

# GENDER EQUITABLE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN INDONESIAN STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES

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## ABSTRACT

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In Indonesia, corporate leadership positions are predominantly held by men, accounting for 69.37%, compared to 30.63% occupied by women (BPS, 2020). This study examines the experiences of a female leader in a state-owned enterprise (SOE) who has struggled to overcome glass ceiling barriers and develop gender-equitable communication throughout her career. This research employs a qualitative approach, using a case study method to model the communicator role of a female corporate director in an SOE. Data collection methods include observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The analysis and presentation of findings are guided by two theoretical frameworks: Tubbs and Moss's Communication Style Theory and Marilyn Loden's Gender Communication and Glass Ceiling Theory. This study examines the glass ceiling barriers experienced by Lies Permana Lestari in her career within a state-owned enterprise (SOE). Findings indicate three major obstacles: gender-biased promotion discrimination, stereotypes that women are unfit to lead in the male-dominated transportation sector, and communication challenges linked to domestic roles. These barriers highlight how SOE business communication practices remain shaped by masculine norms that constrain gender equality. To address these challenges, Lies employed dynamic and egalitarian communication styles. These approaches proved effective not only for her personal advancement but also for transforming organizational communication patterns. Specifically, she encouraged participatory meetings, facilitated equal dialogue between male and female employees, and prioritized collaboration over rigid hierarchy. By doing so, Lies not only overcame the glass ceiling but also contributed to fostering a more gender-equitable communication culture in the SOE. This case underscores the potential of communication strategies to challenge structural and cultural barriers in organizational settings.

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## 1. Introduction

In 2023, Indonesia's State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) announced a policy requiring that companies within their structure achieve 25 percent female representation in top management positions. Gender diversity in the workplace particularly on corporate boards has been associated with multiple benefits that enhance overall organizational performance

(Beloskar et al., 2024). In today's dynamic business environment, the role of women in leadership has become increasingly significant. One crucial contribution of female leaders in promoting gender equality is the creation of a fair and inclusive work environment.

However, despite the growing number of women leaders across various industries, building an inclusive communication culture that is sensitive to gender differences remains a challenge (Galsanjigmed, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2023). Female employees pursuing career advancement within corporate structures frequently encounter gender-based communication barriers and discrimination when striving for higher-level positions (Amakye et al., 2021; Babic & Hansez, 2021). Similarly, women leaders often face communication obstacles such as gender bias, interruptions, and stereotyping, all of which influence their communication styles and interactions with their teams (Briggs, Gardner, & Ryan, 2023; Santoro & Markus, 2024).

A collaborative survey conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the *Never Okay Project* from 2020 to 2022 revealed alarming findings regarding workplace violence and harassment. Among 1,173 Indonesian female respondents, 70.93% reported having experienced at least one form of violence, discrimination, or harassment, and 69.35% of them experienced more than one type of abuse. These findings highlight the severity of communication barriers and gendered power dynamics faced by women workers. In response, the Minister of SOEs, Erick Thohir, launched several initiatives to strengthen women's leadership capacities through the *Forum Human Capital Indonesia* (FHCI), including leadership training and the *Srikandi BUMN* program to foster more inclusive business communication practices (FHCI, 2022; Kompas, 2023).

This study explores the professional communication experiences of Lies Permana Lestari, a woman who has built her career across several SOEs. Her communication experiences are examined in two phases: first, the phase of overcoming gender-biased communication barriers during her career advancement; and second, the phase of cultivating gender-equitable communication after attaining a directorial position. The focus of this study lies in business communication practices within SOEs, given their pivotal role in organizational relationships, decision-making processes, and leadership (Guffey & Loewy, 2022; Cardon, 2023). Gender bias in communication is treated as a challenge affecting the effectiveness of business communication, while gender-equitable communication style is viewed as a strategic means to foster inclusivity (Pan et al., 2021; Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

Lies Permana Lestari has successfully held directorial positions in two SOEs: PT Sarinah (Persero) (detikfinance, 2020) and PT Reska Multi Usaha (KAI Services) (rmu.org, 2024). Before achieving these positions, she began her career as a Personal Assistant to the Finance Director at Permodalan Nasional Madani (PNM) another state-owned company before moving across several departments including Corporate Finance, Corporate Communication, and Funding. Her career then continued at PT Askrindo and PT Jamkrindo, both subsidiaries within the SOE ecosystem. Outside the SOE sector, she also served as a Commissioner at PT Taman Impian Jaya Ancol, Director of Business Development at PT Transportasi Jakarta (Tempo.co, 2022), and Director at Perumda Trans Pakuan Bogor (Bogordaily, 2021).

