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# TRAVELOKA AS THE ULTIMATE WORKPLACE FOR MILLENNIAL GRADUATES IN INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

Traveloka is one of the online agents for booking airline tickets, hotels, trains, and several other online services. As one of the unicorns from four startup businesses in Indonesia, Traveloka is worth over the U\$ 1 billion or equivalent to Rp. 13.5 trillion Rupiah. Traveloka is an organization that applies advanced organizational communication; in structural and transitional theory, the structure is seen as a hierarchy, policy, and organizational design, whereas Weick views structure as an activity and, more specifically, as a communication activity. According to the concept of Weick, humans do not only run organizations; humans are these organizations. This study discusses the understanding of the meaning shared by Traveloka employees about the organization where they currently work. This shared understanding was obtained from the interaction between Traveloka employees. Convergence theory developed by Ernest G. Borman is used to find out how the process of awareness of groups or organizations is formed, developed, and survived. The research uses qualitative methods and constructivist paradigms. The results of the study show that

there is a message dramatization process that forms a type of fantasy chain about Traveloka as an organization where competent people are especially in the field of Information and Technology. From the results of interviews with six informants who are Traveloka employees, the researchers obtained four points in common with their basic values, which directs them to Traveloka employees as the ultimate end.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the breath of the sustainability of an organization. The concept of organizing an organization is prevalent in daily life. Besides that, the development of organizational communication theories is adapted to the current situation. One of the developments in the business world is influenced by increasingly sophisticated technology.

Google Consumer Behavior states that 50% of Indonesians with a population of 265.4 million have a digital native lifestyle where the Internet has become part of people's lives; on the other hand, the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) explained 143.26 inhabitants of Indonesia in 2017 using the Internet (Marta et al., 2020: 32). The development of technology created new business activity, and trading activities have been carried out online or digital because shopping activities are mostly done online. Businesses that use internet technology as their main base are known as Startup Business. Even this business began to develop in Indonesia. We can see many startup businesses emerge and grow in Indonesia. In Indonesia, startup companies are pioneered by Gojek, as a company with main services on online transportation such as an online motorcycle. Then, there is Tokopedia, which provides buying and selling services items such as clothes, household needs, electronics, and much more. Then, there is Traveloka startup business with services that facilitate traveling activities, which will be the research object.

Media as a platform and the communication medium has an important role in framing people's paradigm towards a certain reality, so it can influence society's attitude towards an event (Sya & Marta, 2019: 333). Traveloka was founded in 2012 by Fery Unardi, Derianto Kusuma, and Albert. Unicorn is a term for startups or startup companies that are worth more than 1 billion US dollars or equivalent to Rp. 13.5 Trillion. Indonesia has four unicorns, and one of Unicorn obtained funding from travel companies from the United States of America in June 2017 worth 350 million US dollars or around Rp. 4.6 Trillion. Traveloka has reached a valuation value of more than 2 billion US dollars or equivalent to Rp. 26.6 Trillion from the total of those funding.

Figure 1. Traveloka as an Indonesia's Leading Startup (Source: Natalia, 2019)



The achievement that brought Traveloka to become one of the unicorn startups in Indonesia was obtained from the hard work of its employees. The interesting thing is based on observations made by researchers on a visitation to the Traveloka office, researchers see employees who look relaxed, and when researchers get acquainted with one of the existing employees, researchers can conclude that Traveloka is a dynamic, relaxed organization, employees do not bound by rules commonly found in other organizations. So, based on the observation, the researcher intends to know how the organization can run well with the existing system.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The socio-cultural approach in communication theory emphasizes the idea that reality is built through a process of interaction that occurs within groups, society, and culture. The use of socio-cultural traditions helps the researcher see a reality of what is being built in the interaction process that occurs within the Traveloka organization. The Socio-cultural convention centers on designs of interaction between people instead of the character of an individual because the interaction could be a process and put where different implications, parts, rules, and social values work together. (Darmawan and Cahyani (2019) stated that the socio-cultural tradition is used to describe an interaction in society because it focuses on the interaction process.

