Analysis of Communication Patterns between Leaders and Staff in the Protocol and Communication Section of the Leadership Secretariat of Seluma Regency

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze communication patterns between leaders and staff in the Protocol and Leadership Communication Division (Prokopim) of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat. Organizational communication is understood as a mechanism that regulates the flow of information and influences the effectiveness of bureaucratic work. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation of the Head of Division, Head of Subdivision, functional officials, and implementing staff. Based on Keith Davis's (1953) communication pattern theory (R. Wayne Pace & Don F. Faules (2010)), the results show that the communication pattern in Prokopim is adaptive. The Wheel and Chain patterns dominate hierarchical formal communication, while the Y-Pattern emerges in inter-agency coordination with the Subdivision Heads as liaisons. At the operational level, the Circle pattern is evident in horizontal discussions among staff, while the All-Channel pattern develops through the use of digital media such as WhatsApp. These findings indicate that the diversity of communication patterns supports smooth work, but there are still obstacles in the form of dependence on leaders, delays in information, and suboptimal management of digital communication. Therefore, delegation of authority, simplification of information channels, and strengthening of digital archives are needed to improve the effectiveness of organizational communication.

Keywords: *Communication Patterns, Leadership and Staff, Organizational Communication, Prokopim, Regional Secretariat.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a crucial role in maintaining effectiveness and work harmony in any organization. Through communication, information can be conveyed clearly, messages are received accurately, and misunderstandings can be minimized. In an organizational context, communication is the foundation that connects all elements so they can work in a focused manner toward a common goal. Without effective communication, coordination between departments will be disrupted and can reduce organizational performance (Zahara, 2018).

Within the Regional Secretariat, communication serves as the primary link in cross-departmental coordination. Each unit has interrelated tasks and responsibilities, making communication a crucial tool for maintaining alignment. Smooth communication between parties helps ensure that every program and activity runs according to plan and can be responded to quickly if administrative or technical issues arise in the field (Nurhadi & Suharyanto, 2021). A smooth flow of communication plays a crucial role in improving the efficiency of the regional government bureaucracy.

Seluma Regency in Bengkulu Province has a complex government structure, with various divisions and subdivisions that mutually support the performance of the Regent and regional apparatus. The Protocol and Leadership Communication Division is a crucial element, responsible for coordinating ceremonial activities, documentation, and disseminating public information. This division also plays a role in building the image of a professional and responsive local government (Syafruddin, 2020). Research shows that effective government communication can strengthen the legitimacy and public trust in public institutions.

In carrying out its duties, communication patterns in the Protocol and Leadership Communications Section are influenced by the Regent's leadership style and the bureaucratic system implemented. A leader's communication style often determines the intensity and direction of information flow in the workplace. Leaders who adopt a participatory communication style are more open to staff input, while those with an authoritative style tend to result in one-way communication (Effendy, 2017). In the context of local government, an open communication approach has been shown to increase coordination effectiveness and accelerate public policy implementation.

The variety of communication patterns that emerge within the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat can be categorized into vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and circular patterns. Vertical communication occurs between leaders and staff in the context of instructions or reporting; horizontal communication between staff in task coordination; diagonal communication between different departments; and circular communication in the form of two-way feedback. Each pattern has its own advantages and challenges, depending on the context of the situation and the closeness of the relationships between employees (Liliweri, 2019). The effectiveness of implementing these patterns is determined by the clarity of the message and trust between individuals within the organizational system.

Communication problems such as miscommunication, information delays, and lack of feedback can lead to overlapping tasks and reduce coordination effectiveness (Zahara, 2018). Bureaucratic digitization also encourages more open, flexible, and participatory communication patterns through technology-based two-way dialogue. Research shows that well-managed digital communication can improve coordination speed, time efficiency, and government performance accountability (Sari & Pratama, 2021). Therefore, it is important to examine communication patterns in the Protocol and Communications Section of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat Leadership to determine their effectiveness in supporting organizational performance in the digital era.

