

Optimizing Administrative Services through Interpersonal Communication: Strategies of the Head of Administration at a Madrasah Aliyah in Palembang

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the interpersonal communication strategy of the Head of Administration at MAN 2 Palembang in the context of management administration services. The type of research carried out is field research, which uses a qualitative approach through observation, interviews, and documentation. Using a purposive sampling technique, the informants in this research were the head of administration (KTU), school principals, teachers, and staff. Data analysis techniques use data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This research found that the head of administration at MAN 2 Palembang had implemented three strategies. The first was a formalist structural strategy by prioritized manners, proportion, and professional service with the principles of kinship and mutual respect. Second, a humanist cultural strategy by creating an atmosphere that is supportive, together and full of empathy. Third, an inclusive equality strategy should be created by creating a supportive, fair, and open environment. Thus, the interpersonal communication of the head of administration at MAN 2 Palembang was successful because it integrated credibility, integrity, and clear message delivery by implementing these three strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions also focus on service in the teaching and learning process. The educational service process is an important part that needs to be monitored. Education is part of the provision of services that involves increasing competition. Therefore, educational institutions have to compete to provide their services. Many educational institutions fail to utilize limited space to provide satisfactory services to their students. As a result, the service process is less than optimal and does not provide comfort to students (Maryance, 2022). Carry out administrative duties at the school, namely administration, as per Minister of National Education Regulation No. 24 of 2008.

In the process of administrative administration services carried out by the administration department, facilities and infrastructure are used to achieve optimal results. Human resources who have the competence and responsibility to provide optimal services are not affected by services provided effectively and efficiently, which allows customers to obtain clear and in-depth information. Customers (parents and students) will really trust a school with good service (Maryance, 2022).

Administration is a service that facilitates the achievement of school goals (Zakhroh, 2017). Administration (TU) is an organizational subsystem, in this case including organizations such as madrasahs. The main activity is taking care of all forms of administration, from correspondence to investing in goods (Anwar, 2020). In administrative management, competent and professional human resources are needed, one of which is the role of the head of administration at the madrasah.

The role of the head of administration in managing administrative staff is very important in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative services in an educational institution. The head of administration is responsible for organizing, supervising and developing the performance of administrative staff to support activities in educational institutions. The head of administration has a role in recruiting and selecting administrative staff in accordance with school needs. The head of administration needs to identify the qualifications and competencies needed in administrative staff, as well as carry out a transparent and fair recruitment and selection process. The school principal has the obligation to provide guidance, guidance and development to administrative staff. This includes providing instructions regarding administrative tasks, procedures and policies that must be followed, providing training and education to improve the skills of administrative staff, and fostering good working relationships in order to create a conducive and supportive work environment (Hasanah et al., 2024; Iqbal, 2024). The Head of Administration has a strategic role in carrying out his duties, including communicating interpersonally to achieve optimal administrative goals. The Head of Administration's interpersonal communication strategy is key in creating a conducive administrative environment, involving various related parties, such as staff, teachers, students and even parents.

Effective communication carried out by a leader, even though it contains the interests of the organization/company being represented or desires that want to be realized, does not directly convey these desires at the start. The interests of the opposing party are prioritized first. Effective communication that will not be rejected and will not be opposed by anyone is communication that channels the benefits and interests of the interlocutor (Suryanto, 2019). According to Suwatno (2023), interpersonal communication, a form of human communication that involves two-way, transactional interactions, where messages are sent and received with reciprocal influence. The aim of interpersonal communication is to improve the quality of relationships between the individuals involved to make them healthier. In interpersonal communication, interactions more often occur directly or face to face, involving the use of words and gestures. Even though interpersonal communication tends to be personal, this does not mean that the topics of conversation only revolve around personal matters or only occur in close relationships. This means that interpersonal communication can occur in various contexts and involve varied topics. Effective communication between leaders and subordinates by looking at the interests of the interlocutor or other parties takes priority in communication. Effective communication is capable of channeling benefits and interests to the interlocutor, so that the message conveyed will not be rejected or opposed by anyone.