PT Sarinah (Persero) is a state-owned enterprise operating in the retail and trade sector. Established in 1962, Sarinah has served as a platform for Indonesia's creative industry to showcase local products and innovation. With its slogan "*Panggung Karya Indonesia*" ("The Stage for Indonesian Creations"), Sarinah has become a hub connecting domestic producers with international markets, covering retail distribution, property, hospitality, export-import,

foreign exchange, and food and beverage services (Sarinah.co.id, 2025; Kompas, 2021; Sesneg.go.id, 2022).

Meanwhile, PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI) operates in the transportation sector and oversees several subsidiaries, including KAI Services (PT Reska Multi Usaha). This subsidiary focuses on customer services within trains and at stations, employing approximately 2,300 workers led by a President Director and three other directors.

Positioning Lies Permana Lestari's communication experiences within these SOE environments serves two purposes. First, to present the realities of women's dynamics in developing gender-equitable business communication practices within state-owned companies. In this research, *business communication* refers to all forms of message exchange, idea-sharing, and decision-making within organizational business activities—from meetings, strategic decision-making, and interdivisional coordination to leadership communication with both internal and external stakeholders (Guffey & Loewy, 2022; Cardon, 2023). Second, this study seeks to expand the discourse of communication studies in Indonesia by introducing a new analytical horizon that connects business communication practices with gender relations and women's lived experiences in SOEs. Thus, this research not only discusses gender barriers but also explores how female leadership communication styles contribute to shaping a more gender-just organizational culture.

Several previous studies have addressed communication and leadership among women in corporations. For instance, Heryna Oktaviana Kurniawati (2020) examined *Gender Issues Towards Communication Aspects on Women Leadership Styles in Construction Companies*, concluding that women leaders at PT Hutama Karya Infrastructure adopt a masculine-transformational communication style, characterized by rationality, assertiveness, and emotional restraint, alongside democratic interaction (Hendrawan & Simorangkir, 2024; *Leadership Communication in Project Management in Indonesia*, 2022).

Similarly, Aldi Rinaldi and Beby Ramadhani (2024) in *Communication Styles of Women Leaders in the Hospitality Industry* found that women's leadership encompasses not only professional attributes but also personal qualities such as courage, honesty, and creativity. Women leaders in hospitality tend to employ democratic leadership styles, promoting collaboration and participation among team members.

In another study, Islaq Hastita Hamzah (2023) explored *Leadership Communication Styles of Women in the Mining Industry: A Case Study of Nickel Mining at PT Vale Indonesia*, and found that women leaders in this male-dominated sector often adopt masculine communication patterns, marked by directness, results orientation, competitiveness, and objectivity.

This present study differs from the aforementioned works. It examines the communication experiences of a woman who has repeatedly served on the boards of directors of state-owned enterprises PT Sarinah Tbk and PT RMU KAI Services. Research focusing on female leadership communication within SOEs remains scarce. Furthermore, this study investigates how the subject navigated career barriers shaped by gender relations before reaching top management, and how she later developed inclusive organizational communication as a director.

Accordingly, the analysis is guided by two theoretical frameworks. The first is communication style theory by Tubbs and Moss, which identifies five leadership communication styles: *Controlling, Equalitarian, Structuring, Dynamic, Relinquishing, and Withdrawal* (Tubbs & Moss, 2014). The second is the Glass Ceiling theory by Marilyn Loden

(1978), which explains gender-based obstacles preventing women from advancing to higher leadership roles. The term “Glass Ceiling” was later institutionalized by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and popularized through *The Glass Ceiling Initiative* report by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1991 (EEOC.gov, 2004).

