

Making your follower follow with ‘hearts and minds’

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Abstract : *This report is discussing the management-employee communication at Indonesia private university, Islamic Sultan Agung University (Unissula). The objective of this research is to give recommendation to develop a strategic approach for management-employee communication by studying management-employee communication theories, examining the current situation in Unissula and understanding the trends in management-employee communication. This report is mainly focusing on the influence of leadership communication style on organization performance. However it is acknowledged the influence of another factor: Indonesia private university's culture.*

Keywords: *leadership communication, democratic leadership, lateral leadership, and assertiveness. (Word count: 5018)*

I. Introduction

This is a research report on the issue of leadership communication in Indonesia private university at education sector. Unissula, the chosen client for this research is an organization that provides education for higher degree, health, social and other charity fields. It is a private university that located on Semarang, Central Java- Indonesia. At this time, Unissula consists of 11 faculties and 27 study programs. They have 9.000 students that spread from diploma program, undergraduate program and postgraduate program. With the intention to face globalization challenges and compete with other higher degree education institutions, during it's development Unissula builds several partnerships with other international organizations such as Egypt embassy, Mindanao State University (Philippines), UTM Malaysia, Hankuk university of foreign studies (Korea), Al-azhar university (Cairo), Japan University, etc.

However, from the previous research (Prianti, 2010) it is reveals that some barriers have impeded the progress of those partnerships. One of the barriers is an internal problem within Unissula. It is discovered that the way university management communicate with the middle management is one of the reason the inhibition of the partnership. This situation jeopardizes Unissula reputation in the eyes of its stakeholder.

As a private university, Unissula headed by a rector who oversees the deans who are spread in several faculties and the head of study program that are spread in several study programs. A dean heads each faculty. Each dean is supervises several head of department. Each study program is headed by the head of study programs which has the same level as a dean and they are also supervises several head of department. From the level of degree, a study program similar to the faculty but they only consist of several departments and has just formed. At the end, each study program will also be turned into faculty.

The leadership is the basis of organisational culture because a leader begins the cultural creation process (Schein, 2004). He added that leadership plays role in creating and embedding culture in an organization. This means leader communication style can shape an organization's culture. They influence others. They persuade others to follow goal they define. They improve the organization's performance (Barrett, 2008). Therefore, by having an effective communication between leader and subordinates, organization will be able to enhance its performance which in the end strengthen its reputation in the eyes of it's stakeholders.

This report aims to give recommendation for Unissula to develop an effective leadership communication by studying leadership communication theory and studying the recent developments in leadership communication that could be used to improve Unissula's leadership communication.

This report will be beneficial for Unissula because by improving leadership communication style, Unissula will be able to create effective communication between leader and subordinates which in the end will engaging employee with Unissula's corporate strategy. By getting the employee engage with Unissula's corporate strategy, Unissula will be more competitive in the market. Moreover, it will strengthen Unissula's reputation in order to build more partnership with international stakeholder and to extend Unissula's market.

This report is mainly focusing on the influence of leadership communication style on organization performance. However it is acknowledged the influence of another factor: Indonesia private university's culture.

Central Question

Which recent development in leadership communication could be used in order to improve Unissula leadership communication?

Communication objective

Providing leadership communication strategy that can be used to solve internal communication problem.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter will be discussing the specialisation subject for the chosen client along with the reason and the benefit of the chosen specialisation subject. The next chapter will be discussing the theories of leadership communication and the important of effective leadership communication to enhance organisation performance. After understanding the theories, the next chapter will talk a lot about the recent development on leadership communication. This chapter will lead to the analysis of which idea that can be found in the trends of leadership communication that could be use to improve Unissula leadership communication. Finally, this report will be ended will conclusion and recommendation to improve Unissula leadership communication.

