

Analysis of Bureaucratic Communication in Building Organizational Culture at the Nusantara Capital Authority

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Keywords

Bureaucratic communication;
organizational culture;
organizational performance;
public organization; Nusantara
Capital City Authority

ABSTRACT

Bureaucratic communication is a strategic element in shaping the work culture and determining the performance of public organizations, especially in new government institutions that are in the institutional transition phase such as the Nusantara Capital Authority (OIKN). Hierarchical bureaucratic structures, differences in employee backgrounds, and cross-sector coordination demands have the potential to cause communication distortions that have an impact on the effectiveness of organizational work. This study aims to analyze how bureaucratic communication plays a role in the formation of organizational culture and its implications for organizational performance within the OIKN. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, document analysis, and targeted group discussions with leaders, structural officials, functional officials, special staff, and executive employees. The results of the study show that bureaucratic communication, which is still dominant, is top-down and formal, affecting the perception gap between job levels and hindering the internalization of organizational values. However, the implementation of two-way communication, the use of information technology, and participatory leadership communication styles have proven to be able to strengthen collaborative and adaptive organizational cultures, while increasing the effectiveness of coordination and organizational performance. This study concludes that strengthening open and integrated bureaucratic communication is the main prerequisite in building a healthy organizational culture and sustainable bureaucratic performance at OIKN.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of global governance, bureaucratic communication is a strategic issue that is receiving increasing attention as the demands for transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of public organizations increase (Fontaine et al., 2022; Mappisabbi & Yappi, 2024; O'Regan et al., 2022; Rich, 2023; van der Walldt, 2025; Widanti, 2022). Public administration reforms in various countries show that weaknesses in bureaucratic internal communication are often the main obstacle to achieving optimal organizational performance and public services (Zakarevičius, 2012; Frodouard & Irungu, 2024). The development of information technology, government digitalization, and increasing public expectations encourage bureaucracies to transform from hierarchical and one-way communication models to more open, collaborative, and adaptive communication patterns (Eller, 2016; Muhammad Saeed & Alzitawi, 2023). However, in practice, many public organizations still face complex communication challenges due to rigid bureaucratic structures, fragmentation of work units,

and differences in perceptions among organizational actors, thus impacting organizational culture and overall institutional performance (Whetsell et al., 2021).

Various studies show that bureaucratic communication problems are influenced by a number of structural and cultural factors (Kuntadi & Livrianti, 2022; Monteiro & Adler, 2022; Mustafa et al., 2022; Rich, 2023). A hierarchical organizational structure tends to create communication distance between leaders and employees, so that the flow of information often experiences distortion or delay (Husain, 2015; Ruczkowski, 2022). In addition, complex and formalistic administrative procedures reinforce the dominance of one-way communication that positions employees as passive recipients of instructions rather than as participants in the decision-making process (Ozmen, 2013). Organizational culture also plays a significant role, as the basic values, norms, and assumptions that develop within an organization influence how individuals communicate, interpret messages, and respond to policies (Schein, 2010; Zakharchyn, 2022). Differences in institutional backgrounds, work experience, and value orientations among employees further magnify the potential for perception gaps in bureaucratic communication, especially in transitional public organizations.

The impact of weak bureaucratic communication is not only evident in technical aspects of coordination but also has direct implications for organizational culture and institutional performance. Distortion of messages and lack of feedback often cause policies to be understood differently at each level of the organization, resulting in inconsistent implementation (Reidhead, 2021). This condition can trigger the formation of work subcultures that are not aligned with organizational values, reduce internal cohesion, and increase resistance to change (Gershenson, 2006; Zhou & Gao, 2017). Furthermore, ineffective communication can reduce employee motivation, loyalty, and trust in leadership, ultimately decreasing organizational performance and the quality of public services (Sitompul et al., 2020; Xanthopoulou et al., 2022). In the context of public organizations, failures in bureaucratic communication also have the potential to undermine institutional legitimacy in the eyes of the public and external stakeholders.

Bureaucratic communication in this study is understood as the process of exchanging information, meanings, and values that occurs formally and informally within the structure of public organizations, whether vertically, horizontally, or diagonally (Pocovnicu, 2014). This variable includes not only communication channels and messaging mechanisms but also leadership communication styles, interaction patterns between units, and the use of organizational communication technologies. Organizational culture is viewed as a system of values, norms, basic assumptions, and symbolic practices formed through daily communication interactions (Schein, 2010; Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Meanwhile, organizational performance refers to the level of coordination effectiveness, consistency of policy implementation, work efficiency, and achievement of institutional goals. These three variables have a reciprocal relationship, in which bureaucratic communication shapes organizational culture, and organizational culture subsequently influences organizational performance (Cicea et al., 2022).

