Communication Within and Among Faith-Based Organizationsin Community Empowerment Program

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Abstract

The issue of this research is concerning the communication within and among Zakat Management Organizations (OPZs) as Faith-Based Organization (FBO). The main research problem is how OPZ(s) can successfullydevelop cooperationin increasing both public trust and institutional productivity. Interpretive Approach through Social Construction Theory was used as a reference to see the process of organizational communication through OPZ's communicator ethos. The research method used was qualitative with a technique of case study, and informants were from OPZ's West Java unit. The results showed that the communicator ethos as a source of credibility in communicationwithin and among OPZs, derived from Islamic Teachings, applicable (positive)laws, and basic guidelines of OPZs, can produce organizational values as the basis of implementing cooperation in community empowerment programs. Cooperation among OPZsin an empowerment program is more related to personal power and interpersonal power aspectsthan to political power aspect. There is a need to strengthen openness and mutual trust values among the OPZs, changes in zakat regulation, more transparent, accountable and equitable governance in order to increase trust, realization of zakat potentials, and prosperity.

Keywords: *Communication, FBO, Communicator Ethos, and Empowerment*

Introduction

Some studies of zakat management by zakat organizers can hopefully optimize zakat proceeds and particularly suggest how zakat mayempower beneficiaries in conformity with Islamic Laws (Siena, 2005; Mintarti, Kurniadi, and Utomo, 2009; Guasfahmi, 2009; Sari, 2013). On the other side, zakat management by ZakatManagement Organization (*Organisasi Pengelola Zakat*—OPZ) is aimed at increasing *muzaki*'s trust to OPZs and in turn enhancingboth the

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performance of OPZ services and OPZ governance in improving efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability (Fauzia, 2013).

The present research dealt with how OPZs can simultaneously build public trust and optimizetheir management. It will be seen from OPZ side through its communicator ethos in developing cooperation in community empowerment programs. This is whyit needs to conduct, as a *research gap*of earlier researches. The issue of OPZ's communication by communicator ethos has come to be a social welfare issue because its concept is applied by Social Work (International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW); stating that social work is a human-helping profession by service program, human-environment interactions, utilization of human capacities for social functionality, accomplishment of social roles, realization of aspirations according to their values as a form of social changes and empowerment.

The *zakat* potentials are actually large enough at national level, around Rp217 trillion or 3.14 percent of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), of which only approximately 1 percent was realized (Baznas, 2011). West Java Province possesses the largest potential, Rp17 trillion in 2015, of which only 0.02 percent was realized (West Java Zakat revitalization, 2016). Meanwhile, policies on zakat management, studies of governance, utilization and empowerment of zakat, and maintenance of trust to transparent and accountable OPZsfailed toincrease the realization of the quite large potentials.

Based on the existing phenomena and *research gap*, the study of communication among OPZ organizations by communicator ethos would complement earlier studies. The questions dealt with in the present research were as follows:

1) How OPZ's communicator ethosmay become a source of values in developing cooperationwithin and among OPZs in community empowerment program?

2) What is the organizational communication model that OPZs employ in developing cooperation in community empowerment program?

The objectives of the present research were:

1) To describe and analyze the sources of OPZs' communicator ethos in West Java as a communicational strategy of organization in developing cooperation in implementing community empowerment program.

2) To describe and analyze the communicationwithin and among organizations in forms of organizational culture and organizational leadership of zakat organizers in West Java in developing cooperation in implementing community empowerment program.

Method

The research design used was descriptive with a qualitative method using an interpretive social science approach as suggested by Neuman (2002, p. 70), where the researchers endeavoured to comprehendthe meanings connecting to the communication within and among OPZ organizations by engaging informants from West Java Baznas and *Lazis Dewan Dakwah* in developing cooperation in implementing community empowerment programs. The researchers then managed to interpret the data and fact so as to acquire an understanding of the whole object to investigate in relation to the communication within and among OPZs by OPZ's communicator ethos in implementing community empowerment program in West Java.