The *Glass Ceiling* phenomenon is shaped by both external factors—such as gender bias, organizational masculinity, lack of gender quota enforcement, and discriminatory promotion systems—and internal psychological barriers, including self-confidence, impostor syndrome, literacy access, perfectionism, and competitiveness.

## 2. Method (Cambria Bold, 12pt)

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method. As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018), the case study design allows researchers to describe the shared meanings constructed by several individuals within a common context, reflecting their lived experiences and choices in specific actions. This methodological choice enables an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of business communication practices enacted by a female leader within a real organizational setting, as well as how such experiences shape gender-equitable communication strategies in the environment of Indonesia’s state-owned enterprises (Coombs, 2022).

The research focuses on business communication within the organizational context of SOEs, understood as the process of exchanging messages, ideas, and decisions in everyday business activities—ranging from staff meetings, interdivisional coordination, and superior-subordinate communication to interactions with external stakeholders (Guffey & Loewy, 2022; Cardon, 2023). Communication barriers experienced by women in the business environment are analyzed using Marilyn Loden’s (1978) Glass Ceiling Theory, while the communication strategies adopted by the female leader are interpreted through Tubbs and Moss’s (2014) Communication Style Framework.

The primary data for this study were collected from the main subject and several members of her professional team who worked closely with her. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their relevance and capacity to provide rich and detailed information necessary for this research.

The key informant in this study is Lies Permana Lestari, currently serving as Director of Consumer Business at KAI Services (2023–present). Previously, she held the positions of Director of Retail at PT Sarinah Tbk (2017–2020) and Director of Business Development at PT Sarinah Tbk (2020–2022).

Supporting informants include Lutfiyah Yuli Andriana, Senior Manager of Business Development at PT Sarinah Indonesia Tbk, who worked under Lies Permana Lestari’s leadership for five years during her tenure as Retail and Business Development Director (2016–2021). Another informant is Amelia Yuni Salma, Secretary to the Director of Consumer Business at KAI Services (2024–present), who directly assists Lies in her current leadership role. Additionally, Hesikius Yudha, who previously served on Lies Permana Lestari’s team at PT Transportasi Jakarta (2022–2023) and continues to work under her leadership at KAI Services, also participated as a source in this study.

### Tabel 1. The Informan

No	Name	Position	Age	Gender	Education
1.	Lies Permana Lestari	Director Consumer Business KAI Services 2023- Sekarang)  Director Ritel PT Sarinah Tbk (2017-2020)  Director Business Development PT Sarinah Tbk (2020-2022)	52 y.o	Female	S2 Manajemen Strategi Bisnis BINUS University.
2.	Lutfiyah Yuli Andriana	Senior Manager Ritel PT Sarinah Tbk	56 y.o	Female	S1
3.	Hesikius Yudha	<i>Specialist Strategic Business Partnership unit</i>	32 y.o	Male	S1
4.	Amelia Yuni Salma	Secretary of Lies Permana Lestari di Customer Business KAI-Services	29 y.o	Female	S1

The informants provided data through in-depth interviews. During these interviews, the researcher used a pre-prepared list of questions and an interview guide but remained flexible in exploring additional information based on the responses provided by each informant. Subsequent data collection was conducted through participant observation. The researcher engaged directly in the field to gather descriptive data in the form of written notes, spoken interactions, and observable behaviors that could be analyzed. Daily workplace interactions were observed to gain a direct understanding of how Lies Permana Lestari's leadership communication operates, including participation in her team meetings. The field observations took place at KAI Services, located at Jl. Karang Anyar No. 1 RT 13 RW 10, Karang Anyar, Central Jakarta, DKI Jakarta.'

The interview and observational data were further complemented by the collection of relevant documents, such as activity photos, company profiles, daily notes, work schedules, corporate regulations, articles of association, publicly available videos on YouTube channels, online news portals, the official company website, and KAI Services' social media accounts.

The data analysis process was guided by the research focus and the theoretical framework adopted. This guided the categorization of data, the organization of findings into a logical argumentative structure, and the triangulation process. Initially, the data were classified into two main categories: (1) data illustrating Lies Permana Lestari's strategies to overcome the glass ceiling throughout her career, and (2) data describing her communication style after assuming the position of director. Once categorized, the data were organized into a coherent logical structure capable of articulating the main arguments and findings of the study.

