

Public relations mitigation: Using local wisdom to secure trust in private hospitals

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ABSTRACT

Background: Public trust is a fundamental determinant of the reputation of private hospitals in a competitive healthcare environment. In this context, vulnerability to miscommunication can potentially lead to reputational crises. Previous research related to hospital public relations (PR) has focused on forms of crisis communication and media management. Meanwhile, research related to PR mitigation rooted in the local cultural context is still limited. This gap explores mitigation practices in private hospital PR by integrating local wisdom as a strategic communication method. **Purpose:** To analyze PR mitigation strategies based on local wisdom in building public trust in private hospital. **Method:** This research used a descriptive qualitative method to obtain data through in-depth interviews, including PR personnel, hospital management, and healthcare professionals in four private hospitals in Central Java. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, with the application of source triangulation to ensure validity. **Results:** Local wisdom values such as family-based communication, courtesy (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and mutual respect (*nguwongne*) inherent in Javanese culture served as the basis for the PR mitigation strategies. These values were applied when conveying information, handling complaints, and problem prevention practices, mitigating potential communication risks, reducing conflict escalation, and building emotional closeness between the hospital and the community. **Conclusion:** PR mitigation based on local wisdom played an important role in increasing public trust by strengthening relational communication and social legitimacy. **Implication:** Practically, this research emphasized the importance of integrating local cultural values into PR and health communication strategies to increase public trust. Theoretically, this research contributed to the analysis of PR and health communication by positioning local wisdom as a contextual mitigation framework in institutional communication within the health sector.

Keywords: Hospital public relations; communication mitigation; public trust; local wisdom; private hospitals

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INTRODUCTION

The healthcare industry is becoming increasingly competitive, specifically in the private hospital sector. This requires private hospital to excel in clinical aspects, as well as build and maintain public trust (Lestari et al., 2024). In this context, public trust is the main social capital for the sustainability of private hospital because the concept directly affects reputation, patient loyalty, and the institution's image in the community. Organizational communication plays a strategic role as a link between private hospital and the public (Salamung et al., 2021).

Private hospital as public health service organizations have complex communication characteristics and high risks (Lestari et al., 2023). High interaction between healthcare workers, patients, and patients' families opens up opportunities for misunderstandings, dissatisfaction, and conflict. Inaccurate communication, unempathetic responses, or failure to address complaints can develop into communication issues that lead to crises (Yudia, 2019).

Research on public relations (PR) in private hospital has been limited, focusing on crisis information communication, problem management, and media (Yulianti & Boer, 2020). The method is reactive and is implemented only

after a conflict, crisis, or problem has occurred. Meanwhile, PR in the context of health services is related to the preventive communication method. This includes communication mitigation strategies to reduce potential risks before developing into larger crises.

Prevention strategies are closely related to cultural competence as a determining factor in the quality of health services. Research shows that cultural knowledge and sensitivity are important components for communicating effectively and reliably, specifically in heterogeneous societies (Gedik etboateng al., 2025). This can lead to perceptions of alienation among the communities served when hospital PR fails to give adequate attention to cultural dimensions. Communication between hospital and patients can be more effectively sustained when organizations actively integrate local cultural frameworks, such as community health beliefs and prevailing social norms. Respecting, incorporating, and considering local community values in organizational decision-making enhances the legitimacy and acceptance of health services among the populations served. Proactive and culturally informed mitigation strategies are essential for understanding and managing complex social communication dynamics, particularly within public health services.

Hospital communication practices cannot

be separated from the social and cultural context of the local community in which the private hospital operates (Abdulla et al., 2022). Local wisdom is a set of knowledge and good practices passed down from previous generations. This set of practices derives from traditional values, religious beliefs, and local cultural norms that have naturally developed within a community as mechanisms for adapting to the surrounding environment (Vitasurya, 2016). Indonesia, particularly Central Java, has strong local wisdom such as politeness (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and mutual respect (*nguwongne*), inbuilt in Javanese culture, and form the strategic basis for private hospital PR mitigation. The values have the potential to be a source of strength in communication mitigation practices (Amir & Pangkam, 2025). Therefore, this research is important to examine the application of local wisdom-based communication mitigation strategies by private hospital's PR in building public trust.

