COMMUNICATION ETHICS IN AN ORGANIZATION
(A Case Study: Communication Ethics in Improving Public Services at Education Official of Sukoharjo)

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Abstract

This study described about communication ethics between higher authority officers and staffs at Education Office of Sukoharjo because there were communication gaps between them. This study was aimed to find out the contraventions of communication ethics, communication qualities between two parties, delivering messages by the communicators and receiving messages by the communicants. By conducting this research, it could be figure out that there were internal and external factors which causing ethics contraventions, gaps between higher authority officers, staffs and the society. The internal factors were about the differences of positions, job classes between fellow officers and the fear of communicating with the higher authority officers. Meanwhile, the external factor was the existence of discrimination in services.

Keywords: communication ethics in public services

INTRODUCTION

Naturally, communication was the process of exchanging messages conducted between a communicator and a communicant. It was the process of delivering minds or feelings of someone (communicator) to another one (communicant). Minimally, communication had to contain similar meaning between the two parties who involved in the interaction. Certainly, in this process, there was an expected goal, such as the expectation of communicant's feedback which was expected to meet the communicator's desire. This goal could be achieved if there was a mutual understanding between the communication subjects. A communicant understood about what the communicator's meaning, the vice versa, a communicator understood about what the communicant's intended to know.

To actualize a mutual understanding between communication subjects, there was an important factor. It was a comfortable situation in conducting a communication. In this matter, it was how a communicator made an effort in order to mad the communication process interesting and to involve the communicant into a convenient communication atmosphere. Certainly, a communicator should consider some factors.

Basically, a communication could be conducted orally and in writing. The oral communication was a communication which conducted directly (face-to-face) without a media. Each individual tried to define his own attitude and ideal behavior model which should be possessed and conducted by himself. Besides that, an individual should understand what he should do in a communication. Meanwhile, an indirect communication was a communication which conducted via media such as telephone and internet. For examples, a long-distance communication was held to make a cooperation between companies in order to expedite work process. The communication could be conducted by writing mails each other.

Communication ethics was necessary to be focused on in order to avoid wrong prejudices which led to negative impacts. The negative impacts, in these ethics, were the question of how a human being should behave or act which should not violate the norms. Ethics assisted human beings in posturing all of norms, from in and outside, in order to raise moral awareness, not even raise bad morality (Mufid, 2009:75). It could be said that, ethics gave human beings an orientation about how he experienced his life through the series of daily behaviors. It meant that ethics helped human being to posture and behave properly in undergoing their life.

The role of ethics was important that it was implemented as the rules of any profession. There were some professions ethics which consisting writing rules for a number of various professions conducted by every human being. It included public relation profession ethics which was ruled

by Codes of Public Relation Ethics. One should possess politeness ethics, honesty, responsibility, emphaty and tender speech.

Ethics was necessary in improving professionalism. The implementation of ethics should be appropriate to the guidelines of behavior of a professional in making decision about how to do something objectively and responsibly. Since ethics was very important, people appreciated ethics in order to maintain the existence of an organization and to build satisfaction in target public.

In this study, ethics was connected with communication so it was called as a communication ethics. A communication ethics tried to elaborate ethics standard which used by the communicators and communicants. In communication ethics, there were various perspectives. One of them was dialogist perspective. A communication was a process of two sides dialog. Dialog act was the act of each communication participant which noted by its excellent quality such as openness, honesty, concord, intensity and many more (Munfit, 2009:185).

Communication ethics was an absolute term which was conducted by an official departement in presenting public services, such as customer services or front liners. Communication ethics was the basic or guideline for every customer service who interacted with customer or other public.

Education Official of Sukoharjo was subjected to give services to the public especially, teachers or educators. Education Official of Sukoharjo was aimed to be able to give services well to the public. However, based on some cases found in the office, some public were unsatisfied with the services presented by the officers. The information which were delivered by the organization to the public were not complete. They did not explained the details about what the public have to do, for example, in applying BOS (School Operation Fund) and personnel status.

