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THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN BUILDING A SOLID WORK TEAM AT BUMDES (VILLAGE-OWNED ENTERPRISES)

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Effective internal communication is one of the key factors in building a solid work team in Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). This study aims to explore the role of internal communication in shaping team cohesion in BUMDes and its impact on organizational performance. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participatory observations with BUMDes managers and staff in several villages. The results show that open and transparent communication between managers and team members is highly influential in improving coordination, resolving problems, and strengthening the collective work spirit. In addition, a clear understanding of the objectives and roles of each member also supports creating a harmonious working environment. This research contributes to developing more effective communication strategies in village-based organizations. It offers practical recommendations for BUMDes managers to improve the quality of internal communication to strengthen village economic institutions.
Keywords: internal communication, work team, BUMDes, Village-Owned Enterprise, village organization

INTRODUCTION

Workplace conflict is almost inevitable in organizational dynamics, including in community-based economic units such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). A global study by the American Management Association shows that managers spend nearly a quarter of their working time dealing with conflict (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2011). Conflicts can arise due to differences in values, individual goals, communication styles, and work pressures (Rahim, 2017). Conflict can reduce productivity and trigger organizational social tensions if not appropriately managed. However, on the other hand, conflict can also be a catalyst for renewal and improved performance if managed constructively (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2014).

In Indonesia, village economic development through BUMDes has become an important pillar in local economic empowerment. Based on data from the Ministry of

Villages, PDTT (2023), more than 50,000 BUMDes are spread across Indonesia. However, many face internal challenges, including conflicts between managers and between managers and the community. These conflicts are often rooted in transparency issues, the dominance of village elites, role imbalances, and non-open communication styles. In village communities with strong social values and customary hierarchies, work conflicts cannot be equated with conflicts in modern corporate organizations.

Village economic units, such as BUMDes, have unique characteristics: they are participatory, community-based, and often run by community leaders with other social roles outside the organization. However, this diversity of roles often leads to overlapping functions, potential conflicts of interest, and structural confusion. Along with the increasing complexity of economic-based village programs, conflict management is an important aspect that has not been discussed in depth, both in practice and in the academic literature.

Internal communication plays a pivotal role in either preventing or exacerbating organizational conflict. In the context of BUMDes, ineffective communication characterized by hierarchical barriers, lack of transparency, and informal channels often lies at the root of internal tensions. On the other hand, structured and open communication can significantly enhance trust, coordination, and mutual understanding among team members, thereby minimizing conflict potential.

The urgency of this research arises from the absence of a comprehensive mapping of work conflicts in BUMDes and the unavailability of contextual and local culture-based resolution strategies. So far, conflict resolution approaches in BUMDes have been more informal, relying on personal relationships and lacking documentation. On the other hand, unaddressed conflicts can lead to social disharmony and failure of village economic programs. While much of the conflict management literature addresses corporate enterprises (Danaeefard et al., 2019), the village context requires an approach more sensitive to social norms and local wisdom.

This research offers novelty by using a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the real experiences of BUMDes managers in managing conflict. This approach provides space for participants' narratives and reflections while capturing the complexity of emotions, informal power structures, and social dynamics unique to villages. This research also expands the horizon of conflict management from the corporate space to the local community space, which has so far escaped academic attention.

Previous studies, such as those by Thomas (1992), have classified five conflict management styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Tjosvold (2008) adds the importance of constructive approaches in conflict resolution to build long-term trust. In the context of community-based organizations such as BUMDes, studies by Ayoko et al. (2014) and Jordan & Troth (2004) also underline the importance of emotional intelligence and open communication culture to create a healthy work climate.

While Thomas (1992) and Tjosvold (2008) offer valuable frameworks for conflict resolution, their relevance in BUMDes requires contextualization. In BUMDes, conflict

is deeply intertwined with community values and hierarchical social structures. Therefore, applying these theories must be complemented with a communication-centric lens, highlighting that open, inclusive dialogue is the primary vehicle for constructive resolution.

The main objective of this research is to explore in depth how conflicts arise, are managed, and are resolved within village economic units in Indonesia, particularly BUMDes. The focus is not only on formal conflict resolution mechanisms but also on informal dynamics, social norms, and the role of local leadership in mediating conflicts.