The integration of local wisdom extends beyond behavioral norms to include a broader understanding of the community's knowledge systems. In many regions, traditional health practitioners and local medicinal knowledge play an important role in the community's health ecosystem, suggesting that a hospital's refusal can create a disconnect. By acknowledging and respecting 'old herbal secrets' (Scherrer et al.,

2023) or traditional practices, private hospital bridges the gap between modern medical science and the lived reality of patients. This method is about creating a culturally resonant environment where patients feel understood. Research has shown that engagement with traditional knowledge and local languages enables healthcare providers to enhance credibility and cultivate greater trust within the local population. Therefore, the use of local wisdom is a PR tactic and a fundamental requirement for establishing a healthcare institution embedded in the community.

Communication Mitigation: The definition of mitigation refers to a series of efforts undertaken to reduce the potential for risks to occur and minimize the negative impacts caused (Puspitasari et al., 2021). Communication mitigation is a preventive strategy that aims to anticipate, manage, and control potential threats before developing into conflicts or more severe reputational crises (Amir & Pangkam, 2025). The concept is proactive and prevention-oriented, differing from crisis communication. Meanwhile, crisis communication is reactive and occurs after a crisis has been reported (Angeli, 2023). Communication mitigation in private hospital is important due to the high level of interaction between institutions, healthcare workers, patients, and patients' families. The smallest communication errors

that occur continuously can cause major conflicts. This has a significant impact on public trust since communication mitigation carried out by PR must be implemented (Marhadi et al., 2024). Grunig and Hunt explained that PR strategy transmitted information and managed long-term relationships with the general public through symmetrical two-way communication (Hamidah & Wijaya, 2025). In private hospital, communication mitigation aims to identify potential issues and risks, build trusting relationships with the public, reduce tension and mitigate conflict, and maintain the organization's reputation (Lestari & Rahmanto, 2025). In this context, PR includes external parties such as the media and internal parties, namely interpersonal communication between health workers and patients, handling complaints from patients and families, as well as ethical and empathetic service communication.

Communication Mitigation and Public Trust: Public trust is a positive representation of an organization's competence and integrity. In the health sector, trust is the main factor influencing patient satisfaction, including community loyalty and trust in other medical services (Puspitasari & Afifi, 2022). In private hospital services, this variable is the result of quality communication services that pay attention to information transparency, message consistency, responsiveness to complaints,

empathy, and respect for patients and families. This type of communication is considered effective because uncertainty can be minimized to reduce public anxiety and strengthen social relations between private hospital and the community (Kurnio et al., 2021).

Comparative analysis regarding digital health communication strategies shows that private hospital often use emotional connections, such as sharing patient stories and touching messages. This is different from public institutions, relying more on a bureaucratic and technical communication style. The emotional strategy is a representation that public trust is mediated by the 'human' side through interactions between the hospital and the patient. Frank and transparent communication is the foundation of health literacy, where patients are empowered to make good decisions. This strengthens the patient's trust in doctors and institutions. Therefore, communication mitigation that prioritizes emotional resonance and transparency is a direct driver of institutional reputation.

Communication mitigation serves as a bridge between private hospital and the general public. This concept is rooted in risk management and organizational communication research. Coombs explained that effective organizations responded to crises and actively managed potential communication

risks (Wulandari & Putri, 2025). From a PR perspective, communication mitigation is part of a preventive strategy intended to maintain stable relations between organizations and the public. This emphasizes the importance of consistent, empathetic communication oriented toward long-term relationships. In the hospital context, communication mitigation serves to reduce uncertainty, anxiety, and potential conflicts that arise due to patient conditions, service limitations, and high public expectations (Angeli, 2023). PR is a technical function of transmitting information and maintaining relationships between organizations and the public. Ledingham asserted that the quality of relationships between organizations and the public was determined by trust, commitment, satisfaction, and mutual understanding (Harahap, 2017). In hospital, the relationship between the institution and the public is highly personal and emotional. Therefore, a relational method is an important foundation in communication mitigation carried out by PR to build emotional closeness and a sense of security for patients and families (Fakhrudin & Elmada, 2022).

