

# **BUREAUCRACY COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

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## **Abstract**

In general the function of communication is to achieve the sense one to another, to build trust, to coordinate actions, to plan strategies, to perform division of labor, to perform a group activity, and to share the same sense. As the communication of government bureaucracy tasks are to serve, to regulate, to supervise, and to gain the relationship between the government and the society, just imagine when the government bureaucracy does not interpret the importance of communication, of course, the service process, the regulation, the supervision as well as the relationship between the government and the society will not run. In the end there come problems of both trivial and due to a lack of communication within the government bureaucracy. This makes the changes in the organizational culture in the government on the one hand can improve performance, but on the other hand can also fail if not properly maintained and prepared. However, what to watch is to know when the right time to make a change organizational culture is. The change in organizational culture is required in case if there is an un-avoided development in the environment. On the other hand, the changes become the internal need of the organization; it is perceived as a necessity. It is also required an understanding of how to have proper process to run the organizational change and to know what obstacles might be encountered. Errors can result in the emergence of resistance and failure in the attempt to change the organizational culture.

*Keywords* : Government Bureaucracy, Organizational Culture

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the real life we cannot be separated from a thing called communication. Why is that? It is because human beings are truly created by God as social beings that cannot live alone and need other human beings to be able to meet the needs of everyday life. Similar thing happens to the government bureaucracy as social human beings live in there. Those human beings run the bureaucracy of course through communication among fellow employees or superiors to subordinates and vice versa. Communication happens between bureaucracy employees and the public as well as communication between bureaucracies.

There are some characteristics in the civil service namely; managers / supervisors must be aware in the importance of communication. The managers / supervisors put out action and effort which means after they understand the importance of communication, there are actions and efforts, a commitment to two-way communication, an emphasizing on face-to -face communication, a share in responsibility for the communication with employees, a handling of bad news, a message formed for intended audience, and a treatment of communication as an ongoing process.

Besides that, the general function of communication is to reach an understanding one to another, to build trust, to coordinate actions, to plan a strategy, to conduct a division of labor, to do group activities, as well as to share feeling.

There are two aspects of this perspective on the content of messages and symbols that are generally in the form of language. The second is the process of communication in a mechanistic perspective. It is a process that depends on the immediate situation of communication. This process is quite complicated because the operating of communication is through lips/orals/hands. If the handwriting can be understood by the communicant, the message understanding from communicator

by the communicant can be done with the senses of ears or eyes. This process often causes problems. It is just like the process of communication between the blind and the deaf.

The characteristics, functions, and communication perspective that have been described above are matters that must exist in the government bureaucracy because the task of government bureaucracy is for servicing, regulating, supervising, and gaining the relationship between government and society. Just imagine when the government bureaucracy does not interpret the significance of communication, the service process, the regulation, the supervision, and the relationship between government and society will not run. And finally there is an emergence of problems either trivial or not just because of the absence of communication within the government bureaucracy.

## 2. BUREAUCRACY COMMUNICATION

The bureaucracy is an instrumental tool for an administration to work whereas bureaucracy works based on the division of labor, hierarchy of authority, relationships of impersonality, behavior regulation, and the technical ability to carry out its duties and functions as an organizer of government administration.

As a modern organization, bureaucracy basically has five basic elements as follow; 1. *The strategic - apex* or the top management that is fully responsible for the run of an organization; 2. *The middle – line* or the head executive who is in charge of bridging the top leadership with subordinates; 3. *The operating -core*, the subordinate that is in charge of carrying out basic work related to services and products of the organization; 4. *The technostructure* or groups of experts such as analysts who are responsible for the effectiveness of certain forms of standardization within the organization; 5. *The support - staff* or the staff that supports existed on the unit to help communicate and indirectly provide services to the organization (Mintzberg, 1983:11).