Interpersonal communication is the main foundation for building good relationships in the work environment, especially in the context of administration at MAN 2 Palembang. The Head of Administration as an administrative leader is responsible not only for technical aspects, but also for his ability to communicate with various parties involved in the administrative process, so as to create optimal synergy and cooperation.

A leader's concern and listening skills are very important, because this makes subordinates feel valued and the leader can understand the message well. Leaders also need to provide positive responses, "read" the hearts of subordinates, and provide evaluation and feedback to make

communication constructive, creating healthy interpersonal relationships between leaders and subordinates (Suparyadi, 2020).

In designing an interpersonal communication strategy, the Head of Administration needs to consider various factors, such as cultural diversity, organizational values, and increasingly complex administrative demands. Implementing effective strategies can create an inclusive work environment, motivate staff, and improve overall performance in the administration of governance. In line with what Evi stated, interpersonal communication from a head of administration is considered the most effective in terms of efforts to change a person's attitudes, opinions or behavior, due to its dialogic nature in the form of conversation. Feedback is direct, to find out whether the communication response to the communicator was successful or not (Novianti, 2021).

Several previous studies have been carried out including research of Suryani (2020), Liana (2022), Amaliyah (2021), Viero (2023), Ilham (2024), dan Ulfa (2021). In contrast to previous research, research related to interpersonal communication of heads of administration has never been conducted. Oleh karenanya, the aim of this research is to analyze and identify interpersonal communication strategies implemented by the Head of Administration at MAN 2 Palembang in the context of management administration services. Thus, it is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of the quality of administrative management at MAN 2 Palembang and provide guidance for similar institutions in optimizing interpersonal communication in order to achieve the desired administrative goals.

2. METHODS

The research method used is qualitative research with a descriptive type, which aims to describe the interpersonal communication strategies of heads of administration in administrative services. The location of this research is MAN 2 Palembang. Data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary, primary data sources are data obtained directly from interviews, observations and individual observations with the Head of Administration, staff, teachers and students, while secondary data sources are data obtained directly from parties. -Related parties in the form of school data and various literature relevant to the discussion, such as administrative documents and documents.

Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation. Using a purposive sampling technique, this research's informants were the administration and staff head. The data analysis method uses data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. The data validity technique that will be used in this research is data source triangulation. Data collection and research was carried out by researchers using observation, interviews and documentation techniques with informants. Therefore, to obtain data that is valid and compatible with each other, the researcher triangulated data sources through examining other sources, namely by comparing observational data with interview data.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *The Leadership of the Head of Administration*

MAN 2 Palembang is an educational institution that holds a high commitment to excellence and quality education in accordance with Islamic principles. There is a leader who plays an important role in managing the madrasa administration, namely the Head of Administration. Since 2015, serving as Head of Administration at MAN 2 Palembang, Mr. S has presented various innovations to improve administrative efficiency and transparency of school finances. He is known as someone who is careful in managing budgets, ensuring that every resource is used optimally to support educational activities.

In his leadership role, Mr. S not only handles administrative matters, Mr. S's interpersonal skills are also a special attraction. He is known as a friendly person, easy to get along with, and always ready to help both staff and students. His good communication skills have created a harmonious and collaborative work environment at the madrasa.

Throughout his journey, he continues to strive to provide continuous innovation and improvement in order to realize the vision and mission of the madrasah in providing quality and relevant education for students. It can be seen from the condition of the management service environment at MAN 2 Palembang that it reflects a strong commitment to providing education that is efficient, professional and service-oriented.

It is proven that under the leadership of a dedicated head of administration, Mr. S as head of madrasa administration has succeeded in creating a work atmosphere that is conducive and oriented towards the needs of students and staff. With his educational background and experience, Mr. S brings a nuance of professionalism and managerial expertise to the madrasa management service environment. The success of the management service environment at MAN 2 Palembang is also reflected in the active participation of staff and teachers in training and professional development. By continuously improving their skills, madrasa staff can provide better services to students and respond to evolving educational challenges.

