Analysis of Perceptual Differences Between Employees and Management in Organizational Communication Practices at The Level of Culture in The Bucketlist Indonesia

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Abstract: This study analyzes the perceptual differences between employees and management in organizational communication practices at The Bucketlist Indonesia, a family business operating in the tourism sector. Using a mini-ethnography approach and an interpretive paradigm, this study explores verbal and non-verbal communication applied within the context of organizational culture, utilizing Schein's (2004) level of culture theory. The findings reveal perceptual alignment in several aspects such as the logo and office layout, but also identify significant differences related to uniforms, appearance, and language style. These perceptual differences reflect variations in understanding and internalization of organizational values, which can impact service consistency and customer perceptions. This study highlights the importance of effective internal communication in creating a unified vision and improving service quality. The findings are expected to provide insights for The Bucketlist Indonesia and similar businesses in managing organizational communication to support growth and business success.

Keyword: Organizational communication, perceptual differences, organizational culture, family business, tourism, level of culture.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the broadest industries and has a profound impact on the global economy (Belias et al., 2017). This is due to the complexity of demanding products and services from various different economic sectors. The tourism industry involves many sectors ranging from transportation, accommodation, food and beverages, to entertainment, sports, and cultural activities. The success of the tourism industry is not only determined by the infrastructure and products available. Research has shown that positive perceptions of the services provided by tourism industry players are very important (Mok et al., 2001). Therefore, effective communication is needed to ensure that customers feel valued and satisfied with the services they receive. This communication includes verbal and non-verbal aspects, both of which play an important role in shaping positive customer experiences (Addimando, 2024).

Verbal communication is a message expressed through words or spoken language that conveys meaning (Krauss et al., 2012). This is because high-quality verbal communication is strongly correlated with customer satisfaction in the service industry (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). On the other hand, non-verbal communication plays an equally important role because most of our communication occurs at a non-verbal level (Negi, 2009). Therefore, communication practices within organizations are also influenced by daily habits that reflect the organizational culture, which can be analyzed at three levels: basic assumptions, values and beliefs, and artifacts. Overall, verbal and non-verbal communication practices complement each other in shaping organizational culture and influencing perceptions of service, creating a consistent experience for all parties involved.

In Indonesia, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) dominate the economy, with family businesses playing an important role, especially in the tourism sector. Family businesses include ventures owned and managed by one or more family members, often involving multiple generations (Lea, 1991). The uniqueness of family businesses lies in the family system, which can bring benefits such as strong ties between management and employees and flexibility in decision-making (Hilburt-Davis & Dyer, 2002). However, weaknesses such as dependence on family leadership and potential role conflicts in decision-making can hinder innovation and business development (Zellweger, 2017).

The Bucketlist Indonesia is an example of a family business in the tourism sector that focuses on service. Founded by Helmy, this business was inspired by his love of basketball and his travels to special places for basketball lovers abroad. Realizing the lack of basketball facilities in Indonesia, Helmy created basketball courts and galleries while fulfilling his dream of building a community for basketball enthusiasts. In running the business, Helmy involves family members in the organizational structure, such as his wife managing finances and his brother-in-law leading operations. The Bucketlist's recruitment approach prioritizes empowering local resources, even with diverse educational backgrounds. Communication between employees and management, especially in the use of language and service standards, becomes an important factor in creating quality services.

Based on observations made by the researcher by observing employee communication behavior in daily activities, it is known that they usually use a mixed language between Indonesian and the local language of West Java (Basa Sunda). In practice, outsourced employees with lower education than contract employees often struggle to find the right words and understand instructions, especially related to their job descriptions as housekeeping, security, and hospitality standards when receiving guests.

In the tourism industry, where direct interaction with customers often becomes the focus of the services provided, the way employees and management communicate—both verbally and non-verbally—can significantly affect customer perceptions and satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000). When internal communication between employees and management is well established, this is reflected in more consistent, responsive, and friendly services that ultimately enhance the customer experience. Conversely, if there is a difference in perception between employees and management about how communication should be conducted, this can lead to inconsistencies in how services are provided. For example, employees may understand or interpret service policies differently than intended by management, which can result in inadequate or even disappointing service for customers (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005).

Perceptual differences in communication within an organization are not only about how messages are delivered and received but also reflect the values, norms, and culture within the organization. When management and employees have different perceptions of communication practices, this often relates to differences in how they understand and internalize the organization's values and norms. Furthermore, communication is not just a means to convey information but also a medium to express and reinforce organizational

culture. The way communication is conducted—both verbal and non-verbal—is a reflection of the norms upheld by the organization (Schein, 2004).