Results and Discussion

General Condition of Zakat Management in West Java

Based on the general description of social-economic and cultural conditions of West Java's community, strengthening the optimization process relating to zakat is of high significance, in the hope that zakat potentials in West Java could be better utilized for public welfare. Such significance is based on at least some factors, namely:

1) The number of Moslems is a vast majority, achieving 97 percent of the total population or 47 million persons in total (BPS, 2010); thus, it is very logical that West Java's people are religious and of strong faith in God, and that they are very measured in cultivating their awareness of accomplishing their duties, as Moslems, to pay zakat;

2) In economic sector, processed industry and trade account for more than 60 percent (BPS, 2010), so that it may be a parameter in exploiting the sources of zakat from the sector, and also the welfare level of West Java Province, which is relatively higher as seen from the difference between their income per capita and revenues for consumption per year;

3) The distribution of population with high levels of economy and above-average economic status, as in the buffer zones of Jakarta and Great Bandung, reaches 44 percent (BPS, 2010), so that its contribution is very significant to increasing zakat revenues.

Meanwhile, in the implementation of zakat management in West Java, it was revealed that West Java possessed the highest level of zakat sources, i.e., 17 trillion rupiah in 2015, of which 282 billion was realized (West Java Zakat Revitalization, 2016).

According to West Java government's official website, of 27 municipalities and regencies, only 13 municipalities/regencies that have been officially acknowledged as zakat organizers. It is because the rest has not yet had a legal umbrella, decree of regent or mayor as a minimum, which regulates zakat management at regional level (West Java Zakat Revitalization, 2016). Moreover, according to West Java Province BAZNAS data on the existence of other institutions,there are 20 national-level *Lembaga Amil Zakats*(LAZs) operating in West Java jurisdiction, some of which are officially acknowledged by the government, namely: LAZ *Rumah Zakat Indonesia, LAZ Persis,* and *LAZ Dompet Peduli Umat Darut Tauhid*. Another LAZs are affiliated to national-level organizations that are operating in West Java, among others: *LAZIS Muhammadiyah, LAZ NU,* and *LAZIS Dewan Da'wah*.

The Communicator Ethos of West Java BAZNAS OPZs and *LAZIS Dewan Dakwah*

Based on the research results, the communication within an organization by the sources of communicator ethos has produced organizational values which in turn affect cooperation in implementing community empowerment program, as shown on the chart below:

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Picture 1 The Communicator Ethos of West Java BAZNAS OPZs and *LAZIS Dewan Dakwah*
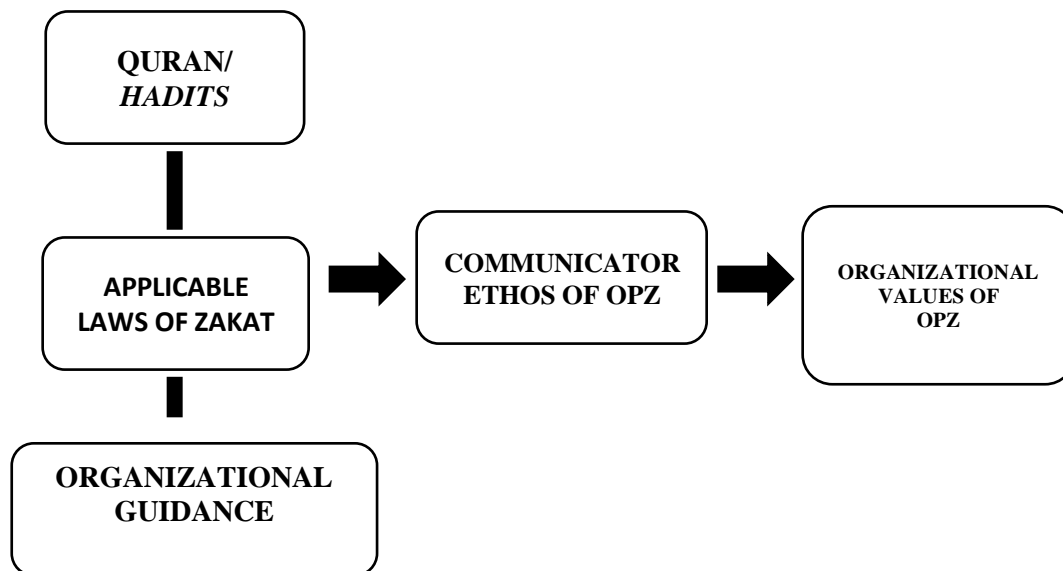
Source: processed from research results

According to the figure above, the communicational processes that take place within an organization and among organizations are strongly affected by the communicator ethos of each organization's management, where communicator ethos has been possessed by individuals in their own organization when they joined the organization, relating to their understanding on both Islam religion in general and on zakat in particular.