Based on the explanation above, the title of this study was related with "Communication Ethics in Public Services (A Study of the Implementation of Communication Ethics in Public Services at Education Official of Sukoharjo)

LITERARY REVIEW

Communication was an fundamental activity in a human being's life. Human's need to connect with others had been occupied by almost all religions which had been existed since the age of Adam and Eve. Human's characteristic which tended to deliver his desire and to be curious about others' desires was the human early ability to communicate automatically through signs and symbols. Then, it was continued by the ability to make those signs and symbols meaningful which changing them into the form of verbal language. It was also explained that generally a communication was meant as a relation or activity related to the process of exchanging ideas. Besides that, a communication was also described as a contact connection between humans, not only individually but also in group (Widjaja, 2008:13).

Besides that, Wilbur Schramm in (Suprapto, 2006 : 2-3), stated that communication was as a sharing process in which: a communication derived from Latin words (language) *communis* which meant general (*common*) or together. Based on the previous explanation, the definition of communication, as stated by Schramm, tended to the effectiveness of the sharing process between both parties. According to Schramm, the effective communication was a communication which produced commonness and similar meaning between sources and audiences. Besides, a communication would also be effective if message, understanding and etc received by the audience were precisely the same as what the conveyor (source) intended to.

In fact, communication had infinite meanings. Even the simplest communication had complex contents. Moreover, it was related to the content of message, media and its purposes alike the definition of communication stated by Effendy (2003:60): a process of delivering a message in form of meaningful symbols functioned as a combination of mind and feeling formed ideas, information, trust, expectation, appeal, and more kinds of things which were as always

conducted by a person to another, not only directly or face to face but also indirectly via media, with the intention of changing attitude, point of view or behavior.

Generally, a communication could be defined as a process of delivering messages from one to another by using various kinds of media. The word of communication came from Latin word *communicatio* and sourced from the word *communis* which meant "same". The meaning of "same" here was both two parties had similar meaning about something (Effendy, 2003:9).

Harold D, Lasswell, one of communication experts, explained a simple description about what communication was by the questions "who says in which channel to whom with what effect?". The definition of communication, according to Harold D. Lasswell, clearly depicted through communication elements:
1. Communicator (Communicator, source, sender, encoder)
2. Message (Message)
3. Media (Channel, media)
4. Communicant (Communicant, communicatee, receiver, recipient, decoder)
5. Effect (Effect, impact, influence)

METHOD

Kind of Research

This study used descriptive research. Descriptive research was a type of research which purposed to explain a phenomenon deeply by collecting infinite data and arranging factual descriptions systematically and precisely about facts and the characters of population of certain objects which existed during the research activities. In this study, the research activities were conducted at Education Official of Sukoharjo which related to the Communication Ethics activities by constructing indepth interviews to the research subjects.

The collected data were words and pictures, not numbers. This study did not consider about the number of population or sampling. Even, the population or sampling used in this study were very limited. When the collected data were enough deep and able to interpret the phenomena, the researcher did not add more sampling. In another words, what was more emphasized in this kind of study was the quality of the data, not the quantity.

The Techniques of Selecting Informant

Selection or determination about who the sample and the informant used used as the source of data was defined as *purposive* sample selection technique. In Patton language, it was called as *purposeful sampling* and Bailay defined it as *non probability sampling* (read Slamet, 2014). Besides that, there was another selecting sample technique called *maximum variation sampling* which described as the technique of capturing or depicting a central theme of study using intersecting information drawn from various types of informants. The sense of using maximum variety in selecting sample was: common tendencies which appeared from the big varieties became profound interests and valuable in a study. The method of arranging maximum varieties of sample selection was by selecting different characteristics of informants (read Pattopn,;Slamet, 2014)

The Technique of Data Collection

To obtained the data needed in this study, it used some techniques as described below:
1. *Indepth Interviewing*
   Interview was the method of collecting data by delivering some questions directly by the researcher (data collector) to the informants (interviewees). Then, the answer of the informants (interviewees) were noted or recorded by tape recorder, (Soehartono, 2002:68). Interview was opened and sociable which conducted in informal and intimate situation (Nasution, 1992: 69-81). The questions asked by the researcher were not too strict or structured in order to be easier to conduct reinterview with the same informants if needed.