The success of the head of administration in managing the administration service environment at MAN 2 Palembang cannot be separated from what is called strategy. Specifically, in this case, it is the interpersonal communication strategy that the head of administration uses in his daily life. As for the definition of strategy itself, if viewed through a traditional approach, strategy is understood as future planning, which is anticipatory (forward looking), meaning it is based on estimates or anticipation of future events. Meanwhile, in the new approach, strategy is better understood as a pattern and is reflective (backward-looking), meaning that it places more emphasis on understanding and learning from past experience (Ahmad, 2020).

Looking at the understanding related to this strategy, if it is related to interpersonal communication itself, then interpersonal communication strategy This involves developing a communication plan or approach that is based on estimates or anticipation of situations and responses that may occur in the future. The goal is to achieve effective communication and achieve communicative goals. This strategy involves recognizing communication patterns that emerge from past communicative actions and decisions, with the aim of enhancing the adaptation and evolution of communication based on learning from previous experiences. Thus, in the context of interpersonal communication, communication strategies can include both proactive and reactive planning aspects, with an emphasis on adaptation and development of more effective communication.

3.2. Interpersonal Communication Strategy: Formalist Structural Strategy

Head of administration of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang regarding formalist structural strategies in interpersonal communication, as Mr. S said:

"In particular, communication rules do not have to be binding but rather prioritize etiquette in communicating between superiors and superiors, superiors and subordinates, or subordinates to superiors. Meanwhile, the division of work or specifications for the division of tasks must be adjusted to educational background and personal abilities so that the completion of the work is certainly effective. The orientation of management services implemented in madrasas through interpersonal communication is built on the professional functions of superiors and subordinates without forgetting family patterns and mutual respect, while also prioritizing adab."

Communication rules are not always binding, but rather emphasize communication etiquette. The division of labor is adjusted to educational background and personal abilities to increase work effectiveness.

Furthermore, Mrs E said:

"The head of administration communicates both vertically and horizontally, formally, usually through official letters, official meetings or emails. For the division of work, of course there is a job description according to each position. If the management service orientation is implemented, it is carried out in a professional manner, friendly communication between individuals goes well."

Formal communication involves formal letters, official meetings, and emails. The division of work is based on job descriptions according to each position. The orientation of management services is described as professional by maintaining a family pattern and mutual respect.

Then Mr KA said:

"Interpersonal communication from the head of administration, if officially or formally, of course with official meetings, written reports or official letters, this helps maintain professionalism in exchanging information. The division of labor in madrasah administration is of course that each task has specifications regarding the tasks and roles carried out by each position. "Through open communication, empathy from a head of administration has a positive impact on services to students and the entire madrasah community."

Mr. KA, highlighted the importance of formal communication, such as official meetings and written reports, in maintaining the professionalism of information exchange. Through open communication, chief administrative officers can have a positive impact on services to students and the community.

This form of formalist structural strategy in interpersonal communication in educational institutions can be carried out through regular meetings with staff to evaluate work progress, coordinate tasks, and formally convey school policies. The head of administration can also send official electronic mail or written notifications regarding important decisions, policy changes, or school events.

According to Kriyantono (2015), formal structured communication in organizations includes setting organizational levels, departmental responsibilities, and communication rules. However, in the context of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang, formalist structural strategies in interpersonal communication include rules that emphasize more on etiquette, professionalism and service orientation. The Head of Administration, staff, Deputy Head of Public Relations, teachers and students stated that formal communication remains an integral part of madrasa management, involving official letters, official meetings and emails. The division of work is based on job description, educational background, and personal abilities to increase effectiveness. Management service orientation is maintained through professionalism, family patterns and mutual respect. The head of administration is seen as a figure who serves, is friendly, and is responsive in carrying out his duties.