Furthermore, the researcher examined the causal relationship between Lies' awareness of gender relations and her chosen communication strategies, both in overcoming the glass ceiling and in developing a culture of gender-equitable communication within the organization. This means that Lies' communicative actions were not random or merely driven

by external factors, such as directives from superiors or adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs), but rather reflected her internalized gender awareness and leadership consciousness.

The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation, which involved collecting evidence from multiple sources to obtain a more comprehensive and balanced perspective. The results of interviews were cross-checked with observational data and relevant documents provided by Lies Permana Lestari as the key subject of the research, resulting in richer and more credible findings.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This study is organized into two main parts. The first part examines the *glass ceiling* barriers experienced by Lies Permana Lestari in her career journey within the context of gender relations. This section follows Marilyn Loden's (1978) theoretical framework, which identifies women's career barriers as rooted in organizational culture, gender stereotypes, structural biases, and social expectations that restrict women's access to top management positions. External constraints often shape internal barriers, particularly in relation to women's confidence and self-perception.

The second part discusses Lies's communication style after becoming a director in two state-owned enterprises (SOEs), guided by the communication style theory developed by Tubbs and Moss (2014). Within this framework, business communication is understood as the process of delivering messages, ideas, and decisions occurring in organizational activities such as meetings, decision-making, team coordination, and communication between leaders, subordinates, and stakeholders (Guffey & Loewy, 2022; Cardon, 2023).

As a woman who built her career while simultaneously fulfilling dual roles as a wife and mother of two, Lies's path to the directorial level was far from easy, particularly as she did not rely on family privilege. Her ability to communicate her professional responsibilities to her family gave her the flexibility and support needed to advance in her career. Lies acknowledged that she had to invest time in helping her children understand that her work-related absences were a sacrifice for their shared success. Nevertheless, for Lies, the pursuit of a professional career as a woman came with its own set of challenges. The dual role of women as both professionals and caregivers requires constant negotiation between domestic and organizational responsibilities—an intersection that inevitably affects business communication patterns, decision-making consistency, and participation in strategic corporate meetings.

“That's right, it's all multitasking. And women can do it — you might be in a meeting and suddenly have to transfer money for household needs or handle something else... That's the challenge I face as a woman, still taking care of domestic matters even during work meetings — men don't have that.”

*(Interview with Lies Permana Lestari, October 10, 2024, 6:30 p.m.)*

As a company director, Lies admitted that despite her busy schedule, she still handled some household matters. However, she viewed this as a challenge that required open communication with her family. Lies demonstrated situational awareness and adaptability; while leading weekly meetings, she also managed to coordinate her family's domestic needs.

This did not mean that all family-related issues could be successfully managed throughout her career. On several occasions, Lies chose to step back from professional roles

due to family priorities—such as when she resigned from her position as President Director of Perumda Trans Pakuan Bogor.

“During those three months, I was thinking about my child — about to go to college in Toronto, Canada. The commute between Jakarta and Bogor was just too far, and I needed to focus on my child. So I decided to resign. At first, Mr. Bima, the Mayor, didn’t allow it and was upset, but I explained my family reasons, and he finally approved it two months later.”

*(Interview with Lies Permana Lestari, October 10, 2024, 7:00 p.m.)*

Another form of barrier Lies encountered was *office politics* and gender-based harassment. During an internal assessment process for a division head position at PNM, she felt unfairly treated despite her strong qualifications and performance. Lies recalled that one male finance director behaved inappropriately, offering to “support” her promotion in exchange for personal favors—an advance she firmly rejected. As a result, despite scoring second highest among four candidates, she was denied promotion. This incident reflects gender-biased communication within corporate systems, where evaluation and promotion processes—ideally merit-based—are distorted by unprofessional, gendered interactions.

“I did my presentation to the board with full preparation and proper materials, but as usual, office politics happened. One director, the finance director, acted... well, inappropriately. He called me alone to his office early in the morning. I went, of course, but when I realized what was going on, I excused myself. He even offered to buy me breakfast — I refused politely. Perhaps he took offense. That director happened to be one of the dominant figures.”