Within the socio-cultural convention, there's a typical meeting hypothesis that examines dialect, daydream, and truth images within the handle and is utilized to clarify the shared meaning that emerges from these relations at the conceptual level (Kartikawangi, 2013: 28-29). In addition, the concept of personal marketing communication is also needed to inform, persuade, remind the public, directly or indirectly, about the image or credibility of a person/person. Prisgunanto

(2006) in Ilevansyah and Sadono (2018) explains that all promotion elements of the marketing mix involve communication between organizations and target audience are pointed to the marketing performance. In addition, marketing communication could be an instrument utilized to advise, induce, and remind buyers specifically or by implication around items and brands sold (Ulfa & Marta, 2017). The Marketing communication planning concept can provide included esteem to a profundity arranging by assessing the part of the procedure since it can create the most extreme exactness, consistency, and communication impacts. In conducting marketing communications, the thing that also needs to be considered is the organizing process. Pradipta (2015) explained that there are three phases to reduce uncertainty information: 1) Enactment stages, which means the organization members re-create their environment by determining and negotiating special meaning for an event. 2) The Selection Stage, the rules, and the communication cycle are used to determine the appropriate reduction in obscurity. 3) Retention Stage allows the organization to store Information about how the organization responds to various situations.

Paying attention to the climate of communication in an organization is also wert important because it will affect how employees' attitudes, interactions, and behavior at work; then, the organizational climate can affect the assessment of job satisfaction in the organization. Organizational climate is a set of organizational attributes, which may be caused by organizational or subsystem ways, towards members and their environment. Wijaya (2013) explained that defining organizational climate as a concept reflects the content and strength of general values, norms, attitudes, behaviors, and feelings of members of a social system.

Indirect communication is a connecting line for harmony in the organizational climate (Fernando & Marta, 2019: 113). Organizational climate is influenced by all aspects within the organization, including behavior, ways of interacting, actions, and organizational culture. A family-friendly communication climate can make organizations communicate openly, relax, be themselves because they assume all people in the organization are relatives. While the negative organizational climate, which is rigid, makes members not dare communicate openly, and there will be a gap between one member and another member. Hardjana (2006) argues that the organization's climate is more crucial than are communication skills or techniques (taken by themselves) in creating an effective organization. Nurlita (2012) suggests six climatic factors that affect organizational communication, namely: 1) Trust, 2) Shared decision making 3), Honesty, 4) Openness in downward communication, 5) listening in upward communication, 6) Attention in high-performance goals.

Irawan & Venus (2016) explain six climate factors that affect organizational communication. The first, trust, described that trust contains relationships involving trust, confidence, and credibility supported by statements and actions. Then, shared decision-making regarding opportunities to communicate and consult with management on it can participate in the making decision and goal setting—the third, Honesty concerns about directness that colors relationships in the organization. Tambuwun et al. (2018) explained that the next factor is openness in downward communication, which deals with the easiness of getting Information about employees' tasks. The fifth, Information from subordinates, must be considered imperative sufficient to be executed but, a few informational are the inverse. Finally, the organization's individuals must illustrate a commitment to high-performance objectives and tall efficiency, tall quality, and moo fetched.

The researchers also use symbolic convergence theory to see the same fantasy theme built in a group, especially in employees' Traveloka. Wildan (2014) revealed that in further developments, Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) could be used to analyze the construction of meaning on an interpersonal level, groups, organizations, and even the mass media. In addition, Suryadi (2010) added that the emergence of Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) was inspired by Robert Bales's research on small group communication. Bales found another reality that was of interest to him: the tendency for group members to become dramatic and share stories when the group experiences tension. Prentice and Boange (2011) also stated that SCT is a context-free general theory using technical terms such as fantasy types, fantasy themes, and rhetorical visions.