Therefore, this study seeks to understand the perceptual differences between management and employees of The Bucketlist Indonesia regarding communication practices, both verbal and non-verbal, in customer service using Schein's (2004) level of culture theory to understand the meanings, interpretations, and social interactions that occur within the organization. It is hoped that this study will provide valuable insights into the values and norms applied by the company, with the hope of improving services and strengthening the company's positive image.

METHOD

This research used a mini-ethnographic approach with qualitative research and an interpretive paradigm to directly observe the company's norms and cultural symbols translated into communication practices used to strengthen the company's identity, practiced and internalized at The Bucketlist Indonesia as a startup company engaged in tourism. This is expected to contribute to daily interactions. The focus of this research is to explore the perceptual differences between employees and management related to verbal and non-verbal communication in the context of an organizational culture oriented towards customer service using the level of culture theory proposed by Schein (2004) to understand the meanings, interpretations, and social interactions that occur within The Bucketlist Indonesia. The Bucketlist Indonesia, located at Jalan R. H. Moh. Tohir No.1 RT.07/RW.10 Tanah Baru, North Bogor District, Bogor City, West Java 16154, was the research site used by the researcher. The researcher obtained two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data, using data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. Then the data analysis techniques used by the researcher were data organization, coding, thick description, and reflection. Likewise, the researcher also conducted data verification to obtain research validity through validity tests, which included credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis presented below uses the level of culture proposed by Schein (2004). This was done to analyze the perceptual differences between employees and management in organizational communication practices at the level of culture, particularly at the level of artifacts in The Bucketlist Indonesia. This is because artifacts are the outermost layer and can be observed generally without requiring in-depth interviews.

Logo

In this research, the management's perception of the logo used by The Bucketlist Indonesia is closely related to the meaning of the name itself. The name "The Bucketlist" is derived from the concept of hopes or dreams that one wishes to achieve before they die, a term that is popular in society. This was inspired by the word "Bucket," which has a history in the sport of basketball. This term refers to the time when the game of basketball was first created, where a trash can (bucket) was used as a hoop before it eventually evolved into the sport known today.

However, the meaning of "Bucketlist" itself focuses more on life aspirations. It reflects something that is aspired to, a dream that one wants to realize. Therefore, the name The Bucketlist was chosen because it is simple, easy to remember, and easy to pronounce—a name that is hoped to represent a strong and aspirational brand. However, employees also have a perception of the "Bucketlist" logo that is strongly associated with the sport of basketball. The pronunciation of "bucketlist" and "basket" has a similar rhyme, making it easier for people to remember the name. Additionally, they emphasize that the simplicity and

ease of remembering this name help create an identity that is easily recognized by customers, especially those related to the basketball experience at The Bucketlist.

Thus, it can be concluded that in the physical manifestation of this logo, there is no perceptual difference between management and employees regarding the message that the logo and name The Bucketlist are closely related to the concept of life aspirations and basketball. This alignment of views indicates that internal communication between management and employees in terms of branding has been effective, resulting in a unified perception that supports the strengthening of the company's identity.

Building Architect

The Bucketlist uses professional architects and interior designers to design and build a modern and aesthetic building. This shows that architects and interior designers in this project are crucial in ensuring that the building design is not only modern but also has elements that are distinctive and relevant to the brand identity. This indicates the dedication of the owner of The Bucketlist Indonesia to creating a space that is not only aesthetic but also symbolic, reflecting seriousness in representing the brand identity through every design element. The owner of The Bucketlist Indonesia has also given special attention to small details in the design of The Bucketlist building, which many people may not notice or pay attention to. This shows that the owner of The Bucketlist has sought to create a building with a strong identity; not all visitors may immediately grasp the meaning behind the design details. This also indicates that although the building design was made with a clear concept and symbolism, its exterior appearance may still give an ambiguous impression to some people, especially those who are not familiar with The Bucketlist.

Office Layout

The Bucketlist's office layout is also something that the owner focused on as a form of non-verbal communication. However, The Bucketlist Indonesia was not fundamentally designed with a specific intended function. Instead, the office layout design focuses more on comfort and accessibility for employees. This aligns with the office layout document showing parallel room arrangements where the positions of employee and management offices are placed side by side. This arrangement was designed to facilitate accessibility and communication between employees and management, creating a more efficient interaction flow. The employees of The Bucketlist also assume that the current office layout indeed supports the creation of a collaborative work environment.

It is also assessed that the room design, which allows all team members to be in one large space, greatly supports direct and quick communication. However, with different departments or divisions, such as security and housekeeping, being separated on different floors, this arrangement still maintains operational efficiency according to the specific needs of each team. The office layout also greatly helps in maintaining a smooth workflow and ensuring that everyone can work more effectively and harmoniously. Thus, the office layout emphasizes practical daily needs without referring to a specific design philosophy. This design not only facilitates quick communication but also supports a more dynamic workflow that is responsive to the operational needs of the company. This approach can also minimize physical barriers in communication, allowing for a more collaborative and open work environment.