*(Interview with Lies Permana Lestari, October 10, 2024, 7:00 p.m.)*

The management later promoted other candidates, including those with lower assessment scores, while Lies’s advancement was blocked. She interpreted this as gender-based discrimination linked to her refusal to conform to inappropriate expectations. Instead of confronting the issue directly, Lies strategically built new professional networks within another SOE, PT Askrindo, where she was later appointed to a higher position than before.

Another glass ceiling experience emerged when Lies was appointed President Director of Trans Pakuan Bogor after surpassing 22 other candidates. Despite her legitimate success, she faced resistance from male colleagues and public skepticism about her capacity to lead in a traditionally male-dominated sector. Some journalists even questioned her technical expertise, as she did not hold a formal background in transportation. Lies responded assertively, using her communication skills to build public trust and legitimacy for her leadership—an example of *external business communication* that strengthened her company’s reputation and leadership image.

Based on Tubbs and Moss’s (2014) classification of communication styles, Lies’s leadership reflects the Equalitarian Style. This style is characterized by balance in communication, participation and collaboration, mutual trust and respect, employee satisfaction, and the development of positive work relationships—all of which were evident in Lies’s approach. She did not differentiate between male and female employees, nor between staff of varying ranks. Everyone’s input was valued equally during team meetings, promoting participatory business communication that transformed hierarchical corporate culture into a more collaborative and inclusive environment.

According to Hesikius Yudha, a member of her team, Lies never discriminated based on gender or position. She treated all employees equally in performance evaluations and

promotions. Even office assistants were included in weekly meetings and invited to sit at the same table as senior staff. This sense of equality fostered collective motivation and teamwork.

“Everyone was treated the same. Whether a division head or a staff member, she was the kind of leader who engaged directly with everyone. If she had to correct someone, she did it genuinely, and when she praised someone, it was just as sincere. There was no hierarchy in communication — even staff-level employees could report directly to her.”

*(Interview with Rahayu, Secretary to Lies Permana at TransJakarta, November 12, 2024, 9:00 a.m.)*

In addition to the equalitarian approach, Lies also demonstrated the Dynamic Style of business communication. This style emphasizes enthusiasm, adaptability, innovation, creativity, employee engagement, and positive work climate. Lies’s high energy and enthusiasm inspired her team and drove innovation within her departments.

According to Lutfiyah Yuli Andriana, who worked under Lies for five years at PT Sarinah, Lies was an up-to-date and dynamic leader who understood how to align organizational needs with her team’s capacity. Her dynamic communication style fostered loyalty and commitment among her employees. Lies’s strong sense of responsibility toward the company’s reputation also motivated her team to maintain excellence in performance.

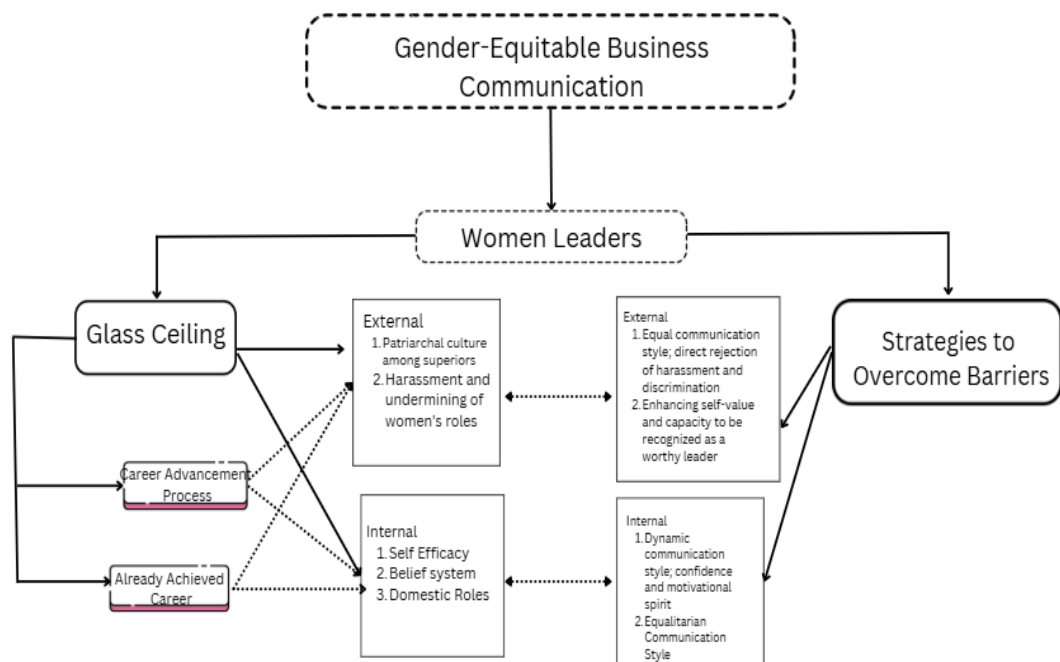
“She always said, ‘If others work 24 hours, you must work 25 hours.’ Her spirit is incredibly high. She told us, ‘If you hit a wall, don’t stop — break through it.’ I’ve learned so much from her.”