3.3. Interpersonal Communication Strategy: Humanist Cultural Strategy

Head of administration of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang regarding humanist culture strategies in interpersonal communication, as Mr. S said:

"If there is difficult information that must be conveyed, it can be done face to face, or through meetings, discussions, or even technical consultations. Then to know that the message I conveyed was well received, namely by proving that the task was completed according to the target. As head of administration, I am of course also open to input and suggestions from other parties. If the suggestions/criticism are constructive and bring goodness and change then they will be followed up immediately. As head of administration, I will of course provide direct guidance and advice as needed. Professionally, too, because as head of administration, of course you identify and understand individual needs in carrying out their duties, such as the need for facilities and infrastructure."

Mr. S underlined the importance of face-to-face meetings, meetings, discussions or guidance to convey difficult information. Proving that the task is in line with the target is an indicator of success in understanding the message. Continuing suggestions and constructive criticism becomes a professional commitment. This is reinforced by Mrs. E's statement:

"If there is information that is difficult for a head of administration to convey to his staff and employees, the head will convey the difficult information with openness and transparency. This creates trust and allows the recipient of the information to understand the context and reasons behind the decision or change. Through careful choice of words to ensure that information is conveyed clearly without causing unnecessary worry or uncertainty. The head of administration is also very welcoming of suggestions or criticism, even if a

solution can be immediately provided then it will be immediately followed up. He also does not hesitate to provide guidance and assistance if possible. The head of administration is also able to understand the needs that support our professionalism at work."

Ms E emphasized that the head of administration chose words carefully to convey difficult information openly and transparently. Trust and understanding of context are built through clear communication. Acceptance of suggestions and criticism is balanced with quick follow-up.

The humanist culture strategy in interpersonal communication at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang, shows that the head of administration supports all types of activities carried out by MAN 2 Palembang even if the head of administration cannot participate. As in the example of the documentation above, the head of administration continues to contribute to the opening of the event which will be carried out by all employees at MAN 2 Palembang at the Mandupa Capacity Building event, despite the fact that the head of administration on that day is unable to take part in the activity for some reason. which is urgent, even so the head of administration continues to provide encouragement and prayers to those who take part in these activities. This reflects an attitude oriented towards togetherness and emotional sensitivity. The humanist culture in communication has a positive impact on the social environment in madrasahs, creating a healthy and empowering spirit.

In the context of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang, humanist culture strategies in interpersonal communication involve careful choice of words, direct face-to-face contact, and proof of tasks as indicators of message understanding. Openness, transparency and active participation in receiving input and providing guidance strengthen the image of leadership that is oriented towards togetherness and empathy. The head of administration is recognized as a leader who understands needs and upholds professionalism in carrying out his duties.

3.4. Interpersonal Communication Strategy: Inclusive Equality Strategy

Head of administration at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang regarding inclusive equality strategies in interpersonal communication, Mr. S said:

"In interpersonal communication, by creating an atmosphere of openness and supporting diversity in the team and madrasah environment, this is by maintaining communication procedures, by not demeaning other people's opinions or criticism, respecting each work done. Efforts to create a work environment that is inclusive and free from discrimination is by integrating the principles of social justice in school policies and programs. "To ensure that my interpersonal communication reflects and supports the principle of inclusive equality in madrasa management services, namely that each person interacts well with each other even though they have different tasks, and that there can be a feeling of good cooperation between employees in supporting the achievement of madrasa programs."

Mr. S emphasized that interpersonal communication must create an atmosphere of openness and support diversity in madrasahs. Steps such as maintaining communication procedures, respecting work results, and integrating social justice principles are part of efforts to create an inclusive work environment.

Furthermore, in the interview, Mrs. E said:

"The head of administration ensures that the language used in communication, both spoken and written, is inclusive and respects the cultural diversity and individual backgrounds in the madrasah. Through clear communication and supportive policies, the head of administration ensures that all team members are treated fairly and without discrimination. He supports open feedback from all team members, and acts responsively to the input received."

Mrs. E highlighted the importance of inclusive language and respecting cultural diversity in communication. The head of administration ensures supportive policies, and open feedback from team members to address needs and concerns fairly and without discrimination.

Next Mrs. R:

"The head of administration never differentiates between individuals or a person's background. Everyone who needs help is helped and facilitated as best they can. "The head of administration also uses good speech when communicating, emotionally supporting everyone."