The work of the bureaucracy that is based on hierarchy of authority enables the effective control and positive performance. Moreover, if the authority of the top management (the strategic - apex) is decentralized to executive leadership (the middle - line). The decentralized structure allows the creation of a professional bureaucracy that affects the organizational performance where bureaucracy can be held into account by the delegated authority.

Any regularity in ways of workings tied to the existing regulations as in Webber view aims to ensure the achievement of duties sustainability and the role of government. However, if the rules are applied in a rigid way then it will give birth to an unprofessional bureaucracy that is reflected in doing the duties and functions bound to the applicable rules (rule - driven professionalism) and will create an un-innovative and unresponsive bureaucracy. If the bureaucracy does not get too attach to the implementation guidelines and rule implementation task but more driven by the mission to be achieved by the organization (mission- driven professionalism) then there will be a professional bureaucracy that implement its duties and functions in an effective, efficient, and innovative way and have a high work ethic (Tjokrowinoto, 1996; 191).

Indonesia is always faced by the problem of how to build a good governance and clean government. Bureaucracy that is expected to be a motivator and also a catalyst of the communication development is not able to perform its role as a modern bureaucracy, that is not only having the capability in doing the tasks and functions of the organization, but also be able to respond to communication from the public aspirations into the activities and the program of the organization and is able to bring new innovation which aims to facilitate the performance of the organization and as a part of a form of professional officers.

In Indonesia, various pathologies are recognized in the perspective of public administration that make bureaucrats or officers are unprofessional in carrying out their duties and functions including the low motivation for a change and innovation.

This pathology occurs as a consequence of the overall behavior and managerial style that is often used by the top management (the strategic - apex) in the hierarchy of public organizations. Managerial and leadership style that are both feudalistic and paternalistic give a big impact on organizational performance (Siagian, 1994; 44) so that the ranks of the middle and lower levels are afraid to do and to take new steps in the effort to improve public services. The low desire for a change and innovation in this regard is also due to the managerial style that is not conducive to the creation of a bureaucracy that is responsive and innovative. It is not surprising that the ability of the organization and its staffs is

decreasing. In the view of top management "pro - status quo" as such, any changes that occur in science, computer technology, and information technology, is considered as a threat to career survival and position.

The good and bad of public services provided by the bureaucracy are associated with the ability and quality of the bureaucracy itself. The ability of government bureaucrats other than formed through the development and enhancement of knowledge and individual skills is highly influenced by the organizational systems such as work orientation, organizational structure, leadership models and remuneration received by the apparatus.

Another thing as the underlying cause is the process of recruitment of new employees that often ignores the aspect of meritocracy and the need of the organization. It is not surprising that in practice the Indonesian bureaucracy is often overwhelmed in anticipating any changes and new aspirations. The impact is the decline in the quality of work of the organization and the quality of public service.

As was explained earlier that the authorities tend to be reluctant to change and innovate, in addition to the managerial style in public organizations, such pathology is as well caused by the climate and conditions in bureaucratic organizations which tends to provide incentives to loyal employees rather than to creative and innovative employees. Bureaucracy is demanded to be more sensitive to the changes and to find new approaches for the development of public services as well as to leave the service process which is very procedural and bureaucratic. The existence of formal rules is not an excuse for not fixing responsive ways of working and playing over the rules to authorize any action. The work that actually can be done quickly and briefly is made into a long time and requires large expenses. ID card process can be an example of how bottom -level bureaucrats have been contaminated by the negative behaviors that have been dominated by the upper management.

### **3. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

The word 'culture' as a concept rooted from the study or the discipline of anthropology by Kilman (in Nimran, 2004:134) as quoted from the book of Communication in Organization; Complete, (Khomsahrial Romli, 2011) is defined as a philosophy, ideological values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that are shared and bind in a community. Raymon Wiliam in John Storey (2003-2-3) offers three definitions on 'culture';

1. a culture can be used to refer to a general process of intellectual and spiritual development.
2. a culture can mean a worldview of a society in a certain period or a particular group.
3. a culture can refer to the works and practices of intellectual especially of artistic activity.

