Communication Strategy in Public Organizations in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this concept paper is to discuss the communication strategies used in public organizations in Malaysia. Communication is very important and is the heart of an organization. The importance of this communication is a key tool in achieving the goals set by a public organization and the diversity of the use of communication strategies into the successive gauge of an organization through the communication of organizations that they practice whether vertical communications, downward communication and horizontal communications. Every citizen of the organization needs to understand the forms and types of communication skills and strategies in public organizations including oral and non-verbal communication, small group communication, organizational culture communication, and public communication. Managers should understand communication techniques and strategies as they need to diversify leadership communication strategies and styles in public organizations.

Keywords**:** Strategy, styles, communication, organization, leadership

Introduction

In organizations, communication is a channel used by individuals or groups to interact, understand and convey information to each other. In fact, through communication in the organization can create cooperation among the citizens of the organization. Effective communication proves the efficiency of an organization to operate. Without effective communication then a public organization will face the problem of efficient governance. What's more, public organizations in Malaysia have now undergone a transformation of governance in line with the development of developed countries with the introduction of the Government Transformation Program (GTP) in 2010. This program is a comprehensive program that changes government policy to become a more efficient and people -oriented institution (PEMANDU, 2011). Therefore, every leader of a public organization is responsible to ensure that all transformation agendas are implemented smoothly as in the Government Transformation Plan (GTP) through the correct and accurate communication channels. This is because communication is very important in implementing the transformation of an organization. Communication is a process in an organization that has a dynamic and open system (Mansur, 2002). Effective communication is the lifeblood of an organization. In fact, communication is also a medium in which the goals and vision of an organization are disseminated to the internal members of an organization as well as organizations and individuals who are interested. Through communication networks as well, enables leaders of public organizations to organize, perform duties, make decisions, solve problems and make changes in the organization (Sapoetra & Susilowati, 2013).

Thus, various changes have been made in government administration in line with the GTP program to date. The top management of a public organization conveys all the information of this transformation through the delivery of communication to various levels of its subordinate staff with the selection of appropriate communication strategies.

Communication that takes place between individuals in an organization, i.e. the interaction between superior officers and subordinate staff (vertical communication). In fact, communication also occurs horizontally among officers or staff to convey information, mission, vision or change in an organization. It is quite difficult to implement and succeed a program without the right communication strategy. Indirectly, proves that communication in organizations plays an important role in conveying information to all citizens of public organizations in achieving the goals of the National Transformation Program to realize the vision of 2020. Communication aspect is actually an important catalyst in organizational relations not only between one organization and another. it is also a key catalyst that triggers a close relationship between upper management and lower management. It is this form of close relationship that often influences the work management patterns of staff in the organization (Wan Idros Wan Sulaiman & Maizatul Haizan Mahb ob, 2015). Accordingly, an effective communication strategy in implementing organizational governance change not only depends on the frequency and amount of information disseminated, but it also depends on the selection of appropriate strategies (Mohammed, 2016). In triggering a high level of awareness of a change or transformation then it also depends on the extent to which the information channeled successfully persuade the staff of a public organization to accept and adapt the message conveyed

Research Objective

This paper aims to find out the variety of communication strategies used by the top management of an organization in achieving targeted goals.

Methodology

Qualitative methods are used in this paper that is by using document analysis from previous studies by scholars through literature review.