Kafle (2014) added that when members of an organization share a fantasy, they experienced the same emotions, developed the same emotional attitude, responded, and interpreted several aspects of their experience in the same way. The control of the typical meeting hypothesis to clarify the way organizational individuals get their social and fabric reality stems from the human propensity to need to get it occasions in terms of individuals treating purposive scenarios.

Fantasy themes are part of a longer or more complicated drama or big story called 'rhetorical vision' (rhetorical vision), which views how something happened or became past, present, and future. This view forms the thoughts or assumptions that form the basis of the knowledge of a group of people who regulate their sense of reality. Shields and Preston (1985) portrayed that fantasy subjects are the unit of examination that portrays the basic components of explanatory

vision, i.e., the *dramatis personae*, plotlines, scenes, and authorized specialists. Alemán (2005) added that fantasy themes and rhetorical vision consist of characters that can be heroes, bad guys, and other supporting players; plotline, acting or story development; scene (scene), which is setting the story location, property, and environment. In addition, there is also a sanctioning agent, which is the party or source that gives legitimacy to a story. The legitimacy source is the authority that gives credibility to the story or authorizes a story to be told. The association or organization members usually like to gather and tell stories before they start a meeting or meeting. They gather, maybe in groups, and share their experiences or stories (fantasy themes) that make them united and familiar. Part of their story is a story that is repeated. Each story will have a cast of characters, story lines, scenes, and sources of legitimacy.

Lee (2006) clarified that a rhetorical vision as a bound, putting together the different subjects and sorts gives the member a broader view of things. According to (2017), some elements compose a theoretical vision, i.e., characters, setting, plot or action, sanctioning agent, and sage. A Rhetorical vision is never told in its entirety but is built in stages by telling related fantasy themes. To understand the whole story, they must listen to various fantasy themes because they contain the group conversation when the full story is told and disseminated. We can recognize the theme of fantasy because it is often repeated, so members no longer need to tell the whole story and just tell the important part. This repeated story is sometimes related to the achievements of a person, group, or community. When community members have the same fantasy themes, the rhetorical vision will unite and give them the same sense of identification for the same reality. In this process, community members will experience convergence and take the same concept because they have the same fantasy theme, and the same rhetorical vision can prove that convergence has taken place. For example, in the colonial period, the desire for independence has united every tribe in Indonesia to produce youth vows in 1928.

When the rhetorical vision starts to become established through the telling of fantasy themes in a group of people, there is the process of creating awareness. Rhetorical vision makes people more aware of seeing things in certain ways because it has explanatory power. Rhetorical vision can attract attention and form awareness because it imitates old ways of seeing things that seem familiar. In other words, rhetorical vision builds or maintains a common consciousness of a group or community.

When awareness is created among the initial supporters of a rhetorical vision, awareness can be spread through communication activities. It will make more people have common

consciousness. When this consciousness reaches the stage of mass, the dissemination of rhetorical vision occurs. Next, rhetorical vision begins to carry out the next function, namely maintaining consciousness. In this context, fantasy themes become an important element in persuasion because public communicators who convey their messages through speeches, articles, books, films, and other media, often use interesting fantasy themes to attract their audiences.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This ponders employments the Constructivism worldview, which sees social science as an orderly examination of socially significant activity, through coordination and nitty-gritty perception of on-screen social characters in their everyday life (Fernando, Sya, & Marta, 2019: 336). Hidayat (2002) defined the constructivism paradigm as a perspective where individuals try to understand the world in which they live and work.

This researcher uses the symbolic interaction method of Herbert Blumer. Ahmadi, (2008) explain in symbolic theory; actors will choose, examine, think, classify, and transform meaning according to the situation and the tendency of their actions. Blumer's conclusion rests on three primary premises, to be specific: people act based on the implications that exist in something for them, the meaning is gotten from the comes about of social interaction with others, and the implications are idealized whereas the method of social interaction is taking put.