Relational Communication Mitigation in Hospital: The relational method in private hospital PR views communication as a process of building and maintaining relationships. The quality of relationships between organizations

and the public is determined by trust, commitment, satisfaction, and shared control. In the context of private hospital, relational mitigation is realized through empathetic interpersonal communication between healthcare workers and patients. Private hospital uses a variety of methods to mitigate communication-related risks, including the use of persuasive and dignified complaint handling, the employment of polite and easily comprehensible language, and the respect for cultural values and social norms. This enables hospital to prevent communication misunderstandings that potentially damage image and public trust. Based on theoretical research, communication mitigation is understood as a preventive, relational, and contextual PR strategy, integrating local wisdom as the foundation of practices (Yudia, 2019). The concept is realized through the application of local cultural values in the delivery of information, handling of complaints, and prevention of conflicts, which contributes to increased public trust.

The relational model is intrinsically linked to the concept of stakeholder participation. The inclusion of local leaders and the public in health priority setting enhances service legitimacy, while relational communication positions patients as active stakeholders rather than passive recipients. Hospital can reach traditionally underserved populations and ensure

that the services remain relevant and accessible by establishing dialogue channels and viewing complaints as constructive feedback (O'Reilly-De Brún et al., 2016). The participatory method is the basis for changing the perception of the hospital from an institution to a community partner. Therefore, responsive relational communication mitigation strategies based on community cultural values are important to maintain long-term trust for maintained service quality.

Public Trust Theory: Public trust is a representative result of the competence, integrity, and good faith maintained by an organization. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman explained that trust was formed through consistent and positive interactions. In the context of health services, communication with empathy and courtesy towards patients has a positive effect on building trust (Burgoon, 2016). Communication mitigation functions as a method to build trust by providing certainty. Every communication interaction should embody care, honesty, and respect for the public, without any form of discrimination (Burgoon, 2015).

Local Wisdom as a Framework for Communication Mitigation: Local wisdom is the values, norms, and social practices that develop and are upheld by a society in a particular cultural context. In communication, this set of values acts as an interpretive umbrella that

shows the interpretation of messages, attitudes, and communication behavior (Fahreza, 2024). Local wisdom is also a value system that lives and develops in a society. Geertz viewed local wisdom and culture as a system of meaning serving as the basis for the formation of social behavior. In the context of communication, the concept serves as the basis for delivering, receiving, and interpreting messages (Griffin et al., 2018). Javanese culture is characterized by an emphasis on social harmony, politeness, and respect for human relations. There are three main values as the basis for social harmony, namely the *unggah-ungguh*, *tepa slira*, and *nguwongne*, which regulate communication ethics, empathy, and the importance of humanizing other people, respectively. These values are oriented towards preventing conflict and maintaining social relations (Vitasurya, 2016). Communication mitigation based on local wisdom values will pay attention to persuasive, dialogic, and socially harmonious methods. Therefore, potential conflicts can be mitigated early without confrontation. Based on the description of the previous background and theoretical basis, research questions were formulated to examine communication mitigation strategies implemented by private hospital PR departments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research implemented a qualitative descriptive design. The main objective was to outline a detailed understanding of communication mitigation strategies based on local Javanese cultural wisdom values implemented by private hospital's PR in Central Java. A qualitative method was selected because this research focused on exploring the meaning, value, and practices of communication (Nurdin & Hartati, 2019). The subjects were four private hospitals in Central Java, namely Indriati Hospital Boyolali, Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Klaten Islamic General Hospital, and PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Surakarta. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that the hospital had intensive service characteristics in the interaction with the community and operated in a strong Javanese cultural context. The object was the communication mitigation strategy based on Javanese cultural values, which included family communication, politeness (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and mutual respect (*nguwongne*) in service communication practices. This research was conducted from June to August 2025. The main instrument was supported by semi-structured in-depth interview guidelines. The interview guide was prepared based on a focused objective to

explore communication mitigation practices, as well as measure the implementation level of local wisdom and experience of informants in managing the risk of miscommunication (Lestari et al., 2022).

