



The Role of Interpersonal Communication of Village Heads in Building a Sustainable Cultural Village Initiative

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Abstract. This research aims to examine how the interpersonal communication of the Head of Miliran Village fosters sympathy, participation, and community support, enabling Miliran to develop as a pioneering cultural village. The Yogyakarta City Government has implemented a program to establish cultural villages in several areas, and Miliran was selected due to its consistent cultural activities, particularly the annual interfaith Nyadran ceremony, which features a cultural parade with the Bregodo troop. This event attracts hundreds of residents, highlighting the need for strong leadership and community involvement. Leaders capable of mobilizing residents play a vital role in realizing Miliran’s vision as a cultural village.

This study uses a qualitative case study method with a post-positivistic paradigm. The findings indicate that interpersonal communication is essential in fostering togetherness among Miliran residents, which in turn supports the development of the Miliran Cultural Village.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication; Village Head; Cultural Village; Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Yogyakarta is renowned as a city rich in cultural diversity. As one of Indonesia’s leading tourist destinations, the city offers not only tangible cultural heritage such as temples, palaces, and historic buildings but also intangible heritage encompassing arts, traditions, and social practices. To preserve this identity, the Yogyakarta City Government has introduced various policies that encourage the development of cultural villages as part of a sustainable tourism strategy. One example is the Miliran Muja Muju Cultural Village in Umbulharjo, Yogyakarta. This village actively maintains and develops cultural traditions through regular events such as Nyadran (traditional communal gatherings), the Mountain Apem interfaith celebration, and performances by the Bregodo troops. These activities not only preserve local traditions but also strengthen social ties and foster interfaith harmony. The Miliran Muja Muju Cultural in safeguarding and developing local culture but also acts as a mediator between the community, the government, and other external stakeholders. In carrying out this task, interpersonal communication is one of the most critical skills. Effective communication helps the village head build synergy with residents, establish trust, and encourage active participation in cultural activities.

However, challenges remain, such as differences in perception among residents, low participation in certain cultural programs, and the pressures of modernization which threaten traditional values. Strong interpersonal communication is therefore key to ensuring social stability and the long-term sustainability of cultural villages.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a post-positivistic paradigm, using a case study method. Case studies are descriptive in nature and focus on examining conditions, activities, developments, and key

factors that influence the phenomenon under study. The results are analyzed and described to draw conclusions and research implications.

The unit of analysis in this research is Miliran Village, located in the Muja Muju Subdistrict of Umbulharjo, Yogyakarta. The village consists of four RWs and fourteen RTs. It has been designated by the Yogyakarta City Government as a pilot cultural village due to its ongoing commitment to cultural activities and community involvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The findings reveal that obstacles remain in encouraging participation from all elements of the community in cultural activities. Some residents are less active in engaging with programs, and there is not yet a shared awareness of the importance of preserving traditional culture as a potential tourism asset for Yogyakarta. Coordination between RTs, RWs, and village administrators also needs improvement to strengthen community participation.

To address these challenges, several communication-based solutions are emphasized:

- **Openness:** Ensuring transparency between village administrators and the community when designing cultural programs.
- **Empathy:** Prioritizing empathy in communication so that all residents feel a shared responsibility in advancing the cultural village.
- **Clarity:** Providing clear long-term plans regarding the benefits of cultural villages for economic, artistic, and social development.
- **Listening Skills:** Capturing residents' aspirations to resolve differences of opinion effectively.
- **Trust:** Building trust that cultural village initiatives will positively impact the community.
- **Adaptability:** Developing flexible approaches to accommodate diverse community perspectives.
- **Collaboration and Negotiation:** Working with community leaders and residents to strengthen cooperation.
- **Utilization of Communication Media:** Using various media channels for effective coordination and outreach.

Acknowledgments

Other villages aspiring to become cultural villages should carefully plan their programs in collaboration with all community elements. Strong interpersonal communication, supported by diverse media channels, is essential to ensure cooperation, sustainability, and success.

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