Data collection techniques in this research are observation and in-depth interviews. Informants in this research are employees of Traveloka because they are experienced and work in Traveloka. Hutapea (2015) Informant can be defined as people who know and experience the phenomena so; they give important information for researchers.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

Traveloka is a company wanted by groups who have an interest and passion for technology. It becomes the right company for those who are interested in world technology and actualize themselves. Advances in Information and technology cannot be avoided because technology affects every aspect of human life and ease human activities. Yuliati (2017) explained that some communication experts were convinced that every year the discovery of new

communication technology would have an impact on social change. Traveloka was established where the founder was in the condition of looking for flight tickets; according to him, it would be better if there was a technology that can help to book tickets easily and provide Information about ticket prices between one airline with another airline. Traveloka provides not only Information about traveling facilities but also twenty-two (22) services provided by Traveloka in its application, which is divided into three service categories are travel, entertainment & routine needs, and travelokapay.

As a person who is interested in technology, those values become the vision and mission that unite employees and Traveloka as a company where they work.

*"If marketing technology is like Yola and I 75% IT. But if the marketing team approximately 30%, this is Traveloka's marketing. Every company is different" (Fajar, Bridging Marketers and Technology).*

From the statement, it can be concluded that most of the employees have a background in technology and Information. Organizational Climate is one of the most important factors because it will make Traveloka employees feel comfortable being part of this company. Four informants interviewed by the researchers consider that the culture in Traveloka and interaction between employees occurs casually because hierarchy, status, and position are not limited.

From the interview, the researchers got Information that all teams in Traveloka once every three months often hold gatherings or relaxing activities such as eating together and outing.

Furthermore, researchers will explain six important factors of the organizational communication climate according to Pace and Faules: a) From the interview results, the researcher believes that the trust factor is important, as expressed by the four informants the value of the responsibility must be held by all Traveloka employees. Traveloka does not regulate the working hours of all employees; it represents that there is a trust value from Traveloka to employees. In particular, trust in employee professionalism in working hours and assignments given by the company. b) Shared decision-making: When getting a project, the team leader will discuss the project timeline with engineers. From the Information, the researcher knows that each team will always hold a "weekly meeting." In this meeting, all teams will report the progress of the work or project being carried out and discuss the problem faced and the next project. The project team, led by the Project Manager, will always discuss the project together. c) Honesty become values that are connected between one person and another. Honesty is an important value in Traveloka



because if an employee is given a project and felt challenging to do the project, employees must tell the difficulty, so the project can be given to those who can do it, and the project can be finished punctually. Honesty can be applied and compiled easily if there are openness and flexibility in an organization.

Employees can work from outside the office, as issued by Otniel, Most employees choose to work from home instead of going to the office, but they must report to their team leader if they do not enter. Openness will make employees easier to get Information related to their assignments, interact, coordinate the work being carried out, and know the company's plans, achievements, vision, and mission.

*"There is no hierarchy; this company does not view the position as something that limits the employees and superiors," said Otniel, Prad, and Hadrian when asked about the work system between superiors and subordinates in the Traveloka office. (Otniel, Ios Mobile Engineer; Prad, Developer Programming Backend Engineer; Hadrian, Software Backend Engineer)*

According to Otniel, there is no restriction among employees, seniors, and even with other divisions or teams. As a result, it eases them to work together with one another and actualize the vision and mission of Traveloka.

Although Traveloka is an organization that provides freedom in its work system, their employees must have a responsibility in their work. If the employees cannot carry out those tasks and responsibilities, they will terminate the employment relationship.

Then, when analyzing the result of depth interviews with informants, the researcher saw a theme of organizational fantasy and their meanings as Traveloka employees. Elsakina (2016) explained the Symbolic Convergence Theory as a general theory that examined the phenomena of message exchange, which raised group awareness and have an implication with shared meanings, motives, and feelings. If it is connected to the interview results, there is awareness about Traveloka starting from the introduction of the five informants about Traveloka in college. The five informants' similarity is that they have the same background in computer science or IT education. Even though they are from a different university, they choose the same experience related to the way they got to know Traveloka before becoming part of Traveloka.