*(Interview with Lutfiyah Yuli Andriana, Senior Manager, PT Sarinah, November 7, 2024, 11:15 a.m.)*

Rahayu echoed this observation, describing Lies as a tireless and inspirational figure: “She’s full of energy. She always says, ‘If you can’t run, then fly.’ She knows exactly what she wants to achieve each morning. That kind of energy is contagious — even when we’re tired, her spirit motivates us.”

*(Interview with Rahayu, Secretary at TransJakarta, November 12, 2024, 9:30 a.m.)*

Overall, Lies Permana Lestari’s leadership communication demonstrates that women leaders in SOEs can navigate gendered barriers not only through resilience but also through strategic, inclusive, and dynamic communication practices that transform organizational culture and expand the space for gender-equitable leadership.



**Figure 1. Gender Equitable Bussiness Communication**

For many working women, *glass ceiling* barriers arise not only from external factors such as patriarchal social constructions or the overly masculine culture of corporate organizations but also from internalized limitations within themselves. Many women employees are constrained by feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt about their ability to reach top management levels. Thus, the *glass ceiling* can also be understood as a reflection of how women evaluate and perceive their own professional worth and potential.

Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to persist in pursuing their goals, whereas those with low self-efficacy are more likely to give up or refrain from trying altogether (Lathabhavan & Balasubramanian, 2017).

Lies Permana Lestari, however, represents a different case. She achieved her position as a director precisely because of her strong confidence and assertive self-efficacy. Her confident body language and ability to convincingly communicate her competence made others recognize her leadership potential. Lies was appointed as the Director of Retail Business at PT Sarinah after presenting an innovative retail business concept during a high-level state-owned enterprise delegation meeting in Sweden. Two years later, she was promoted to Director of Business Development at PT Sarinah Persero, a recognition of her proven capability and visionary ideas for advancing the company's business growth.



**Figure 2. Lies Permana (second from the right) received the “Dewi Keuangan Srikandi BUMN 2019” award**

All of these positions were achieved through a combination of professional competence and a strong sense of self-confidence. Lies firmly believed in her ability to bring transformation and meaningful change to the organizations she led. This was particularly significant given that the transportation industry, where she built much of her career, has traditionally been perceived as a male-dominated sphere. Female leaders in this field are often regarded as less competent or unsuitable. Lies successfully challenged this stereotype by convincing all relevant stakeholders of her leadership capabilities and her worthiness to be entrusted with executive responsibilities.

Her egalitarian communication style enabled Lies to attain a leadership position equivalent to her male counterparts. Lies frequently emphasized to her team—especially to the women—that gender should not be viewed as a barrier to success. Instead, what truly matters are resilience and the continuous effort to enhance one’s capacity and competence. According to all informants, Lies was the only director who invited every member of her team, including office assistants and support staff, to participate in the weekly meetings.

At times, Lies showed particular attention to her female employees. She stated: “I’m happy, you know... I actually want to have female protégés because I believe women are strong. When a man works, that’s just it—he works. But when a woman works, she might suddenly get messages like, ‘Mom, the gas at home is finished, the water’s out,’ and so on.”

