

# AN ANALYSIS ON GOVERNMENT'S ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT THE KISARAN BARAT SUB-DISTRICT OFFICE, ASAHAN REGENCY, NORTH SUMATERA PROVINCE, INDONESIA



**Muhammad IKHSAN**

**Badaruddin \***

**Humaizi**

*\*Universitas Sumatera Utara, Master of Development Studies, badaruddin131@gmail.com*

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## **Abstract**

The objective of the study was to find out organizational culture in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, Asahan Regency, North Sumatera. The study used qualitative method, and the data were gathered by conducting interviews with 8 informants who worked at the Sub-district Office. The result of the study showed that organizational culture at this office was in good category even though there was the decrease in achievement and performance. The employees' service was also in good category since they have applied a principle that people who need their service are "the king" who has to be humbly served. On the other hand, it can be noted that their capacity to comply with the rules applied at the office is bad. This is due to the many obstacles faced in creating a good work culture, one of which is inconsistent regulations and reward and punishment system is not performed well.

## **Introduction**

From its definition, it can be known that organizational culture is how the members of an organization appreciate work values and reflect them in their daily life in order to achieve the highest work performance (Yogaswara, 2015) (Sambali, 2015). It also constitutes an important element which development in an organization should be heeded since it can influence work performance (Ahmed & Shafiq, 2014) (Kumar, 2016). This is because organizational culture contains values, norms, experience, confidence, and habit which are united by a mutual perception among employees and which are eventually shared to each other to achieve the goal (Janicijevic, 2012) (Ahmadi, Salamzadeh, Daraei, & Akbari, 2012) (Ehtesham, Muhammad, & Muhammad, 2011) (Meško Štok, Markič, Bertoneclj, & Meško, 2010). There are three important organizational culture – organizational culture which is provided for new employees through socialization, organizational culture which influences

behavior at a working place, and organizational culture which exists in a different level.

Organizational culture can also be used as a binding chain to equate the Sub-district employees' perception or viewpoint on a certain problem so that it can be a power to achieve the goal. Through an organization, organizational culture is able to yield innovations in providing services, the employees will work with high morale, there will be a sense of togetherness and comfortable condition in providing services, they will emphasize on result rather than process, they will have good discipline and each of them will understand what he has to do according to his task and obligation. In other words, organizational culture conveys a sense of identity for the members of an organization, makes it easy to gain member commitment to something bigger than the self, enhances system stability and serves as a sense-making tool that can guide and shape members' behavior (Goromonzi, 2016).

When this culture has been established, service quality will be good, too; therefore, good human resources (employees and apparatus) are needed to establish the organizational culture. In this case, good organizational culture will be created in the government's organization.

The data from the Sub-district Office of Kisaran Barat revealed that there was the decrease in the achievement and performance of the employees who work in the office. The data in 2016 revealed that Kisaran Barat Sub-district got achievement as the best Sub-district in Asahan Regency. However, after a few years had passed, there was the decrease in achievement and performance which caused the decrease in its rank although it had the 3rd (third) contender of the best Sub-district in Asahan Regency as it was announced on August 17, 2016. This condition made me interested in doing a research in Kisaran Barat Sub-district since there was the decrease from the champion in 2016 to become the third contender in 2018.

The decrease in achievement and performance cannot be separated from the influence of organizational culture at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office. Organizational structure constitutes the government's organizational commitment in the Sub-district Office which is closely related to the behavior in getting through the work. The behavior itself is the reflection of working attitude based on values and norms owned by every employee. When they join with a government's organization, they will adjust themselves to a pattern of behavior, attitude, and communication as well as the work method wanted by the government's organization in order to achieve its goal. Changing organizational culture means attempting to instilling new work values and method into the organization. This was what was intended by this study, to find out what organizational structure found in this work organization and what obstacles existed in realizing good organizational culture in the employees' work environment.

## **1. Methodology**

The study used descriptive qualitative method which became the basis for observing and analyzing the government's organizational culture at one of the government's offices. The data were obtained from the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, Asahan Regency, North Sumatera Province and gathered by conducting interviews, observation, and documentation so that the research problems could be solved. The interviews were conducted with the Sub-district Head of Kisaran Barat, the Secretary, two Sub-Section Heads, two Staffs, and two people who resided in Kisaran Barat with the expectation that the

informants could inform organizational culture and mechanism at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office.