By applying this method, the informants were expected to deliver their answer honestly and opened. The purposes of this interview were stated by Guba and Lincoln (in Moleong, 2007:186) as to construct, reconstruct, project, and verify the objects of the research.

2. *Direct Observation*

   Passive direct observation was conducted in this study. It meant that the researcher did not further emotionally involve with the object of the research. Detailed observation was aimed to the activities of Communication Ethics of the officers at Education Official in Sukoharjo in order to be able to collect accurate data. The observation was conducted not only by making notes about events or phenomena but also by doing anything more which related to this study (Nasution, 1992:58). After conducting observation, the researcher created some notes containing the observed activities which was called as activities notes.

Data Validity

Data validity was an accuracy degree of data which sourced from the objects of research and the effort of the researcher in reporting them. Validity standard in a qualitative research refereed to the contents and the use of measurer. According to Lincoln and Cuba (1985:125-130), there are at least four standards of prominent criteria used to assure the accuracy of the qualitative research results:

1. Credibility standard.

   It had to be conducted in order to make the results of qualitative research highly trusted in accordance with the facts happened during the research activities (information from the subjects or the selected participants)

2. Transferability standard.

   This kind of standard was formed as empiric questions which cannot be answered by the qualitative researcher, yet it only could be answered and evaluated by the readers of the researcher. If a result of a research had high transferability standard, the readers could obtained clear description and explanation about the context and the focus of the research

3. Dependability standard

   It was an examination or evaluation focused on the the researcher's accuracy in conceptualizing what had been discussed. The more consistent the researcher in conducting the research such as the process of collecting data, interpret the research finding, even reporting the result of the research, the more achievable the study to fulfill dependability standard.

4. Confirmability standard.

   This standard was more focused on the quality of audit (inspection) and the accuracy of the research results, if it was truly sourced from the activities of data collection in the field. Confirmability audit commonly conducted during dependability audit process.

The Techniques of Data Analysis

Data analysis method used in this study was qualitative analysis. The definition of qualitative analysis was the analysis based on the arranged words which elaborate in to a text (Miles & Huberman 1992 in Nurhaidar 2009:59). The collected data obtained by doing exploration and interviews then were analyzed and presented in the form of words or narration , not in the form numbers. Based on the research purpose which previously described, the data analysis method used in this study was qualitative description.

1. Data Reduction

   According to Bungin (2004:25) reduction in qualitative research could be paralyzed by the terms of data processing, including the activities of collecting data completely and classifying them in a concept, category of certain theme.

2. Data Presentation

   The next phase was data interpretation which referred to the condition, relation or tendency which was elaborated in order to make the data can be described and interpreted well.

3. Drawing Conclusion

At last, the data were organized into a conclusion. So, the conclusion consisted of all the results of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication ethics was a complex matter and a must to be implemented by every individual in interacting with others, not only in society but also in an organization. A communication ethics which was implemented well in an organization, such as in Education Official of Sukoharjo, would bring positive impact in achieving the organization's aims. Otherwise, if a communication ethics was not applied in an organization intensively, there would be negative impacts occurred in the organization or corporation.

Giyatno, SE, as the Administrative Section Head of General Affairs and Personnel stated that:

"Ethics was a must to be implemented in a the job life, especially in our office as focused on public services. When communication ethics was well implemented by doing activities such as talking politely, our job could be done well and safely. We always informed to the staffs to keep implementing ethics well when interact with the public who needed our services."

The results of the research figured out that basically ethics brought good benefits for all individuals who implemented it well, ethics could be applied by the officers by conducting a good communication when giving services to the public. To maintain a good ethics, the authority always reminded the officers to apply it according to the procedures.

Dewi, as customer service 1, stated that:

"Working in education institution, especially in a public service, demanded applying ethics. Not only in office, but also in the society, an individual should implement ethics well. Essentially, ethics was very useful to be implemented, especially in my job as a customer service who directly faced the public."