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach to examining bureaucratic communication as a meaning-making process that mediates the relationship between organizational culture and the performance of public institutions. In contrast to previous studies, which generally emphasize structural, regulatory, or bureaucratic digitalization aspects (Lumbanraja, 2020; Fetni et al., 2024), this study combines Co-Orientation Theory,

Ethnomethodology, and Organizational Systems Theory to explain how the alignment of perceptions, daily communication practices, and systemic feedback mechanisms contribute to the formation of organizational culture. In addition, this study adopts the empirical context of the Nusantara Capital Authority (OIKN) as a new government organization in the phase of cultural and governance formation, thereby providing a contextual contribution that has not been widely explored in the literature on bureaucratic communication in Indonesia.

The urgency of this research is heightened by the strategic position of the Nusantara Capital Authority as a key institution in the development and management of the new national capital. OIKN faces complex coordination across ministries, local governments, the private sector, and the community, which requires an effective, adaptive, and collaboration-oriented bureaucratic communication system. Without well-managed communication, the risk of policy fragmentation, internal conflict, and weak internalization of organizational values becomes even greater. Therefore, an in-depth study of bureaucratic communication and its implications for organizational culture and performance is crucial to ensure the sustainability of transparent and accountable modern governance (Torfing et al., 2021; Ramadhan et al., 2022).

This study aims to comprehensively analyze and understand the role of bureaucratic communication in the formation of organizational culture and its implications for organizational performance within the Nusantara Capital Authority. Specifically, this research seeks to identify evolving patterns of bureaucratic communication, analyze the alignment of perceptions among organizational actors, and explain how daily communication practices shape institutional values and norms. In addition, this study aims to uncover communication barriers that affect organizational performance and to formulate a conceptual understanding of the communication–culture–performance relationship in the context of modern public bureaucracy.

The benefits of this research include both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of bureaucratic communication and organizational culture research by offering an integrative approach based on meaning, perception, and open organizational systems. It also enriches the literature through the empirical context of OIKN as a unique transitional organization. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for OIKN leaders and policymakers in designing effective internal communication strategies, building a collaborative organizational culture, and improving bureaucratic performance sustainably. In addition, this research may serve as a reference for other government agencies undergoing bureaucratic reform and digital transformation processes.

METHOD

This research was designed as a qualitative study with a descriptive–analytical approach aimed at understanding the dynamics of bureaucratic communication and its implications for organizational culture and performance. This approach was chosen because the issues examined could not be fully captured through quantitative measurement alone but required exploration of the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of organizational actors within their institutional context. The research focused on how communication was practiced, interpreted, and enacted in daily bureaucratic life, as well as how these practices contributed to organizational culture and institutional performance.

The research was conducted within the Nusantara Capital Authority (OIKN), selected due to its characteristics as a newly established government institution with a developing organizational structure and actors from diverse institutional backgrounds. This context provided a relevant setting for examining bureaucratic communication in a transitional organization. Data collection took place over a defined period that enabled observation of communication practices in both formal settings, such as meetings and coordination activities, and routine work interactions. The study did not evaluate specific policies but instead emphasized understanding communication processes that shaped interaction patterns and organizational culture.

The study examined three interrelated aspects: bureaucratic communication, organizational culture, and organizational performance. Bureaucratic communication was analyzed through vertical, horizontal, and cross-unit interactions, leadership communication styles, and the use of communication media and technology. Organizational culture was explored through observed values, work norms, and symbolic practices reflected in bureaucratic interactions. Organizational performance was considered in terms of coordination effectiveness, consistency of policy implementation, and workflow efficiency. These aspects were analyzed together to understand the relationships between communication, culture, and performance.

The research subjects were members of the bureaucratic apparatus directly involved in communication processes within OIKN. Informants were drawn from various organizational levels, including leaders, structural and functional officials, special staff, and employees, to capture diverse perspectives and experiences. Primary data were obtained from informants' experiences and communication practices, while supporting data were derived from institutional documents and organizational activities. Informants were selected based on the relevance of their roles in communication processes to ensure depth and contextual richness.

Data collection was conducted iteratively to capture bureaucratic communication comprehensively. The researcher engaged directly with organizational actors and examined relevant documents and activities to compare formal communication structures with informal practices. This approach enabled identification of consistencies and discrepancies between intended communication processes and their implementation in practice.