Uniform and Appearance

Uniforms and appearance are also forms of non-verbal communication used by both employees and management. According to the results of interviews with The Bucketlist Indonesia's Director of Operations, it is known that there is currently no standardized daily uniform for employees. Currently, employees are only required to wear clothes of uniform

color in accordance with the concept of the place, which is a sports arena, so employees must look sporty and professional, including wearing sneakers. In addition, each employee will also wear a nametag as an additional identity, making it easier to interact with customers and giving a professional impression. This becomes a good and attractive appearance and is very important for employees to maintain a professional and neat appearance to create a positive impression.

However, this perception differs from that of the employees, who believe that the demands of physically intensive work make it difficult for housekeeping team members to always appear formal or dress according to management's standards, especially when working in areas requiring routine cleaning. This is still due to the fact that their primary duties are to maintain the cleanliness of all facilities, which requires more functional and comfortable clothing. This also shows that there are challenges in aligning the appearance standards desired by management with practical needs in the field, especially in divisions focused on operational tasks.

Social Routines

In this study, it was found that The Bucketlist Indonesia has social routines that are frequently conducted within the organization. These social routines also include informal events held to strengthen relationships among employees and boost team spirit. Activities such as dinners together after a successful project or small gatherings when a certain achievement is made are often held to celebrate successes and strengthen bonds among team members. One of the social routines that has been conducted is the breaking of the fast together, which has become a routine activity for the past four years and has become an important form of appreciation and togetherness within the organization. Events like this are not only opportunities to celebrate special moments but also a means to strengthen relationships among team members and create a more inclusive and harmonious work atmosphere.

In addition, other social activities also greatly help in creating a familial atmosphere in the workplace. However, activities like these not only strengthen relationships among employees but also help eliminate boundaries between divisions, thus creating a more harmonious and collaborative work environment. By maintaining various social activities and traditions, The Bucketlist Indonesia has succeeded in creating a strong and cohesive work culture. This has become one of the important factors supporting the company's success in creating a positive and productive work environment.

Meetings

The Bucketlist Indonesia, as a company that heavily relies on intensive communication among stakeholders, also implements various meetings that function to ensure the smooth operation and coordination between departments. These meetings are considered very important to ensure that every part of the company can carry out its tasks well and in line with the needs of customers and other stakeholders. Through daily morning briefings, each department can clearly understand the operational priorities and challenges for that day. This not only ensures the team's readiness to handle daily activities such as court bookings or events but also helps identify potential issues early on so that they can be addressed before affecting the customer experience. This is also acknowledged by managers down to staff levels, that good coordination is key to the operational success of the company. This statement reinforces the view that routine coordination meetings provide space for management and staff to delve into operational issues in detail and ensure that every step taken is in line with the company's needs.

The structured and routine communication not only minimizes operational errors but also strengthens synergy between divisions. Every employee has a common understanding of

management's goals and expectations, so they can work more focused and proactively in delivering optimal service. Thus, this strong communication culture not only contributes to smooth operations but also enhances the quality of service provided to customers and supports the overall growth of the company.

Communication Patterns

The communication patterns at The Bucketlist Indonesia are known to adopt a structured hierarchical approach, where each management level has clear roles and responsibilities in conveying information and ensuring the smooth flow of communication. This is reflected in the company's internal communication system, which prioritizes the flow of communication from staff to management as well as decision-making involving various levels of leadership. Through this communication system, any suggestions or feedback from lower-level employees will be forwarded to management for further discussion at the strategic level. This process ensures that every idea or input from employees receives appropriate attention while also facilitating transparency in decision-making. Through weekly meetings, the owner of The Bucketlist Indonesia also strives to maintain direct involvement in this process, enabling two-way communication between top management and the entire team, and ensuring that every decision made has gone through a thorough consideration process.

However, on the other hand, employees naturally have different perceptions that the communication patterns they implement have certain limitations. Aulia explains that although communication within the company is open, there are levels of transparency applied according to the needs of each level. These limitations are applied to ensure that sensitive strategic information is only accessed by those with certain responsibilities. This is important to maintain confidentiality, prevent information leaks, and ensure that the communication received by employees is in line with their roles and responsibilities within the company.