Problem Statement

Effective communication should be mastered and implemented at all levels in an organization whether public or private. Communication is the mainstay of the smooth governance of an organization. Top management leadership in the organization also needs to show a good attitude and role model to employees. Indirectly, employees will look up to and respect top management when effective communication is implemented, and noble values will be formed, as well as directly help towards the stability and achievement of an organization's goals (Mustaffa, 2015). However, the problem of ineffective communication of top management is also acknowledged to exist in the context of communication in organizations in Malaysia where communication of top management is said to be more one -way, less open, and less emphasis on the opinions and views of subordinates (Mustaffa, 2004; Raja Abd. Rahman et.all, 2008); (Wan Abd Aziz Wan Mohd Amin & Abdullah et.all, 2009). Top management or leaders need to have an effective communication strategy to convey information to various levels of staff below them. However, not all leaders of public organizations are able to master the overall communication strategy in performing their duties such as the ability to communicate accurately, effectively, meet needs, appropriate to time, circumstances, selection of appropriate channels and successfully achieve goals (Mustaffa, 2015). This is because too many obstacles cause the delivery of information to be less effective to his subordinates. The effective and efficient delivery of information depends on the wisdom of the leader in handling the situation of the staff at that time so that the message conveyed is understood by the staff under him (Aladdin, 2012).

Literature Review

Communication is a medium for members of the organization to convey messages or information and actions to colleagues or top management as well as subordinate staff or external organizations and interested individuals. Communication is also a dominant activity in an organization (Suhailawatie Ramli. Kamiliah Siarap & Nor Hazlina Hashim, 2015; Husain, 2009). Without communication, then the governance of an organization is distorted. Therefore, the upper management or lower staff need to have communication skills, especially communication strategies to achieve the goals that have been targeted. (Barret, 2002).

In fact, each organization has a different approach to communication strategy and according to the situation or changes that occur in the organization. Unfortunately, not all managers or leaders of an organization can master communication strategies well. It is supported by Ashkenas, R. N. & S.C. Francis (2000) who emphasized that effective communication strategies are important in the organizational structure to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization. This is because when an organization undergoes change or transformation then the leader or top management needs to have a strategy to realize the targeted goals. One of the strategies of a leader is a communication strategy. Mustaffa (2015) pointed out that in public organizations, the job of civil servants is to channel services to customers and one of the aspects assessed is the

competence of a civil servant in the information exchange process that takes place. This process of information exchange requires individuals to have certain skills especially communication strategies. The communication competence possessed must cover a comprehensive aspect in terms of the ability to communicate accurately, effectively, meet the needs, in accordance with the time, situation, selection of appropriate channels and successfully achieve goals.

Communication strategies act to identify appropriate communication tools by presenting ideas and issues in achieving organizational objectives. According to Effendy (2006), communication strategy means the guidance of communication planning and management to achieve the goals that have been set in an organization. Hallahan (2007) also agrees that the use of communication strategies used by organizations aims to fulfill a predetermined mission. What's more, organizational managers or leaders rely on communication strategies to make them good communicators to overcome communication barriers that often occur when there is a transformation in the organization and help overcome the work problems of subordinate staff (Downs & Adrian, 2004).

However, the communication strategic can overcome the barriers in organization by transformation the knowledge and information form in organization; increasing expectation of workers for significant works and opportunities for personal and professional growth; perspective from the past normally do not provide a map to guide current organization and strategic decisions focus purely on their development rather that concerns about issues in organization (Leandro et.al, 2019).

An organization is defined as a group of people who are in a combination of groups when members in the group are determined positions and responsibilities to enable them to carry out activities that have been determined (Ab. Aziz, 2012). In addition, the organization also serves as a mechanism to achieve the goals of its members collectively in addition to having its own system in determining the boundaries of what can or cannot be done. The study of Pruzan and Miller (2006) showed that an organization is a collection of individuals who develop a coordination system by specifying an activity to achieve a goal in a predetermined time period with effective communication (Awang & Abdullah, 2012).

An organization can be paralyzed if the leader or manager is not efficient in managing the organization. Therefore, every leader should have good and efficient leadership qualities to achieve the goals targeted by the organization. Leadership plays an important role in realizing the mission of an organization (Ishak, 2011). Leadership is the ability and process of influencing leaders and employees to achieve objectives through changes made. A good administrator knows how to influence his followers in order to achieve the set objectives. Leadership is very important in the governance of an organization. The effectiveness of an organization depends on the commitment and productivity of support staff as well as the leadership skills of the leader or top management. This is supported by Hassan, Silong & Muslim (2009) concluding effective leadership is often seen as something that is very important in explaining or making predictions of success or failure of an organization. This is because effective leadership will have a positive impact on the success of the organization.