Research Method

This research is based on desk research on the chosen topic: leadership communication. Desk research is a continuous method that was occurring throughout the writing process, and here the list of several books that have been assessed by using content analysis and search method; clear leadership: sustaining real collaboration and partnership at work by Gervase R. Bushe, Leadership, feedback and the open communication gap by Leanne E. Atwater and David A. Waldman and Leadership communication by Deborah J. Barrett. However, valuable information also obtained during research from the interview with the client.

II. Leadership Communication

The basic concept

Northouse (2007) defined leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. And communication is an inevitable part of this process. Supporting that statement, research carried out by Mintzberg (1973) Eccles and Nohria (1991) (as cited in Barrett, 2008, p.2) found that managers or leaders spend most of their day engaged in communication; in fact communication activity occupies 70 to 90 percent of their time every day. This research shows the importance of mastering leadership communication for leaders in order to improve their communication effectivity with the subordinates. Barret (2008) also emphasised that it is through effective communication that leaders guide, direct, motivate, and inspire others. By having good communication skills, Unissula's leader will enable, foster, and create the understanding and trust necessary to encourage others to follow him/her in order to achieve Unissula's goal.

According to Barrett (2008) leadership communication is the controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which leaders influence a single person, a group, an organisation, or a community. Leadership communication uses the full range of communication skills and resources to overcome interferences and to create and deliver messages that guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others to action.

The leadership communication skills

From several literatures (Barret, 2008; Hamelink, 2002; Archibald, 2002) the writer offers a range of leader's communication skill that leader should have in order to achieve effective leadership communication:

1. Projecting a positive leadership ethos
Leadership communication depends on the ability to project a positive image, or more specifically, a positive ethos. Ethos refers to qualities of greater depth and substance. It ties more directly to leader character (Barret, 2008). As it mentions previously that leaders influence others to achieve a specific goals. In order to accomplish this, having a good persuasive communication is important. The Greek philosopher Aristotle divided the means of persuasion, appeals, into three categories--Ethos, Pathos, Logos. Aristotle (as cited in Ramage & Bean, 1998, pp. 81-82) refers ethos as credibility or trustworthiness that shown from individual's character. It also relies on the individual's reputation. Reputation can be resulted from individual's previous record and sometimes it exists independently or separated from the message that is being delivered. How the audiences perceive the speaker is significant aspect that influence the communication effectivity. Furthermore, for the audiences to perceive the speaker as credible, they must perceive the speaker as knowledgeable, authoritative, confident, honest and trustworthy (Barret, 2008). From the previous research (Prianti, 2010) leader credibility is important in influencing subordinate achieving specific goals. The nursery faculty felt hesitant in carrying specific project because they felt that their rector is less knowledgeable than themselves about the project that make them questioning the project's policy at the first place. Understanding how subordinates perceive leader will help leader to be more self-aware in his/her character and reputation. By doing this leader will have the ability to project a positive leadership ethos.
2. Understanding what motivates others to listen and to act In Harvard business review article, Cialdini (as