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling method with criteria including private hospital PR officers, hospital management, and health workers. The data obtained were both relevant and reliable, originating from experienced individuals with in-depth knowledge of communication practices (Nurdin & Hartati, 2019).

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, supported by documentation research on communication practices and policies, including standard operating procedures, and internal hospital documents. Interviews were conducted directly based on a flexible guide and plan to enable comprehensive data exploration (Ibrahim et al., 2018). Data analysis was carried out qualitatively using an interactive analysis model consisting of three stages of reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions (Nurdin & Hartati, 2019). The interview data were transcribed, coded, and further analyzed thematically to identify patterns and results relevant to the research objectives. Finally, the validity of the data was cross-checked through source triangulation by comparing information obtained from several

informants and different research locations.

The choice of a qualitative design was based on the need to explain the form and reality of social interaction, including hospital employees and the community as entities in one culture. In addition, qualitative analysis was effective as a tool to map elements of stakeholder inclusiveness in terms of setting priorities, enabling a detailed understanding of participation mechanisms in the decision-making process in the health sector to be described. This research could describe more accurately the driving factors based on certain cultural values as the legitimacy of acceptance and trust for local communities, by focusing on the phenomenon of service delivery.

The focus on the strategies is based on methods used to analyze inclusivity in digital health communications. Generally, comparative and narrative analysis successfully explains how transparent emotional communication can build public trust. A methodological framework is established, enabling the collection of diverse data using in-depth interviews. The data are crucial for bridging the expectations of the general public with the delivery of medical services guided by modern methods. The results report the strategies used in health communication and analyze the shaping of beliefs within specific cultural contexts. Therefore, effective health communication must

be responsive to local traditions and knowledge systems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication mitigation strategy implemented by the PR of private hospital in Central Java is based on the values of local Javanese cultural wisdom. These results show that family communication, politeness (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and mutual respect (*nguwongne*) are normative values internalized into daily practices.

In the practice of transmitting information to patients and relatives, private hospital applies patterns that are personal and friendly in nature. Medical and administrative information is transmitted through a dialogic approach that places patients as part of equal social relations, reducing misunderstandings or different perceptions (Mailani, 2021). This is reflected in the image above. This reflects the value of mutual respect (*nguwongne*), humanizing patients as subjects. The results are in line with relational PR theory, where the quality of relations between organizations and the public is determined by mutual trust and respect, as well as the effectiveness of message delivery. PR administrator from Indriati Hospital, Boyolali, stated that the community around the hospital was very strong in *nguwongne* culture,



Source: Author's documentation, 2025

Figure 1: Services at dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo

specifically in the slopes of Mount Merapi and Merbabu, Boyolali.

The integration of specific cultural values such as *nguwongne* into hospital communication protocols exemplifies a high degree of cultural competence (see Figure 1).

Research shows that the possession of cultural knowledge and sensitivity is indispensable for healthcare professionals to effectively communicate and build trust with patients from diverse backgrounds (Gedik et al., 2025). Furthermore, the adoption of a personal, family-friendly dialogue is consistent with the results on digital health communication in Indonesia, where private hospital have successfully used emotional appeals to engage

the public and enhance confidence. This validates the necessity of active stakeholder participation, suggesting that understanding and addressing the unique cultural and emotional needs of the community is a critical component of service delivery and trust-building.