## **2. Analysis on Organizational Culture**

### **2.1. Understanding the Meaning of Work: as Obligation and Source of Earnings**

The informants' fundamental reason for working is to get earnings since they are the heads of families. Looking on working as the source of earnings can cause their professional attitude. They will accept what they are disserved to be their own rights and what they have done toward the organization they are working at. On the other hand, when the reward is beyond what they have been long for being expected, their work motivation will definitely decrease or disappear. For the employees at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, working is not only considered as the source of earnings but is also considered as the tasks which have existed since they were recruited to be new government employees. As government employees they are bound to norms, whether it is in a written form or not. They are ready to be imposed by sanction when they violate against the regulations stipulated in the legal provisions. This will have positive sad negative impact.

The positive one is that they will not be dismissed easily since it takes a long procedure and legal provisions while the negative one is that the awareness of a sense of belonging toward the organization will diminish since it does not come from their own self; it comes from the system. They only work for what they are asked to without thinking about innovation or developing the organization to be better. Nevertheless, they always do their job since they think that they are government employees because the first time they are hired as government employees they are committed to work for their organization as an obligation. Besides that, they are also aware of their position in which they get payroll from the government.

### **2.2. Attitude toward Job and What should be done: Positive Attitude toward Work without discriminating it.**

The employees of Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, in accomplishing their work, have had positive attitude. They do as well as possible what their superiors ask them to do according to their capacity. They always do the tasks ordered by the Sub-district Head without any objection or denial. In this case, the Sub-district Head will not, of course, give them any tasks which are not in accordance with their own tupoksi (acronym of Task, Primary, and Function). The Sub-district Head also ask his subordinates or employees to do and to get through their work

according to their capacity. When he finds that some of his employees or staffs are not able to do their job, he will give guidance and direction toward the solution in order to accomplish the work properly. He never disclaims his responsibility for his staffs and employees in doing their job. This policy creates good relationship between superiors and subordinates; besides that, any task can be carried out successfully.

### **2.3. Attitude toward Time: Flexibility, It is adjusted to the Types of Activity and other Conditions**

The working hours for the government employees at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, starting from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM West Indonesian Time with 5 (five) work days, from Monday through Friday, except national holidays or joint holidays as they are determined by the Central Government. Attendance list signed by the employees is divided into two parts: morning attendance list and afternoon attendance list. It is aimed to keep the employees' attendance stable and they will always be ready at the office.

The result of the interviews with informants showed that office hours applied in the sub-district offices are flexible or adjusted to the activities and to the other specific conditions. Based on the result of the researcher's observation in the research location, it was found that the employees did their routine activities such as electronic Resident's Identity Cards, Family Cards, Land Certificates, BPJS Recommendation Letters, Recommendation Letters for the Poor, and the other Residential Administration. These activities do not take a long time. It was also found that after 2:30 PM West Indonesian Time only a few people or even no more people who came to the office to ask for services. The employees' attitude toward working hours can also be seen from the roll call activities in the morning and in the afternoon. It was found that not all of the employees at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office did the roll calls, especially in the afternoon roll calls, because of some obstacles in the field such as some of them participated in the activities organized by the government agencies of the Asahan District Administration so that the Sub-district staffs who were related to the job had to be present or to accompany the Sub-district Head. However, some employees did not show up in the afternoon roll calls because they did not go back to the office after they took a break, and some of them did not feel comfortable at the office when they had nothing to do and they thought that it was better for them to go home early from the office even though a few of them still remain in the office although there was no work to be done.

### **2.4. Attitude toward Work Environment: Safeguarding Environmental Preservation for Providing Work Comfort and Prioritizing Comradeship in Working**

Relationship between the employees of the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office and internal social environment and the surrounding people is relatively good. Viewed from the office internal relationship, the type of relationship among the employees and between subordinates and superiors at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office is usually used kinship of comradeship relationship rather than a formal one between superiors and subordinates. Work interaction created by the Sub-district Head prioritizes kinship or comradeship relationship rather than a formal one. The employees who violate the rules or indiscipline will be imposed with sanction in written form. He usually would rather use persuasive warning and person-to-person approach.