The researcher served as the primary instrument in interpreting data and meanings derived from interactions with informants and the research context. Open-ended question guides were used to maintain focus while allowing flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives. This approach facilitated in-depth data collection grounded in participants' experiences.

Data analysis was conducted interpretively and continuously alongside data collection. The researcher identified communication patterns, similarities and differences in perceptions, and relationships between communication practices and organizational values. Analysis focused on key themes explaining how bureaucratic communication influenced organizational culture and performance, linking empirical findings with the study's conceptual framework.

To ensure credibility, the study applied cross-checking of information from multiple sources to assess consistency. The researcher also engaged in ongoing reflection to minimize bias. These measures were intended to ensure that the findings accurately represented bureaucratic communication practices within OIKN.

Ethical considerations were observed by maintaining informant confidentiality and using data solely for academic purposes. The study was limited to a specific institutional context and timeframe; therefore, the findings were not intended for broad generalization but to provide an in-depth understanding of bureaucratic communication within OIKN. Nevertheless, the results may offer relevant insights for other public organizations facing similar challenges in communication, culture, and organizational performance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was carried out within the Nusantara Capital Authority (OIKN) as a new government institution that has a strategic mandate in the development and management of the national capital. OIKN was formed with a relatively complex organizational structure and involved human resources from various backgrounds of ministries, institutions, local governments, and non-ASN professionals. This condition makes OIKN a transitional organization that is building a bureaucratic communication system, work culture, and performance mechanism simultaneously.

The research subjects consist of apparatus who are directly involved in the communication and coordination process of the organization. Informants include unit leaders, structural officials, functional officials, special staff, and executive employees. This diversity of positions and roles allows the research to capture the variation in perceptions and experiences of bureaucratic communication from different levels of the organization, as emphasized in a descriptive qualitative approach (Schein, 2010; Whetsell et al., 2021).

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Informants

Category Information	Quantity	Main Role
Leadership & High Officials	5	Strategic decision-making
Structural Office	7	Policy coordination and implementation
Functional Office	6	Implementation of technical functions
Special Staff	4	Strategic support and communication
Executive Officer	8	Operational and administrative
Total	30	

Source: Primary data of the study, processed by the researcher, 2025

The results of the study show that the practice of bureaucratic communication at OIKN is still dominated by a vertical pattern (top-down), especially in the delivery of strategic policies and work instructions. Leaders tend to use formal forums such as coordination meetings, circulars, and official minutes as the main means of communication. This pattern is seen as effective in maintaining policy consistency, but on the other hand limits the space for dialogue and feedback from lower-level employees.

At the horizontal level, communication between work units is relatively intensive, but it is often situational and has not been systematically integrated. Coordination across units often relies on personal relationships and individual initiative, rather than on standardized communication mechanisms. These findings are in line with the view that newly formed bureaucratic structures tend to rely on informal networks to overcome the limitations of formal communication systems (Pocovnicu, 2014; Ruczkowski, 2022).

Vertical communication at OIKN shows that there is a perception gap between leaders and executive employees. Leaders consider that policy information has been conveyed clearly and in stages, while some employees feel that the messages received are often general and less operational. This difference in perception gives rise to different interpretations in the implementation of tasks, especially in units that have cross-sector functions.

These findings show that the dominance of one-way communication has the potential to distort meaning and weaken shared understanding in organizations, as described in Co-Orientation Theory (Zakarevičius, 2012). The misalignment of perceptions has an impact on the slow decision-making of operations and the increasing need for re-clarification at the executive level.

Horizontal communication in the OIKN developed in response to the need for rapid coordination between units. The informant revealed that informal discussions through instant messaging applications and ad hoc meetings are the main strategies to solve cross-functional problems. While effective in the short term, this pattern has the potential to create dependencies on specific individuals and make it difficult to document organizational knowledge.

The results of the study showed that the absence of a standard horizontal communication mechanism caused variations in the quality of coordination between units. Units that have leaders with an open communication style tend to show better coordination than units with a rigid communication style. These findings confirm the importance of the role of leadership in shaping the organizational communication climate (Eller, 2016; Sitompul et al., 2020).

The use of information technology is an important element in bureaucratic communication practices at OIKN. Internal information systems, emails, and digital collaboration platforms are used to accelerate the flow of information and coordination. However, the study found that the use of technology still focuses on the information delivery aspect, not fully supporting two-way dialogue and cross-unit collaboration.