Hofstede (2007:21) in Koesmono (2005:9) argues that culture can be defined as interaction of various characteristics of habits that affect groups of people in their environment. Tika (2006:16) argues that in the formation of organizational culture there are two important things to note; they are the constituent elements of organizational culture and organizational culture formation process itself.

Here are a few terms of organizational culture according to some experts:

1. According to Wood, Wallace, Zeffane, Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn (2001, 391), organizational culture is a system of trust and values developed by the organization to which it leads the behavior of members of the organization itself.
2. According to Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll as quoted by Munandar (2001, 263), organizational culture is ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting based on certain patterns that exist within the organization or that exist in parts of the organization .
3. According to Robbins (2006, 289), organizational culture is a common perception held by members of the organization.
4. According to Schein (2002, 12) organizational culture is the basic pattern that is accepted by the organization to act and solve problems, to establish an employee who is able to adapt to the environment, and to unite the members of the organization.
5. According to Cushway and Lodge (2000, 132), organizational culture is the system of value of the organization that will affect how the organizational way is done and how employees behave.
6. Organizational culture (bureaucratic) is a common agreement on shared values in organizational life and is binding on all concerned people in the organization (Sondra P. Siagian, 2005, 18)
7. The totality of behavioral patterns and thinking characteristics, faith, service, behavior, and actions of employees of an organization (Goldstein, 2007:33)

Based on the understanding of organizational culture according to some experts above, it can be found out what is meant by organizational culture in this research is the organization's value system held by members of the organization which then affects the way and behavior of the members of the organization. So it is clear that organizational culture is a system of values that is believed, can be learned, can be applied and developed, serves as glue, unifying, identity, image, motivator for the entire staff and the people in it. Furthermore, the system of value is transmitted to subsequent generations and can be used as a reference of human behavior in organizations oriented to the achievement of goals or outcomes/target of performance that have been set.

Results of research conducted by O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (2001:33) and Sheridan (2002:41) suggests the importance of organizational culture values in influencing the behavior and attitudes of individuals. The results indicate that there is a relationship between person- organization fit with organizational satisfaction, commitment and turnover of employees where the individuals in accordance with the organization's culture have a tendency to have organizational satisfaction and high commitment to the organization and also have a high intensity to remain and organize in the organization. On the contrary, individuals who do not fit with the organizational culture tend to have a low commitment with the result that they have a higher tendency to leave the organization (high turnover rate on employee). The results also suggest that cultural values significantly affect employee's morale.

According to Robbins (2006, 294), organizational culture functions are as follows:

1. a culture to create a clear distinction between one organization and another.
2. a culture to bring a sense of identity for organization members.
3. a culture to facilitate the emergence of commitment to something larger than one's individual self-interest.
4. a culture as the social glue that helps unify the organization by providing appropriate standards to be done by employees.
5. a culture as meaning -makers and control mechanisms that guide and shape the attitudes and behavior of employees.

According to Sutanto (Soni, 2009:52) as quoted from the book of Communication in an Organization; Complete (Khomsahrial Romli, 2011) a means to recognize the organizational culture is divided into ten namely:

1. Individual initiative
2. Tolerance to risk
3. Direction and goals
4. Sharing the same vision
5. Support from management
6. Management supervision
7. Identity
8. The reward system
9. Tolerance for conflict and patterns of communication

According to the researcher, elements of the organizational culture are;

1. Rules that bind employees to work
2. Improvement of labor discipline
3. Improvement of performance
4. Harmonious working relationship
5. Improvement in creativity, working innovation
6. The existence of strict sanctions and impartial

Basically every organization has a culture, either strong culture or weak culture. A culture can have a significant influence on the attitudes and behavior of any members of the organization. According to Stephen P. Robins (256, 2006) the organizational culture is a system of values held and performed by members of the organization, so that such a thing could distinguish the organization with other organizations. The system of values is built by the seven characteristics as the essence of the organizational culture. The characteristics are:

1. *Innovation and risk taking*, to the extent for employees that are encouraged to be innovative and to take risks.

