

# A Measurement Model of Leadership Communication of Coastal Village Leaders in Terengganu, Malaysia

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## Abstract

Leadership communication skill was identified as a significant predictor for an effective organisation. Despite that, lot of leaders especially in village organisation was not getting clear picture for needed skills to practice their roles. This study was conducted to identify the skills that relating to significant leadership communication practices. This cross-sectional survey by questionnaires was applied in state of Terengganu Malaysia, involved 300 members of coastal village organization as research respondents. The data that was analysed by structural equation modelling (SEM) found 27 indicators and three construct can be apply to measure the variable. Finally, a measurement model of leadership communication among the coastal village leaders was succeed developed, and suitable to practice in order to improve the performance of leadership skills in village organisation.

**Keywords:** *Leadership communication, organizational communication, organizational leadership*

## 1. Introduction

The effectiveness of leadership in the village organization remains in low level even though high expectation have been targeted (Mohd Razali, 2008; Romzi 2001), which resulted in less successfulness to act as a catalyst for community developments (Mohd Razali, 2008). Most of village organization (<sup>1</sup>JKKK) were found to be inactive in performing their role as head of the village as assigned. For example, the District Office of Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia would only considered 23 active JKKK organizations as compared to 292 units of JKKK found in the district

of Kuala Terengganu in 2012. This problem had caused the District Office to introduce new standard in 2013 in order to measure the effectiveness level of particular JKKK's role.

According to the report by Malaysia Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, there is JKKK that hardly hold any meeting in 2011 and only organize once or twice meeting per year. In the same report, the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development has confirmed that there are four major drawbacks of JKKK, namely; less implementation of community services, less concern for the poor and community members in need of assistance, less helpful to government and did not provide village's profiles that lead to the improper projection for the development needs. The chairman of JKKK also less proactive in playing their role, for instance did not hold meetings, not make a report, as well as not being able to take responsibility to the root cause that eventually raised the complains, thus affect the government's image.

In the real environment of fishermen community in coastal village nowadays, leadership communication among chairman of JKKK has become the main focus in which communication has been considered as important as the other inputs (Mohd Yusof et al, 2011). Therefore, the problems arise in the leadership communication of JKKK basically based on incapability in the communication skills and also leadership skills (Samir Shakilla Muhazzab & Sara, 2012). Communication problems are often induced by all-knowing concept by a leader and also the absence of people interaction in the organization of which community needs are failed to be understood (Syed Abdul Rahman and Mohamed Zain, 2004). Ineffective leadership will cause conflicts in determining the direction and goals to be achieved by the community (Samir Muhazzab & Sara Shakilla, 2012; Azima et al., 2011; Mohd Zulhafiz, 2013). This study was done to develop a measurement model of leadership communication among the coastal village leaders in Terengganu, Malaysia.<sup>1</sup>

## **2. Background**

Communication was defined as transmission of meaning verbally or nonverbally from an individual to another individual (Barrett, 2008). Meanwhile, leadership is a leader, who guides, instructs, motivates or inspires others that could affect the organization and community. Leaders also persuade others to set goals for improving the performance of groups and organizations. Previous research were concluded that leadership effectiveness is determined by the effectiveness of communication (Barret, 2008). Through effective communication, a leader would control, direct, motivate and inspire followers. Good communication skills would build an understanding and effectiveness in communication that makes an effective leader would be possible. Thus, Barrett (2008) has clarified leadership communication as control; in order to turn the point of leader influences a person, group, organization or community. Hence, it is stated that leadership communication since it has used the full range of communication skills and resources to overcome the interference and to create and deliver messages to control, direct, motivate or inspire in making action.

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<sup>1</sup> Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK) is referring to an authority village organization in Malaysia

Leadership communication is crucial for the success of an organization since it is the way for leaders to connect with their followers (Baldoni, 2004). This relationship would provide the impetus to bring along their followers towards the same aims and goals. Raja Roslan et al. (2008) then define leadership communication is the ability to influence followers and involves the use of power by leaders and followers' acceptance. The ability to influence followers is related with the satisfaction and fulfilling the desire of followers. Mai and Akerson (2003) have asserted that leadership communication is more than delivering information with effective delivery while explaining the basic meaning of leadership communication is the participation of communication between leaders and community to ensure that any information received is delivered to the public. Wan Abdul Aziz et al. (2009) reported that leadership communication is the leader that communicates by using certain symbols between each other through behavioural change or character for the purpose of sharing goals and common needs.