Some informants said that information overload has become a new challenge, where employees have difficulty sorting out priority information. This condition suggests that communication technology has not been balanced with effective communication management strategies, as also found in previous research on digital public organizations (Zhou & Gao, 2017; Muhammad Saeed & Alzitawi, 2023).

The results of the study show that the organizational culture at OIKN is still in the formation stage (emerging culture). Values such as collaboration, professionalism, and integrity have been formally introduced, but their internalization has not been evenly distributed across all work units. Bureaucratic communication plays a central role in the process of internalizing these values.

Work units that implement dialogical and open communication show a higher level of understanding of organizational values. In contrast, units with rigid communication tend to form a work subculture oriented towards purely procedural compliance. These findings reinforce the view of Schein (2010) that organizational culture is formed through repeated communication processes in daily work practices.

The performance of the organization in the OIKN is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of bureaucratic communication. The results showed that units with clear, open, and coordinated communication patterns were able to complete tasks faster and consistently than units with fragmented communication.

Communication barriers, such as delays in information and lack of feedback, have an impact on work overlap and inefficiencies in work processes. This condition shows that bureaucratic communication not only functions as a means of policy delivery, but also as a determining factor for the effectiveness of public organizational performance (Cicea et al., 2022).

Table 2. Summary of Research Variable Relationships

Aspects	Key Findings	Implications
Bureaucratic Communication	Top-down Dominant	Distorted Meaning
Organizational Culture	Still in shape	Work subculture
Organizational Performance	Varies between units	Different effectiveness

Source: Primary data of the study, processed by the researcher, 2025

The results of this study are the analytical basis for further discussion of the relationship between bureaucratic communication, organizational culture, and institutional performance. Empirical findings show that an open and integrated communication strategy is key in building an adaptive organizational culture and improving the performance of OIKN as a modern public organization. Thus, these results provide a strong foundation for theoretical discussions and policy recommendations in the next section.

The results of the study show that bureaucratic communication is a crucial factor in the context of public organizations that are in the phase of institutional formation and consolidation such as the Nusantara Capital Authority (OIKN). The urgency of this research lies in the fact that the OIKN not only functions as an administrative institution, but also as a symbol of the transformation of national governance. In these conditions, bureaucratic communication does not only function as a means of policy delivery, but as a mechanism for forming shared meaning that determines the direction of culture and organizational performance. The findings of this study reinforce the view that the failure of bureaucratic communication in the early phase of organizational formation has the potential to cause structural and cultural dysfunction that has a long-term impact (Schein, 2010; Whetsell et al., 2021).

The discussion of the results of the study shows that the problem of bureaucratic communication in OIKN stems from a combination of structural, cultural, and systemic factors. Structurally, the dominance of top-down communication reflects a classic bureaucratic pattern that is still strong, where communication flows are more oriented towards hierarchical compliance than dialogue and collaboration. This condition is in line with the findings of Ruczkowski (2022) who stated that public organizations with hierarchical structures tend to experience message distortion and limited feedback.

Culturally, the diversity of employee backgrounds from various institutions brings different values, norms, and communication habits. Without an integrated communication mechanism, these differences have the potential to give birth to a work subculture that is not aligned with the values of the parent organization. This strengthens the argument of Schein (2010) that organizational culture is formed through a process of repeated communication, not just through formal regulations. From a systemic perspective, the use of communication technology that has not been strategically managed also widens the information gap and causes the phenomenon of information overload, as also found by Zhou and Gao (2017).

The results of the study show that the weakness of bureaucratic communication has a direct impact on the process of internalizing organizational culture. The expected work culture that is collaborative and adaptive has not been fully realized because the organization's value message is not always translated consistently in each work unit. Units with open communication tend to build a participatory work culture, while units with rigid communication form a procedural and defensive work culture.

This discussion emphasizes that organizational culture cannot be built through symbols and slogans alone, but through consistent and meaningful communication practices. These findings corroborate previous studies that emphasized that public organizational culture is strongly influenced by the quality of day-to-day communication interactions, not just by the design of organizational structures (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Zakharchyn, 2022).

From the perspective of organizational performance, the results of the study show that the effectiveness of bureaucratic communication is closely correlated with smooth coordination and consistency of policy implementation. Work units with clear and coordinated communication show more stable performance, while units with fragmented communication experience overlapping tasks and decision-making delays.