- cited in Barret, 2008, p. 12) argues, “no leader can succeed without mastering the art of persuasion”. Just as creating a positive ethos aids in the art of persuasion, understanding what motivates others to listen and to act will help leader to create effective leadership communication. Looking thoroughly at what makes people attend to the messages, what is important to them, what problem do they face are important to find out the motivation that makes them to listen and to act. People are obviously much more likely to listen to or to care about what others say if the messages are meaningful to them or if they have interest in them. By combining this interest with knowing how to encourage the audience to trust the speaker and believe the messages, leader will have attentive audiences (Barret, 2008).
3. Creating assertiveness environment Rich and Schroeder (as cited in Rakos, 2004, p. 290) propose definition of assertive behaviour as “the skill to seek, maintain, or enhance performance in an interpersonal situation through the expression of feelings or wants when such expression risks loss of reinforcement or even punishment, the degree of assertiveness may be measured by the effectiveness of an individual's response in producing, maintaining, or enhancing reinforcement.” Moreover, being assertive is being able to speak up what individual's want neither in passive nor aggressive way that harms no one but in the same time preserves individuals own right. Therefore creating assertiveness environment is important for leader in order to fully understand his/her subordinates. Archibald (2002) argued that if leaders have the ability to express ideas constructively and in the same time encourage others to do the same then he/she would be able to “negotiate organization's objectives” and attain peak team performance. Furthermore, by creating assertiveness environment, leader will stimulate subordinates to bring their own skills, passion and commitment to organization's objective. By having the ability to express what they feel and think about organization's action, it will increase subordinates sense of belonging to the organization. Creating assertiveness environment also shown to subordinates that leader willing to listen subordinates' opinion and creating dialogical communication. Hamelink (as cited in Quarry and Ramirez, 2009, p.17) stated that dialogical communication requires the capacity to listen, to be silent, to suspend judgment, to critically investigate one's own assumptions, to ask reflexive question and to be open to change. With dialogical communication, it stimulates the same commitment from each participant in particular communication encounter. For example, if leader build his/her action from dialogical communication, then it means he/she also share the responsibility of his/her action consequences with others.
 4. The dean and head of nursery study program is an expert about their subject: nursery. Therefore, creating assertiveness environment in order to build dialogical communication with them will enable rector to understand their point of view about the project or even resulted on finding possible solutions about the project. By doing this, rector will increase his subordinates commitment to his action since his subordinates feel more involved in building that specific action.
 5. Those three communication skills will help leader in the Unissula to create effective leadership communication. In addition each communication skills are interrelated with each other. In order to projecting a positive leadership ethos, leaders have to understand how his/her subordinates perceive him/her. It means that leader have to undergo analysis about his/her audiences. In this audiences analysis he/she will have to build assertiveness environment in order to find genuine information from his/her subordinates. Especially, in Indonesian private university like Unissula, which fall into high-power distance and high-context culture (Prianti, 2010), subordinates prefer not to directly express their opinion about certain subject in order to avoid argument with their superior. Therefore, creating an environment where people have the ability to express their truly feeling and wants is important to understand what subordinates point of view and motivation to listen and to act.

The Importance of Effective Leadership Communication

According to Laswell, communication is simply defined as who says what, to whom, with what channel and what effect. Individuals send a message to others in order to achieve shared meaning (Fiske, 1990). Therefore communication labelled as effective if both the speaker and receiver shared the same meaning. To put this concept into organizational context, the writer defines organizational communication activity as process of sending messages to organization's constituencies in order to create mutual understanding, which in the end will help organization to achieve organization's objective.

As it mention before that leader have the ability to influences the behaviour of others. Consequently, leadership in organisations concerns the exercise of power to some degree. If there is a leader then there should be a follower and leader have the power towards his/her follower. The question now relies on whether effective leadership communication is important or not, since leader already have the power to influence the behaviour of others. Research discovered that even though Unissula's rector have the ultimate power in the decision making and his subordinates has to follow his decision like it or not, it doesn't guaranteed Unissula to achieve it's goal. Unissula partnership with Mindanao state university overcome several barrier because lack of effective leadership communication. The dean and head of nursery study program as rector's subordinates do not feel

engaged with the partnership policy. They have their own feeling and attitudes towards the partnership, which makes them light-hearted in carrying the partnership. Therefore effective leadership communication is important for leader in order to communicate with his/her subordinates. Effective leadership communication is the key towards employee engagement, which in the end influences organisation's performance.

III. Where The Trends in Leadership Communication Hold?

As environment keeps changing, organisation-facing complex challenges. Research recently carried out by Criswell and Martin on 2007 about how leader views their organisation future, found that nearly 92% of the executive surveyed believe the challenges (internal and external) their organizations face are more complex than they were just five years ago. Generally, the top factors listed were internal changes to the organization, market dynamics, a shortage of talent, and globalization (Criswell & Martin, 2007). Those challenges will influence employees' motivation, employees' commitment, employees' loyalty and employees' performance. Leadership is necessary to motivate and guide individuals, to transform groups of individuals into teams, and to provide a vision for the grater strategic direction of the organizations. If leadership is a key basis for organizational performance, then communication is the key to effective leadership (Atwater & Waldman, 2008). Therefore, those challenges will influence leader in his/her leadership style, which accordingly will change the way leader communicate to his/her subordinates.