“Almost 90% of Boyolali patients use regional languages, such as Javanese Kromo or Ngoko, and in our health services, we also use these languages more often, apart from being polite and responsive when patients need information on service instructions, but also the emotional closeness in the service creates a different feeling received by our patients.” (PR Indriati Hospital, personal communication, August 02, 2025)

The value of politeness (*unggah-ungguh*) is the main principle in PR communications, specifically in situations with the potential to



Source: Author's documentation, 2025

Figure 2 : Inpatient room dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo

cause tension. PR personnel and health workers exercise caution in language, tone, and non-verbal behavior to avoid offending patients or the relatives.

The application of *unggah-ungguh* and local dialects serves as a practical implementation of cultural competence, which is essential for healthcare professionals to bridge communication gaps and build trust with diverse patient demographics (see Figure 2). This strategy of building emotional closeness is in line with the occurrence in private hospital in Indonesia. An approach that engages the emotional aspects of patients is more effective in reaching the public than communication focused on transmitting technical medical

information. In addition, a responsive and frank attitude when giving directions reinforces that open communication is the main key to maintaining public trust in health institutions (Boateng, 2025; Wang et al., 2025).

This is in line with the interviews conducted by medical personnel at the Klaten Islamic

General Hospital:

“The patient is very sensitive because their condition is not good, hence, they are more easily irritated, that's why our service is very careful, we have good manners in speaking and acting, and when providing care. Nearly 80% of the nurses here use Javanese to be closer and more polite when providing health services, such as in the inpatient room”. (PR Klaten Islamic General Hospital, July 30, 2025)

Communication mitigation is carried out

from the early stages of interaction to reduce the potential for misunderstandings. This reinforces Coombs' perspectives that this preventive strategy reduces communication risks before developing into a larger conflict or crisis.

Handling patient complaints is the main focus in implementing local wisdom-based communication mitigation (Sulistiyanto et al., 2024). The results show that complaints from patients are directly considered as input and suggestions from the public to improve performance. An empathetic method (*tepa slira*) is applied by actively listening to complaints, showing emotional concern, and avoiding defensive attitudes. This practice has proven to be an effective method to reduce the escalation of conflict while preventing the spread of information about dissatisfaction into the wider public space.

The strategy of using language and etiquette based on local wisdom values is in line with relevant research on cultural competence. Cultural understanding and sensitivity are essential for effective communication. Furthermore, the attitude of empathy, politeness, and patience in handling complaints strengthens the result that openness is an important factor in maintaining public trust. For private hospital, an emotional approach is a powerful method used to close the distance between the hospital and the surrounding residents (Ganiem et al., 2025).

The theory of public trust is formed through consistent, empathetic, and goodwill-oriented communication experiences from the organization. Mitigation communications serve as a risk control tool and an ongoing trust-building mechanism. Private hospital that show empathy and respect in challenging situations tend to earn greater social trust from the public. This is consistent with statements made by a PR staff member at Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo:

“The mitigation activities undertaken represent one of the efforts by private hospital to maintain public trust. Rather than waiting for conflicts to arise, proactive measures are more effective in capturing attention and building a positive reputation. Although maintaining consistency is challenging, hospital strive to implement these practices as thoroughly as possible, particularly among medical personnel who interact directly with patients over extended periods”. (PR Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo, personal communication, August 05, 2025).

Despite differences in organizational characteristics among the four hospitals, a consistent pattern is reported in the application of public trust theory. Organizational competence, integrity, and goodwill are improved through communication mitigation practices grounded in local wisdom. Therefore, public trust is cultivated through the quality of medical services and communication relationships.