This attitude prioritizes the tendency to partiality in human relationship approach which will, of course, have good and bad effect on the organization. Its good effect of prioritizing human values is that the employees will have the feeling of secure and comfortable in working since they are supported by a favorable work environment. Its bad effect is that if the employees feel secure and comfortable, they tend to neglect their tasks and responsibility. In consequence, it is difficult for them to have the willingness to change the organization toward the better one while norms and rules become the lips service or are written on the walls. In this case, the firmness of superiors in enforcing the prevailing regulations and sanctions are highly needed. Human relationship and formal relationship should be balanced so that they can share to each other.

As civil servants, direct interaction between the employees of the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office and the community automatically occurs. In this interaction, the employees always attempt to make good relationship with the communities as the acceptors of the services provided by the government. In providing services for the community, they consider the clients as the kings. Therefore, it is not ethical if the clients are not served well. In this case, it is obvious that there is the shift of paradigm in the sub-district in which the government employees used to be considered as the kings that were served by the people, but today it is shifted to a better organization: it is the employees who serve people. They are really good Civil Service that humbly serve people.

**2.5. Attitude toward Devices Used for Working: Indifferent and Reluctant to Use Available Technological Devices due to the Incapacity to Use them**

It seems that the employees of the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office are indifferent and reluctant to optimize the available devices as well as possible. The fact is that using these devices can make the work easier and speedier to do. Their indifference is often caused by their limitations such as the factor of age since the older a person is, the weaker his mind in catching up current information. Old-aged employees will feel awkward to learn modern technology.

Technological advancement should be used as well as possible so that organizational vision and mission can be achieved properly. The factor of age is not a serious obstacle in learning something well if it will make the work easier to do. The result of the observation done in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office concerning the use of devices in working showed that many employees had no capacity to learn how to operate technological devices such as using computer. Many of them are not able to operate computer well so that many of them use those who are hired on a contract basis in operating technological devices. There are some people who are recruited to be hired as computer operators for helping employees work; for example, typing letters. Even though the new recruited hired employees have helped cover the shortage, the side-effect is the decrease in the interest of the government employees in learning to master current technology so that mastering science and technology in the future will be decreased, too.

**2.6. Work Ethic: Trusteeship which has to be maintained**

In the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, work ethic or morale which becomes the basis for the employees in working means that they consider that working is trusteeship. The status as a government employee is a trusteeship by Indonesian people and by government to do his job well. As government employees, the employees in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office consider their job as trusteeship which has to be carried out and accounted for because the first time they are hired as government employees they have to take a vow to be good and trustworthy government employees. Therefore, they always consider their job as trusteeship given to him. When they violate their vows, they will, of course, be shameful so that the vow becomes the trigger to increase their work motivation and liability for the work which has been trusted to them.

**2.7. Behavior in Working and Making Decision: Waiting for Order**

In providing services for people, the employees of the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office are very hospitable. "Clients are the kings" – this motto has been instilled well in their mind as the government employees. Every client who comes to the office will be received and served politely with smiles. Unfortunately, they usually wait for the order from their superiors; they only do their job when their superiors ask them to do it, but when there is no order, they only keep sitting, chatting with their co-workers, going to the office cafés, or doing any unproductive activities, without thinking about the benefit of the organization. From the researcher's observation in the research location concerning the employees' behavior in working and in making decision, it was found that the employees of the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office were good and hospitable in serving people. However, in the office hours they usually wait for order from their superiors and do not dare to make decision without the consent of their superiors although sometimes the Sub-district Head is not in the office. Consequently, the work is impeded and cannot be completed on time. This indicates that they are not initiative and have no courage to make any decision quickly in any problems which have to be solved immediately.

**3. Some Obstacles In Creating Good Organization Culture**

Organizational culture should be developed in order to adjust to environment. Developing organizational culture in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office is aimed to create an organizational culture which is able to support the implementation of all assignments and tasks which must be done. However, problems and obstacles usually exist in implementing the assignments and tasks which will be impeded or delayed. If they not completed properly, they will influence the organizational culture.

