rough cut process involves editing television news and compiling raw footage into a complete sequence of images with the aim of matching the script and images.

Final editing is the advanced editing stage after rough cut, where the news is refined in terms of visuals, audio, and layout so that it is ready to air. In this process, the editor ensures that all elements of the news, namely images, sound, narration, and graphics, blend harmoniously in accordance with television journalism standards

(Lovari and Rosa 2025).

News Upload (Publication), News upload or content distribution is the finishing stage of television news production. In this process, the editor publishes the news results that have been processed during production to the IJTI Tapal Kuda YouTube platform. The goal is to make the work easily accessible to the public.

This activity shows that IJTI Tapal Kuda serves as a laboratory for journalistic practice that closely resembles real working conditions.

### 3. Evaluation and Feedback (Evaluative)

Evaluation and feedback are provided directly by senior journalists on the participants' work. This evaluation process emphasizes technical aspects, news substance, and compliance with journalistic ethics in an effort to assess the level and identify obstacles encountered during implementation.

This evaluation stage is divided into two forms, namely Internal Group Evaluation and Joint Group Evaluation, which are carried out every day as explained below:

#### a. Internal Group Evaluation

Internal evaluation is carried out independently by each group every day after the activity ends. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of teamwork, the distribution and achievement of coverage targets, and the obstacles encountered during field coverage. The results of the internal evaluation will then be used as material for consideration and learning in the next coverage (Husna, 2025).

#### b. Group Joint Evaluation

This evaluation is carried out by all groups and field assistants from 4:00 p.m. until completion, consistently with the following functions:

- I. Reporting the work progress of each group
- II. Reporting technical obstacles and problems encountered in the field
- III. Determining follow-up actions, strategies, and resolutions to facilitate the next technical coverage
- IV. Creating a job list for the production team and projections for the next news coverage

Referring to the experiential learning framework, the role of IJTI Tapal Kuda in the transformation of students can be mapped into several operational stages that reflect a gradual and reflective experience-based learning process, as described visually in the following chart:



**Table 1.**  
**Flowchart The Process Of Transforming Students Into Journalists**

These findings show a strong correlation with experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience in the professional learning process. Compared to previous studies that highlight the limitations of journalism training in schools or campuses, these findings show the originality that local professional organizations are able to fill this gap in a contextual and sustainable manner.

Data analysis shows that student and university student involvement in IJTI Tapal Kuda contributes significantly to the development of journalistic competencies. The competencies developed can be classified into three main aspects, namely technical competencies, conceptual competencies, and ethical-professional competencies (Putra, 2024).

<b>INFORMANT</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>INTERVIEW RESULTS</b>
Tomi Iskandar	Chairperson of the Indonesian Journalists Association (IJTI) Tapal Kuda	IJTI acts as a learning facilitator through training, intensive mentoring, and periodic evaluations to improve the professional standards of aspiring journalists.
Mahfud Sunarjie	IJTI Journalist	Mentoring is carried out through hands-on reporting practice, editorial discussions, and familiarization with the journalistic
Abir Nabila A. H	University students	Students experienced an increase in technical reporting skills, confidence, and understanding of journalistic ethics after consistently participating in the program.

Source: Primary data, processed by researchers (2026).

From a technical competency perspective, interview data and analysis of journalistic work show an improvement in participants' abilities in field reporting, interviewing techniques, television news script writing, and basic image capture and editing skills. Several informants stated that direct involvement in news production gave them a better understanding of journalistic work standards than theoretical learning in the classroom.

Conceptual competence also developed in line with the intensity of participant involvement. Participants demonstrated a better understanding of news value, determining perspective, and critical thinking skills in sorting out newsworthy information. This can be seen from the journalistic work produced, which increasingly fulfills the elements of news completeness and public relevance.

In addition, journalistic ethics competence is an important aspect that develops through the mentoring process (Tambunan 2025). The data shows that participants not only understand the journalistic code of ethics normatively, but also learn to apply it in real situations, such as maintaining the balance of sources, verifying information, and avoiding ethical violations in reporting. This understanding of ethics is reinforced through case discussions and direct evaluation by professional

journalists.