The findings of the research suggested that, in the communicational process of zakat organizations derived from communicator ethos, when the individuals joined their organization some of them undergo crystallization of values predominantly following the organization's norms, but some are more predominant based on the organizational culture that has already been built and there is similarity in values between communicators before or after joining their organization, and even their original values are strengthened after having joined the organization. In other words, the presence of the individuals in the organization increasingly strengthens the development of the organization. The former predominantly take place in BAZNAS zakat institution of West Java Province, and the latter in LAZIS Dewan Da'wah of West Java Unit.

The fact proves that organizational reality is a subjective construction where organizational communication is a process of creating the meaning of interactions that creates,

maintains, and changes the organization. Where objective views emphasize more on structural aspects, subjective views emphasize more on process aspect. Therefore, an organization is more than a tool, but rather it is a way of thinking (Pace & Faules, 1993).

In line with the views, the communicational strategies relying on communicator ethos are strongly affected by both organizational culture and communicational style as leadership behaviors in any organization which also influence the satisfying achievement of organizational goals. This is because the communicators mobilize their whole resources as the potentials they possess, including competence, integrity, and good faith in implementing their communicational processes. Therefore, an effective organizational communication concept is an organizational communication by using a subjective, interpretive, and humane approach that emphasizes more on value, ideological, and cultural aspects than on structural, functional, and duty-distributing aspects in an organization.

Therefore, the view that reinforces the role of those communicators with ethos in organizational communication is supported by a social construction theory which places humans as individuals who have a freedom of creating a social reality in their own environment and in other time social environment as an inter-subjective interaction process that reinforces and provides knowledge as a social reality for the individuals. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), social institutions are established and maintained or changed by human actions and interactions. Though both societies and social institutions appear objectively as real, in reality they are all built in subjective definitions by an interactional process, as an externalization concept. An objectivity concept can arise only by repeated affirmations made by others with the same subjective definitions. At the highest generality level, by an internalization concept, humans create their world in universal symbolic meanings, that is, their comprehensive worldviews, legitimating and regulating social forms and giving meanings to their diverse life fields through institutions established by inter-subjective processes institutionalized in their externalization processes.

However, both organizations with communication predominant in normative aspect of enforcing its communicator ethos and ones with communication predominant in cultural aspect have their own internal organizations that separately and simultaneously are capable of building their own organizational values that later become an organizational capital in accomplishing their

organizational values, in this case developing cooperation in community empowerment programstoward an empowered target of the program.

Communication of West Java BAZNAS and LAZIS Dewan Da'wah Organizations in Cooperation of Community Empowerment Programs

A series of data and facts relating to basic organizational values as a source of communicator ethos that affects the processes of communication between OPZs in developing cooperation of community empowerment programs can be seen in the following table:

Table 1

Communicational Relations among OPZs in Cooperation of Community Empowerment Program by BAZNS and LASz in West Java

Indicators	OPZ	
	WEST JAVA BAZNAS	**WEST JAVA LAZIS DDII**
Main Sources of Communicator Ethos	1. Koran/*Hadits* 2. Applicable laws	1. Koran/*Hadits* 2. Organizational guidance
Basic Organizational Values	Synergy Professional accountable	Faith Proselytizing Cooperation
Organizational Communication Model	a. Internal communication between central OPZ and regional OPZs b. Internal communication among local OPZs c. Communication between OPZs and Local Government/Agency d. Communication between OPZ and *Muzaki* e. Communication between OPZ and Beneficiaries	a. Internal Communication between Central and Regional OPZs b. Communication between Central OPZ and Other Central OPZs/Foreign c. Internal Communication among local OPZs d. Communication between local OPZs and Islamic Mass Organization
Cooperation of Community Empowerment Program	a. Regional Government /UPZ of West Java Province b. Agencies c. MUI d. Beneficiaries	a. Central BAZNAS OPZ b. Foreign Donation c. Islamic Mass Organization

