

The Importance of Understanding Civil Servant Voice Behavior in Preparing to Indonesia's New Capital Relocation

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Abstract

The study attempts to reveal how civil servant employee voice conduct should be raised by their supervisor in order to make the relocation process of Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN) successful. Using a qualitative approach, interpretative phenomenological analysis with an in-depth semi-structured interview is used in this study to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal perception regarding their movement to the IKN. The findings of this study found several important factors that are taken into consideration by civil servants in facing the relocation process to IKN, namely the support of family and partners, availability of infrastructure (accessibility to quality education, public services, transportation, and health facilities), accessibility of information, open socialization, and sustainable, as well as the role of leaders in bringing about change

Keywords

Civil Servant; Voice Behavior; Relocation

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Introduction

Organizations became increasingly aware that HR relocation may occur as they grow (Marshall et al., 2005), in particular for public organizations where it is merely determined by the increasing country population. Given the current dynamic and intensely competitive business environment, it is essential for a firm to generate and implement new ideas. Leaders should encourage new ideas and assist in their implementation, as well as create the conditions necessary for status quo transformation. Case management is

frequently misrepresented as leadership in developing nations, and this especially happens in Indonesia, where high uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and power distance norms are prevalent (Hofstede, 2001). As Indonesia is an archipelago country, the need to relocate its staff from one point to another point is unavoidable. They have become more reliant on the quality of civil servants' skills as well as their commitment to be relocated to other branches of office in different islands and cities. As Indonesian government have declared to move their capital to a new city in Borneo Island

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(Kalimantan Island) called Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN) and within these two year the central government has begun making socialization the civil servant all over the ministry and undoubtedly received pro and contra. Only the government and administrative functions would be moved, leaving Jakarta as the country's economic hub (Shimamura & Mizunoya, 2020). There are five reasons why this move should be advantageous for Jakarta such as it will ease the heavy traffic congestion, it will slow down environmental degradation such as air and water pollution, and it will help Jakarta become less vulnerable to risks from natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis, volcanoes, and floods, it will mitigate the levels of economic and population concentration, and it will relieve land subsidence brought on by the relocation (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2021). Additionally, the decision will have an impact on moving civil servants, particularly from Jakarta-based offices and ministries/institutions (central government institutions). The majority of central government institutions will move from Jakarta to IKN, according to information provided by the IKN civil servant Transfer Working Group (2021). At least 7687 government employees (civil servants) and Army/Police personnel will transfer to IKN in 2024.

The result of online sentiment Twitter exhibits a similar pattern. Based on 1236 sentiment-related tweets, 404 were in favor of moving the capital and 832 were against it. It indicates that the public's reaction to the relocation of the capital was unfavorable (Arsi & Waluyo, 2021; Savitri et al., 2023). The research by Agustina & Hendry (2021) revealed different results. The public trusts the government to implement this program because it is more neutral. The society argues that the government was aware of both the long-term beneficial and detrimental effects. Thus, organizations are opening the channels for encouraging civil servants to speak up (employee voice) to give constructive feedback regarding this initiative (Um-E-Rubbab & Naqvi, 2020).

Recent research suggested that civil servants, especially in a collectivist country like Indonesia tend to show conformity behavior (Buggle, 2020) because they are morally obliged to accept their status as civil servants where at the beginning, they swore to be ready anytime, anyhow, and anywhere where they may have subjected to relocated. However, as Indonesia experiences more than decades of democratic reformation, current conditions state that civil servants tend to speak up their frank opinions to their direct superiors (Pierskalla et al., 2021). In particular, their main concern about this relocation is whether they can get comprehensive information on this issue. Employee voice behavior is characterized by uncertain reactions toward changes that impact to them. In relation to this behavior, research in public services also suggests that it is related to organizational justice. The literature on organizational justice is relevant to this IKN relocation, as this groundbreaking relocation perceived by the civil servants led to uncertainty management theory (Bos & Lind, 2002) as it emphasizes the information obtained from the voice behavior to be perceived as fairness to the employer and/or supervisor to reduce their anxiety that may impact on their performance. Finally, this study is one of the first attempts to give recommendations to the Indonesian government in this strategic IKN relocation by giving its flavor on the employee voice behavior and organizational justice perspectives. Therefore, the study aims to unlock what the civil servant's employee voice behavior is to be raised by their supervisor in making this IKN relocation smooth and successful.