Tabel 1. Informant interview results (processed by researchers)

Informants	Opinion of Informants
Informant A:	"I have already know it from my senior when I was in University (Otniel, <i>Ios Mobile Engineer</i> )"
Informant B:	"Already known when I was studying in University about Traveloka. As IT student, Traveloka has become our destination and favorite company." (Prad, <i>Developer Programming Backend Engineer</i> )
Informant C:	"I was a big fan of Traveloka since I was studying in University." (Febri, <i>Marketing Technology</i> )
Informant D:	"I have gotten the information from my seniors in University." (Ivan, <i>Ios Mobile Engineer</i> )"
Informant E:	"The organization is wooww, as you can see in linkedin, people who work in Traveloka are great people." (Hadrian, <i>Software Backend Engineer</i> )".
Informant F:	"Proud of it (as Traveloka employee) because surrounded by outstanding people, and it has been my target when I was studying in University." (Fajar, <i>Bridging Marketers and Technology</i> )".

Thus, the convergence process emerged and formed a symbol that is shared by the employees that Traveloka, is a technology-based company, and there is pride if they become part of Traveloka. Taking from (2017) said that common consciousness is built through group stories and rituals that give meaning to members. The ability to build, trigger evolution, and describe its members' drama and change their behavior.

There are many things that organizations can do to build and create common consciousness. Traveloka strengthens the sense of pride as part of Traveloka by holding a gathering once every three months in each team. Gathering activities can be in the form of eating together or vacation together. Not only holds a gathering once every three months, but Traveloka holds company function once a year, followed by all of Bali's employees for three days last year. According to Fajar and some of the other informants, the Traveloka organization held the gathering because it could strengthen the solidarity and family feel between one another. Besides gathering activities, Traveloka also provides several lounges that can be used by all employees. The lounge can bring together employees from different teams and divisions, and Traveloka employees also have a chat room containing all Traveloka employees.

Based on the interview with every informant, the researcher found that the workplace climate is the most important influence that makes employees survive to become part of Traveloka. The researcher summarizes that Traveloka is an organization that gives freedom on how to dress and work especially in time. However, it does not means that Traveloka has no organizational

structure. Still, the existing structure as a reference for every employee to carry out their duties and responsibilities on their awareness, without coercion from the organization.

*"There is no absence, you can really use flip-flops to the office. However, I often stay at the office until 8 pm, the office atmosphere is not boring, and there are rest areas." (Otniel, Ios Mobile Engineer)*

For work time or attendance, all informants confirmed that Traveloka did not have an absence machine.

*"This is the first time I work, for which there is no machine absent, you can come at 1 pm go home at 3 pm, but that is the responsibility of your work." (Hadrian, Software Backend Engineer)*

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Traveloka is an organization that applies the latest concept of organizational communication thinking in structural and transitional theories. The structure is seen as a hierarchy, organizational policy, and design. Wiwitan (2005) views the structure as a human communication activity because they run the organization. After all, humans are the organization. Traveloka realizes that structure is just a policy made to make the organization knows the direction of the vision, mission, and way of working applied. However, the most important about an organization is its people and employees, who cannot be limited by the existing structure.

Cited from Regev and Wegmann (2006), Weick uncovered that Adaptability is vital for keeping up the fit with a changing environment without losing character, so Weick considered that organizations have three primary forms, sanctioning, determination, and maintenance. In this study, Traveloka employees passed experiences with others through symbol systems.