These findings create a question, how will leadership communication function differently to address those challenges? In Unissula cases, internal changes in structure/process, market dynamics and globalization are the issues that influence their leadership communication. In order to answer that question, the writer propose several trends on leadership that influences how leadership communication should function, today.

1. Lateral leadership

A study by The Hay Group (as cited in Benzia, et.al, 2001 pp.3) a global human resource management consultancy, found that trust and confidence in top leadership was the single most reliable predictor of employee satisfaction in an organization. Supporting this fact Garten (2001) in his book emphasised that the need for leaders to be trusted by their subordinates is becoming more important. Indeed, trust is the foundation upon which all successful organizations are built. Without trust, employees will not commit and engage to organisation's objective. Furthermore, It is estimated that over 70% of organizational change initiatives fail for reasons related to those issues (Benzia, et.al, 2001). Therefore, lateral leadership paradigm arises to support foundational basics of mutual trust and effective communication that become organisation's issue, nowadays.

Benzia, et.al. (2001) defined lateral leadership as a new leadership paradigm for inspiring others to greater achievement, in alignment with organizational objectives. They also add that a great sports coach not only sets the game plan, he/she also coaches individual players to higher performance, during the game, and from the sidelines (or laterally). Hence, the lateral leader is a coach as well as a leader. It comprises a constellation of communication skills that leader should have from networking and coalition building to persuading and negotiation communication skills (Harvard management update, 2003). This paradigm implied that "I leader-You follower" or authoritative communication style is no longer relevant since it becomes more participative communication style. The following communication skills are pointed to describe the trends.

From article on harvard management update (2003), the writer list several leadership communication style that leader should have as the implication of lateral leadership:

a. Networking

Certain people are portals to other people, they can connect leader to more and bigger networks. Therefore leader need to build relationship with these individuals in particular. As it mention before, Unissula is higher education institutions. It means that most of Unissula employees are lecturer, which hold higher degree education. These kinds of employees are expertise in their own subject. They have their own network that can help Unissula in achieving its objectives. From example, the dean of nursery program has his own network that related with nursery subject. From in-depth interview, it is revealed that one of the reason, nursery faculty felt hesitant in working with Mindanao state university, because they have their own network, which they think more credible to work with than Mindanao state university. Such circumstances can be avoided, if rector builds networking with his own subordinates since certain peoples will lead him to more and bigger networks. Building relationship (continuous communication) with his subordinates might help rector in creating network within Unissula in order to achieve a bigger network outside Unissula.

b. Constructive persuasion and negotiation

Leaders should communicate with their subordinates not for manipulation but for mutual benefit. In doing this, when communicate leaders have to see people that they are dealing with as a peer instead of a "target", who can serve as a confidant and brainstorming partner. In nursery faculty case, by communicating with instead of communicating out with his subordinates in order to create partnership relationship, rector will

gain more information. Those information will help rector to understand his subordinates' opinion about the project or even about himself. It will help rector to persuade and negotiate his idea about the project. Understanding the audience motivation and opinion is important to create successful persuasion and negotiation (Barret, 2008).

c. Consultation

By consulting the idea with the network or subordinates, leaders will get the better results. More over by inviting subordinates to participate in defining the process, subordinates will commit to and advocate the desired outcome to other employees. In addition, instead of telling his idea, rector should asking his subordinates about his idea and sees what his subordinates idea or suggestion about it. For a person in a leadership role, giving feedback is essential but receiving feedback, whether positive or negative, also is considered essential to developing a sense of self-awareness and realistic self-perceptions (Atwater & Waldman, 2008).

d. Coalition building

By doing coalition building, leaders will be able to gather influential people together to form "a single body of authority". In fact when leaders consult his idea at the same time he build coalition. Indeed, by consulting with the most influential employees (the ones who shape the attitudes of those around them), leader can get them on board in order to get others employees' support (Mitchell, 2002).