Literature Review

Employee Voice

Employee voice is a well-established study topic that Freeman & Medoff (1984) created. It has roots that go back more than 200 years and has only been known to be conservative in trade unions (Kaufman,

2015). Scientists from a variety of fields have determined the factors related to employees who participate in employee voice and its effects on organizations. Employee voice is important because it provides a powerful incentive for making decisions that are of good quality and lead to organizational success (Hosseini et al., 2022; Morrison et al., 2011). Additionally, employee voice aids in the early identification of major issues (Detert & Burris, 2007). As a result, new employee voice initiatives in organizations such as self-governing teams, proposals, and open-door policies that encouraged participation swiftly emerged. Voice behavior is a type of proactive behavior that is discretionary in character. Future-focused, extra-role actions that prioritize making things happen are referred to as proactive habits. Employee voice behavior connected to organizational reforms can be encouraged to encourage highly engaged employees across the organization, which is necessary for organizational sustainability. For organizational innovation, voice behavior is crucial. Employee engagement and motivation are typically poor in organizations where employees do not speak up and hide information. Employees are made accountable for the longevity of the organization when managers delegate, which motivates them to enhance organizational procedures and identify organizational defects. Employees feel more significant and trustworthy when their managers delegate to them. According to research, employees perform better and are more motivated to engage in productive behaviors when they feel that the organization values them.

Organizational Justice

French (1964) originally used the phrase "organizational justice" to describe how employees felt about fairness in the workplace. The fairness of a choice made by a company, the process they follow when making judgments, and the interpersonal treatment employees receive are all

examples of organizational justice (Sheeraz et al., 2021; Wan, 2016). It plays a crucial role in determining an employee's behavior and attitude, and it serves as the invisible glue that enables teamwork and productivity (Colquitt et al., 2013). Additionally, it reduces employees' intentions to leave the company, the necessity for revenge, and their involvement in unproductive work practices like conflict or theft (Rupp et al., 2014). Managers will look to be better individuals and leaders if they treat employees fairly (Sheeraz et al., 2021). Distributive justice refers to just workplace decisions and consequences (e.g., favorable compensation, raises, and promotions) (Khan et al., 2013). According to Ghaziani et al., (2012) procedural justice refers to the use of procedures to determine outcomes that are based on accurate information and accepted ethical principles, represent everyone affected by the procedure, allow for input and appeal, are impartial, and are applied consistently. People who feel they were treated with respect and dignity and who believe they were given accurate information about the processes and judgments are said to have experienced interactional justice (Wu et al., 2012; Yean & Yusof, 2016). In relation to organizational justice in the light of leadership, Greenberg (1990) found that distributive justice is a condition when members of the organization feel fair and equal, when the rewards they receive from the leader, are equal to the effort they give to organizations they feel more comfortable. On the other side if members of an organization feel the leader treats them with fairness and equality, the leader itself becomes favorable for members of the organization (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). The other benefit of distributive justice itself is diminished work stress, fewer complaints, and also good health behavior (Ghaziani et al., 2012).

Method

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach as the dynamic of the unit analysis to get a better understanding of the civil servant's employee voice behavior during relocation from Jakarta to IKN as new capital of Indonesia in the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of Indonesia. The Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture has the task of coordinating, synchronizing and controlling ministerial affairs in the administration of government in the fields of human development and culture. By using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), this research tries to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants (Smith & Eatough, 2007). In narrating the data obtained from the participants, interpretative analysis was conducted by comparing the data of all key participants, highlighting common themes or key factors that emerged, relating to their perception of relocation process.

Procedure and Instruments

In-depth semi structured interview was used to collecting the data and respons of 5 key informants in the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of Indonesia to reveal what kind of voice behavior of civil servant employees their superiors want to show in making this IKN relocation a success. The licensing process is the first step in the interview process, followed by coordination and determination of key informants and an agreed schedule for conducting the interview process. The interview process was carried out behind closed doors in a room that was approved to be recorded for a maximum of 45 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

This study has been carefully approved by the Research Ethics Commission team for the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Brawijaya, Indonesia, reference number 1749/UN10.C10/TU/2023 date 28 August 2023.

Results

Based on the interview result, the study revealed that there are several potential factors needed by the civil servant's employee during relocation from Jakarta to IKN as new capital of Indonesia in the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of Indonesia. Since signing the employment agreement as civil servants, they have promised to be willing to be placed anywhere in Indonesia. Although all decisions must be obeyed and followed by civil servants, some are concerned about the IKN infrastructure's lack of readiness. Especially for civil servants who are married and have families, the infrastructure factor is very important, especially as the physical form of the buildings at IKN does not yet have a definite form. Availability of access to adequate education, public facilities, availability of transportation and health facilities are important factors that civil servants should consider before moving to IKN. Research from the international human resource management domain has shown repeatedly that spouses play a highly influential role in the successful adjustment of assignment acceptance and completion of ASN assignments (Konopaske et al., 2005). For example, several studies have identified the spouse as the family member whose support and satisfaction with the civil servant assignment is critical to the overall success of the assignment. Given the important role that partners play in the overall success of the relocation process, additional research needs to be conducted to increase understanding of what influences partners' attitudes regarding willingness to

move abroad for the short and long term (Brett et al., 1993; Brett & Reilly, 1988).