Source: processed from the research results

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Based on the matrix of the processed research results above, there were 4 (four) indicators of how OPZs' communicator ethos is related to the implementation of cooperation in community empowerment program that can be described as follow:

1) Forindicator of the source ofcommunicator ethos, both West Java BAZNAS and LAZIS Dewan Da'wah puts Koran and Hadits as the main source which are then made as guide for the OPZ organizers who are involved in managing zakat at their own institution. However, there is difference when the main source is applied in running an organization related to zakat management. West Java BAZNAS emphasize strongly on the applicable (positive) laws such as act, president decree, minister decree, and Central BAZNAS decree as the legal umbrella and guidance in implementing zakat management including in developing cooperation with other institutions. On the other side, for LAZIS Dewan Da'wah organizational guide is made as its main reference in developing cooperation in community empowerment programs. Nevertheless, OPZ LAZs generally prefer applicable laws on administrative procedures and requirements for the establishment of an OPZ.

2) For indicator of basic organizational values as communicator ethos implemented by each OPZ, there is difference and similarity in emphasis. A similarity is that there is a synergy value at OPZ BAZNAS and cooperation value in OPZ LAZ which is employed as an ethical basis in implementing empowerment programs. That is, the two OPZs commit to building communication and coordination outside their own OPZ. However, the basis of building cooperation and synergy differs for both OPZs. West Java OPZ BAZNAZ is based more on the mandates of legislations where BANNAZ serves as protector and facilitator of zakat institution of all kinds so that it has a more enforcing formal legal basis. On the other side, for OPZ LAZIS Dewan Da'wah the cooperation value based on faith and proselytizing carried on as a concept of change is made as the main basis because it becomes organizational vision and mission that the organization has to pursue in implementing programs; being different in the emphasis of values, it may well produce different leadership styles in both. For example, for the type of BAZNAS as protector and coordinator, in all zakat institutions a best-single leadership style can be applied. On the other side, LAZ in general can apply a conditional-best leadership style;

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3) For indicator of communication model, both OPZs apparently differ in a quite principal ways. For example, West Java BANNAZ emphasizes more on organizational communication with vertical agencies such as regional government and agencies under its control and it has not optimally developed organizational communication with other OPZs in program cooperation. On the other side,LAZIS Dewan Da'wah is apparently more capable of building wider networks with fellow OPZs and with foreign funding institutions and collaboration in programs with other Islamic mass organizations.

4) For indicator of cooperation in community empowerment program, both OPZs follow a more predominant communication models. West Java BAZNAS develops more cooperation of programs with public agencies, while West Java LAZIS Dewan Da'wah is capable of winning some opportunities of cooperation with diverse kinds of those organizations and communitiesthat make business in zakat management and in other sectors such as education and humanity.

The subjective perspective on organizational communication also emphasizes the roles of humans and processes in creating meanings. That is, meanings occur not only in humans but also emerge in transactional processes between persons at an organization. As such, according to subjective view, organizational communication is an endless process. Therefore, an organizational communication will not exist until it is created and interpreted by humans. Morgan (2003) maintains that, according to interpretive perspective, social world does not exist in a concrete meaning, but rather it is built by interactions and convention among individuals. Accordingly, a process of creating meaning is one of building organizational realities and aspect of understanding symbolic discourse that enrich organizational life(Pace, Faules, & Mulyana, 2006).

The aspect of understanding in an organizational communication with a subjectivism approach leads more to organizational culture that includes values, belief, ideology, and norm expressed by symbols, myths, stories, rituals, language, and artifacts (Jones & May, 1992). If artifacts are seen as something concrete, the approach is functionalism, and culture is considered as artifacts. However, if organizational culture is seen as a formation of understanding, making sense of symbolic behaviors and process of forming the understanding become important. Samovar (2014)classifies the aspects of culture into three major groups of social-cultural

elements that directly influence the creation of meaning for perceptions, in turn determining communicational behaviors. The social-cultural elements are: 1) Faith, value, and attitude systems, 2) Worldviews, and 3) Social organizations (Saduarsa, 2011).