This research is important because it provides an empirical overview of the internal communication system in the Regional Secretariat, particularly in public services and the implementation of protocol duties. Understanding how communication between leaders and staff occurs, both in person and through digital media, helps identify barriers and opportunities for building more adaptive, transparent, and participatory organizational communication (Ruliana, 2016). These findings can also serve as a basis for local governments in formulating effective communication strategies that align with the principles of good governance.

This study uses Keith Davis's (1953) Organizational Communication Pattern Theory, which states that organizational success is greatly influenced by the communication network pattern between leaders and members. The five main patterns are chain, wheel, Y-pattern, circle, and all-channel, which explain the direction and relationship of information flow in the work environment. In the Protocol and Communication Section of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat, the pattern that emerged was a combination of wheel, where leaders serve as the information center, and all-channel, where staff interact openly through digital media. Understanding these patterns serves as the basis for assessing the effectiveness of information flow and the quality of coordination to support the creation of harmonious and productive bureaucratic communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Organizational Communication

Organizational communication is the primary foundation for building coordination, collaboration, and shared understanding among members of an organization. In the context of government institutions, communication is not merely a means of conveying messages, but also a means of establishing social structures, maintaining a work climate, and maintaining alignment between the goals of leaders and those in the field. According to Wrench, Punyanunt-Carter, and Ward (2023), organizational communication is a continuous process in which individuals share information and meaning within a system with a shared purpose. This process creates interpersonal relationships that are not only based on job structure but also influenced by the values, culture, and leadership style within the organization.

In the context of modern bureaucracy, organizational communication patterns are no longer one-way, but rather more participatory and collaborative. Two-way communication allows for constructive feedback, encourages staff engagement, and increases transparency in the implementation of public duties. Recent research also shows that open and digital-hybrid communication patterns within government agencies can strengthen coordination and reduce information gaps between departments (Siregar & Nurjanah, 2023). Therefore, organizational communication is a central aspect in ensuring the synchronization of policies and work implementation in the Protocol and Communications Section of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat.

Types of Communication Patterns

The classic organizational communication pattern, first introduced by Keith Davis (1953) and later explained in more depth by R. Wayne Pace & Don F. Faules (2010), consists of five main patterns, namely:

1. Chain
   In a chain pattern, communication flows sequentially through a formal hierarchical path. For example, manager → department head → staff → executive, or vice versa, staff report to their immediate superior. This pattern is more organized and minimizes channel jumping, but can be slow if the chain is too long.
2. Wheel
   In a wheel pattern, the center of communication is at a single node (usually the leader). Everyone communicates directly with the center, but members interact little with each other. This pattern allows the leader to be the primary controller of information flow.
3. Y-Pattern
   A combination of a chain and a wheel, where some members can communicate directly to the center, while others can communicate through hierarchical channels. This pattern is useful in organizations with subunits or departments.
4. Circle
   The circle pattern allows members to communicate equally within a closed circle. Messages can pass from one to another in a rotating manner. This pattern reflects a more egalitarian organization.
5. All-Channel
   In this pattern, all members can interact with each other without structural barriers. Communication is completely open, and each individual can be both a source and a receiver of messages. This pattern often occurs in small workgroups or interaction-intensive project teams.

Communication Patterns and Public Organizations

In the context of government, organizational communication patterns are generally influenced by bureaucratic structures and institutional culture. Research by Wulandari and Swarnawati (2024) shows that the wheel and chain pattern remains dominant at the planning and monitoring stages, while the all-channel pattern begins to emerge at the implementation stage through the use of digital media. In modern organizations, including local governments, communication patterns evolve as a combination of formal and digital network patterns. Formal patterns such as the chain and wheel maintain clarity of instructions and hierarchical decisions, while open network patterns such as all-channel and circular provide flexibility, accelerate coordination, and strengthen collective understanding within the workplace (Wulandari & Swarnawati, 2024; Kusumah & Fikri, 2021).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach that aims to describe and understand communication phenomena in the form of words or narratives, not numbers. This approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of communication patterns between leaders and staff in government organizations (Sugiyono, 2020). Research data were obtained from various sources, including interviews, field notes, activity documentation, and relevant photographs or archives. All data is descriptive and reflects the communication experiences of informants in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The researcher also conducted field research to understand the real-world situation at the workplace, particularly how leaders and staff interact, convey information, and respond to messages in the context of protocol and leadership communication activities.