2. Democratic leadership and participative style

According to Western (2008) democratic and participative leadership style are widely accepted as the most relevant styles, which can motivate workers and create organizational structures and cultures, which are the closest embodiment of the human relations movement's ideas. Therefore, in the age where trustworthiness and leaders' credibility are the key to employee's commitment, democratic and participative leadership style become another trends that influence the way leaders communicate to their employees.

Democratic leadership aims to share decision-making and give employees responsibility and a degree of autonomy to bring about double benefits: satisfaction for the employee and increased output (Western, 2008). To simplify, democratic leadership is the opposite of authoritative leadership. In an article "exerting influence without authority (Harvard management update, 2003) explains that authority doesn't really necessary for leaders to have in order to influence their follower. Indeed, authority does not guaranteed that leaders always be able to influence their follower. To add, Blanchard (as cited in Caroselli, 2008, pp.9) stated, "The key to leadership today is influence not authority". Authority can help leaders, however it can also harm them when trying to push their influence through authority. To explain what is really meant by this, Western (2008) argued that a leader who is given a position needs to get followers to follow with 'hearts and minds' and not solely to use their leadership position to coerce people into actions.

3. Collaborative working

Gervase R. Bushe in his book (2008) argued as industrial revolution created its new form of organisation (bureaucracy), the information revolution is creating its own new form of organisation. Organisation moving from command and control to collaboration, from organising based on a few leaders telling everyone what to do to dispersed leadership, with managers, professionals and teams authorised to make their own decisions. Moreover, in collaborative organisations, authority is dispersed widely. More people authorised to make decisions and take actions that obligate others in the organisation to make complementary actions (Bushe, 2008). Accordingly, in collaborative working leaders delegate their authority to subordinates. It can be shown from the way leaders communicate with their subordinates, instead of telling, leaders consulting their idea. This kind of communication style will stimulate partnership relationship between leader and subordinates. Leader's ability to create and sustain partnership with others is a key in collaborative working system. Partnership is a relationship between two or more people who are jointly committed to the success of whatever process or project they are engaged in (Bushe, 2008).

4. Open communication

Atwater and Waldman (2008) in their book defined open communication in terms of difficult information potentially communicated by people in leadership positions, rather than the more positive or mundane information. It means, leader have to be able to communicate good news and bad news, including giving and receiving positive feedbacks and negative feedbacks. Feedback is encouraged in organisations because it is expected to improve self-awareness and can be used to modify behaviour or to reinforce desired behaviour (improve performance, fix behaviour problems) (Atwater & Waldman, 2008). However, negative feedbacks might not be well received. Therefore creating assertive environment is important to support open communication trends.

The following quote from Daft (2002) is representative regarding the open sharing of information across levels: "Open communication improves the operations of a company, builds trust, spreads knowledge, and provides a foundation for communicating vision, values, and other vital big-picture information". The assumption is if it is good enough for upper management to know, then it is also good enough for those at the lower levels to know, especially if the information is in some way relevant to those individuals. On top of that, Martin (1998), McCune (1998) (as cited in Atwater & Waldman, 2008, pp.6) argued if upper management shares information with employees at lower levels, trust should permeate the organization, thus inspiring collaboration and commitment to common goals. It will also foster employees' sense of belonging regarding organisational goals and challenges.

IV. Conclusion

Having effective leadership communication is important for the ongoing organisation. As environment keeps changing, organisation has to face more complex challenges. A myriad of factors have challenges employee's motivation, employee's commitment, employee's loyalty, which in the end threaten organisational performance. Leadership is necessary to motivate and guide individuals, to transform groups of individuals into teams, and provide a vision for individuals to get engage with the organisation's objectives, which in the end influences organisational performance. Moreover, if leadership is a key basis for organisational performance, one can safely say communication is the key to effective leadership (Atwater & Waldman, 2008).