2. *Attention to detail*, to the extent where employees are expected to show their accuracy (precision), their analysis and their attention to details.
3. *Result Orientation (Outcome Orientation)*, to the extent where the management focuses on results rather than on the techniques and processes used to achieve those results.
4. *People Orientation*, to the extent where management decisions take into account on the effect of outcomes on people within the organization.
5. *Team Orientation*. It is to the extent where the organization's activities are organized around teams rather than individuals.
6. *Aggressiveness*, to the extent where people are aggressive and competitive rather than take it easy.
7. *Stability*, to the extent where the organization's activities emphasize on the maintenance of the *status quo* in contrast to growth in the sense of organizational steadiness in performing the task.

Hofstede (2007:21) argues that organizational culture has five (5) main characteristics:

- (1) Organizational culture as an integral unity and interrelated
- (2) Organizational culture is a reflection of history of the related organization
- (3) Organizational culture relates to matters studied by anthropologists such as rituals, symbols, stories, and persona
- (4) Organizational culture is socially constructed in the sense that the culture of the organization is born from the shared consensus of a group of people who founded the organization
- (5) Organizational culture is difficult to change.

There are many dimensions that differentiate cultures. These dimensions affect behavior that can lead to confusion, disagreement and even conflict (Early, 1993) as quoted from the book *Communication in Organization; Complete*, (Khomsahrial Romli, 2011). The concept of culture was originally derived from the field of anthropology and got a place in the early development of organizational behavior as a science (Morrey & Luthans, 1987, in Luthans, 1998:11). Gibson (2006:23) mentions seven dimensions of culture namely the human relationship with nature, individualism versus collectivism, time orientation, informal activity orientation, language, and beliefs.

As the dimensions used to distinguish the culture of the organization, according to Robbins (2006:23) there are seven primary characteristics that capture the essence of organizational culture namely (1) *Innovation and risk taking*. It is to the extent to which employees are encouraged to be innovative and dare to take risk. (2) *Attention to the details*. It is to the extent that employees would be expected to exhibit precision, analysis, and attention to details. (3) *Results of orientation*. It is to the extent to which management focuses on results, not on the technique and process used to obtain the results. (4) *People orientation*. It is to the extent to which management decisions take into account on the effect of the results of the people in the organization. (5) *Team orientation*. It is to the extent to which work activities are oriented in team work rather than individuals. (6) *Aggressiveness*. It is to the extent to which people are aggressive and competitive, not relaxing. (7) *Stability*. It is to the extent to which organizational activities emphasize on the maintenance of *status quo* as an opposition to growth or innovation.

According to Tosi, Rizzo, and Carrol as quoted by Munandar (2001:264), organizational culture is influenced by several factors namely:

1. The general effect from outside that is extensive including factors that cannot be controlled or has a little control from the organization.
2. The influence of the values that exist in the community. The beliefs and dominant values of society such as politeness and cleanliness.
3. Specific factors of the organization. The organization always interacts with its environment. In addressing both external and internal problems, the organization will get successful completions. The success in overcoming those problems is the basis for the growth of the organization's culture.

Changes in organizational culture on one hand can improve performance, but on the other hand this can also fail if it is not properly maintained and prepared. However, the thing to be most concerned is to know when the right time to make a change in organizational culture is. The change in organizational culture is required if there is an un-avoided development in the environment. On the other hand, changes are frequently parts of the internal needs of the organization; it is perceived as a

necessity. There is also a requirement to an understanding of how to have a proper process to run organizational change and obstacles that might be encountered. Errors can result in the emergence of resistance and failure of effort in organizational culture change.

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