Data collection in this study was conducted using several techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model. The analysis process began with a review of all data obtained, including interviews, observations, and documents.

RESULTS

The communication patterns formed in the Protocol and Leadership Communication Section (Prokopim) of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat show a variety of forms according to the work context and coordination needs. The research results revealed that formal communication is still dominated by the Wheel and Chain pattern, where the leader is the center of information control and instructions are delivered through hierarchical channels. However, in situations that require coordination across sections and agencies, the Y-Pattern pattern emerges through the role of the Sub-Section Head as the main liaison between the leader, internal staff, and related OPDs. Meanwhile, in daily operational activities, especially during the preparation and implementation of protocol activities, horizontal communication is seen through the Circle pattern, where staff exchange information and provide input without structural boundaries.

The use of digital media like WhatsApp also reinforces the all-channel model, enabling all department members to communicate quickly, openly, and in two directions. The combination of these five patterns demonstrates that communication within Prokopim is not static, but rather adapts to the dynamics of bureaucratic work and the demands of effective coordination in the digital age.

DISCUSSION

The communication pattern between leaders and staff in the Protocol and Communication Section of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat demonstrates an organizational communication structure formed from a combination of formal bureaucracy and more open and adaptive communication practices to modern work needs. The results of interviews and observations indicate that communication does not occur in a single pattern, but rather develops in several complementary patterns according to the task context. The patterns that emerge include Wheel, Chain, Y-Pattern, Circle, and All-Channel as described by Davis, all of which are visible in daily organizational activities with varying intensity.

Wheel Pattern

The Wheel communication pattern is the main foundation of the Prokopim Section's work system. The Section Head acts as the central control center for information and decision-making, so that all communication flows, including instructions, reports, and activity results, are centered on the leader. All strategic decisions, such as setting the regional leader's activity schedule, assigning tasks, and approving official speeches, must be approved by the leader before being forwarded to the Sub-Section Head and implementing staff. This pattern demonstrates strong vertical relationships and strict communication discipline. However, its highly centralized nature has consequences for response time, especially when the leader is out of the office or handling several activities simultaneously. In such situations, the decision-making process is slower, while staff in the field are required to act immediately. This situation demonstrates that while the Wheel pattern maintains order and clear control, communication efficiency often depends on the leader's availability of time and readiness to provide direction.

Chain Communication Pattern

The Chain communication pattern works alongside the Wheel pattern and is part of a formal communication system that upholds the hierarchical principle of bureaucracy. In this pattern, all information passes through a predetermined flow: from the Section Head to the Sub-Section Head, then forwarded to the implementing staff, and vice versa, from the staff to the Sub-Section Head and back to the leader. This path ensures that every message is recorded and documented through a clear chain of responsibility. In the context of activity implementation, this pattern is seen when the Sub-Section Head acts as the primary intermediary between the leader and the field implementer. However, observations indicate that this hierarchical system sometimes results in information delays. Messages that must pass through several stages tend to prolong coordination time, especially if one party has not yet responded. The Chain pattern confirms that the organization still strongly upholds bureaucratic values in maintaining orderly information flow, but at the same time requires greater flexibility to ensure the communication process is not hampered by administrative formalities.

Y-Pattern

In addition to the formal pattern, the Y-Pattern also plays a crucial role in cross-departmental and inter-agency coordination. The Head of the Protocol Sub-Division acts as a node connecting the flow of internal information between leaders and staff with external information from the agency or agency organizing the activity. In this position, the Head of the Sub-Division serves as the forwarder of the leadership's instructions and the recipient of feedback from external parties, ensuring continuity of coordination. However, observations indicate that differences in work tempos between agencies and sudden changes to agendas often lead to information discrepancies. Implementing staff often receive changes without written confirmation, leading to confusion in the field. These findings emphasize that the Y-

Pattern requires a stronger feedback mechanism to maintain consistency and accuracy of cross-departmental information.