Practically, the results of this research are expected to provide applicable policy recommendations for village governments, BUMDes managers, and village assistance agencies in building a more participatory and accountable conflict management system. From the academic side, this research enriches the treasury of human resource management science by adding the village perspective as an alternative organizational space.

Although this paper discusses conflict and economic empowerment, its principal focus is internal communication within BUMDes teams. This study investigates how communication dynamics strengthen or weaken team cohesion in village-level enterprises.

Using a narrative and thematic approach, this research enables a re-reading of the experience of village organizations not as mere business units but as complex social ecosystems. Amidst the spirit of self-reliance and local economy that the government continues to encourage, BUMDes' ability to manage internal conflicts effectively becomes an essential indicator for institutional sustainability and trust in the village community.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the dynamics of internal communication in building a solid work team in BUMDes. The following is a detailed description of the methods used:

A. Research Approach and Type

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to describe and understand the phenomenon of internal communication in BUMDes. This approach allows the researcher to explore the participants' subjective experiences regarding communication in their organization.

B. Location and Research Subjects

This research was conducted in several BUMDes across West Java. The research subjects included BUMDes managers, administrative staff, and several other active members directly involved in BUMDes operations. The selection criteria for the research subjects were based on their experience communicating and working within the BUMDes team for at least one year.

C. Data Collection Technique

Data collection was conducted through two primary methods:

1. In-Depth Interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with BUMDes managers and staff to explore their communication experiences, challenges, and strategies for building a solid work team.
2. Participatory Observation: The researcher is directly involved in the BUMDes' daily activities to observe the interaction between team members and managers and the communication process within the work team.

D. Data Analysis Technique

The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis, with the following steps:

1. Transcription of interview results
2. Coding relevant data
3. Grouping data into key themes or categories related to internal communication and work team dynamics.
4. Compilation of findings based on patterns found in the data, which are then presented as narrative descriptions.

E. Data Validity Test

Data validity is maintained through several techniques:

1. Triangulation of Sources and Methods: Using multiple data sources (interviews and observations) to increase the validity of findings.
2. Member Checking: Confirming the results of the interviews with several participants to ensure that the interpretation of the data matches their experiences.
3. Audit Trail: This involves recording the entire research process in detail, which allows others to supervise and recheck it.

F. Research Ethics

This study complied with applicable ethical standards, including seeking permission from the BUMDes and obtaining participants' consent to participate. All data collected was kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Sources of Conflict in Internal Communication at BUMDes

Conflicts in BUMDes internal communication arise from various factors rooted in intergenerational communication differences, role ambiguity, and limited infrastructure to support effective communication. The term 'limited infrastructure' refers to technological and procedural deficiencies, such as poor internet connectivity, inadequate meeting facilities, and a lack of standardized communication protocols or digital tools for team coordination. Based on interviews with several BUMDes

managers, it was found that communication problems often arise due to differences in perspectives and communication styles held by more senior managers and younger managers.

A senior manager at BUMDes C, who has worked for more than 10 years, explains:

"Our communication is more formal. Sometimes, new ideas presented by young people seem rushed and not well-considered. We tend to be more cautious in making decisions, whereas they want to act quickly."

On the other hand, the young manager at BUMDes A revealed:

"We often feel that communication with seniors is less open. Many ideas are not accepted just because we are young, even though we bring innovations that can make BUMDes more advanced."

From this statement, there is tension between the older generation, who tend to be cautious and more formal, and the younger generation, who want to innovate faster and more open. This conflict can potentially hinder the innovation process within BUMDes, which should be key to improving village efficiency and competitiveness.

In addition, an interview with one of the BUMDes administrators in Village B revealed a lack of clarity on organizational roles. Administrators who also double as business managers often feel confused when dividing their time between administrative and operational tasks, which results in ineffective information delivery to other team members.

B. Conflict Resolution Strategy in BUMDes

In these communication problems, BUMDes try to resolve conflicts with various informal and more structured strategies. Most BUMDes in the researched villages rely more on village deliberation strategies to resolve disputes between managers and team members. These deliberations usually involve community leaders or the village head, who serves as a mediator.

A BUMDes manager from Village A explained:

"We always prioritize deliberation. If there is a conflict, we usually invite all parties to discuss together. The village head is often the mediator."