A description of the concept of organizational culture in an organizational communication context can be understood from the ethos of its communicators, because the dimensions of ethos which are then investigated by experts are related to the personal quality of a communicator, such as: skill, competency, experience, knowledge, trustworthiness, honesty, reliability, sincerity, dynamism, vigilance, energy, societal passion, personal capacity, and hospitality. Thus, there is a correlation between communicator ethics and communicator ethos. The latter can be meant as an ethic evidence of a communicator that may be universal in nature. However, ethics in communicating may well have a subjectivity element, depending on the public dealt with (Johannesen, Valde, & Whedbee, 2008).

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

Based on the research result on organizational Communication relying on the communicator ethos of OPZs (Zakat Management Organization) in Cooperation of Community Empowerment Program in West Java, some conclusion could be drawn as follows:

1) The source of reference for OPZs' communicator ethos is the basis of how OPZs manage zakat. Externalization process of zakat management has affected the preliminary process of zakat management. Only when the objectifying process—thatis, inter-subjective interactions falling into domain of organization—occurs, that the source of OPZ reference basically refers to the organization source, each with different characteristics, i.e., those which refer to the applicable laws of zakat management are practiced by BAZNAS.Thus, synergic, professional, transparent, and accountable values are very prominent. On the other side, those which refer to organizational doctrine, experience, and vision-mission are implemented by LAZIS Dewan Dakwah, thus bringing about a doctrine of values on *dakwah* as the core of change, autonomy, and cooperation, as well as controlled organizational climate;

2) The organizational values as the result of the source of OPZs' communicator ethos become a basis of communication among OPZs in developing cooperation in community

empowerment program and also become a crucial strategy, considering two (2) things, namely: 1) reciprocally, communicator ethos in an organization may generate organizational behaviors as an organizational culture that can create an organization in a form of organizational values; 2) also reciprocally, communicator ethos in the communication of organization may generate organizational norms by communicational model, and the styles communicational behaviorsin the leadership of OPZs also contributes to forming organizational values;

3) Organizational communication process by a communicator ethos is moving in the organization intern by referring to those organizational values emphasizing more on both vision-mission and internal structure of the organization. Meanwhile, in the scope outside the organization and other organizations, cooperation is developed on a basis of understanding grounded on mutual advantage of the beneficiaries, openness, and mutual trust;

4) The implementation of cooperation in community empowerment program by BAZNAS initiated directly by and in cooperation with government has community empowerment programs relying more on personal power aspect (fulfillment of the beneficiaries' basic needs) and interpersonal power aspect (expansion of the accesses to the sources of fulfilling the beneficiaries' needs).

Suggestion

Based on the research result and discussion relating to the problems that OPZs face in their organisasional communication in the implementation of cooperation of community empowerment program, some fundamental suggestions are proposed as follows:

1) Organizational management, particularly at supervisor/manager level, should more actively play its role and has high initiative and mobility in building organizational communication by strengthening the ethos of the management that contains ideas,attitudes, and ideal acts in zakat-managing processes; so that the community empowerment programs are not simply verbalistic formal jargons, but rather become an organizational value driving force founded on the values of Islamic tenets on zakat;

2) For joint agendas relating to the orientation of the implementation of cooperation in community empowerment program, communication and coordination have to be opened as

wide as possible among zakat institutions by promoting mutual trust, openness, and wider welfare values, so that the implementation of the programs become efficient, effective, and on target, directed mainly to two (2) aspects, namely collection and utilization of zakat. This is to prevent any hidden agenda and sectoral ego of each zakat institution in zakat collection and utilization processes;

3) The existence of zakat institutions regulated in Law Number 23 of 2011 should be strengthened with provisions that give authorities to zakat institutions in charge of coordinating all zakat organizational potentials, in this case BAZNAS, and a power of punishing those zakat institutions which are not synergic, collaborative, and cooperative. Moreover, in attempt to keep the image of zakat institutions as a whole, BAZNAS should be functioned only as regulator, facilitator, mediator, educator, and advocate for the implementation of zakat management for all OPZs, not as the implementer of zakat management, so that it becomes a competitor of other OPZs which are also under guidance of BAZNAS. In addition, the decision makers, both executive and local parliament, should be encouraged to strengthen those regions with majority populations of Moslems for them to enact zakat regulation reaching up to grassroots in community;

4) Researches related to communicator ethos as an organizational communication strategy should be conductedon policy aspects that support the improved implementation of effective and comprehensive zakat management system for the prosperity of people.

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