Mrs. R emphasized that the head of administration does not discriminate between individuals or backgrounds, providing assistance and facilitation as fairly as possible. The head of administration also uses good words and is emotionally supportive of everyone in communicating.

The inclusive equality strategy in interpersonal communication at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang adheres to the principle that all individuals must be treated fairly, without discrimination, and respect cultural diversity and backgrounds. Based on the results of interviews, observations and documentation at MAN 2 Palembang, such as at meetings of school principals, heads of administration and teachers and employees at MAN 2 Palembang with committees that discussed priorities for the infrastructure to be built. The head of administration openly listens to the opinions and input of each individual present at meetings and in making important decisions related to school development.

In Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang, the inclusive equality strategy in interpersonal communication involves concrete actions to create a work environment that is fair, free of discrimination, and respects diversity. The active involvement of the head of administration in supporting norms of behavior that support diversity and prevent discrimination creates an inclusive atmosphere. Initiatives such as open feedback, inclusive dialogue, and student engagement demonstrate a commitment to the principles of inclusive equality in every aspect of communication at the madrasah.

3.5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Head of Administration's Interpersonal Communication

3.5.1 Supporting Factors

Supporting factors for interpersonal communication strategies in management services. First, credibility and integrity factors really support the success of the head of administration's communication strategy. A head of administration who has high credibility, integrity, and the ability to invite sympathy is able to build trust from staff, students, and the entire madrasah community. The ability to manage emotions, communicate clearly, and be dedicated to the madrasah's vision and mission are the main foundations.

In the interview, Mr. S emphasized the importance of maintaining open information regarding madrasa management, consistent decision-making, and aligning communication with madrasa values and principles. The opinions of Mrs. E and Mr. KA also emphasized that consistent decisions, two-way dialogue, and acceptance of input from various parties reflect the integrity and credibility of the head of administration. In conclusion, the credibility and integrity of the head of administration is a strong foundation in supporting the effectiveness of interpersonal communication at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang.

Second, the success of a communication strategy also depends on the ability to convey messages clearly. Mr. S emphasized that explaining processes, policies and procedures in language that is easily understood by all relevant parties is a crucial step. Ms E highlighted the importance of using language that is easily understood by different recipient groups, and providing additional explanations where necessary.

Avoiding the use of complicated or unclear language, ensuring information is conveyed carefully and based on facts, and conveying information in a timely and easy to understand manner are the principles emphasized in the head of administration's communications. Students, NAA sisters, observed that the chief administrative officer's easy-to-understand and friendly communication style improved connections with students.

Overall, clear messaging is a key element that supports the chief administrative officer's communications strategy. This creates a uniform understanding across madrasahs, avoids over-interpretation, and strengthens the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

By maintaining credibility and integrity, as well as conveying messages clearly, the head of administration of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang applies key factors in supporting interpersonal communication strategies in management services. Openness, consistency, and alignment with madrasa values strengthen relationships with staff, students, and the community. These factors play an important role in creating a harmonious and effective madrasah environment to achieve educational goals.

The high credibility/authority of a leader in communicating is able to invite sympathy, intelligence in analyzing situations, reliable integrity/coherence between words and actions, ability to understand the dynamics of the work environment, ability to manage emotions, understanding of the psychological condition of the communicant, friendly but consistent attitude, assertiveness, as well as the skills to adapt to society wherever they interact. Credibility and integrity factors really support the success of the head of administration's communication strategy. A head of administration who has high credibility, integrity, and the ability to invite sympathy is able to build trust from staff, students, and the entire madrasah community. The ability to manage emotions, communicate clearly, and be dedicated to the vision and mission of the madrasah are the main foundations.

Meanwhile, the message conveyed by a leader in communicating must be designed clearly according to the conditions and situation, the symbol or symbol used is also easy for the communicant or communicator to understand, and does not give rise to excessive interpretation which gives rise to different interpretations.