The attitude of optimism of civil servants in facing the possibility of moving is quite high. Various factors underlie this optimism, one of which is the presidential decree regarding the relocation of the Indonesian capital which sooner or later will be carried out. Moreover, various factors in Jakarta as the capital are no longer supportive, such as very severe traffic jams, seasonal flooding, especially in the rainy season, as well as aspects of severe air pollution where Jakarta was declared the most polluted city in the world in August 2023. High levels of stress and physical fatigue occur considering that a lot of time is wasted traveling to the office, thus hampering the performance of civil servants. By relocating to IKN, it is hoped that they will face a new and more comfortable situation, a healthier environment, cleaner air, and an atmosphere without congestion which will support better and more productive performance. Furthermore, they will also receive various additional benefits such as accommodation, health insurance, and various allowances that will support their moving process to IKN.

The aspect of providing and disseminating information in a transparent manner is seen as important in the process of relocating to the IKN. The information conveyed by the central ministry was not carried out openly, nor was socialization related to relocation carried out on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the increasingly wild and large amount of information circulating on social media regarding several factors such as the size of the flats to be provided, the distance between schools and supporting infrastructure, as well as various other news is enough to make civil servants worry about their move, especially for those with families. To overcome this, massive and continuous socialization, as well as blocking hoax news circulating on social media are important keys in reducing

negative sentiments of civil servants regarding their move. Most of civil servants also continue to monitor the latest news regarding their transfer process and the extent of the physical buildings and infrastructure at IKN. Furthermore, several informants stated that their wives and families were also actively looking for updated information, possible school facilities for their children and various possible supports at IKN. However, the most massive news reported was dominated by the construction of a state palace at Titik Nol Nusantara (Zero Point Nusantara), and there was not much news regarding the infrastructure support that would be used by civil servants. Therefore, news regarding infrastructure, supporting facilities and infrastructure related to the transfer of civil servants needs to be carried out on a massive scale.

The leadership aspect is seen by civil servants as one of the important factors that supports their move to IKN. Leadership that can effectively and confidently employ persuasion and argumentation is required to support the IKN relocation program and to get government servants ready for change and adapt to a new environment. To effectively carry out corporate goals, a leader must be able to inspire, engage in active communication, and take persuasive action (Irawanto et al., 2023). As a result, a leader's duties include more than just delivering orders and persuading followers. They also include setting an example for followers and playing a significant part in the process of moving government employees to the IKN. The leader that civil servants expect when they move to IKN is someone who is flexible, understands and actively uses technology, is able to bring about new changes, has a youthful spirit, understands information technology well, and is adaptive. A leader with the ability to always try to resolve conflicts is needed to support the relocation of the IKN program and prepare civil servants for change. A leader must be able to foster and maintain harmony as well as bridging the gap

between group members and within the workforce organization. Although, in general, thriving integration is not an easy thing to achieve, a leader must be able to do it in an organizational context. In addition, the relocation planning process which will begin in 2024 is also of increasing importance to employees. Thus, the leader must be able to consider various possibilities and make decisions wisely.

Limitations

This research has several limitations, such as the limited number of critical informants due to the accessibility limitation. Further research can be carried out using different methods to define the civil servant' perception of their relocation process to IKN.

Implications for Behavioral Science

The findings of this study produce several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretical implications regarding the family factor, infrastructure availability, openness of information, continuous socialization, and leaders practice are important factors considered by a civil servant when moving to IKN and support previous research. Practical implications are based on the results of the interview result can be applied as recommendation for Indonesian ministries to prepare the relocating process for their civil servant. Additionally, in order to demonstrate their confidence and make full use of their resources, leaders who are in a command must be able to anticipate that the migration of civil servants would go smoothly.

Conclusion

The study's findings several key important factors considered by civil servants in the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of Indonesia facing relocation process to IKN, a new capital of Indonesia. There are the support of the family and spouse, the presence of infrastructure (accessibility to a

quality education, public services, transportation, and healthcare facilities), the accessibility of information, socialization is carried out openly and continuously, and the leader's role. When public workers transfer to IKN, they want a leader who is adaptable, flexible, knowledgeable about and skilled in using technology, able to introduce new innovations, and who also has a youthful spirit and a solid understanding of information technology.

Notes on Contributors

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