Slogan

Based on the research conducted, the owner of The Bucketlist Indonesia has a philosophy behind the company's slogan, which comes from the spirit of creating an experience that is more than just a place to play basketball, namely "All Stars All in!". The creation of this slogan allows The Bucketlist to be a place where visitors, both professional and amateur basketball players, can feel the same atmosphere as their star idols. Additionally, by presenting iconic murals and design elements featuring famous figures from the basketball world, The Bucketlist aims to create an environment that inspires and motivates every individual who visits the place. The philosophy of "All In" not only reflects The Bucketlist's dedication to the world of basketball but also demonstrates the company's commitment to providing high-quality facilities that allow visitors to have a special experience.

However, employees naturally also have different perceptions, indicating that the slogan is intended to describe the company's commitment and spirit, but the implementation and communication currently being carried out are not yet effective enough in explaining the philosophical meaning behind the slogan. Improving understanding of this slogan's philosophy is very important because it can help employees better understand how the company's values should be reflected in their daily activities and interactions.

Language style

As known in the research, the language style used for communication at The Bucketlist Indonesia varies depending on the management level and inter-team relationships. At the management level, communication is conducted using proper Indonesian with an emphasis on formality and professionalism. This aims to maintain consistency and clarity in conveying important information and to ensure that all parties understand the message in a uniform

manner. At the management level, the use of standard and formal language aims to avoid ambiguity and ensure that all official communication occurs clearly. Meanwhile, at the team level, such as housekeeping and security, the use of language can be more relaxed and familiar. This is due to interpersonal closeness and daily interactions, which make the use of local dialects or everyday language more common. In addition to the use of Indonesian for communication at The Bucketlist Indonesia, there is also a practice of using local languages in daily interactions. However, to build closer relationships and adapt to team habits, sometimes local languages, particularly Sundanese, are used in conversations with the housekeeping and security teams.

The use of local languages not only enriches social interactions but also reflects employees' efforts to demonstrate appreciation and adaptation to local culture. By using local languages in informal contexts, employees can strengthen relationships with team members who share the same background, while still maintaining formal and professional communication through Bahasa Indonesia. This demonstrates an adaptive approach taken by management in addressing cultural diversity in the workplace and underscores the importance of flexibility in communication to build a harmonious and inclusive work environment.

Criticism and Praise

The research results show that in giving criticism or praise, The Bucketlist Indonesia's management applies the principles of hospitality culture. This culture is crucial in creating a positive work environment where every individual feels valued and motivated to continually improve their performance. It is important for management to always appreciate positive performance by employees. Appreciation is often given in formal moments such as morning briefings, where management openly expresses thanks and gives recognition to teams that have completed their tasks well. This appreciation is not just in the form of verbal praise, but sometimes followed by gestures showing management's gratitude, which ultimately can motivate employees to continue contributing optimally.

On the other hand, the hospitality culture adopted by The Bucketlist Indonesia also includes how to provide constructive criticism. However, when mistakes or negligence occur, it is important for management to communicate them directly and clearly while maintaining a professional attitude and respecting the dignity of the employees. Although the criticism given may sometimes hurt feelings because it does not consider the employee's current state of mind, the main goal is to improve the situation and encourage better performance.

Employees also recognize that even though the criticism from management sometimes causes anxiety, they understand it as part of the learning process. The criticism received by employees encourages them to be more careful and meticulous in their work to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future. This reflects The Bucketlist Indonesia's management efforts to create an inclusive and supportive work culture, where criticism and praise are not just part of performance assessment mechanisms but also a way to maintain harmony and collaboration among teams. With a balance between praise and criticism, employees feel valued for their contributions while being open to feedback aimed at self-development and operational improvement. This kind of culture allows The Bucketlist Indonesia to run its operations more effectively because every employee understands the expected standards and feels supported by management in their efforts to achieve the best results.

CONCLUSION

The discussion above concludes that the exploration of perception differences between employees and management regarding organizational communication practices at The Bucketlist Indonesia, a family business in the tourism sector, reveals that there are findings of alignment in some aspects such as logo, office layout, and social routines.

However, there are also significant perception differences between management and employees, particularly concerning uniforms, appearance, and the language style used. These differences reflect a divergence in understanding and internalization of organizational values, which can affect service consistency and customer perceptions, and enhance organizational cultural alignment, making organizational communication at The Bucketlist Indonesia effective.

Overall, effective internal communication between management and employees is crucial for creating a unified vision and improving service quality. This research provides valuable insights into the need to strengthen organizational communication, which not only involves the delivery of information but also a deep understanding of the company's cultural values and norms, to achieve better synergy and alignment between employees and management. The results of this study are expected to contribute to The Bucketlist Indonesia in improving organizational communication and serve as a reference for similar businesses in managing perception differences between management and employees to support the company's growth and success. However, future research could use analysis with the level of structure model by Schein (2004) at the level of values, norms, and basic assumptions to provide a deeper analysis of organizational communication in various fields.

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