Generally, leadership communication is how a leader gets in touch with the followers. Therefore, as a definition, the concept describes the views of a wide range of communication leadership. Studies conducted by scholars have founded the concept of communication, especially the leadership of the organization which developed the concept of leadership communication which is how an organizational leader communicates with the upper (superior) of the organization and its customers (subordinated) to achieve organizational goals.

Mai and Akerson (2003) emphasized the concept of leadership communication should include three major aspects such as what the leaders say and how the leaders deliver something, with whom they communicate, and how the leaders develop community and get to know the community. They said that leadership communication could not exist when there is no dialogue with the community. Power is given to the leader, but leadership is created with members of the organization by sharing thoughts and making changes together to establish community relationship.

Raja Roslan et. al (2003) confirmed the concept of leadership communication should involve three elements of communication skills in the organization which are downward communication, upward communication and horizontal communication (Pace & Faules, 2002; Evawani, 2012). Downward communication exists when an organizational leader giving instruction or sharing information to the public. While upward communication acts on how leaders interact in conveying information to the supervisor, horizontal communication proceeds in a way to interact with members in the organization to discuss, express opinions and deliver information.

In the other hand, Andrews and Andrews (2004) have stressed the concept of communication must involve two important icons; the sender and the receiver. They also emphasized that the sender that plays as a leader is an individual who start the communication such like giving orders, information, ideas and so on while the recipient is an individual who receives the orders. Thus, when there is a relationship between those two, then leadership communication will occur.

Mohd Yusof Noor Rahamah, Abd. Hair, Junaenah & Ong PuayLiu (2011) stated the concept of leadership communications is the leaders as a facilitator. A leader should communicate through discussions as they listed that a leader should able to communicate in the course of their duties. Among the ways include are identifying the appropriate individuals that interested to join the discussion, asking questions to elicit the views from the participants, listening to the views expressed, recording all their thoughts, getting a deal of thoughts about the views, summing up the views recorded from the participants and writing a report on the discussions held.

Thus, the hypothesis model of leadership communication as in Figure 1 was proposed to be tested in this study.

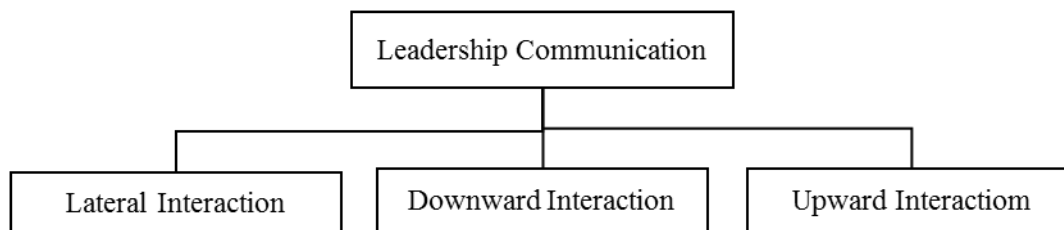


Figure 1: Hypothesis model

The suggested model was contained three construct, namely; lateral interaction, downward interaction and upward interaction. For this research, lateral interaction was defined how village leaders communicate themselves in internal organization. Meanwhile, downward interaction was referred how leaders interact with the village community as their clients, and upward interaction was defined how they communicate with the superiors, especially government officers that responsible to village development. In questionnaire, construct of lateral interaction was represented by indicators B1-B9, downward interaction B13-B21, and construct of upward interaction represented by indicators B23-B31.

### 3. Measures

The study was applied cross-sectional design by quantitative approach. Research respondents were 300 JKKK's member from fisherman coastal village that located in the state of Terengganu, Malaysia. The samples was selected using stratified sampling method while the sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formulae. Data was collected using five response scale questionnaires with 27 items to measure three main construct namely lateral interaction, downward interaction and upward interaction.

The data was analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) approach by AMOS 20 software focusing on standard loading, convergent validity, composite reliability, discriminant validity and fit indexes. The item, construct and variables of the model will accepted when regression weight for every standard loading are 0.708 and above, average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity are 0.5 and above, composite reliability (CR) are 0.708 and above, square root AVE for discriminant validity greater than value of correlation between item and between construct (Hair et al, 2012). The model also assume as fit when at least one fit index from each category namely basic, relative and parsimony was achieved where CMIN ratio < 5, CFI and NFI > 0.9, PCFI and PNFI > 0.5, and RMSEA < 0.1 (Meyers et al, 2013).