Communication spread through all aspects of leadership behaviour. Indeed, as it mention on the previous chapter, communication activity occupies 70 to 90 percent of leader's activity (Barret, 2008). Organisation exists because it has something to achieve. Therefore, leaders communicate with their subordinates with the intention to motivate and persuade others organisation's member to perform at their peak performance in order to achieve organisational objective.

Leadership occur in a group context (Western, 2008). If there is a leader, there are followers. Consequently, leaders have influences toward their subordinates. However, leaders do not necessarily need authority to exerting their influences toward subordinates. Indeed, individual with no authority can become a leader and have influence among others. Therefore, mastering the art of persuasion is important for leader who is given a position (authority) in order to get followers to follow with 'hearts and minds' and not solely to use his/her leadership position to coerce people into actions.

Thus authority vs. influence development in leadership style changes the way leaders have to communicate with their subordinates. Instead of putting subordinates as a "target", leaders have to put subordinates as a partner in achieving mutual benefit. This kind of communication style will stimulate dialogical communication between leader and subordinate. In dialogical communication, each participant can assertively express his or her idea. With assertive environment, both leader and subordinate will be able to communicate openly. Including sending and receiving negative information. Furthermore, creating partnership relationship with other organisation member will sustain collaborative working within organisation. It also leads leader to build a wider networking, since certain people are portals to other people (Harvard management update, 2003).

Improving leadership communication effectiveness will help Unissula to improve internal public's commitment, motivation and loyalty towards organisational objectives, which in the end will enhance Unissula performance in the eyes of external stakeholder. Communicating and advocate organisational objectives internally at the first place are a key to achieve organisational objectives before you start to communicate it to the outside world.

V. Recommendation

Unissula leaders can no longer only rely on authority to get subordinates undertake the desired behaviour; however authority along with effective leadership communication can support leader in order to get subordinates' commitment and loyalty in achieving organisational objectives. Based on this research, there are 3 things that Unissula leaders (everyone with structural position; rector, dean, head of study program, head of department, etc) can do to improve effective leadership communication:

1. Bring the right people on board and get real dialog

In several article and books, it is discovered that subordinates' engagement is important to achieve the desired outcome of leadership communication activity. Therefore participative style of communication that invites dialogical communication between leader and subordinates is important. By putting individuals that you are dealing with as a partner that have the same right to send and receive a message, it will help you to stimulate their engagement. Feeling involve with the process will build individuals responsibility and commitment to the desired outcome. Furthermore, by creating dialogical communication, you will collect more important information about your audiences (subordinates) that lead you to understand who are the right individuals that can help you to advocate and support your idea to others organisation members.

In addition, knowing who you your audiences are will help you to understand your audiences in order to create effective communication strategy for them. From the audiences' perspective, knowing their leader and have a

chance to communicate with them, will increase 'we feeling' which stimulate loyalty in achieving organisational objectives.

2. Create assertive environment

Communicating positive information such as positive feedback to leaders is easy for subordinates. However, because not all feedback is positive and it might not be well received for a variety of reasons, therefore communicate negative feedback to leader is more complicated for subordinates. Especially, for Unissula that have high-context culture, subordinates will prefer to stay silent than to disagree with his superior. For that reason, using open communication style that stimulates individuals to be able to express their idea is important to support subordinates become assertive.

For a person in a leadership role, giving feedback is essential but receiving feedback, whether positive or negative, also is considered essential to developing a sense of self-awareness and realistic self-perceptions (Atwater & Waldman, 2008). Therefore, creating assertive environment will help leader to projecting a positive reputation about him/herself. Pity goes to leader who lacks self-awareness of his or her own reputation. How the audiences perceive the speaker is significant aspect that influence the communication effectivity.

3. Consult your ideas

Research discovered that the most common mistake leaders did in communicate with their subordinates is that they are focusing on sending the ideas out instead of seeking the opinion inside. By consulting the ideas within the network or his/her subordinates, leader might get a new perspective about the idea and get a better result. Involving the audience with the process itself will increase their commitment to the N-result.

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