This discussion reinforces the findings of Cicea et al. (2022) who state that the performance of public organizations is not only determined by resources and regulations, but also by the quality of internal communication systems. Thus, bureaucratic communication can be understood as a key variable that bridges between strategic policies and operational performance.

The results of the study show that leadership communication styles have a strategic role in shaping the organizational communication climate. Leaders who implement dialogical and participatory communication are able to create a safe space for employees to convey ideas and feedback. Conversely, overly formal and instructive communication styles tend to reinforce the psychological distance between leaders and subordinates.

This discussion is in line with the views of Eller (2016) and Sitompul et al. (2020) who emphasize that communicative leadership is the main prerequisite for the creation of a healthy organizational culture and sustainable performance. In the context of OIKN, communicative leadership is the key to uniting diverse organizational actors in a common vision and values.

The use of information technology in bureaucratic communication at OIKN presents opportunities as well as challenges. On the one hand, technology allows for the acceleration of information flow and coordination across units. On the other hand, without a clear communication strategy, technology has the potential to create information noise and weaken the focus of work.

This discussion shows that the digital transformation of the bureaucracy cannot be separated from the transformation of communication culture. These findings complement previous research that tends to place digitalization as a technical solution, without considering the social and cultural dimensions of organizational communication (Muhammad Saeed & Alzitawi, 2023).

Based on the results of the research, the solution to the problem of bureaucratic communication in OIKN cannot be partial, but must be systemic. First, it is necessary to strengthen two-way communication that allows dialogue and feedback between organizational levels. Second, it is necessary to build a standardized horizontal communication mechanism to

support cross-unit coordination. Third, the use of communication technology needs to be accompanied by a clear information management policy to support collaboration, not just delivering messages.

This solution is in line with the recommendations of Torfing et al. (2021) who emphasize the importance of collaborative governance in modern public organizations. Thus, bureaucratic communication is positioned as a strategic instrument in bureaucratic reform, not just an administrative function.

If bureaucratic communication is carried out in an open, integrated, and participatory manner, this study shows the potential for a significant positive impact. These impacts include increasing the alignment of perceptions between organizational actors, strengthening collaborative work culture, and improving organizational performance in a sustainable manner. In addition, effective communication has the potential to increase internal trust and strengthen the institutional legitimacy of OIKN in the eyes of external stakeholders.

This discussion affirms that investment in bureaucratic communication systems is a long-term investment in the success of public organizations, as also highlighted in the study of global public administration reform (Reidhead, 2021).

Compared to previous research that emphasizes more structural, regulative, or technological aspects of bureaucracy, this research offers novelty through an integrative approach that places communication as a process of meaning-formation that mediates the relationship between culture and organizational performance. The findings of this study expand on previous studies by showing that the problem of bureaucratic communication cannot be solved only through structural or system improvements, but requires changes in the way of communication and building relationships in the organization.

By combining the perspectives of co-orientation, ethnomethodology, and organizational systems, this research provides a conceptual contribution that enriches the literature on bureaucratic communication, particularly in the context of transitional public organizations in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to comprehensively understand the role of bureaucratic communication in shaping organizational culture and its implications for organizational performance within the Nusantara Capital Authority (OIKN) as a transitional new government institution. This goal is based on the urgency of strengthening internal communication governance to ensure policy consistency, coordination effectiveness, and sustainability of modern public organization performance. The results of the study show that bureaucratic communication in OIKN is still dominated by a one-way hierarchical pattern that has not fully supported dialogue and alignment of perceptions between organizational levels. This condition has implications for the formation of variations in policy understanding, the emergence of work subcultures that are not always aligned, and differences in performance achievements between units. The main findings of the study confirm that the quality of bureaucratic communication has a central role in the process of internalizing organizational values and in determining the effectiveness of institutional performance. Open, integrated, and participatory communication has proven to be an important prerequisite for the formation of a collaborative and adaptive organizational culture. Theoretically, this research contributes by expanding the study of

bureaucratic communication through an integrative approach that positions communication as a process of forming meaning that mediates the relationship between culture and organizational performance. This study emphasizes that bureaucratic reform is not enough to rely on structural and system changes, but must be accompanied by a transformation of communication patterns and work relations. Practically, the findings of the study have significance for strengthening the internal communication strategies of OIKN and other public organizations that face similar dynamics. This study has limitations in the context and timing of the specific study, so the findings are not intended for broad generalizations. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop a cross-agency comparative approach or use longitudinal design to look at the dynamics of changes in communication, culture, and organizational performance in the long term.

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