However, while many stated that village meetings are a practical solution, some BUMDes managers revealed that decisions are often not optimal due to the dominance of more senior managers or the village head. This sometimes decreases the sense of engagement and participation from younger members. For example, one BUMDes team member from Village C said:

"Sometimes the decisions taken in village meetings do not fully consider the views of us younger people. The village head is too dominant in decision-making."

Nonetheless, most BUMDes in the studied villages reported that these deliberations effectively address emerging tensions and conflicts due to their communicative and inclusive nature. Local customs and hierarchical traditions also shape conflicts in BUMDes. The influence of age-based seniority norms often discourages younger team members from voicing dissenting opinions. In such contexts, communication must navigate managerial structure and entrenched social norms that govern interpersonal interactions.

C. Impact of Conflict on Team Performance at BUMDes

Conflicts that are not appropriately resolved have a considerable negative impact on team performance at BUMDes. In this case, several BUMDes managers acknowledged a decline in morale and team disharmony that can slow operational progress. One of the managers at BUMDes Village A revealed:

> *"When conflicts are not resolved properly, we often feel discouraged from working. For example, if communication issues are never resolved, we don't trust each other."*

This psychological impact impacts the team's productivity and the quality of services provided to the village community. If team members do not feel valued or understood, their involvement in BUMDes activities will decrease, ultimately impacting the BUMDes operation's sustainability.

Although village deliberations serve as the primary conflict resolution method, their inclusivity varies. Dominant voices, typically from elder leaders, can overshadow contributions from junior or marginalized members. To address this, BUMDes could benefit from facilitated dialogues with neutral moderators, anonymous feedback mechanisms, and structured participatory tools that ensure equitable input.

D. Discussion

1. Analysis of Conflict Sources in Internal Communication

The findings suggest that generational differences in BUMDes can be a significant source of conflict. This phenomenon is similar to the findings revealed by Hargie et al. (2010), who mentioned that generational differences in organizations can lead to differences in expectations and communication styles. In this case, the mismatch of communication styles between young managers and senior managers can lead to misinterpretation of messages, ultimately fostering tension within the team.

In addition, role ambiguity is also a considerable source of conflict. BUMDes managers who double up on several administrative tasks without a clear organizational structure lead to a poorly distributed workload. This is similar to the findings of Rahim (2017), who pointed out that role ambiguity often contributes to interpersonal tension in organizations.

2. Analysis of Conflict Resolution Strategies

The village deliberation strategy used by many BUMDes is a practical approach to resolving conflicts, but its success depends on the manager's openness to involving all parties. This reflects the concept proposed by Tjosvold (2008), which states that effective conflict resolution in community-based organizations requires open communication and active participation from all parties.

However, the dominance of senior managers or village heads in some decisions can create dissatisfaction and reduce the sense of participation of other team members. This phenomenon indicates that while village deliberation can formally address conflict, it needs to be improved to be more inclusive and not centered on specific individuals.

3. Impact of Conflict on Team Performance

Beyond short-term disruptions, unresolved internal conflicts jeopardize long-term organizational health. They undermine managerial stability, reduce member retention, and erode community trust, which are critical to the sustainability of BUMDes operations.

Unresolved conflicts can undermine team performance and hinder the progress of BUMDes operations. This study found that decreased morale and distrust among team members can decrease work effectiveness and reduce the quality of services provided to the village community. This is consistent with research conducted by Ayoko et al. (2014), which showed that team tension can negatively impact team members' mental health and productivity.

CONCLUSION

The study underscores the strategic importance of communication in mitigating internal conflict. By institutionalizing open dialogue, clarifying roles, and training managers in inclusive leadership, BUMDes can fortify their operational resilience and long-term sustainability. This research shows that conflicts in internal communication in BUMDes often arise due to differences in communication styles between generations, unclear roles, and a limited communication infrastructure that supports organizational efficiency. Conflict resolution through village deliberation has proven effective, but its success is often constrained by the dominance of senior managers and village heads, who reduce the participation of younger members. Poorly resolved conflicts can lower team spirit, increase distrust among members, and ultimately hinder the progress of BUMDes operations. For this reason, it is recommended that BUMDes improve open and inclusive internal communication, provide clarity on role structure, and ensure active participation of all parties in every decision-making process. In addition, there is a need for managerial training for BUMDes managers to improve communication and conflict resolution skills to create a more harmonious and productive working environment.

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