This finding is in line with research findings of Eroy et al. (2020), several factors supporting the success of a communication strategy, namely: 1) Communicators have high credibility and integrity, 2) Communication messages are designed to be easy to understand.

3.5.2 Obstacle factor

Factors inhibiting the interpersonal communication strategy of the head of administration at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Palembang provide an in-depth understanding of two types of barriers, namely technical barriers and semantic barriers. First, technical barriers arise in the context of interpersonal communication due to constraints on the devices or technology used. In the madrasa context, Mr. S said that obstacles such as technological incompetence among madrasa staff or members could be an obstacle. He highlighted proactive steps, such as establishing regular maintenance schedules and technology skills training, to overcome these obstacles.

From the perspective of madrasah employees and staff, Mrs. E and Mr. KA emphasized the importance of clarification in overcoming technical ambiguities. They also expressed openness to participate in training and technology skills development. This response shows awareness of the importance of understanding technology to minimize barriers in communication. Technical difficulties can also affect learning, and Ms. R, a teacher, emphasized flexibility in adapting lesson plans to ensure learning effectiveness.

Second, semantic barriers relate to differences in understanding the meaning of words, phrases, or symbols which can cause confusion or ambiguity in communication. In overcoming semantic barriers, the head of administration, Mr S, highlighted the importance of providing further explanation to ensure correct understanding and being open to correction.

Mrs. E and Mr. KA emphasized clarification and asked direct questions if there was any ambiguity or misunderstanding in communication. Understanding other people's language styles and the ability to provide examples or illustrations are emphasized strategies. Mrs. R showed her readiness to open the door to dialogue and provide clarification if there were terms or concepts that were unclear. Creating an atmosphere of two-way communication is the main focus to increase understanding.

Students, as recipients of the message, said that they would actively ask questions or ask for clarification if they felt there was ambiguity or semantic obstacles in the head of administration's message. This shows student initiative to support better understanding.

Overall, technical and semantic barriers in interpersonal communication at Madrasah Aliyah

Negeri 2 Palembang were clearly identified. The proactive actions of the head of administration in overcoming technical obstacles and the readiness of all parties to overcome semantic obstacles create an adaptive and responsive communication environment. A shared understanding of the role of technology and a readiness to ask questions or provide clarification is key to minimizing barriers and strengthening madrasa communication strategies.

The research findings are in line with the research findings of Adawiyah (2019), barriers that occur in communication are divided into two types, namely technical barriers and semantic barriers. Barriers that occur when interpersonal communication is taking place generally come from the devices or technology used in the communication process. Meanwhile, semantic barriers in interpersonal communication are related to differences in understanding the meaning of words, phrases or symbols, which can result in confusion or ambiguity in communication. Every individual has a unique language style.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of interpersonal communication strategies used by the Head of Administration at MAN 2 Palembang reveals several key approaches that enhance administrative services. First, the head of administration at MAN 2 Palembang implemented a formalist structural strategy that emphasized rules that were not too strict but still prioritized etiquette, an adjusted division of work, and a professional service orientation, while paying attention to family values and mutual respect. Then, a humanist cultural strategy creates an atmosphere that is supportive, together and full of empathy. Interpersonal communication is carried out by understanding the message through direct face to face, careful choice of words, and active participation in providing input. Also, an inclusive equality approach creates a supportive, fair and open environment. Concrete steps include the use of inclusive language, fair handling of conflict, and active involvement of all team members, including students.

Communication from the head of administration at MAN 2 Palembang was successful because it integrated credibility, integrity and clear message delivery. By maintaining integrity, providing messages that are easy to understand, and actively engaging with the school community, the head of administration creates a harmonious, transparent and effective madrasah environment. Identifying and resolving technical and semantic barriers is an important part of communication improvement efforts. Proactive solutions include technology skills training, hardware maintenance, additional explanations, openness to correction, and encouraging two-way dialogue. The limitation of this research is that it cannot know specifically the influence of the head of administration's interpersonal communication on the quality of administrative services because it is limited to a description. Therefore, this study suggests further research to examine the influence/relationship of the head of administration's interpersonal communication on the quality of administrative services.

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