Thus, the term competent in this study refers to the participants' ability to integrate technical skills, conceptual understanding, and ethical attitudes in journalistic practice. These findings are in line with the literature that emphasizes that journalist competence is not only measured by technical skills but also by integrity and professional responsibility (Zebua et al. 2024).

An evaluation of the suitability of student and university student competencies with journalistic competency standards was conducted by referring to the standards set by the Press Council. The results of the study show that most participants who were actively involved in the IJTI Tapal Kuda mentoring program have met the journalistic competency indicators at the basic to intermediate levels. In terms of knowledge, participants understood the role and function of journalists, the workflow of television journalism, and the basic principles of journalistic ethics. In terms of skills, participants were able to carry out journalistic tasks according to procedures, from reporting to news writing. In terms of attitude, participants demonstrated ethical awareness in carrying out journalistic tasks.

However, the data also shows variations in competency levels among participants. Factors such as intensity of involvement, duration of mentoring, and educational background affect competency achievement (Triantafyllou et al. 2025). Participants who are consistently involved for a longer period of time tend to show higher competency levels than participants whose involvement is sporadic.

This analysis shows that although IJTI Tapal Kuda does not yet fully function as a formal competency certification institution, its role is very significant in preparing prospective journalists to approach the established competency standards. These findings reinforce the argument that professional organizations have a strategic position in the journalist development ecosystem.

Theoretically, the results of this study contribute to the development of studies on the role of professional organizations in journalism education. The findings of the study broaden the understanding that the development of competent journalists does not only depend on formal education, but also on non-formal, practice-based learning carried out by professional organizations at the local level (Putra, 2024).

This study also enriches the literature on journalistic competence by showing that competence is formed through social processes, professional interactions, and continuous field experience (Sulistiyani & Heriyanto, 2025). Until now, the transformation of journalists' competence has been understood more as a process that takes place in formal educational institutions such as vocational high schools, communication colleges, or journalism study programs. However, the findings of this study show that professional organizations such as IJTI Tapal Kuda play a significant role as transformational actors outside the formal education system. Thus, the process of forming journalistic competence is not solely linear and institutional, but also collaborative and based on professional communities (Lestari et al. 2024). This broadens the theoretical perspective on the ecosystem of journalistic competency formation, where professional organizations become spaces of praxis that accelerate the internalization of industry standards. Thus, the results of this study complement competency theory with the empirical context of local television journalism practices.

In the context of journalism education studies, this research reinforces the argument regarding the importance of experiential learning or learning based on direct experience (Suleman, 2024). The transformation experienced by students and university students participating in the IJTI program shows that journalism competencies develop optimally when theory is combined with real-world practice in the field. The mentoring approach carried out by professional journalists enables the

transfer of practical knowledge that is not always obtained through classroom learning. These findings confirm that effective journalism education is not only oriented towards mastery of concepts, but also towards the formation of reflective and adaptive skills through direct practice (Masduki, 2023). Thus, this study provides empirical reinforcement of constructivist learning theory, which places experience at the center of the learning process.

Furthermore, this study offers a model of competency transformation based on professional organizations consisting of four main components, namely practice-based training, professional mentoring, and integration with media industry networks. This model shows that competency transformation is not an instant process, but rather a gradual process through technical learning, continuous evaluation, and exposure to industry realities (Ibrahim 2024) (Ibrahim & Sukmana, 2024). The theoretical contribution of this model lies in the integration of pedagogical and professional dimensions. While classical competency theory understands competency as a combination of knowledge (Kovach 2021), skills, and attitudes, this study shows how these three elements are developed simultaneously through structured professional organization mechanisms. This model has the potential to become a new conceptual framework in the study of young journalist development at the local and regional levels (Masduki 2023) .

In practical terms, the findings of this study have implications for the development of journalism education curricula, particularly in encouraging collaboration between educational institutions and professional organizations. For professional organizations such as IJTI, the results of this study confirm the importance of their strategic role in nurturing young journalists. Meanwhile, for policymakers, this study provides an empirical basis to support community-based journalist training programs and professional organizations at the regional level (Saphira et al. 2021) (Saphira et al., 2021).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the role of local journalism professional organizations in the context of transforming students into competent journalists, which has been relatively rarely studied in depth in communication and journalism research in Indonesia.