Lasswell model. In an organization, the citizens of the organization are the communicators and recipients of information or messages either through verbal and non-verbal communication, small group communication, organizational cultural communication, and public communication. Every member of the organization must understand each other the message or information they receive. In addition, communication channels are also important to ensure that the message conveyed is appropriate and the recipient of the message understands or not the message received by him and provides feedback on the message as illustrated in Figure 1 (Lasswell, 1948). This is because all these elements are present in the interaction of a leader to his subordinate staff which is termed as downward communication in the organization for example, they receive instructions from their superior officers to perform a job (Rahmanto, 2004). While his subordinate staff gives feedback to his boss and this communication is known as upward communication. In certain situations, either subordinate staff or superior officers will interact with each other and this situation is termed as horizontal communication. This communication process is illustrated as Figure 1 below:

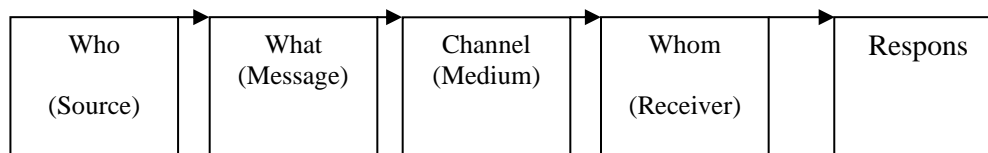| Who (Source)	What (Message)	Channel (Medium)	Whom (Receiver)	Respons

Figure 1: Lasswell Model

Through the above communication process, then the delivery of messages between leaders and staff of the organization takes place smoothly. However, when there is a transformation in the organization then the top management must inform the subordinate staff by using the right communication strategy. This is intended to prevent their subordinates from feeling overwhelmed by changes or transformations in the organization. So, leaders need to master communication skills including communication strategies. Hallahan et al. (2007) classify communication strategies into four levels namely the ability of communicators especially managers to distinguish between traditional communication activities with current communication activities; important changes in organizational communication are driven by technology and the media economy and lastly is that organizational leaders use a variety of state -of -the -art methods to influence the behavior of their employees in terms

of thoughts, feelings and the way subordinate employees act relative to the organization. Leaders or managers also use the same communication process only they have the advantage of a communication strategy to enable the targeted objectives to be implemented well by his subordinates.

According to Mintzberg & Quinn (1991) stated that the strategy can be implemented well by having some specific elements that the first is to have a clear objective and understanding to be implemented; have the effort and commitment to act; worker concentration; strategies are flexible; committed leaders; honest citizens of the organization and a harmonious atmosphere in the organization. This is important so that all members of the organization move together to achieve the goals set by an organization. While Effendy (2003) emphasizes that communication strategy in the organization should have factors such as recognizing communication targets, situational factors, selection of communication channels, purpose of a message, the role of communicators in the communication, resource attractiveness and credibility of a source. This will indirectly give a clear understanding to his subordinates to perform a task related to changes in the organization. In fact, he emphasizes four important factors in communication strategy, namely knowing the audience, organizing the message or information to be conveyed, setting methods to achieve the targeted objectives and finally the selection of the right communication channel. This is supported by Verhoeven, Zerfass and Tench (2011) because every leader should have a communication strategy in giving instructions to his subordinates to achieve the targeted goals.

Conclusion

Every staff of the organization should have a communication strategy in performing the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them. Moreover, when there is a change in the organization that requires understanding and action in parallel with the change. Communication within the organization becomes important in every process and interaction between the citizens of the organization. This is because this communication is related to the personality, attitude, and behavior of the people of the organization. In fact, communication feedback plays an important role in human interaction. Meanwhile, communication strategy will determine the outcome of achieving the goals set by an organization.

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