Based on the quote of the interview above, it turned out that ethics must have been applied in every situation when conducting social interaction with another individual, in this case with the public who asked for some informations in any forms at Education Official of Sukoharjo. Fundamentally, ethics which was implemented by the Customer Services, as the front liners, was a general image of the services conducted by Education Official of Sukoharjo.

Bambang, as a service recipient, explained:

"So far, the services presented by Education Official of Sukoharjo were good. Every time I came here, I was always serviced well even though the process took a little bit longer and complicated."

Based on the public opinion who received the services at Education Official of Sukoharjo, it turned out that the services were generally good although sometimes it was complicated because the public had to pass some procedures. The procedures were the steps or dispositions of documents which should be fulfilled by the consumer. This documents, then, had to be checked more by the officers at Education Official of Sukoharjo.

Dewi, as Customer Service 1, stated that:

"It was true that it was complicated when public managed anythings in a government institution. There were many steps that had to be passed. We, as the subordinations, cannot do anything because there was the rules applied. However, we tried to give best services to the public in order to make them more satisfy by talking with them about anything comfortably."

Based on the quote above, it figured out that although the process of managing anything in the institution took long time due to some procedures, the Customer Service Staffs kept giving

maximum services to the public to make them comfortable by having small conversation informally but politely.

Giyatno, SE, as the Administrative Section Head of General Affairs and Personnel stated that:

> "Actually, this was not complicated. It was common steps of process that had to be fulfilled because we also had to check wether it was right or not."

Basically, managing personnel needed quite long time because there were some steps had to be fulfilled. The purpose of the steps were to avoid incorrect data which caused disadvantages to the public or the educators themselves.

Ian, as a Customer Service 2, stated that:

> "It was common that some teachers or public were not patient to wait the queue. Sometimes, there were some people got angry and complained that the service was so late. However, we as the customer service, kept showing good ethics in front of them. Nevertheless, if there was a chaos happened, we asked the security to manage it."

Each Customer Service Staff had to present good services to the public, in this case they were called as consumers. The services were presented by delivering good messages politely although the consumer who received the services was uncomfortable caused by the complicated process that made them took quite long time in managing documents.

Dewi, as Customer Service 1, stated that:

> "To me, as a customer service staff, the first ethics that presented in front of the consumer was smiling. Then, it was be followed by asking them about what we could help. Kindness showed our credibility of us as an individual and an organization."

The form of communication ethics in the process of delivering messages could be conducted non verbally for example by showing smiley facial expression. Then, it was continued by delivering verbally message related to the purpose of why the consumer came to Education Official of Sukoharjo.

The Head of Education Official of Sukoharjo stated that:

> "Anywhere and Anytime, every single person should have good ethics for himself and for others when he interacted with them. This ethic could be presented by various activities such as being discipline to the work schedule. It meant that if a staff was discipline with his work schedule, he must have been obedient and loyal to the job rules."

The result of the interview above described that ethics was very important to be implemented to every individual's self and to others whom a person interacted with. At Education Official of Sukoharjo, communication ethics implementation could be proven by being discipline at the office. A staff who was discipline about his office hour showed that he was responsible to his job. The impression showed by this kind of staff was the beneficial consideration for the supervision in his assessment.

Giyatno, SE, as the Administrative Section Head of General Affairs and Personnel stated that:

> "If we were noticed that there were some staffs behaved unethically, in example being late to the office or leaving the office at office hours, we were not reluctant to reprimand them directly. Ethically, those kind of staffs were not able to trusted and irresponsible to their job."

The indirect rebuke from the higher authority officer to their staffs was the information that had a beneficial purpose which was to change the staffs' bad behaviour so that they could work better. According to communication ethics, it was in accordance with what should be explained and the surrounding condition. Basically, what the higher authority officer did was positive in

order to achieve the organization's goals well and maximally, especially in serving public as consumers.

Ian, as Customer Service 2, stated that:

> "It was true that our higher authority officer was very discipline. The rules must have been obeyed. They directly rebuked us who broke the rules, in example serving the public improperly. The point was ethics had to be implemented in our attitude (non verbally) and talking (verbally)."