The enactment stage started when the employees began to become a part of Traveloka. This stage makes them know more about the Traveloka organization. Traveloka has internal and external training programs. Training is the right program because someone who has just become part of the organization can recognize and know the role that will be carried out as part of the organization more quickly. The interaction process plays an important role through colleagues because they can determine if things are allowed and not allowed. In addition, through interaction, they learned that working in Traveloka does not have to wear formal clothes such as shirts, trousers, ties, and so forth. Then, through symbolic interactions, they can see that working

at Traveloka can wear casual clothes and flip-flops, but it must be adjusted. If there are meeting schedules with their clients, they cannot wear informal footwear.

The selection stage describes Traveloka as an organization that has a structure. Although researchers see Traveloka as an organization in a subjective approach, the structure still exists as a basis for the work's roles and responsibilities. Based on the interview results, the researcher concluded that although they were not bounded by the structure, especially working hours, employees are required to have a responsibility at their work. When an employee cannot be responsible for their work, they will be fired from the company.

The retention stage allows the organization to store information about how it responds to various situations. Through the process of symbolic interaction that occurs continuously between one another, Traveloka employees understand, who they are, what their role, how they become part of the organization, and what things they should do and shouldn't do as part of Traveloka.

Traveloka, as a company based on technology and Information, realizes that they must look for people who have the same interests in technology and Information, and still staying innovative to achieve the company's vision and mission.

Based on the convergence theory developed by Borman, which is used to find out how the process of common consciousness. Researchers conclude that employees have held the theme of Fantasy about Traveloka since they are in college, where it will continue to form a fantasy chain from the results of interactions between employees and experiences while working at Traveloka, self-actualization as someone competent in the world of technology and information, and rewards as employees (salary, shopping discounts, fitness discounts, breakfast, lunch, office facilities, and other facilities).

Then, another Fantasy theme that researchers found between the awareness of informants as Traveloka employees are: Traveloka as an organization where competent people are placed, especially in Technology and Information, and an organization that is flexible & responsible. From the result of interviews conducted by researchers, researchers found four things that became a shared pride as part of the Traveloka organization, namely 1) Traveloka as one of the Unicorns in Indonesia. 2) Traveloka as a modern organization. 3) Traveloka as an organization based on Technology and Information. 4) Traveloka as an organization that provides high salaries (salaries) and facilities that support the credibility of the employees

Based on the four explanations above, the researcher summarized that those four things as a fantasy Ultimate End. It means as a symbol of self-achievement as part of Traveloka organization. Structure, as a guideline in employees' roles, but the pride as part of Traveloka makes them work without structural control, and they can work late into the night. Work is not a heavy burden for them, but their existence and work have become a part of themselves, and they pronounce Traveloka as a "second home." This sense of belonging will support the vision and mission of the Traveloka organization.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study entitled Traveloka's Organizational Communication concludes that the organizations have been moving to the cutting edge. This tendency is a development and paradigm change that was initially very positivistic towards subjectivism. The interpretive approach views the organization as a social construction of reality.

Traveloka, as a company based on technology and Information, realized that they must look for people who have the same interests in technology and Information, and people can continue the innovation to achieve the company's vision and mission.

Based on the results of existing studies, the convergence theory developed by Ernest G. Borman is used to find out how the process of common consciousness is built. Besides that, the researchers figure out that the theme of Fantasy about Traveloka has been in the mind of employees since in college, where fantasy continues to form a fantasy chain from the results of interactions between employees, the experience while working at Traveloka, self-actualization in the world of technology and Information, and rewards as an employee. Therefore, researchers summarize that the pride of employees being part of Traveloka as a fantasy Ultimate End or a symbol of self-achievement because Traveloka as one of the Unicorns in Indonesia, a modern organization, an organization based on Technology and Information, and an organization that provides high salaries (salaries), and provides facilities to support the credibility of the employees.

## **LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD**

This study is limited to the process of awareness in the form of fantasies from employees as individuals about Traveloka growing up to the term ultimate end (symbol of self-expression).

Future studies will open by looking at the perspective of group communication or organizational communication to see how communication patterns improve the quality of Traveloka's performance in the area of technological development in the social environment.

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