Bad organizational culture can also occur in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office. Therefore, in order to create good organizational culture the employees, especially those who work at the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, have to know what obstacles they are facing. In this case, the researcher identifies some obstacles which exist in developing organizational culture:

**a) No Local Government Regulation on Developing Organizational Culture.**

So far, the Asahan District Administration has not issued any regulation on developing organizational culture in the Asahan District Administration in following up the Decree of the Minister of the Efficient Use of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic

Reformation No. 39/20012 on Developing Organizational Culture in which it is stated that there are 3 (three) types of mechanism of selection in formulating the values (which have advantages and disadvantages) as the basis for working:

1. Top management and echelon 1 in each Ministry/Institution and local government work together in stipulating organizational values, regulations, and policies or legal provisions;

2. Top management and echelon 1 in each Ministry/Institution and local government work together with official representatives (echelon II, III, and IV) and staff representatives work together in formulating organizational values. Each participant has the right to present personal values or the values which are in accordance with vision, mission, primary mission/task, organizational functions, rules, and policies or legal provisions;

3. Top management and echelon 1 in each Ministry/Institution and local government invite all officials and staffs to work together in formulating organizational values. Each participant has the right to present personal values or the values which are in accordance with vision, mission, primary mission/task, organizational functions, rules, and policies or legal provisions;

The availability of clear norms, the development of organizational culture can be accomplished well. There will be no ambiguity among the employees and their mindset can be equalized. They will know clearly what work pattern wanted by the government for achieving and accelerating the organization's goal.

#### **b) Lack of the Number of Employees**

The shortage of employees in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office has significant influence on their work performance. For example, some officials have difficulty in doing their work because almost all employees who have the positions of the Section Heads in the office do not have staffs or subordinates who can do their tasks. Consequently, the Section Heads have to do them themselves. There are only 2 (two) staffs in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, and this condition influences the acceleration and the effectiveness in completing the work and, of course, influences the quality of the work itself.

#### **c) Management changes the Values without Mature Planning**

In January, 2017, the Sub-district Head of Kisaran Barat Sub-district was changed. In the previous tenure, the Sub-district Head was Darwinsyah Lubis, S.STP who was transferred to a new post as the Head of Protocol Department of the Secretariat of Asahan Regency. He was replaced by Agus Jaka Putra Ginting, S.H., who is still in his position as the Kisaran Barat Sub-district head. In

this case, the employees had difficulties in accepting new values come by the new Sub-district Head, especially in the aspect of discipline. The previous Sub-district Head used to emphasize on strict discipline such as in punctuality.

The employees were required to get to office at exactly 7:30 AM and the roll call in the morning and to return from office at exactly 4:00 PM. The new Sub-district Head more emphasized on the output or work result. Punctuality is not much emphasized; the important thing is the job has to be completed properly. The change in this policy would certainly make great effect on the employees' performance. They would be confused in adjusting to the new policy and leadership style of the new top management, and it takes time and long process. Relevant cultures should be well kept and maintained, and the instilled culture should be adjusted to the existing culture.

#### **d) Reward Dan Punishment are not Optimal**

The implementation of reward and punishment in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office is not optimal. The employees believe that there is no difference between those who work hard and seriously get the same treatment from their superiors as those who are lazy and sluggish. Besides that, it is very difficult to impose punishment in a written form or normative punishment such as legal provisions upon subordinates since employment is based on family relationship in the local government or in public organizations. Besides that, many employees have close relationship or even kinship with political figures so that they will be backed up when they get problems. This condition will eventually have the significant effect on the work atmosphere in this Sub-district Office.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the data above, it was found that organizational culture in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office was in good category although there was the decrease in the work achievement and performance. There were some obstacles in creating good organizational culture in this office: 1) there was no normative regulation issued by the Asahan District Administration on developing organizational culture, 2) there was the shortage of qualified and quantified human resources in the Kisaran Barat Sub-district Office, 3) the superiors could not maintain the consistency of the available positive values and tended to change them without socializing to their subordinates, and 4) reward and punishment system was not optimal.

Improving organization culture toward a better one will take years; therefore, the improvement should begin with the changes in the attitude and behavior of the superiors or the top officials

which will be followed by their subordinates. The establishment of organizational culture begins with superiors' awareness of the relationship between superiors and subordinates in determining their own method in the Work Units. Problems occur because of the viewpoints and the behavior of the government apparatus is not good enough since they are influenced by bad organizational culture. The development of good organizational culture will be very beneficial for the employees themselves and for their work environment which give them opportunities to play their role, to perform, to do self-actualization, to get recognition, to get reward, to get work pride, to have a sense of belonging, to take responsibility, to increase the capacity to lead, and to be able to solve any problems. The implementation of organizational culture is needed because government employees' condition is alarming since they ignore moral values and organizational culture in doing their job.

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