From the quote above, it could be understood that ethics, in this case, was related to how to behave verbally and non verbally. Verbally, ethics was depicted by the body movements in doing tasks. While, non verbally, ethics was related to how to talk directly to not only the consumers but also the office mates. These kinds of things should be maintained well in order to achieve the organization's goals.

Giyatno, SE, as the Administrative Section Head of General Affairs and Personnel stated that:

> "When the higher authority officers rebuked the staffs who broke the job rules especially related to the work ethics, we did not snap them. Otherwise, we advised them politely. We invited them in to a warm discussion. I thought that we were mature enough to accepting critics and suggestions."

The reprimand delivered politely to the staffs who tended not to serve maximally to the public was not presented by angry face or by high voice intonation. It was purposed to make the staff unoffended and accept the messages well.

Dewi, as Customer Service Staff 1, stated that :

> "This was the positive part of higher authority officers that when delivering rebuke, they were polite. Their rebukes contained suggestions. So, it made us as staffs felt appreciated and we, with pleasure, changed our bad behavior to be positive."

The quote above depicted that the attitude of appreciating and honoring each other was presented by a good communication ethics even though one of the staffs had broke the rules in serving the public. These attitudes were able to maintain the stability or improvisation the staffs'performances to be better than before.

The Head of Education Official of Sukoharjo said that:

> "Snapping our staffs and being angry because of their mistakes did not assure that their performance would be better. So, we tended to show a good ethics in a communication, I believed that you understood my meaning. Our purpose to deliver rebukes to our staffs was to make their performance better so this organization's image would also be positive."

A communication ethics was a method related to what should do and how to deliver messages to the addressee. A good communication ethics in an organization was alike what had been implemented by the Head of Education Official of Sukoharjo that by delivering positive messages to the staffs who did not work maximally."

Ian, as a Customer Staff 2, said that:

> "Actually, I and my friends here, did not only work but also learn anything from our work environment such as how to give excellent service to the public, understanding the manner of communicating with the public as consumers. It was due to the function of this institution which giving servies to the public in the case of managing licences."

This kind of work environment encouraged staffs, especially Customer Service staffs, to not only working and getting salary but also learning anything to improve their performance in

serving the public who were as consumers. This process of learning was more important than just being focused only on working and being paid.

A consumer stated that:

> "When I managed a licence about my promotion, the customer service staff, to me, did not perform maximally in giving service. I had been sitting there for hours while the staff was busy talking with other customer staff. Besides that, the staff also interrupted me when I was talking to him. Fortunately, his supervisor was looking at him and directly advised him."

The public services which less maximum performed impacted to a negative image for the organization where the services conducted, in this case it was at Education Official of Sukoharjo. It could be proven by the service which performed by the staff who tended to interrupt when conducting two sides communication with the consumer. It was not surprising that the reprimand related to that bad performance was directly delivered by the higher authority officer. The purpose was to make the staffs work better.

Ian, customer service staff 2, said that:

> "yesterday, I did not mean to interrupt the customer when he was talking to me. I just wanted to answer the question he asked in the previous but he kept talking without giving me chance to explain the answer. I was afraid of being forget about what I would explained to him. However, I asked him apologize to show politeness to him even though it was not 100% my mistake in serving him."

The attitude shown by Ian, as customer service staff 2, related to his apology to the consumer because of being mistaken in performing service, was a good ethics since he was brave enough to admit his mistake. This attitude was purposed to make the consumers, from lowest, middle or high class social status, appreciated.

Giyatno, SE, as the Administrative Section Head of General Affairs and Personnel stated that:

> "Giving public services meant to serve anyone who came to Education Official of Sukoharjo for example in the intention of managing personnel status. There was no discrimination in serving the consumers. For example, there was no special service to the consumer from high class social status. We serve all the consumers well."

From the quote above, it could be concluded that in giving services to the public, Education Official of Sukoharjo's staffs kept performed optimally to all the consumers from all social status. There was no discrimination in serving the public. The polite behavior was maintained and performed well by conducting a good communication and creating comfortable atmosphere when the consumers were in Education Official of Sukoharjo office building.

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