All-Channel Pattern

In internal work relationships, the Circle pattern demonstrates participatory and egalitarian communication dynamics. The relationship between leaders and staff is not only instructive but also dialogical through staff meetings and informal discussions. Staff have the freedom to express their opinions, while leaders respond openly as long as the input supports task implementation. This open work environment encourages the emergence of new ideas, but the Circle pattern still faces challenges in the documentation aspect. Many ideas that emerge informally are not systematically recorded, potentially leaving them unaddressed in reports or evaluation materials. This suggests that participatory communication patterns need to be accompanied by more orderly documentation management so that communication outcomes can be optimally utilized.

The analysis shows that the communication system in the Prokopim Section of Seluma Regency is in a transition period from a traditional bureaucratic pattern to a modern, technology-based organizational pattern. The Wheel and Chain patterns are still dominant as characteristics of vertical and hierarchical communication, but the Y-Pattern, Circle, and All-Channel patterns are increasingly developing as a form of adaptation to the need for faster, participatory, and cross-unit communication. This illustrates that the flow of communication is no longer completely closed, but is starting to move towards a more open, collaborative, and digital network. Formal patterns are maintained to maintain administrative accountability, while horizontal and digital patterns increase efficiency, flexibility, and accuracy of coordination in task execution.

In this context, the effectiveness of communication within Prokopim is determined by the organization's ability to balance adherence to formal structures with adaptation to modern communication innovations. Strengthening internal and external communication is a key step. Internally, improvements are needed to address information delays, dependence on leaders, and suboptimal digital instruction documentation through delegation of authority, structuring digital communication flows, and increasing the consistency of coordination meetings. Externally, communication with regional government agencies (OPD), activity committees, and vertical agencies needs to be formalized through clear coordination standards, the use of official channels, and orderly decision documentation to prevent information asymmetry, especially during large or sudden activities. With these steps, Prokopim can work more responsively, structured, and accountably in supporting the performance of regional leaders in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the communication patterns of leaders in the Protocol and Communication Section of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat demonstrate a focused, structured, yet flexible communication system tailored to the needs of regional government work. Leaders act as information control centers, decision-makers, and inter-section coordination regulators. Instructions, clarifications, and reports generally flow through formal channels from leaders to Sub-Section Heads and staff, reflecting a bureaucratic character that maintains discipline, clarity of duties, and orderliness of work. In strategic decision-making, leaders retain full control to ensure that every policy is implemented according to protocol procedures.

However, communication patterns are not rigid. Leaders adopt a more open and participatory approach through staff meetings and informal discussions, allowing subordinates to express their opinions and provide solutions to problems. This working relationship fosters a collaborative atmosphere and fosters a sense of shared responsibility. The use of digital media

such as WhatsApp and e-office also demonstrates leaders' efforts to adapt communication patterns to technological developments to ensure the flow of information remains fast and effective, especially when activities take place outside the office or involve multiple agencies.

SUGGESTION

Suggestions that can be given based on the results of research on leadership communication patterns in the Protocol and Leadership Communication Section of the Seluma Regency Regional Secretariat focus on increasing the effectiveness of coordination, strengthening the documentation system, and optimizing the use of digital communication technology to support organizational performance.

First, it's necessary to simplify communication channels without eliminating bureaucratic structures to expedite decision-making, especially in urgent situations in the field. Leaders can grant limited authority to sub-division heads or specific staff to make technical decisions to ensure smooth implementation.

Second, the documentation system for communication outcomes, both formal and informal, needs to be strengthened. Every meeting, informal discussion, or decision made through digital media should be systematically recorded and archived for evaluation and administrative accountability.

Third, human resource capacity building in digital communications needs to be implemented through training in the use of communication platforms and information management. This can help staff become more skilled at delivering reports, managing messages, and maintaining communication ethics in a technology-based work environment.

Fourth, horizontal communication between staff needs to be continuously strengthened to create a participatory, open, and respectful work environment. Leaders can regularly hold internal forums that encourage the exchange of ideas, reflection on activities, and joint evaluations so that every employee feels involved in the organizational process. Such forums not only enrich knowledge but also strengthen collaboration and reduce the potential for miscommunication between staff.

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