Data on patient visits during the period of January to August 2025 shows a relatively

Table 1 Results of the Analysis Of The Public Trust Theory Towards Indriati Hospital and Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital Theory of public trust in private hospital

Aspects of Public Trust Theory	Indriati Hospital Boyolali	Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo
Competence	Medical and administrative information is conveyed clearly and gradually in language that is easily understood by patients and relatives.	PR and health workers show mastery of service information and coordinated communication flow.
Integrity	Consistency between the information transmitted by PR and service practices in the field	Transparency in explaining procedures and service limitations to the public
Benevolence	Family approach and empathy in dealing with patient complaints	Friendly attitude and personal attention to patients and families
Communication Transparency	Information is conveyed openly while still paying attention to communication ethics.	Explanations of service procedures and risks are provided communicatively.
Empathy and Respect	Application of empathy (tepa slira) and mutual respect (nguwongne) values in service	Use of polite language (unggah-ungguh) in sensitive situations
Responsiveness to Complaints	Complaints are handled directly with dialogical communication	Fast and persuasive complaint response mechanism
Emotional Closeness	Close and sustainable interpersonal relationships with the surrounding community	Building long-term relationships with patients and families
Social Legitimacy	Local community trust in the existence of the hospital	Positive image as a trusted private hospital

source: research results,2025

Table 2 Results of the Analysis Of The Public Trust Theory Towards the Klaten Islamic Hospital and PKU Muhammadiyah Surakarta

Aspects of Public Trust Theory	Klaten Islamic General Hospital	PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Surakarta
Competence	Delivery of service information is carried out systematically with patient assistance.	Communication competence is reflected in the officer's readiness to answer questions and provide further explanations.
Integrity	Honesty in communicating service conditions and hospital policies	Message consistency between management, PR, and health workers
Benevolence	Handling complaints with a persuasive and non-defensive approach	Humanist approach and emotional concern in communication interactions
Communication Transparency	Information disclosure is tailored to patient needs	Transparency of information accompanied by education to patients
Empathy and Respect	Empathic approach in listening and responding to complaints	Respect for patient dignity in every interaction
Responsiveness to Complaints	Complaints are seen as part of service improvement	Handling complaints is solution-oriented and relationship restoration
Emotional Closeness	Emotional closeness through friendly communication	Emotional connections are built through humanist and religious communication
Social Legitimacy	Strong social acceptance in the community	Social legitimacy is reinforced by Islamic and humanitarian values.

source: research results,2025

consistent trend. The increase in the number of visits appears significant from April to August 2025 (Table 3), in line with the strengthening of public communication strategies and issue mitigation carried out by the PR unit. Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo, and PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Surakarta recorded the highest number of visits. This reflects a strong level of public trust in the quality of service and consistency of institutional communication. Meanwhile, Indriati Hospital Boyolali and Klaten Islamic General Hospital showed stable growth in visits, specifically to local communities. This is consistent with statements made by Indriati Hospital Boyolali’s PR Officer:

“The mitigation process is not the PR who are the key, but the medical staff who continuously implement it. Therefore, the impact is felt directly by the patient and the patient’s family, our PR only tries to provide educational and counselling input for all internal employees, specifically the

medical services department”. (PR Indriati Hospital, personal communication, August 02,2025).

The results reinforce the evidence that communication directed to the social context can improve public trust and patient loyalty. The success is highly dependent on the consistent attitudes and behaviors of medical staff. This is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of health workers who are attuned to cultural values. Therefore, regular training is crucial in making frontline staff more sensitive and alert. There is a visible relationship between better communication and an increase in the number of patients. This method is very fitting with the current trend of private hospital services in Indonesia.

The results show that there is a clear relationship since the implementation of communication is directly proportional to the

Table 3 Patient Visit Data At Private Hospital

2025	Indriati Hospital Boyolali	dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo	Klaten Islamic General Hospital	PKU MUH Hospital Surakarta
January	2.450	5.320	3.870	6.540
February	2.980	5.940	3.230	7.120
March	3.560	6.410	3.760	7.890
April	4.230	6.050	4.340	7.420
May	4.980	6.870	4.120	8.360
June	5.640	7.530	4.890	8.040
July	6.320	8.060	5.170	8.280
August	6.550	8.240	5.480	9.130

source: hospital data,2025

Table 4 Data On Inpatients And Outpatients At Private Hospital

Hospital	Outpatient	Inpatient	Total Visits
Indriati Hospital Boyolali	82.050	35.160	117.210
dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, Sukoharjo	116.940	47.480	164.420
Klaten Islamic General Hospital	74.210	29.150	103.360
PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital Surakarta	107.980	44.700	152.680

source: hospital data,2025

increasing trend of patient visits at the four private hospital (January–August 2025). The increase is consistent as services improve through the prioritization of a sense of family, courtesy (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and mutual respect (*nguwongne*). This communication strategy is crucial for minimizing misunderstandings, reducing complaints, and preventing minor issues from escalating into problems.