*(Interview with Lies Permana Lestari, October 10, 2024, 19:00 WIB).*

In Lies’s view, the resilience of working women is a natural formation—something inherent in their being. She remarked:

“When we’re babies, even with a 39-degree fever, girls usually cope better; boys struggle. That’s already a sign from God, that women are naturally more resilient. I’m not being feminist here—it’s just our nature. That’s why I want to see more strong female leaders, women who can be just as great. I always tell my team: ‘Be militant, be spartan, have strong fighting spirit.’”

*(Interview with Lies Permana Lestari, October 10, 2024, 19:00 WIB).*

Through her egalitarian and dynamic communication style, Lies achieved numerous accomplishments and left a transformational legacy within Indonesia's state-owned enterprises (BUMN). Her leadership excellence earned her the title of "Srikandi BUMN" (Outstanding Female Leader in State-Owned Enterprises) in the financial sector.

Among her notable achievements and legacies is her work at PT Sarinah Tbk, a retail enterprise. Lies was the first to open Sarinah outlets at several major airports, including Soekarno-Hatta Terminal 3, Kuala Namu International Airport in Medan, Yogyakarta International Airport, and Banjarmasin Airport—all of which remain operational and thriving today.

Another major milestone under her leadership was the restoration and revitalization of the Sarinah Building during her tenure as Director of Business Development. Lies believed that Sarinah—often regarded as "the nation's mall"—should serve as a national landmark that reflects Indonesia's modern identity while honoring its historical legacy, as envisioned by President Soekarno. The restoration process required approval from senior cultural heritage experts and professors, and Lies played a pivotal role in presenting and defending the concept of creative business development that maintained the building's original cultural value. The Sarinah structure that stands today represents one of Lies's enduring legacies at PT Sarinah.

This success was also driven by her strategic business communication skills, particularly her ability to build cross-sectoral consensus among government officials, academics, and business partners, ensuring that the transformation process was broadly legitimized and collectively supported.

Beyond the BUMN sector, Lies's accomplishments and legacies also extend to her work as Director of Service and Business at TransJakarta. Under her leadership, many corporate tenants collaborated with the company, including advertisers at bus shelters and on TransJakarta buses. Lies also led the service division, responsible for customer care operations at bus stops and on buses. She introduced a rebranding initiative changing the title *Petugas Layanan Halte* (PLH) or "Bus Stop Service Officer" to *Pramusapa*, meaning "greeter" or "frontline host." This change elevated the sense of hospitality and professional identity among employees while enhancing the passenger experience. The *Pramusapa* program continues to operate across all TransJakarta bus shelters today.

This initiative illustrates Lies's innovative approach to business communication in public service, where strategic rebranding and customer-centered communication contributed directly to improving the company's public image and stakeholder trust.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study reveals that the professional journey of Lies Permana Lestari within Indonesia's state-owned enterprises (BUMN) reflects the pervasive influence of the glass ceiling faced by women in corporate environments. The barriers she encountered include discriminatory practices in promotion, gender stereotypes that undermine women's leadership competence, and the burden of dual domestic and professional roles. These obstacles not only affect women on a personal level but also expose the persistence of gender bias within business communication practices in BUMN organizations—particularly in processes such as performance evaluations, promotion mechanisms, and professional interactions that remain distorted by masculine power relations. In this regard, Loden's Glass

Ceiling Theory becomes highly relevant for analyzing how the structure of organizational and business communication continues to hinder women's advancement to top leadership positions.

However, the study also finds that Lies's leadership communication strategies—specifically the Egalitarian Style and Dynamic Style (Tubbs & Moss) played a pivotal role in fostering a more inclusive and gender-equitable form of business communication. Through her egalitarian communication style, Lies succeeded in creating participatory spaces within meetings and decision-making processes, enabling team members to engage openly and collaboratively. Meanwhile, her dynamic communication style served to encourage innovation, motivation, and team loyalty. These two communication styles not only enabled Lies to overcome the barriers imposed by the glass ceiling but also contributed significantly to the transformation of business communication culture within BUMN organizations. In doing so, Lies's leadership demonstrates how communication can function as a crucial medium for realizing gender justice and equality in state-owned business institutions.

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