In addition, the findings of this study confirm that technical competence and professional ethics are two inseparable elements in the development of competent journalists. The transformation facilitated by IJTI does not stop at improving technical skills such as script writing or image capture, but also emphasizes the internalization of the journalistic code of ethics and social media responsibility. The theoretical implication of these findings is the strengthening of a holistic paradigm of journalistic professionalism. Professionalism is not only measured by content production capabilities, but also by moral integrity and commitment to journalistic principles (Sari and Andiyansari 2023). This study contributes to emphasizing that the process of competency transformation must be understood as the integration of technical capacity and ethical awareness into a single, unified whole.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results presented, it can be concluded that the Tapal Kuda Television Journalists Association (IJTI) plays a significant and strategic role in transforming students into competent journalists. In the context of digital disruption and media convergence, which require journalists to be adaptive, multitasking, and highly ethical, the existence of local professional organizations such as IJTI Tapal Kuda has proven to be able to bridge the gap between formal education and the real needs of the media industry, especially local television.

Conceptually, this research confirms that journalistic competence is not formed instantly through theoretical learning in the classroom, but rather through a systematic, reflective, and continuous experiential learning process. The transformation mechanism carried out by IJTI Tapal Kuda takes place through three main stages, namely basic and advanced journalism training, direct content production assistance in the field, and continuous evaluation and feedback. These three stages form a professional learning cycle that resembles actual journalistic work practices.

During the training stage, participants are equipped with conceptual foundations regarding news value, coverage techniques, television script writing, and journalistic ethics. This stage serves as an initial framework for thinking before participants dive into field practice. Next, in the production mentoring stage, participants are actively involved in the entire television journalism process, from coverage planning (projection), field coverage (news gathering), rundown preparation, roles as news anchors and voice-overs, to the editing and publication process on digital platforms. This comprehensive involvement makes IJTI Tapal Kuda a contextual journalism practice laboratory that approaches industry standards. The evaluation stage, both internal and joint, strengthens the critical reflection process, improves technical and substantial shortcomings, and instills professional discipline.

The analysis results show that the transformation that occurred covered three main dimensions of competence, namely technical competence, conceptual competence, and ethical-professional competence. From a technical aspect, participants experienced an increase in their abilities in reporting, interviewing, writing television news scripts, operating cameras, and editing videos using professional software. From a conceptual perspective, participants demonstrated a more mature understanding of news values, reporting perspectives, and critical thinking skills in sorting and verifying information. Meanwhile, from an ethical-professional perspective, participants not only understood the code of ethics normatively, but were also able to implement it in practice, such as maintaining the balance of sources, accuracy of information, and social media responsibility.

This study also found that the level of participants' competence was influenced by the intensity of their involvement and the duration of the mentoring. Participants who were consistently involved for a longer period of time showed higher levels of competence than those whose participation was sporadic. This confirms that competence transformation is a gradual process that requires continuity, habituation, and ongoing professional interaction.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of communication studies and journalism education by broadening perspectives on the ecosystem of journalist competency development. These findings confirm that local professional organizations not only function as a forum for professional solidarity, but also as transformational actors in journalist regeneration. Thus, the formation of competent journalists is not linear and solely institutional through formal education, but also collaborative and based on professional communities.

The transformation model offered by this study which consists of practice-based training, professional mentoring, real production, and reflective evaluation can be an alternative conceptual framework in the development of young journalists at the local and regional levels. The integration of pedagogical and professional dimensions in this model shows that competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) develop simultaneously through direct experience and social interaction within the professional community.

In practical terms, the results of this study recommend the importance of closer collaboration between educational institutions (schools and universities) and professional organizations such as

IJTI. For policymakers, this study provides an empirical basis that community-based journalist training and professional organizations at the regional level should be supported as a strategy to strengthen the quality of local media.

Thus, it can be asserted that IJTI Tapal Kuda acts as a catalyst for the transformation of journalistic competence at the local level. This organization not only facilitates the improvement of technical skills, but also instills integrity, professional responsibility, and ethical awareness as the foundation of journalistic professionalism. The resulting transformation is holistic, encompassing technical capacity and ethical character in a unified whole, thereby bringing students closer to the nationally established standards of journalistic competence.

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