A hospital that consistently integrates local wisdom values when transmitting information or addressing complaints has gained increasing public trust, as evidenced by a stable and growing population. Culture-based communication serves as a response to existing problems and strengthens the hospital's social standing while preventing issues from arising. These results confirm that cultural communication plays a critical role in building trust and sustaining the operations of private hospital.

The positive relationship between culturally friendly communication and patient interest supports the scientific view regarding

the importance of cultural competence in health services. Understanding and being sensitive to cultural values is an additional skill and the main driver for improving public trust in institutions. The success of implementing a kinship and empathy method is relevant to the Indonesian context, where communication with emotional expression has proven to be effective in enhancing trust. In addition, the ability to implement the strategy strengthens social acceptance. “The incorporation of local values is essential for ensuring that health services are well-received by the community.

Patient visits to the four private hospital in Central Java are dominated by outpatient services (Table 4). This pattern reflects the high intensity of communication interactions between private hospital and patients, because the process includes the stages of registration, consultation, delivery of medical information, taking medication, and handling complaints. In this context, communication mitigation strategies are related to the initial point of interaction between private hospital institutions

and the community.

The dominance of outpatients shows that the quality of interpersonal and institutional communication is a crucial factor in building public trust. An effective private hospital tends to receive positive responses from the public, as reflected in the high number of outpatient visits.

This is in line with the comment of Dr. Oen Solo Baru Sukoharjo's Hospital PR Officer:

“Whether it is true or not, outpatient data can be an indicator for us at the hospital to continue to improve health services; the higher the interaction, the better the service. It will have a positive impact on hospital evaluations regarding the performance of all lines, including how PR can provide input to management to continue providing excellent service education for all staff at the hospital”. (PR Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, personal communication, August 05, 2025).

Communication mitigation contributes to conflict prevention, as well as strengthens patient loyalty and the sustainability of health services.

The high frequency of interaction inherent in outpatient services shows the critical need for competence since research identifies cultural knowledge and sensitivity as fundamental for effective communication and trust-building in healthcare. The emphasis on PR providing educational input to staff is consistent with the recommended strategy of using in-service training to enhance competencies among professionals. Furthermore, the reliance on

polite and empathetic communication to drive patient loyalty supports results specific to the Indonesian context, where emotional appeals effectively engage the public and enhance trust.

This dynamic suggests that transparent and culturally attuned communication is a courtesy and strategic necessity for managing the intense volume of stakeholder interactions typical of outpatient care.

The results show that communication mitigation practices are realized through efforts to systematically prevent problems. Private hospital PR actively builds internal coordination with management and health workers to ensure uniformity of messages and attitudes in serving patients. This reflects the existence of symmetrical two-way communication, where private hospital transmit information and open up space for dialogue and feedback (see Figure 3). The results expand the understanding of the role of PR in private hospital, which include media, interpersonal, and social relations. This is in line with the comment of the dr. Oen Solo

Baru Sukoharjo's Hospital PR Officer, that

“For excellent service, all employees have the same culture, the same vision, hence the service is the same. There is no difference between service in the treatment room and drug service in the pharmacy room, as well as administrative services, hence patients will experience excellent service until the treatment process is finished in the hospital.”(PR Dr. Oen Solo Baru Hospital, personal communication, August 05, 2025).



Source: Author's documentation, 2025

Figure 3: Interview with the public relations officer of Indriati Boyolali Hospital

Gasana (2024) emphasized more on crisis communication and reactive reputation management. Meanwhile, this research shows that local wisdom-based communication mitigation has a more fundamental and long-term role. The integration of Javanese cultural values in communication practices allows hospital to build emotional closeness with the community. Therefore, conflicts can be suppressed from the early stage. This strengthens the argument that a contextual communication method based on local culture is more effective in maintaining public trust.