#### 4. Result and Discussion

The preliminary result shown all the constructs were at medium level which three and above mean score from maximum five. The finding also got acceptable values for skewness and kurtosis which meaning all the variables were at normal distribution and parametric testing can be done. Result also shown all construct were strength correlate between each other. The preliminary results was shown in Table 1 follow.

Table 1: Preliminary results

Construct	Mean	Sd	Skew	Kurt	1	2	3	4
(1) Leadership communication	3.594	0.112	-0.668	-0.629	1.00			
(2) Downward Interaction	3.522	0.112	-0.650	-1.500	.981	1.00		
(3) Lateral Interaction	3.740	0.110	-.738	-0.619	9.47	0.929	1.00	
(4) Upward Interaction	3.520	0.114	-0.738	-1.493	0.955	0.937	0.904	1.00

Meanwhile, all the measurement of convergent validity via AVE, reliability via CR, and discriminant validity via square root of AVE was achieved, while all the standard loading in the figure 2 next score 0.701 and above. It is mean all the indicator and constructs that was suggested for leadership communication variable was valid and reliable, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Convergent validity, composite reliability and discriminant validity

Construct	AVE	CR	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
Leadership communication	0.928	0.928	0.963
Lateral interaction	0.703	0.955	0.838
Downward interaction	0.770	0.981	0.877
Upward interaction	0.774	0.774	0.880

Figure 2 shown the final model of leadership communication which 27 indicator skills and three construct. All the suggested item was accepted as reflected to suggested construct, while the three suggested construct also reflected to the variable of leadership communication with 0.95 and above of standard loading score. Meanwhile the fix indexes also shown the model was fit.

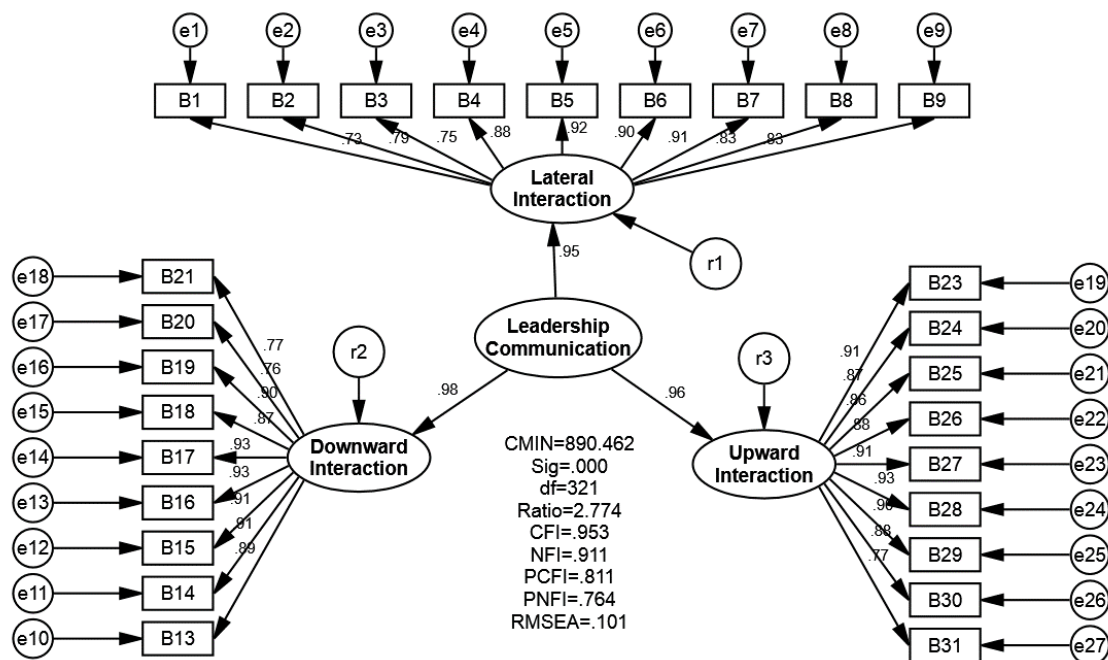


Figure 2: Final model

Finally, the study was succeed in developing measurement model of leadership communication among village leader, especially leader for the coastal fisherman villages. Hopefully the finding

will give value input to village leaders and government in order to upgrade their performance, recruitment process, training system and evaluation among them.

The village leaders who always curious for best practices in their leadership perhaps can apply the skills that suggested by the model in their roles. The responsible departments also can use the model to develop their training syllabus to improve leadership skills among village leaders under their supervision. The model also can be predictor to evaluate performance among village leaders, at same time give treatment to undertake weaknesses issues among them.

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