The emphasis on internal coordination to ensure a unified service culture is consistent with the academic view that cultural competence must be systematically cultivated among healthcare

professionals through in-service training. This ensures that hospital understands culture and practices the concept to build trust with diverse patients. In addition, the shift towards open dialogue reflects seriousness in implementing clear and transparent communication. The legitimacy of services is increased by intending to accept the community while responding to input. Emotional closeness can prevent conflict, in line with recent investigations. This research shows that smooth and polite communication filled with empathy is effective in enhancing trust.

Local wisdom is used as a suitable framework for mitigating communication in PR and health research. Values such as courtesy (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and

mutual respect (*nguwongne*) play a dual role as a representation of ethical principles and a communication strategy that bridges the interests of the organization with the hopes and needs of society. Therefore, this research enriches the literature by offering a local cultural perspective as a strategic element in mitigating health institution communication.

Positioning local wisdom values as strategic communication assets is consistent with the broader concept of cultural competence. These values also promote real participation to strengthen the legitimacy of health service providers as a bridge between institutions and citizens. The reliance on ethical principles such as *tepa slira* shows the successful implementation of an emotional method in gaining public trust. This reflects global trends that suggest the recognition of local uses and practices required to enable greater acceptance and trust in modern health systems.

Local wisdom-based communication mitigation is effective in reducing the risk of misunderstanding and conflict, as well as building public trust. The results are important evidence relating to the importance of analyzing, understanding, and implementing local cultural values into PR practices and health services. This is because each community directly and indirectly has strong social and cultural ties to others within the Javanese culture.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the PR strategy of private hospital is very strong in the local wisdom of Javanese culture. Family values, politeness (*unggah-ungguh*), empathy (*tepa slira*), and mutual respect (*nguwongne*) are the main foundations, specifically when transmitting information, handling complaints, and implementing communication risk prevention. The application of these values has proven effective in minimizing misunderstandings, reducing conflict, and building emotional closeness with the community. Therefore, local wisdom-based communication mitigation is proven to have a strategic role in building trust while strengthening the social position of the community.

Private hospital should start integrating local values more systematically into operational standards, specifically in the PR and service departments. HR also needs to be strengthened through culture-based communication training to enhance the consistency of practices at all levels. Cross-cultural comparative research or mixed methods are recommended to better understand the role of local wisdom in building trust in the health sector.

The implications of this research extend beyond Central Java and address national as well as global needs related to cultural competence

in health communication. The effectiveness of Javanese cultural values in stabilizing patient relationships supports existing research where health workers must have sensitivity to cultural values in order to be trusted by various groups. This emphasizes that local wisdom is an important component of life and communication as the basis for modern health literacy and a bridge to public trust, respectively. Hospital can create a ‘communication tapestry’ (Wang et al., 2025) to address grievances and ensure clear public health information dissemination by prioritizing transparent and culturally attuned communication.

The strategy through the value of empathy (*tepa slira*) and a family method is in line with the research on digital health communication, where the transmission of information with emotional expressions has proven effective in gaining trust. In this context, trust grows when institutions are emotionally ‘on the same frequency’ with the people (Razavi et al., 2019). Therefore, mitigation strategies must be developed as a form of active community participation. These comprise the inclusion of local figures to legitimize health communication policies and the understanding of local community cultural values to legitimize private hospital.

The results serve as a basic reference for broader research integration. Future research

may be extended to examine communication practices in traditional local medicine to assess the effectiveness of mitigation strategies in bridging practitioners and communities across modern and traditional medical contexts. Furthermore, traditional knowledge needs to be strengthened with elements of cultural identity and belief. Private hospital should regard local wisdom as a strategic communication tool and a valuable asset for building a distinctive, culturally competent, and resilient health service model.

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